

PHILOSOPHICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL BASED DESIGN FOR ADDRESSING DRUG ABUSE AMONG KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study sought to propose a philosophical and pedagogically based design for addressing drug abuse among Kenyan secondary school students. The study uses the analytical method alongside the Cartesian methodic doubt in examining the student as an inherent critical thinker, the inefficiencies of current solutions to menace of drug abuse and in proposing a better way out of drug abuse. The preventive model begins with critical pedagogy which is not only philosophically founded but also practical. The practicality of this kind of pedagogy is made possible through the exercising elements of reasoning and universal intellectual standards. It is the opinion of the researcher that if critical pedagogy is used over a period of time, there will be no need of talking about drug supply since the probable consumers will have developed the capacity to question themselves and others before taking the illicit drugs.

Keywords: Pedagogically Based Design, Pedagogy, Drug Abuse, Design.

1. INTRODUCTION

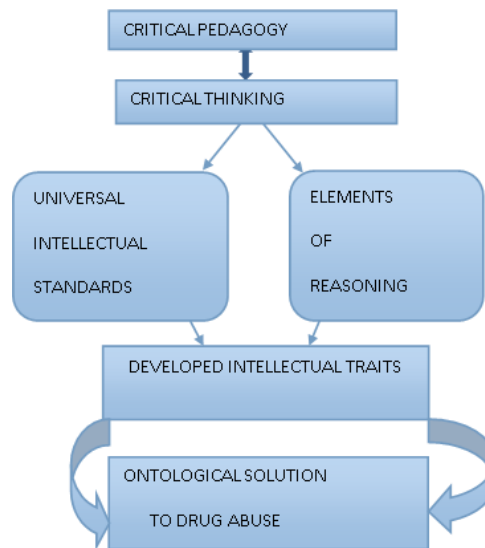
The current strategies for dealing with drug abuse among secondary school students in Kenya are unsatisfactory for reasons indicated in the study. Most of the current strategies tend to be more reactive than preventive. These strategies can in a general way be divided into three, namely, supply-reduction, demand reduction and treatment/rehabilitation. These three can further be qualified as either being proactive or reactive. A brief analysis of each strategy can justify the point of view that the strategies are not sufficient.

First, supply reduction which would normally be seen as a preventive measure is actually a reactive measure. Most of the supply reduction strategies are designed and implemented after drugs are already widespread into the country including in schools. The anti-supply laws and policies and the established agencies such as NACADA and the antinarcotics unit came into existence as a reaction to the undesirable effects of drug abuse. However, it is noteworthy that drug trafficking precede the effects of drug abuse and drug trafficking is an indication that there was considerable pre-existent production of drugs and psychotropic substances outside the legal frameworks.

Secondly, demand reduction strategies can be qualified as preventive or proactive depending on the individual situation. In the situation whereby demand reduction measures are applied on the students/teenagers who are already engaged drug abuse, the measure can be said to be reactive. On the other hand, if the demand reduction measure is applied in solving drug abuse among teenagers who are not yet involved in the menace of drug abuse it would be correctly described as preventive or proactive. Thirdly, in so far as treatment is concerned, it is a reactive measure because it is put into effect after the victim is deep into the problem of dependency and addiction.

It therefore becomes evident that there are more reactive measures than proactive ones. The imbalance between proactiveness and reactivity is unfortunate because it leads to short term remedies and blatantly proves lack of premeditation. Therefore there is a serious need to ameliorate the proactive measures without doing away with the preventive measures.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



According to this diagram, the thick double pointed arrow is the bi-conditionality that exists between critical pedagogy and critical thinking. This means that there can be critical thinking amongst Kenyan secondary school students if and only if they are exposed to critical pedagogy. The argument can be formulated thus: If Kenyan secondary school students are exposed to critical pedagogy then they will become critical thinkers and if they become critical thinkers, it is because they are exposed to critical pedagogy.

The two thin single pointed diverging arrows emanating from the critical thinking box explain the two major aspects of critical thinking namely analysis (based on elements of reasoning, EOR) and evaluation (based on universal intellectual standards, UIS). When analysis and evaluation are properly done, they lead to the most logical conclusion, synthesis. Therefore the two thin single pointed converging arrows emanating from EOR and UIS are consequential, meaning that the synthesis between EOR and UIS leads to developed intellectual traits (DITs). Students who have developed intellectual traits are themselves ontological solution to drug abuse. This is a conclusion shown by the thick curved arrows.

The act of abusing drugs is evil and enslaving. But before this action takes place there is a prior motivating action called thinking. Thinking is the action before any action, or, the mother of all actions. When a person does a morally undesirable thing, it is because the thinking that led to their morally undesirable action was in itself corrupt in the first place. This means that all human actions are effects of thoughts and therefore bad thinking leads to bad actions and good thinking leads to good actions.

In this context then, it is posited by the researcher that to deal with the action of drug abuse without properly dealing with the action of reflection is to engage in a logical absurdity. The root cause of drug abuse ought therefore to be sought in the thinking patterns of the abusers. Statistics indicate that the leading cause of drug abuse amongst teenagers is curiosity (Maithya, p.69). This in itself justifies the argument that learners enter into drug abuse due to lack of guidance on how to channel curiosity to critical thinking and critical thinking to wise choices. The mind of the learner ought to be guided by critical pedagogy that directly touches on their being as thinking beings.

Indeed, when an untrained curious mind encounters mass thinking, it succumbs to it even when the mass may be wrong. On the other hand, a trained mind is an intellectually converted mind. Intellectual conversion is the mind's movement from simplistic acceptance of propositions, a transcending beyond the empirical and common sensical world into the universe of being or the universe of truth. The power of intellectual conversion lies in the experience of liberation from confusion into knowing what a thing is. It is indeed liberation from darkness, from Plato's cave, to the light of insights and judgment (Cronin, 1999, p. 284). An intellectually converted student is one who not only decides to turn away from the old slave-like thinking but also embraces a new way of thinking called critical thinking. In critical thinking, the student transits from elementary knowing to questioning and judging. This is a student who will channel their curiosity towards justified true belief (knowledge) and stick to truth at all cost. A student with such a mind is a solution not only against drug abuse but also against many other problems that bedevil the teenage world.

The ontological solution to drug and substance abuse in Kenyan secondary schools can be achieved through critical pedagogy. Questions posed by critical pedagogy that emanates from an ontological basis would include: What is it to be? What does it mean for something to exist? what is it to be a secondary school student in Kenya in the light of drug abuse? Given a Kenyan secondary school student is a human being, what does it mean to exist as a human being who is likely to abuse drugs? These, among other questions, tend to absent from the minds of persons in charge of dealing with drug abuse amongst teenagers in secondary schools in Kenya.

Concerning the question “what is it to be?” this study makes a very special reference to two concepts, ontology and ontics. There is a very thin line between these two concepts because they are derived from the same Greek root noun *ontos* which means “being”. They both speak of being except that pure ontology speaks of being as it is while ontics takes a more scientific approach with limitations to empirical existences. Ontics deals with critical realism, an epistemological position that attempts to analyze being as perceived by the human perceiver and being as it is without perception and interpretation of the human perceiver (Atmanspacher, 2001, p. 50). The closest relation that ontology has with ontics is to be found in scientific or applied ontology. This being the case, then, the question is, what is it to be both ontically and ontologically? Ontically, it is to be noted that ‘to be’ is to exist both perceptually and conceptually.

In scientific epistemology or realism, that which exists is only that which is knowable and that which is knowable is that which can be observed and measured. Ontical existence implies that empirical entities exist, but also argues that their existence they must be conceived by the mind. This is a position held by critical realists and it means that the scientific conception of existence is limited and could not get into the thing as it is in the purest sense of the term. The knower therefore attempts to know but carries along their subjective self, their person, their experience as a knower.

This becomes even more complicated when it comes to an attempt of trying to know the human student. Scientific researchers would be satisfied that the different observable and measurable remedies against drug abuse are all there is, but ontically speaking this point of view is preposterous for the simple reason that nobody external can penetrate the thing in itself, what Kant calls the noumena (Jacquette, 2002). According to Kant, a knower comes to know of a thing or a being because of its phenomena and not its noumena. Phenomena is that which a being presents to the mind of those who attempt to know or perceive it with senses, whereas noumena is the being as it is and is only accessible to the being itself. A scientist will observe that a table is smooth, rectangular, a few centimeters long but will never know what it means to be a table unless they (scientists) become tables. Similarly a student may intelligently exhibit observable and measurable behaviour (phenomena) to the external world but only they know best who they are (noumena).

Ontology on its part goes even deeper in its attempt to answer the question of what it is to be. Based on Aristotelian philosophy, this study holds the view that before arriving at the conclusion that a thing exists we must know what it means to be a thing. In other words the question, “What is it to be a thing?” precedes the question “What is it to be?” To be a thing is to be an entity and to be an entity in the strict sense of the term refers to that which can be correctly put into the category of substance (Aquinas, 2001, p. 19). This means that a thing is its own substance.

To be a substance or rather to be a substantial being is to entail two things, first to have an essence and secondly to have an existence. From the ontological perspective a thing’s essence precedes its existence. The essence of a thing is the mode or manner in which a thing is fashioned or fashions itself. Existence is the act whereby a thing is present in nature or reality. It is very important to note therefore that to be a thing is to be fashioned in a particular mode (essence) and to act (existence). But what is it to be? For anything to be it must not only have the potency to actuate itself, but more so it should fully actuate itself. Therefore a thing that is, is that which consistently actuates itself towards a final cause (or the purpose for its existence).

What then does it mean to be a ‘thing’ called secondary school student in Kenya? This question can be answered based on the rubric of essence and existence as stated above. To be a secondary school student in Kenya is fundamentally to be a human being. This is because being a secondary school student is an accidental property that is dependent on the substance of being a human being. A human being is a being with its proper essence and existence. The essence of a human being or the mode in which any being is fashioned as human is to be found in the *logos*, which is the human’s mental capacity for asking important questions in an attempt to arrive at truth (Mattei, 1994, p. 54). The mental capacity is what we commonly refer to as thinking. As such *logos* is the essence of human beings, the a Kenyan secondary school student is a human being. Therefore the Kenyan secondary student has a *logos*. If the student has *logos*, then he/she has an essence. Since essence is ontological, the Kenyan student is an ontological being. As an ontological being with an

essence, it can be inferred that the student exists as a substantial being. As a substantial being the student has the capacity for self actualization. It is very important to understand that self actualization also means the capacity to be acted upon and/or to act upon another thing.

A student exists in the proper sense of the term if he/she is not only able to actuate themselves into the highest possible level of their logos but also if they are able to act upon and against anti-logos elements like the slavery accrued from bad thinking and drug abuse. A passive student cannot be said to exist fully as a human being. Banking education and controlling drug abuse among teenagers without providing them a proper opportunity for acting existentially is to imprison their ontological power and to reduce them to accidental beings when in the real sense they are substantial beings.

The next question is “What does it mean for a Kenyan secondary student to exist as a human being who is likely to abuse drugs?” With all due respect to sociologists of education and educational psychologists, this study posits that a student cannot be considered as simple specimens upon whom scientific rules and principles are applied to determine how many of them are abusing drugs and how many are not. This is because each student is an individual ontical and ontological being, a being that cannot be reduced to observations and measurement. This complexity comes about as a result of two sets of ontological facts namely potency & act, and appearance & reality. Potency is the aptitude in a being to acquire some perfection or perform some action, and act is the realization of potency. Appearance as applied in this study is the illusion of reality while reality is the truth of what a thing is.

A student who is not abusing drugs is thus potentially a drug abuser, while a student who appears not to be abusing drugs can actually be abusing them. This is a hard fact that lies behind proactive measures in dealing with drug abuse. The rule of potency means that given time x the potency of a thing Y can be actuated whether or not there are measures for controlling Y . Therefore to control drug abuse, those in charge should not lay emphasis on drugs but on directing the potentiality of the logos within the soul of a student.

The control of logos should be done in such a way that it does not become an action being done on the learner but an action whereby the learner takes the initiative. It should also be borne in mind that the outward appearance of a student, which is the ontic, is not an automatic exoneration from drug abuse. The thing which does not appear, ontology, is the controlling soul or mind. Ontology controls the appearance (abusing drugs and substances) which is ontic. The mind is to merge with the appearance to produce a synthesis through critical pedagogy. The synthesis produced is the unflinching conviction to say no to drugs. The ontic can sometimes be a basis for grand deceptions if taken at face value. It is only through thorough search and dialectical & friendly investigation that the truth can be unearthed.

Having noted the capacity for ontological fulfillment present in the whole issue of drug abuse among students, the next conditional concern is to seek the implication of this state of affairs. The injunction is, let the teacher tell the student, “Know thy self”. For the student to know themselves the teacher must use critical pedagogy, which is a pedagogy that allows the students to question answers rather than simply answering questions. Critical pedagogy is committed to the ontological fact that the Kenyan secondary school student is a substantial being true to itself, good in itself and has sufficient reason for its existence. The approach upholds the principle of causality (PCa) which states that “whatever comes to be has a cause” (Mattei, 1994, p. 137). If a student abuses a drug or comes to be a drug-addict, then there is a sufficient cause for this state of affairs.

Finally the study upholds the principles act and potency. A student can actuate themselves from any potency. A student who abuses drugs can actuate himself/herself into a very sober student if properly formed in critical thought. This student becomes a lover of wisdom, is brutally honest with his ontological vocation and is as it were, a philosopher student.

How then should critical pedagogy be effected to promote critical thinking or logos in Kenyan schools? This question can properly be answered by first of all commenting on the situation of the country’s education system. The Kenyan education system has received a fair share of criticism. It is common to hear the complaint that Kenyan students are taught how to cram information for reproduction during national exams, followed by certification for job market, yet the content on how to think critically about life’s issues seems to notoriously lack (Andafu. and Simatwa, 2014). This state of affairs indicates that there is a problem with the banking pedagogy observable in our schools. On the contrary, pedagogy as the art of teaching of the young ones needs to be critical by all means. This is occasioned by the fact that teenagers tend to be curious due to transitioning from childhood to adulthood. For a critical pedagogy to be carried out the students need to be

conscientized. Conscientization means that the students are made vividly aware of the society's structure, their current place in it and their desired place.

Of great importance in the process of conscientization is that the learner should be made to know who exercises dominant power in the society and for what ends (Leonard & McLaren, 1993, p. 23). This knowledge is very important because then they become conscious that drugs are supplied by those who hold oppressive dominant positions, namely the economic and political elite, those with ambitions of joining the elite cadre and those interested in shortcuts to economic success.

After conscientization, the learner should be carefully led to critical literacy, which is a way of dialectically and analytically reading both the word and the world, what is said and what actually happens on the ground. This method should lay emphasis not only on scrutiny of the actions of drug barons but also of their mindset. Analyzing the mind of drug barons, some of whom are closely affiliated to the government should be part of studies in drug abuse in schools. Education on drug abuse seems to be too shallow, presumably factual and teleologically linked to passing KCSE exams. Critical literacy demands that pedagogy on drug abuse should evoke questions. Some of which could be answered by learners in secondary school would be: Why would it be that the supply of alcohol and psychotropic substances still persists despite the fact that they are known to be illegal? Why would drug barons be in close relations with some government officers? Are security agencies involved in drug trafficking? Why are my friends abusing drugs? Do my friends have justifiable reasons for engaging in drug abuse? Raising pertinent questions about the objective world is a mark of a thinking student.

The teacher ought to lead the student to conscientization, but this time to the existential self, and this is the most difficult part. A student who is brought to conscientize themselves is made aware of the oppressive and dominant emotions that guide their irrationality like passion, hatred, boredom, lethargy, fear, low esteem, disorderly desire to belong, among others. The first responsibility of the teacher is to provide information that is not just extensive but also intensive. Teaching students that drugs are bad and that there are different kinds of drugs that can be abused, is not enough. They should be told that the first oppressor is within them and not outside. That immediate supplier of drugs is not really the drug baron outside there rather the unthinking self within 'me':

The 'me' that is not skeptical, the 'me' that does not question everything doubtful, the 'me' that says Yes before reflection. Critical literacy is not enough though. It should transcend to immersion. Immersion in this context means exposing learners who are already critical thinkers into the world of drug abuse with the intension of hardening their criticality and cementing it to the praxiological aspect; and this has to be done frequently. It is in immersion that habits of thinking, reading, writing and speaking about drug abuse are fused with analytic, evaluative and synthetic aspects of thinking in the practical world. This level should involve students who, in the opinion of a pedagogue, are moving towards developed intellectual traits. The critical pedagogue/ teacher should accompany the students without school uniforms to drug abuse dens, to rehabilitation centers, to the streets, to chang'aa brewing centers, to hospitals, to families that are facing advanced effects of drug abuse, to government offices dealing with drug abuse issues, to police stations, to prisons and any other relevant places.

This encounter should last a whole day or two days, mostly weekends. The day should be characterized by intense interaction with concerned parties. Intense interaction means questioning the hosts, participating in their daily activities, evaluating conversations with them, applying doubt and in some cases carrying along with them fake imitations of the drugs for 'solidarity' with drug abusers and addicts with the aim of extracting information. When back at school a thorough evaluation must be done using critical thinking. A comparison has to be made with what is available in social media. Learners in secondary schools should be exposed to newspapers, television radios and magazine. This research project points to the fact that consistent repetition of the above methods throughout a student's life in school will by all means produce students who will be able not only to avoid drug abuse but confront it not by guns but by the power of the mind; and of course by default this would kill the supply chain. There are three questions however that the readers of this research will ask: Is there enough time for all these activities? Is there no possibility of learning how to abuse the drugs when the students visit the drug dens? How many teachers will be willing to undertake this task, practically speaking?

To the first question we answer that training in thinking critically can be incorporated into all subjects and into all lessons if the teachers are themselves critical enough. Secondly, this can be done in clubs and societies, and thirdly immersion can be on selected weekends as long as it is consistent. In response to the second question; students are to be accompanied by a teacher or teachers for control and guidance. The third question is extremely important. It in fact raises another question.

Are Kenyan teachers critical pedagogues and are they willing to deal with the drug menace? Most teacher training institutions offer critical thinking courses and philosophy of education but as part of preparation for exams and not as a life skill to be carried to the work place. Passing an exam in critical thinking is a guarantee that a student teacher is a critical pedagogue, it is the habit and the conviction that teaching is not the filling of a container but the starting and the sustaining of a flame. This means that teacher training institutions should invest a lot in training teachers towards critical pedagogy beyond lecture halls but also outside lecture halls. But since we may not wait until such training happens, specific teachers with talent and interest in life skills should be identified and sent for in-servicing in critical pedagogy and drug abuse.

The aim of all these activities is to produce students who are critical thinkers. Every student can become a critical thinker and indeed every student should become a critical thinker. Critical thinking is not a preserve for university education. Unless Kenyan teenagers become critical thinkers there will never be an end to drug abuse. A Philosopher student is one who has an appreciable degree of competencies in Analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. It is this kind of student who has undergone intellectual conversion and has developed intellectual traits that can grasp ontological realities of their freedom from the oppression from drugs. The student skilled in critical thinking is not likely succumb in the environment of the abundance of drugs but will question appearances, like Descartes and Socrates of Athens. The idea behind the diagram above, replicated from the conceptual frame work, is an indication of the ontological solution which is premised on the engagement of the student's mind to think independently and fight the drug menace on their own. Once a student has been sensitised to think, he/she will not need the anti-drug abuse laws and policies to abstain from the drugs because his/ her inner self is ontologically free and is duty bound to act rightly. When the student is ontologically endowed with a mind whose commitment is to act rightly as the greatest good, drug and substance abuse becomes subservient.

Ontological freedom, which can be described as rigorous thinking and thinking about thinking, is based on the cognitive/rational faculty and is the most powerful tool that any human being can use to solve any problem. The solution to any problem is in the mind and to use Plato's idea that training awakens the mind to implement the solution which is therein.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has attempted to propose a preventive model that can be used to deal with drug abuse. The preventive model begins with critical pedagogy which is not only philosophically founded but also practical. The practicality of this kind of pedagogy is made possible through the exercising elements of reasoning and universal intellectual standards. It is the opinion of the researcher that if critical pedagogy is used over a period of time, there will be no need of talking about drug supply since the probable consumers will have developed the capacity to question themselves and others before taking the illicit drugs.

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