

The Image Of New Substance Users In The Interpersonal Communication Context

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the self-image of substance users as they first enter a new environment (a community of drug-users) through the understanding of their self-concept as a tendentious factor. Based on a phenomenological perspective and employing a qualitative method, the study aims to reveal the self-image of drug users in the context of interpersonal communication, and to understand their behavior from this point of view. The data of 20 subjects was collected using the snowball sampling technique. The majority of subjects in the study began taking drugs between 10 and 16 years of age, including one informant who began taking drugs in elementary school. The research showed several distinct categories related to the way drug users describe their perception of illicit substances: as a "socializing tool, namely as an indicator of acceptance into a group or gang, and as an indication of their appreciation of their friends; as a "happiness and relaxation tool"; as "a lifestyle" (increasing self-confidence, signifying strength and bravery, and giving a sense of participating in a trend); as "a survival tool"; as "a form of escapism/camouflage"; as "something frightening" [something deadly]. The phenomenon shown among the case studies of the drug users in this research indicates that the positive attitude of first-time drug users shapes the way in which they see the community into which they are entering- a community which contrastingly has a tendency towards negative behavior. It is hoped that this research will provide a greater understanding for society at large, and especially for individuals, families, and education professionals, enabling them to better recognize the early signs and symptoms of substance abuse- a growing social concern for the people of Indonesia.

Keywords: self-image, new users, substance.

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INTRODUCTION

Narcotics - or as these illicit and dangerous substances are referred to by the Indonesian government, "narkoba" - refer to the substances in narcotics, drugs or medicine which can cause a decreased or altered state of consciousness, pain relief, and a sense of addiction for the user. The word narcotic itself refers to a number of classifications, including plant and non-plant based substances, as well as synthetic and non-synthetic substances. Almost every country in the world has regulations or laws either restricting or prohibiting the use and distribution of these substances due to the tendency for these substances to cause both moral and physical harm to their users. Today, drug addiction is one of the leading causes of public health issues worldwide (Sadock et al. 2007), because drug abuse leads to numerous personal, social, and health outcomes which negatively impact the user's quality of life (Karow et al. 2008). (Andre Caputo, 2018:2, International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, Springer Science+Business Media 15 October 2018).

Through the testimony of informants (new users), this study reveals a number of categories regarding the way they view illicit substances, detailing changes in their perspective from the time prior to them entering the community of drug users, to the time subsequent to them entering into that community and ultimately becoming drug users themselves. The study also reveals the process which led the informants to first becoming a part of these communities. The common image of narcotics is one usually prescribed by non-drug users prior to an individual deciding to use drugs, and is one perspective that influences the individual when they are initially forming a view or judgement of a community of drug users. Potential users create a biased or imperfect image based on how they view their own social life. They also

receive a number or differing views from public opinion, including views such as: narcotics are types of medicine which are restricted from general use, and require the recommendation and prescription of a licensed medical professional; drug use is a trend among the youth, and is part of their social life, and; drug use is a way of easing problems and coping with the burdens of life. Individuals typically have several specific concerns regarding the implications of becoming a drug user; concerns which range from getting caught by their parents or family members, to the worry of addiction or death. They also actively worry whether society will still accept them, tolerate their behavior, and allow them to live a normal life, or whether they will be considered criminals, and at risk of being arrested by the authorities. From this it is evident that entering into a community of drug users conforms to the anticipatory self-image the individual has formed. One concept is that of survival, namely how to exist within a community of drug users, but to avoid changing or being changed by their community. Theoretically, based on various criminal acts occurring within society, personal or self-analysis conducted within the society should be done holistically, because it is a system which consists of interrelated parts. Throughout human history, humans have defined themselves according to their place or their level in their society. Of all of the components of communication, the most important is the component of the "self". Who you are and how you perceive yourself and others will affect your communication toward and perception of others' communication. Here we will explore these two self-aspects. First, we will examine our self-awareness and how we observe ourselves. Second, we will reveal our self-disclosure, a form of communication in which we reveal something about ourselves (Johari Window, Joseph Luft). Self-awareness or self-consciousness is the

basic principle of all forms and functions of communication (Kleinke, 1978). It can be well explained through a window (Johari Window), which divides the field into four distinct quadrants: the open self, the blind self, the hidden self, and the unknown self. According to Head of The National Narcotics Board of the Republic of Indonesia (BNN Indonesia), Police Commissioner General Heru Winarko, there was an increase of 0.03 percent in drug circulation during 2019 compared to the previous year. The majority of drug users fall into an age range of 15 to 65 years of age, and exceed three million individuals in number (liputan6.com 05 Dec 2019, 17:32 WIB). In recent decades drug abuse has become a critical issue worldwide. The World Drugs Reports, published in 2018 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), reported that 275 million people in the world, or approximately 5.6% of the world population aged 15 to 64 years old, have consumed illicit substances or drugs. Meanwhile in Indonesia BNN (The National Narcotics Board of the Republic of Indonesia), as the focal point in the sector for minimizing the abuse of controlled substances through prevention and law enforcement measures directed primarily at illegal drug abuse and drug trafficking, recorded the number of people aged 10 to 59 years old¹ abusing illicit substances or drugs in 2017 as 3,376,115

Based on the latest statistics provided by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2016), of the potentially high-risk opioid users in the European Union, approximately 75% were reported in the UK, France, Italy, Germany, and Spain. Moreover, the UK, Italy, and Spain accounted for 74% of all reported treatment entries related to cocaine in Europe. In 2014, Italy produced an estimate of 0.64% for individuals in need of treatment for cocaine use, thus revealing drug addiction as a public health emergency at the national level. (Andre Caputo, 2018:5, International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, Springer Science+ Business Media 15 October 2018).

Additionally, Alan T. Baker (2015) stated that one impact of drug abuse can be seen in the personality trait of negative urgency, characterized as behaving rashly when emotionally perturbed, which is gaining attention as an indicator for susceptibility to problematic substance use. How this trait is influenced by exposure to drugs of abuse is still unclear (Alan T. Barker, G.V. Rebec: 2015).

This research offers important insights into the substance and drug abuse issues occurring within society, indicating that drug abuse is a very serious issue. This research shows the *self* is a fundamental factor at the root of preventing substance and drug abuse at the level of the individual. In a sense, there needs to be a fundamental approach to addressing this problem, which has become toxic at all levels; not only to adults, celebrities, and officials, but also at the level of educational institutions, including schools and among school-aged children. From a theoretical standpoint, when looking at the various instances of deviant behavior which occur, analysis of the individual or self is not sufficient, but must also include analysis on the level of interpersonal communication and interaction with others. The substance or drug abuse problem is a complex one, because the causes and the effects of this problem cover a variety of aspects of daily human life: aspects which are physical-biological, psychic, social, and also mental and spiritual in nature.

The results of the research conducted by Hawari (2001) posited a number of factors which led to an increase in instances of drug abuse in DKI Jakarta (the Special Capital

Territory), one of which assigns blame to the educational curriculum in schools, citing its overemphasis on the cognitive aspect (knowledge) at the expense of the affective (emotional), conative (will), and psychomotor (skill) aspects which collectively constitute the full scope of human behavior.

Drug abuse and its problems have come to constitute a national threat in need of serious and multidimensional attention, at both the micro (family) and macro (state) level.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach with the descriptive research type, with the aim of describing the self-image of new drug users. This study employed the symbolic-interactionist methodology of Erving Goffman, which asserts that systematic research should be conducted in a naturalistic setting, as opposed to a controlled and artificial one. The variants include theories and procedures known as ethnography, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, environmental psychology, semiotic analysis, and case study (Lindlof & Meyer, in Deddy Mulyana, 2001:148).

In conducting this study, the researcher built a relationship with informants in a natural setting without manipulating them. In this approach, phenomena were studied in context and without manipulation, with the informant participating as a friend, or as part of the research environment; namely, a rehabilitation center. Having collected data from 20 informants using the qualitative approach, this study is considered an emic study, which aims to reveal the self-image of drugs users, derived from their "inner-self." Research with a qualitative perspective falls within the paradigm of mainstream humanistic phenomenology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:157). A research paradigm is a basic set of beliefs that guide action, dealing with first principles, "ultimates," or the researcher's worldviews. Humanistic phenomenology focuses on efforts to understand human behavior from the research subject's viewpoint. This study was conducted by carrying out in-depth interviews and observing 20 informants, whose first drug use experience occurred between the ages of 10 to 16 years. The period of each individual's drug use varied from 1 to 12 years. These 20 informants were chosen through the snowball sampling method. In this study, the key informants are the social actors. This study focuses on extant drug users, former users, or anyone who is in a process of recovery involving interpersonal communication. The units of analysis are individuals and are referred to as the key informants. As written by Mulyana (2001:147) within the principles of the subjective paradigm of human behavior, the communicators or communication participants are actors (Communicators).

The researcher has created a pseudo-statistical range, classified by the number of informants found in the field of 20 informants. The classification is meant to group the informants into special categories for research purposes. The data collection from the field captured categories, with their characteristics emerging from each event examined by the researcher. In analyzing the data, the researcher employed pseudo-statistics as a guide for categorizing and classifying the special characteristics of each informant (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of Pseudo-Statistics

Category	Informant classification
All	20 people
Majority	17-19 people
Most	11-16 people
Half	9-10 people
Fewest	1-8 people

The purpose of qualitative research analysis is to formulate propositions that fit the cases studied. Therefore, the result will not be quantified, nor generalized to all drugs users in Jakarta or nationally. In this research, no isolated individual is viewed as a part of the whole.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to Liljana Siljanovska and Stefani Stojcevska, the self-image described by Charles Horton Cooley allows individuals to create a mental image of their true self, including their characteristics and appearance. Each person possesses different standards which must be fulfilled in order to feel sufficient. Some have low standards while the others have high standards. Those who have lower standards tend to be satisfied with themselves because the conditions are more easily achieved, while those who have higher standards tend to be easily dissatisfied due to the disparity between reality and the criteria they have set: a criteria which is often inspired by their idols or an imagined sense of how they should be seen or behave. In this, the duality of our being is represented. Similar to the notion of the ideal image, the individual feels satisfied with the self-image he or she has created, because it accords to the reality of that individual's manifest character: it is not a product of self-doubt or external influence, but rather a consequence of their confidence and self-belief. The individual wishes to become his or her authentic self: someone unique, but simultaneously someone who at that moment does not yet represent his or her manifest character. The individual desires to stay true to his or her self by not copying others, even as these self-made hopes cannot be fulfilled. This kind of person often experiences disappointment due to the belief that being oneself should be easier than not being oneself (Liljana Siljanovska & Stefani Stojcevska International Journal of Qualitative Methods 2004:65).

The best way of developing an understanding of this study is through the deciphering and interpretation of the true meanings hidden behind the phenomena/experiences of each new drug users. One strategy through which the self-image of new users is formulated and strengthened is through self-dialogue, and self-reflection. By contemplating their background, as well as their past and present behaviors and motivations, a new drug user comes to the conclusion that adopting the group's behaviors or attitudes will enable them to fit in and properly become a part of the community of drug users. The self-dialogue spans the period from the respondent's initial socialization with the group or gang, up to the point of interpersonal communication. Self-dialogue is a broad self-assessment of what will be done, and at the same time involves self-analysis or introspection that is an important part of the process of self-change when entering a user-group or environment. The image of a substance or drug before one starts using it is categorized as an outsider perspective image, which is described from the most common to least common of users' tendencies, as follow:

Social Life

Most users stated that they have friends with whom they often interact and socialize, creating a very a strong sense of solidarity and community, in which individuals gradually coming to know each other very well. Some informants stated that their neighborhood had shaped their perception of drugs. As the following statement from Kk, one of our informants, indicates:

"I'm used to seeing people get drunk around my neighborhood, I see a lot people of all ages getting drunk practically every day, as well as gambling, and even stabbing. I live in Poncol, a very vulnerable area. I often used to see my friends do drugs and smoke weed, Even though I wasn't interested at first, as I hung out with them and was the only one who didn't take drugs, I often felt awkward. In order to stay with the gang, I kind of felt I just had to join them, so I started doing drugs. After that, not only was I accepted by the gang, but I also stopped feeling awkward around them, so I followed the trend of "the youth can't mingle, if they don't do drugs" (Kk).

Kk described how using drugs can be considered as a survival tool in the user's social life and environment. An individual's environment or surrounding neighborhood has a significant influence on shaping his or her self-concept, which enables them be accepted as a part of a group or gang; this also happened to Hs, another informant, who is still a teenager and who lives on the street as a busker. Hs said that before he started busking on the street, he didn't know anything about illicit substances or drugs; however, after he began busking, he encountered a gang who introduced him to drugs. He described the drug as "BR" (the stuff), which is often used by groups or gangs of homeless children before they go out busking. He initially thought that the drugs could help him increase his self-esteem and confidence, and he eventually developed a habit. Now, whenever he earns enough money busking on the street or public transport, he buys alcohol and sometimes mixes it with the drugs. He finds it pleasurable, and also wants to be accepted, appreciated, and considered as a part of his gang. Another experience was shared by informant Bb. As he began to feel bored with his previous group of friends, whom he considered to be boring and undynamic, he was introduced by his cousin to a user group in a drug-prone area on the east side of Jakarta. As he became a part of the gang, he began to compare himself to the other members. Not wanting to be singled out, informant Bb decided to try drugs. The decision was partially made out of curiosity about the drug itself, because when the informant was observing his new gang, he saw that most of the gang members seemed more cheerful and relaxed when under its influence. Another example of an informant motivated to try drugs by a desire for friendship and a sense of belonging is Idr. Idr stated that when he built a music studio in his home, it became the gathering place for his fellow musicians. The house was not under his parents' supervision, because they worked out of town, which gave his friends free reign of the house. Idr recalled that his friends would often bring drugs (BR) to his house and use them in the studio. The substance was often used before they began to rehearse. BR was frequently offered to Idr, until he finally accepted it in order to show his appreciation for his friends. Over time he began to believe the substance helped with creativity, music-making and songwriting. He recalled that later he would often use the substance when he was under the pressure of a deadline for a music project.

"I've never had to find BR, since I became a user, because my friends always bring me the stuff whenever they come to my house. At first, I tried it because I was curious about it, and I felt bad not accepting something my friends had brought for me; whenever they came to the studio, before rehearsal they used the stuff together, and always offered it to me. I accepted it to show them that I appreciated their kindness; besides, I never had to buy it: they always gave it to me. At the time, I considered it as a sign of friendship; they always asked for my permission before they used it, and they also offered it to me. Later, whenever I had a deadline coming up and felt under pressure, I would use BR to get rid of my anxiety. Whenever I feel under pressure because of a deadline and my mind is blank, marijuana helps me to be feel relaxed" (Idr).

Pleasure and Relaxation

Most of the informants described drugs as a tool to get rid of the monotony of daily life. For the drug users who are still in the phase of situational user, they only use drugs in a certain situations. For example, when under pressure, or socializing with their fellow group members. Drug use in situational-user groups is especially common during the holidays, weekends, at parties, and on special occasions. The drugs are used at a lower dosage, so they will not become too intoxicated, but there occasions at which the drug use takes place in a setting such as a villa, where higher dosages are used, causing a decrease in consciousness (in a highly intoxicated state). The researcher observed this directly from the informants during parties and special occasions, at events which were usually held out of town in places such as "Puncak" (a popular local holiday destination in Bogor, West Java), or in clubs and cafés. Drug use also occasionally resulted in fights among members of the group. The research analysis shows that most users who feel happier and more relaxed after consuming illicit substances are those who use marijuana. Similar research has been done by Howard S. Becker, who portrayed the phases of changes in behavior and experience for those who have smoked marijuana as *something enjoyable*. In such a context, marijuana has many associations such as something which people "use for pleasure," and can be considered a "recreational" tool. Our informant Bny described seeing the substance around his neighborhood as his friends used it. He concluded that substance was only used as a way of entertaining oneself (for pleasure, for fun, and for relaxation). Before he decided to try the substance, he first observed his friends, both at school (during his middle-school years) and around his neighborhood. His observations led him to the conclusion that after consuming the BK pills or marijuana, his friends became more cheerful, more relaxed, more carefree, and had more fun. Bny eventually decided to try the substance (it was during his second grade of middle school). His stated reason was that he felt awkward whenever he socialized with his friends who were users and he didn't use with them. Similarly, Dd (informant 9) recalled that he was not initially curious about or interested in drugs, but most of his friends would smoke marijuana when they socialized, which made the situation more enjoyable. As a result, Dd. became interested in using it, too. He thought that because marijuana came from plants, it would not be harmful, and was keen to experience what the other members of his group experienced. A similar opinion was also expressed by informant Jry:

"I think consuming marijuana is fine, because it came from a plant, and I've studied about plants in the past. No matter how high someone gets smoking marijuana, he always knows who he is" (Jry).

Lifestyle

This categorization was shared by most by the informants. Informant Kk described drugs use as a lifestyle. He lives in Poncol, a drug-prone and crime-prone area of Central Jakarta. He recalled seeing people steal, get drunk, and commit murder around his neighborhood. Having a negative self-concept which creates a one-sided perspective when viewing problems, as well as a weak personality in terms of engaging in self-introspection has led to him developing a warped ideal self-concept. Psychologically, although the decision is contrary to his positive self-concept, he has not been able to effectively overcome the influence of his neighborhood. He believes that without using drugs, it is not possible for him to fit in in his community, and in this sense he is following the community majority: the idea learned from his community that "the youth can't mingle, if they don't do drugs". The phrase has become a key part of the decision-making process in his self-dialogue. A similar experience to that of Kk was also reported by informant 5 (Bny) who similarly lives in a drug-prone area. A drugs user's surroundings commonly accustom its inhabitants to that sort of environment. A drug user's behavior is often derived from the community in which he or she lives: areas referred to a "drug-prone areas." Almost every night, Bny saw his friends around his neighborhood using drugs (mostly marijuana) recreationally. Non-drug users in the community began to feel very pessimistic about their neighborhood. Informant Jazz claimed that drugs had become a "true friend" to him, whenever he was feeling lonely. Jz had known about drugs ever since he began smoking cigarettes in the 5th grade of elementary school. A similar experience was recalled by informant Tp, who began smoking cigarettes in 2nd grade. In both cases, drugs were described as a tool for creating a sense of fulfillment and enjoying life. In another statement, informant Hs described drugs as something commonplace, frequently used by gangs of homeless children before going busking in order to increase their self-esteem, enabling them to cope with their shyness when playing music on city busses and other forms of public transportation- a reality he had to face every day in order to feed himself. He accepted older children's offers of drugs, because he needed to boost his confidence while busking. Life on the streets has hardened him, enabling him to survive among the gangs where substance abuse is considered normal, and even a symbol of strength among members of that community: "My friends called me Jz, the cool guy, and they considered me 'Jz the boss', so I always gave my friends free stuff, and we used to hang out in my house, in Jz's bedroom" (Jz).

Significantly fewer informants considered drugs to be an effectively tool for boosting creativity among musicians; instead it is generally considered to be a false association. According to Dd, Idr, Gt, and Rz, when they create music under the influence of drugs, they often think they have created a good song, but are often disappointed when listening back to their creation when sober. Nevertheless, the image of musicians has a strong connotation with drugs, and society commonly associates musicians with drug abuse. Consequently, when Idr was offered BR by his friends, he accepted it as a way of showing his

appreciation for his friends. At the time he also thought that the drugs would help him become more creative musically, which later led to him using drugs whenever he felt the pressure of finishing a musical arrangement to a deadline. Informant Dd stated that before he decided to use drugs during his teenage years, he had observed young teenagers around his neighborhood getting drunk, and perceived it as a common trend among young people. This trend persists among teenagers to this day, but the latest trend is drug abuse. When Dd started using drugs, the popular drugs were marijuana and BK pills; however, today many new types of drug have become widespread. Whatever types of drugs or illicit substances exist nowadays, it is incontrovertible that substance abuse has become a way of life for both teenagers and adults alike, especially in big cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, and Surabaya. The prevalence of discotheques, cafés, or clubs serving alcohol in these cities enables people in these areas to access and abuse drugs more freely, due to drug circulation commonly taking place in these places

Surviving

The least common image of drugs in the perception of the informants, is that of a survival tool for dealing with life's problems, whether economic or otherwise. Such a situation was recalled by informant 2 (Jry), occurring at a time when he was living in Australia. At the time, he was making money as a drug dealer in order to survive. He primarily sold marijuana to his friends at school and their popular social venues. He claims to have become an established drug dealer, with permission to deal marijuana in a number of many discotheques and nightclubs clubs. As well as the financial benefits of his lifestyle, he was also able network and make friends. He was eventually jailed after being caught red-handed with drugs in his car. In contrast, informant 7 (Hs) busks on the street in order to feed himself. As mentioned previously, the life of street children is hard, and staying in a gang is often crucial to their survival. However, since drug use is considered both a status symbol and a symbol of

belonging in street gangs, drug use became a condition for his survival in his community. The area where a gang busks is considered to be their territory, and consequently needs protecting from other buskers. In his interview, Hs recalled:

"At first I was afraid when the older children offered me BK pills, but I didn't want to be considered rude, since I was the youngest in the group at the time. Still, I was worried about what would happen to me, because I've heard stories about the effects of the drug. I gathered my courage and took at least 8 pills, or half a strip. After that, I used them to make money, because by consuming them I became bolder, and started busking" (Hs).

Escapism or Camouflage

Only five informants in this study perceive drugs as a part of this category, namely Rn, Hs, Ald, Jz, and Bb. In this research, the terms escapism and camouflage refer to the fact that these five informants have Antisocial Personality Disorders (ASPD), with drugs serving as a tool for forgetting, eliminating, and diminishing their difficulties, disappointments, and inability to cope with their problems. In the cases of these five informants, drug became a tool for escaping from reality and forgetting their problems. This is the category with the lowest number of claiming to have received information from their fellow drug users to the effect that drugs can help ease, overcome, or forget their burdens. In becoming drug users, these informants showed themselves to have accepted and internalized the assumption that drugs are an effective tool for dealing with their problems and forgetting their worries.

"I was having problems with my family. My dad had remarried, and I didn't approve. At that point, we were arguing all of the time, so to ease my anger I started use putaw after it was offered to me by my friend. Even though I had never used drugs before, I was trying to forget about my problems and ended up accepting my friend's offer, because he said it would make me 'fly'" (Ald).

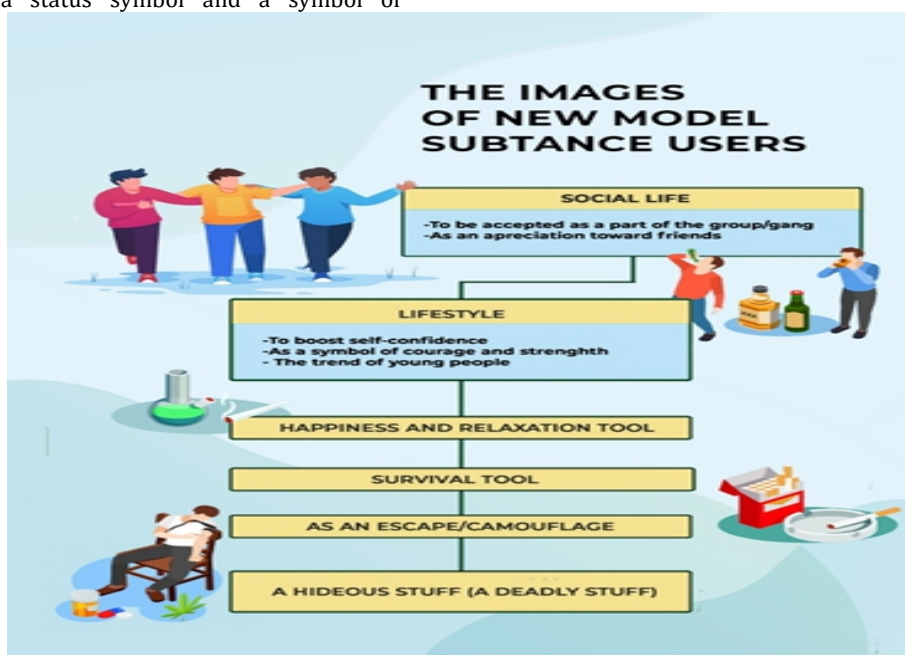


Figure 1. The Image of New Model Substance Users

Something Frightening (Something Deadly)

When a user first starts abusing drugs, it is common for them to initially feel afraid. Many first-time drug users

report feeling that the drug is something frightening, which stems from their prior knowledge and understanding of illicit substances (associations such as

addiction, abuse, and death). Informant Rn, a putaw user, described how she had spent a significant amount of time outside of the home with her gang in order to escape sadness in her home life. Initially Rn's friends hid the fact that they used putaw from her, but over time, as their relationship grew close and reached the level of interpersonal communication, she became accustomed to seeing her friends using putaw. Her story is as follows:

"I felt terrified when I first tried putaw, because, from what I'd heard, it could cause you to overdose, but since I saw my friends use it so often, I wanted to try it too. I was interested, because whenever I saw them take it, they became so cool and relaxed, as if they didn't have a care in the world... I wanted to try in order to forget the sadness of my home life, where my parents don't pay any attention to me. It was like an escape. I was terrified at first, but I started smoking it together with my friends. After that we kept on taking it, and over time I got addicted. Then I got caught by my parents" (Rn).

Unlike Rn, informant 7 (Hs) initially thought that drugs should never be used at all. However, due to the nature of his life on the streets, he eventually made the opposite decision, although he intends to stop using drugs when he eventually stops busking. Hs vows that someday he will overcome his addiction and get a better job. In his mind, his current drug use is only a temporary compulsion. The following table is a summary of the various ways in which new substance users perceive drugs:

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that within the social interactions mentioned, the appropriate behavior or attitude can allow individuals to gain social approval and acceptance in their surroundings. A statement, in the form of a certain behavior or attitude, will enable the individual to gain the appreciation and acceptance of people who are considered to be essential (or so-called significant others) such as parents, close friends, or social groups. The adaptation function states that these users will attempt to maximize the behaviors which are favorable, and minimize behaviors which are unfavorable to them getting what they want; in this instance, their effort to be embraced as a member of the group. Accordingly, these individuals adapt their behavior positively toward matters they consider advantageous, and negatively towards matters that they consider harmful. These case studies shows that the positive behavior displayed by new users, in the form of demonstrating their appreciation to their group, created a feeling of positivity within the community of drug users they had entered. From the symbolic interactionist perspective, it can be concluded that the drug use of new users is essentially an adaptation to achieve the users' desire for pleasure, happiness, relaxation, and social enjoyment. The manifestation of these users' self-adaptation processes, both physically and psychologically in terms of their behavior and attitude, leads them to accept a social life as a part of a community of drug uses, along with the lifestyle which that entails. The lifestyle lived by user groups is often felt as an attempt to increase their self-confidence, demonstrate their strength, and to enable a sense of belonging, thereby ensuring their survival though the participation in a youth trend. To the small number of users with Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD), the substance represents an alternative space in which to diminish, eliminate, or forget their problems, in which drugs have become the tools for fulfilling their desire to escape reality or forget the issues

they are facing, and to make them feel more relaxed and calm. Only a very small number of users described the substance as something frightening or deadly. Overall, the phenomena presented in the case studies in this research show that the positive attitudes of new users manifested as a positive attitude towards their new community of drug users: groups which carry a contrasting tendency towards negative behaviors. By way of reflecting on the cases and conclusions of this study, this research is intended as a reference for the community. Whether personal, family, groups, educational institutions, organizations, or community institutions, this research is intended as a reverence in instances of substance misuse and rehabilitation. Only by observing the users' perspective can the formulation of the persuasive approach be found and applied, thereby helping these users to return to a healthy life and to develop a positive self-concept. Interpersonal communication can be an effective solution for drug users within our social environment. For families, efforts of this kind are capable of preventing or minimizing substance abuse issues. By observing the described results, recognizing that the family is the first fortress for someone in deciding not to fall into a negative social life, and that by equipping their children with religious education from an early age, they might enable them to form a healthier, more positive self-concept. With regard to educational institutions, it is hoped that they might pay more attention to their students by maintaining a more comprehensive knowledge of the substance scope.

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