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Activating the role of the university in protecting youth from the dangers of drugs from an Islamic perspective

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Abstract

The educational institution, especially universities, represents a central axis for individual and societal development, as well as for preserving human values in the face of current challenges. Therefore, its role has emerged in preserving youth from the impact of drug abuse, which has become a major challenge for Iraqi society. Islamic thought emphasizes the importance of the institution and its leadership role in increasing self-awareness among youth by enhancing their social responsibility and promoting awareness, guidance, and student disciplinary regulations. Hence, the study focuses on the role of the educational institution in protecting youth from drug abuse in light of Islamic thought.

Keywords: Youth protection, Islamic drug education, campus awareness, substance abuse, Islamic values, drug prevention programs, Islamic counseling, youth drug risks, educational role

Introduction

The educational institution, especially universities, represents a fundamental axis for individual and societal development, as well as for preserving human values in the face of current challenges. Consequently, its role has become prominent in safeguarding youth from the impact of drug abuse among university students, which has emerged as a significant challenge for Iraqi society. Islamic thought emphasizes the institution's importance and its leadership role in enhancing self-awareness among youth by reinforcing their social responsibility, promoting awareness, guidance, and caring for student disciplinary regulations. Therefore, this study focuses on the role of the educational institution in protecting youth from drug abuse in light of Islamic thought.

Today's society, especially Iraqi youth, has become victims of drug abuse due to various reasons including unemployment, psychological disorders, frustration, failure, and the rapid changes in lifestyle patterns. Statistics indicate that drugs in Iraq have become a phenomenon threatening families and communities due to their serious effects, primarily targeting the youth. The most commonly abused drugs include crystal (37.3%), followed by tablets known as "zero-1" (28.35%), and various types of sedative medications. Therefore, it is crucial to shed light on the health effects caused by drugs and how they can be confronted.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study lies in shedding light on

1. Defining drugs and the reasons for their prevalence among university youth.
2. The Islamic stance on drug abuse.
3. The role of Islamic thought in enhancing the role of universities in combating drug abuse.

Study Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study posits that Islamic thought has played a role in enhancing the role of universities in protecting youth from drug abuse by reinforcing their leadership role.

Research Methodology

The methodology of the study necessitated dividing the research into two sections as follows: The first section addressed defining drugs, the Islamic perspective on them, and the reasons for their use among university youth. The second section focused on the Islamic approach to enhancing the role of universities in combating drug abuse.

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Chapter One: Definition of Drugs and Reasons for Their Spread Among University Youth

Subsection 1: The Concept of Drugs and the Islamic Stance on Them

First: Definition of Drugs Linguistically and Legally

Drugs: (Plural of "mukaddar", derived from "khadr", which means weakness, lethargy, and relaxation. It is said that a limb becomes "mukaddar" when it relaxes and cannot move due to fatigue).

Drugs are also defined terminologically as: (Plant or chemical substances that have mental and physical effects on those who consume them, causing lethargy, sluggishness, and paralyzing their activity. They cloud the mind, similar to intoxicants, although they may not induce the same intense euphoria characteristic of liquid intoxicants... Legally, drugs are defined as: "A group of substances that cause addiction and nervous system toxicity. Their cultivation, manufacturing, or trafficking is prohibited except for purposes specified by law, and they should only be used by those authorized).

The Holy Quran has pointed out their dangers as evidenced by the verse: "O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful." (Al-Ma'idah 5:90). The term "defilement from the work of Satan" is addressed to the believers. It prohibits them from what they used to do of drinking wine and playing gambling, and mentions stone alters and divining arrows to confirm the prohibition of wine and gambling, and to show that all this is from the work of ignorance and idolatry, and thus avoiding it all is imperative, as if there is no distinction between a servant idolater and a polytheist in the knowledge of the unseen, and those who drank wine or gambled, then singled them out with a mention to see that the intended mention of wine and gambling. His saying, "And from the prayer," is a privilege for prayer among the mention, as if it were said: And from the prayer especially. And many of the noble Prophetic Hadiths have been included in the prohibition of alcohol, including the saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) "Every intoxicant is wine, and all wine is forbidden" And his saying (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "God has cursed wine, its drinker, its server, its seller, its buyer, its presser, the one for whom it is pressed, the carrier, and the one to whom it is carried." Reported by Abu Dawood. The interpretations of the verses that prohibit wine have highlighted the reasons for its prohibition, such as: "The prohibition of wine and gambling is affirmed through various aspects of emphasis, including: specifying the sentence with 'indeed', and linking them to idol worship. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The drinker of wine is like the worshipper of idols.' And among these aspects is that it has been made impure, as Allah said: 'So avoid the uncleanness of idols.'" (Al-Ma'idah 5:90)."

"And among them: that they are deemed as acts of Satan, and Satan only brings forth pure evil from them. And among them: it is a command to abstain. And from them: that abstaining leads to success, and if abstaining is successful, indulgence in them leads to disappointment and loss. And among them: it mentions the consequences that result from them, which include enmity and hatred among the drinkers of wine and gambling, and what they lead to in terms of diverting from the remembrance of Allah and neglecting the times of prayers."

Secondly: Islam's stance on drug abuse

Drugs refer to substances that cloud the mind and affect their users with lethargy, heaviness, and dullness, such as opium, hashish, and similar substances. All drugs are prohibited due to their immense danger, severe corruption, and their fatal impact on the youth and men of the nation, distracting them from obeying their Lord, combating their enemies, and pursuing noble pursuits.

Allah Almighty says: "Satan only wants to cause between your animosity and hatred through intoxicants and gambling and to avert you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer." (Quran, 5:91)

This means that Satan adorns drinking alcohol and gambling with enticing promises of wealth, but he intends to sow enmity and hatred among people due to the intoxicating effects that lead drinkers to speak obscenely and sometimes escalate to fighting, thus causing animosity and hatred among people. It also has negative economic impacts as it wastes the wealth of its consumers frivolously and unknowingly into the hands of those who produce and export it, who spare no effort in promoting and tempting others with it.

Beyond these moral damages that undermine decency, dignity, and respect for family, children, and friends, alcohol is considered impure. Therefore, Islam has prohibited it. Additionally, modern studies have confirmed its serious health hazards.

The second issue: Reasons for the spread of drugs among university youth

Iraq, after 2003, became a transit and consuming point for drugs, whereas in the years preceding it, it only served as a transit point. Statistics from the United Nations suggest that in the next 10 years, if the situation remains unchanged, drug consumption will take a toll on Iraqi youth, with an estimated 10% of smuggled drugs being used in Iraq.

External clinic statistics from government hospitals in 2009 revealed that the number of addicts to alcohol and mind-altering prescription drugs reached 2,017 individuals, with around 320 hospitalized. Security officials and experts attribute these figures to political and economic instability and widespread unemployment, which contribute to youth depression and involvement in drug abuse or trafficking.

The main reasons for the spread of drugs in Iraq after 2003 can be identified as follows

1. Weak religious principles among many users, especially university youth, who often follow others blindly and lack cultural and educational depth.
2. Limited budgets allocated by institutions for research and development activities, which could otherwise study the causes of drug abuse and potential solutions.
3. Insufficient intellectual and financial resources dedicated to community and student research activities, negatively impacting university engagement in cultural and social events.
4. Universities' neglect of updating their faculties, programs, and curricula, failing to monitor societal changes and developments.
5. Political instability and ongoing unrest creating an environment conducive to drug trafficking.
6. Youth disillusionment and loss of self-confidence, leading them to seek escapism through drugs, which they perceive as fulfilling unrealized aspirations.
7. Lack of clear control over border crossings, despite intermittent efforts to seize large drug shipments.
8. Growing economic problems and rising unemployment

- rates contributing to drug-related issues.
9. Absence of public recreational facilities where youth can spend their time constructively on university campuses.
 10. Inadequate cultural awareness, whether through media, religious, or educational channels within educational institutions, particularly universities, regarding the dangers of drugs on human life and future.
 11. Lack of stringent legal measures to deter drug traffickers following the suspension of Article 68, which previously governed capital punishment for drug traffickers.

Chapter Two: The Role of Islamic Thought in Activating the Educational Institution's Role in Combating Drugs:

First Topic: Definition of the Educational Institution:

The educational institution is defined as: "A technical unit that combines various factors of production to produce goods and services. It is a social organization, comprising individuals with diverse social characteristics. It is a political cell as it operates within a political field, and an open system that interacts with its environment. Thus, it reflects various conflicts and contradictions that affect the institution within its internal context."

As for the university, it is defined as an independent scientific institution with a specific organizational structure, systems, and academic traditions. Its primary functions include teaching, scientific research, and community service. It consists of various faculties and departments specializing in scientific disciplines, offering diverse academic programs ranging from undergraduate to postgraduate levels, granting academic degrees to students.

The institution we are focusing on in our study is Iraqi universities. Universities constitute an important economic and cultural axis for every country, especially Iraq, where they were once among the best in the Arab world. However, due to the circumstances of the past two decades of wars and other factors, the standard of universities has significantly declined. Higher education is a process of producing future generations, and investing in this industry is the best and most beneficial type of investment. Educational institutions work to nurture society with future leadership in all fields.

The role of universities varies from one environment to another. Universities in advanced countries, for example, located in industrial environments, focus on industrial specializations. Universities in agricultural environments prioritize agricultural research and improvements. This highlights the importance of what universities can contribute to societal development on various fronts and their potential to lead social change and diversity.

Thus, if universities lose this capability, they risk their own destruction. Therefore, the importance of universities lies not only in teaching and scientific research but also in their role in society, producing new leadership and professionals. To fulfill this role effectively, universities must have a clear vision of how to meet the needs of individuals and society through their various departments. This leads us to the market requirements that are an essential part of societal development, constantly interacting with a rapidly changing world in terms of its requirements, needs, tools, and methods.

Therefore, the role of the university is not only to prepare students to be good citizens serving their country optimally and to be competitive winners in job markets but also to make scientific research, conducted by higher education centers and institutions, one of the most important avenues for societal development, educationally, economically, and socially. Amidst the challenges faced by Iraqi society, it has become

necessary to highlight the university's real role in protecting the intellectual thought of university students and providing a safe intellectual environment that contributes to confronting these challenges, particularly drugs.

Recent years have shown a continuous increase in drug use and addiction, especially among young people globally. In Iraq, recent reports from the Supreme Judicial Council revealed that drug addiction among youth reached 50% in 2021, with rates as high as 70% in impoverished areas with high unemployment.

The second issue: The role of Islamic thought in enhancing the role of educational institutions in addressing drug abuse among youth

Islamic thought has played a significant role in activating the role of educational institutions, especially universities, in combating drug abuse in its various forms through the use of diverse means. This approach is characterized by its comprehensive nature in addressing drug abuse due to its negative effects on individual and societal health. Among these interventions are:

Firstly, activating the sense of social responsibility among university students: Enhancing youth's sense of social responsibility is a fundamental approach emphasized by Islam. This is achieved by reinforcing the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil, which is one of the most effective deterrent measures for human behavior. The concept of enjoining good and forbidding evil encompasses all acts of obedience to Allah, acts of kindness towards people, and adherence to what is encouraged by Islamic law, contrasting with acts considered evil or disliked by the Sharia.

The Quran provides clear guidance on this matter, as Allah says: "And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful." (Quran 3:104) and "You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient." (Quran 3:110).

The obligation to hold fast to the Quran and adhere to religion was enjoined upon us. It prohibits us from division and difference, then it showed us the way to hold fast to the call to goodness and to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. This reminder of Allah and the Hereafter guides us to Islam, protects us from deviation and perversion, with the aim of preserving the unity of the nation and guiding its sons.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith." Therefore, the duty to enjoin good and forbid evil is one of the most important deterrent duties for individuals from sins and transgressions, purifying society from all evils and prohibitions. Drug abuse in all its forms, old and new, is among the greatest evils and major sins, serving as a gateway to all vice. As an Islamic society, it is incumbent upon us to activate this duty correctly as Allah commanded.

The principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil is one of the principles that ensure the preservation of morals for individuals and society, rejecting all that is immoral. Thus, it does not allow room for any strange or non-Islamic behavior to spread in Muslim society. Many misguided and deviant

individual habits, if widespread in society, turn into entrenched social habits that threaten the collapse of society.

Enjoining good and forbidding evil is considered one of the agreed-upon obligations in Islam, affirmed as obligatory in the Quran, Sunnah (Prophetic traditions), and consensus of scholars.

From the above, it is clear that the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil is every action judged by sound minds as reprehensible or stopped at acceptance, with its repugnance determined by Sharia law. Thus, the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil eliminates any opportunity for individual deviation and involvement in crime by eliminating its causes and precursors, representing a fundamental aspect in enhancing social responsibility among youth.

Secondly: Reinforcing the principle of guidance and counseling: Guidance and counseling represent an important approach in protecting the minds of youth from falling into drug addiction. Universities play a prominent role by educating about the dangers of addiction and prevention through integrating curricula and purposeful programs aimed at influencing the motivations and attitudes of youth regarding substance use. This requires expertise and skills in developing self-confidence, fostering adherence to higher values, emphasizing the importance of respecting their bodies and leading healthy lives, thus developing youths' capabilities to confront challenges within educational curricula and educational programs. Educational programs and health and psychological programs, whose main objective is to protect young people and strengthen their psychological defenses, support sound principles that make the chances of their acceptance of addiction or involvement in its challenge scarce and arduous.

Thirdly: Protecting and preparing youth: The preparation of individuals equipped with the fundamentals of knowledge, advanced research methods, and high values is fundamental to Islam. Universities highlight their role in building and reinforcing society by focusing on youth, instilling love of country and humanitarian service. The university's functions, as defined by researchers according to university law, include teaching, scientific research, and community service. Through teaching, courses and study curricula are examined to address the phenomenon of drug abuse and clarify its health and social effects on the individual.

The Quranic approach distinguished itself by establishing penalties for crimes that threaten the safety and security of the Islamic community. These penalties are always proportionate to the size and danger of the crime for the preservation and maintenance of society. Here we note an increase in the penalty whenever the frequency of committing the crime and insistence upon it increases. As we see here, the judgment of Islamic law in the penalty of drinking alcohol: "Whoever drinks alcohol for the first time is lashed forty times, and if they drink a second time, they are lashed, and if a third time, they are lashed, and if a fourth time, they are imprisoned or killed as a punishment; safeguarding the worshippers and deterring corruption."

Fourthly: Attention to student disciplinary law: It is essential to enforce punishments and establish legal boundaries, considering that law provides organization and protection for both the individual and society. Therefore, universities today need to activate the role of student disciplinary law within campus.

Fifthly: Enhancing community activities focusing on community service: The connection of universities with their communities and offering a range of roles, activities, and services to these communities has become necessary due to contemporary changes. It is no longer optional for universities, as in third-world countries, but rather obligatory and essential. Faculty members are required to play a vital role in providing community services, and this should be considered in their selection, preparation, and evaluation. Identifying the main obstacles preventing them from performing these roles optimally and proposing solutions to activate the role of faculty members in universities in the field of community service is crucial. Community service is manifested through:

- Applied research, aimed at solving specific community problems or meeting specific needs as dictated by certain conditions.
- Consultations, where university professors provide services in their respective fields of expertise to governmental and non-governmental community institutions, as well as individuals in the community who require such services.
- Organizing and implementing training and qualification programs for workers in production institutions, achieving the principle of continuous education and professional growth.

Activating this aspect contributes to creating realistic solutions that align with the aspirations and needs of youth and the reasons for their drug use. The educational institution needs to redefine its role, a focus emphasized by Islam, considering that the educational institution is the nurturing environment for the thinking and culture of youth, directing them effectively and productively.

Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned, the study leads to several important conclusions:

1. It is incumbent upon the government to care for the university institution, considering it a fundamental axis for building individuals and society and protecting them from negative phenomena threatening the youth's mindset.
2. Enhancing community activities in universities that focus on serving the community is essential. The connection of universities with their communities and the provision of various roles, activities, and services to these communities have become necessary due to contemporary changes.
3. Directing university research towards solving societal problems that serve and develop the community.
4. Community institutions should organize conferences in their specialties to innovate protective measures against drug abuse.
5. Providing programs to meet the requirements of community members at different levels and raising awareness about the health and psychological risks of drugs.
6. Establishing community service centers to conduct workshops for training community members in various crafts, industries, and projects targeting students' talents in different fields.

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