The Role of School Media in Combating Addiction Through Guidance and Counseling

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Abstract

This study explores the role of school media in raising awareness about addiction risks, a key responsibility of guidance counselors in middle and high schools. It examines how counselors help students understand themselves, their abilities, and their interests while preventing addiction through media-based guidance and counseling. Using a descriptive approach, the study surveyed 50 counselors from Algiers and Blida through structured interviews. Findings reveal that media sessions, both individual and group-based, have a significant impact on educating students about addiction risks, fostering self-awareness, and helping them overcome challenges. The study underscores the vital role of counselors in promoting informed decision-making and resilience among students.

Keywords: School media; addiction; media; guidance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Modern nations strive to promote national and ethical values and a sense of belonging through education, using various pedagogical, social, and media tools. In Algeria, schools hold significant cultural and social importance, as students and parents trust their educational and societal role. Through awareness and educational campaigns, schools emphasize their crucial role in individual and community life, as well as their programs designed to meet educational needs.

However, schools face a major challenge with the growing issue of tobacco and drug addiction, which poses serious psychological and social threats to society. Guidance and counseling advisors in educational institutions actively combat this problem through media-based awareness programs aimed at educating students and parents about the dangers of addiction using various media tools.

Research Objectives:

This study aims to examine the state of school media from the perspective of guidance counselors and assess its effectiveness in preventing tobacco and drug addiction in schools to protect younger generations from this threat.

Research Questions :

- What is the current state of school media from the perspective of school guidance counselors?
- What role does school media play in preventing addiction risks within the school environment?
- What are the challenges facing school media, according to guidance counselors?

Hypotheses:

- School media plays a crucial role in preventing addiction within the school environment.
- There are no significant obstacles to school media from the perspective of guidance counselors.

Study Goals:

- Examine how school media tools (such as advertisements, magazines, and forums) are used to raise awareness among students and the school community about the dangers of addiction and its negative effects on mental and physical health.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of school media programs in addiction prevention.
- Analyze the impact of school-based media and counseling programs in reducing addiction-related risks and assess whether these programs help prevent students from engaging in addictive behaviors.
- Explore the role of school guidance counselors in designing and implementing prevention programs and their involvement in developing and executing media and preventive campaigns to curb addiction in schools.
- Identify challenges and barriers that may hinder school media from delivering effective messages to students, such as limited resources, lack of training, or insufficient student engagement.

Significance of the Study:

- Highlights the importance of school media as a structured and effective awareness tool within the school environment.
- Explores the potential of expanding school media's role in addressing harmful social issues, such as addiction.
- Draws the attention of school administrators to the critical role of guidance counselors in tackling social problems within schools.
- Emphasizes the need for diverse media formats (visual and auditory) and targeted audiences, including students and parents.

School Guidance and Counseling Advisor

A guidance and counseling advisor is an education sector employee responsible for implementing orientation programs set by the Directorate of Assessment, Guidance, and Communication.

Definition of the School Guidance and Counseling Advisor

According to Circular No. 827/1991, which defines the responsibilities of this vital member of the educational team in middle and high schools, the advisor is responsible for student guidance, providing information, and monitoring academic progress. They offer psychological and educational counseling to help students adapt, plan their future, and overcome academic or social challenges. Additionally, they conduct counseling sessions to support students in dealing with difficulties, fear of failure, and understanding the risks of drug addiction.

Definition of School Media

One of the key responsibilities of the school guidance counselor, school media involves providing accurate and clear information about the educational process, students' interests, and career planning. It also explains factors affecting students' academic journeys and development.

Operational Definition

School media is an educational process aimed at equipping students with knowledge and information to develop their skills and competencies, enabling them to achieve full autonomy in planning their academic and professional futures.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Guidance and Counseling Advisor

Ministerial Decree No. 827, issued in early 1992—the first-year school guidance counselors were officially integrated into high schools—defines their responsibilities. Their work focuses on student guidance, providing information, and monitoring academic performance. They are key members of the school's educational team (Decree 827, Article 5).

Their main activities include:

- Academic and Career Guidance: Assisting students in making informed educational and professional choices.
- Psychological and Educational Counseling: Helping students adapt to the learning environment.
- Psychological Assessments: Conducting necessary evaluations to support students with specific challenges.
- Identifying Struggling Students: Assisting in detecting and addressing academic difficulties.

Role of School Media in Guidance and Counseling

- Ensuring effective communication and information flow within educational institutions while maintaining open sessions for students, parents, and teachers.
- Organizing media campaigns on education, career paths, and job market opportunities.
- Managing the school's information and documentation office in collaboration with teachers and education assistants, ensuring students have access to necessary guidance materials (Decree 827, Article 14).

2. Media and School Media

Media encompasses all communication methods aimed at delivering information, news, and facts to the public about various issues and events. It contributes to fostering awareness, knowledge, and comprehensive understanding among recipients.

School media, on the other hand, focuses on educational, academic, and professional information. Its primary goal is to organize and optimize students' academic paths by aligning their aspirations with their academic performance and fostering both individual and collective learning (Morsi, 1995, p. 195).

2.1 Role and Responsibilities of Guidance Counselors in School Media

The guidance process heavily relies on awareness and information dissemination. A school guidance counselor plays a crucial role in helping students identify their academic and career paths. Acting as a bridge between schools, families, and students, the counselor provides up-to-date and relevant information regarding educational, professional, and social opportunities.

2.2 Services Provided by the Counselor

- Provides students with relevant educational and career-related information.
- Ensures effective communication between various stakeholders within the school.
- Conducts group information sessions and organizes meetings between students, parents, teachers, and professionals.
- Manages and supervises the school's information and documentation unit.
- Guides students throughout their academic journey by helping them make informed study and career choices based on their abilities, aspirations, and social-economic context (Ben Fliess, 2013, p. 138).

2.3 Objectives of School Media

School media serves an educational purpose, focusing on achieving the following goals:

- Providing students with engaging information that stimulates and nurtures their interests, preferences, and career aspirations.
- Combating misinformation and correcting misconceptions students may have about academic and career paths.

- Developing students' attitudes and behaviors to ensure intellectual and psychological maturity, aiding them in making critical decisions.
- Strengthening the connection between students and their studies by demonstrating the link between academic activities and future professional and social engagement.

3. Addiction

3.1 Definition of Addiction

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** defines addiction as a state of periodic or chronic intoxication that is harmful to both the individual and society. It is characterized by:

- An uncontrollable craving for the substance.
- The need to obtain it by any means necessary.
- The tendency to increase the dosage over time.
- A psychological and physiological dependence on the substance.
- The possibility of addiction to multiple substances at once (Armoush, 1990, p. 29).

Other scholars define addiction as:

- A state of dependency on a natural or synthetic substance, leading to an urgent psychological and physical attachment (Asaad, 1996, p. 456).
- An illusionary escape from reality, arising from an individual's inability to cope with life's difficulties (Nabulsi, 2004, p. 137).

3.2 The Social Impact of Addiction

Drug addiction is a severe societal issue that threatens both individuals and communities. It weakens personal stability, disrupts social values, and contributes to physical and psychological health deterioration.

3.3Characteristics of Drug Users in Schools

Students who abuse drugs often exhibit the following behaviors:

- Lack of concentration and disconnection from reality.
- Declining academic performance and lower grades.
- Blaming teachers for their academic struggles.
- Frequent absenteeism from classes and school (Meshaqba, 2007, p. 63)

3.4 Symptoms of Addiction

The most dangerous aspect of addiction is its self-destructive and anti-social behavior. Common symptoms include:

- An intense urge to continue using drugs and obtaining them by any means.

- Increasing dosage over time to maintain the desired effect.
- Psychological and physical dependence on the substance.
- Severe withdrawal symptoms when stopping the drug.
- Harmful consequences on both the individual and society.

3.5 Concepts Related to Addiction

- **Consumption/Usage:** Occasional drug use without immediate harm (e.g., drinking alcohol at social events).
- **Harmful Use:** Regular drug consumption leading to **psychological, emotional, and social damage**.
- **Dependence:** Continuous and habitual drug use, which may develop gradually or suddenly. Dependence can be:
  - ✓ **Psychological:** Seeking drugs to experience pleasure or avoid emotional pain.
  - ✓ **Physiological:** A state of body adaptation, leading to withdrawal symptoms when the drug is stopped.
- **Tolerance:** The body's need for increasing doses to achieve the same effect.
- **Withdrawal:** Physical and psychological distress when reducing or stopping drug use.

3.6 Causes and Contributing Factors of Drug Addiction

1. **Individual Factors:**
   - Genetic predisposition (hereditary theory suggests children of addicts are more likely to develop addiction).
   - Low self-esteem, emotional instability, and poor problem-solving skills.
2. **Substance-Related Factors:**
   - The addictive properties of the drug and how the body adapts to it.
   - The method of consumption (injections are more dangerous than inhalation or smoking).
   - The availability and legal status of the drug.
3. **Environmental and Societal Factors:**
   - **Family issues:** Parents' addiction, lack of parental supervision, harsh discipline, or neglect.

- **Economic and social conditions:** Poverty, unemployment, peer pressure, and exposure to drugs.

Addiction, especially in unstable environments, is often a means of escaping life challenges rather than confronting them.

3.1 Research Methodology:

Any researcher relies on a specific methodology to conduct their study. Since this study explores the contribution of school information services in preventing addiction risks in the school environment from the perspective of school guidance and counseling advisors, the descriptive approach was adopted. This approach is defined as "a systematic method of analysis and scientific interpretation used to describe a specific phenomenon or problem and quantify it by collecting structured data and information, classifying, analyzing, and subjecting them to thorough study." (Melhem, 2000, p. 324).

3.2 Study Boundaries:

- **Human Boundaries:** The study targeted on school guidance and counseling advisors responsible for school information and student orientation in educational institutions.
- **Geographical Boundaries:** The research conducted among a sample of **30 school guidance counselors** from the **Algiers and Blida** provinces.
- **Time Boundaries:** The study was conducted during **September – October of the 2024-2025 academic year**.
- **Study Population:** The total study population consisted of **50 school guidance counselors** from Algiers and Blida.

3.3 Results Analysis and Field Study

Through fieldwork, data analysis, and a review of the study's theoretical framework, the following findings emerged:

- School guidance and counseling advisors play a crucial and influential role in the school information process, as it is one of their fundamental responsibilities within educational institutions.
- Effective school information programs have demonstrated a significant role in mitigating the risks of addiction in school environments and reducing academic underachievement.
- Given its positive and influential impact, educators should encourage and enhance this form of education to achieve optimal academic outcomes and educational goals.

- Many teachers, students, and parents recognize the real and positive impact of guidance counselors' efforts in combating addiction risks and acknowledge their contributions by cooperating with them.
- Some counselors emphasize the need to diversify information dissemination methods by integrating modern media, multimedia, visual lectures, brochures, and posters to maximize their outreach and effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the role of school information programs in preventing the risks of addiction within the school environment from the perspective of school guidance and counseling advisors. Through both theoretical and field research, the findings confirm that effective school information programs play a crucial role in raising awareness, educating students, and reducing the spread of addiction-related issues.

The results highlight the significant contribution of guidance counselors in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors, fostering a healthier school environment, and mitigating academic decline associated with substance abuse. Additionally, the study emphasizes the necessity of integrating modern communication tools and diverse media formats to enhance the impact of school information campaigns.

Based on these findings, it is essential to develop and modernize school information programs, strengthen collaboration between educators, students, and parents, and invest in further research to address emerging challenges. By implementing well-structured awareness strategies and educational initiatives, schools can effectively contribute to the well-being of students and the overall improvement of the educational system.

Recommendations

- Enhancing and modernizing school information methods.
- Increasing parents' awareness through a structured and impactful media program.
- Instilling a love for hard work and academic competition while encouraging students.
- Providing guidance and counseling to help students improve their academic performance and maximize their potential.
- Focusing on research and studies in this field to contribute to finding effective solutions to the issue.
- Organizing workshops and discussions involving all stakeholders in the school information process.
- Developing diverse media programs and audiovisual materials on the topic.

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