

THE IMPACT OF MEDIA CAMPAIGNS IN ERADICATING DRUG ABUSE IN MALAYSIA FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The drug story can easily and probably will return again and again to the media attention at the national and international levels, but it is unlikely that the media itself will make a meaningful achievement unless serious efforts are made and effective strategies to cure the societal illness are put in place. In assessing the influence of "natural" media such as entertainment, advertising, news and even new Media to an examination of the effects of media campaigns, one is struck with the very poor record of evaluated mass media health promotion programmes. Television is the preeminent mass medium among adolescents, adolescents observe and listen to drug use, particularly alcoholic drinking, being modelled and discussed as a natural and everyday event on prime-time television. Among the illicit drugs, it has been suggested that marijuana use, is commonly regarded with humour as a harmless escape from frustration. Other illicit drugs that are rarely shown and fairly consistently associated with bad consequences. This paper discusses the level of effectiveness of media campaigns on drug abuse; the strategies that the media can employ to avert the society from evil of drug abuse and to prevent the adolescents from drug abuse. It also examines the appropriate role of Islamic media in combating drug abuse. This study will provide some examples of effective programmes on drug abuse; it will also propose some suggestions that the writer believes will help in eradicating drug abuse.

Keywords: *Media campaigns, Eradicating, New media, Drug abuse, Adolescents.*

Introduction

Media campaign on drug abuse is part of the international drug strategy aimed at reducing illicit use of drugs by increasing people's knowledge about the potential negative consequences of drug abuse. The media campaign with a very simple and flexible slogan "stop drug abuse" is creating a worldwide awareness in addressing legal and illicit drug issues. The international drugs campaign is designed to support education around illicit drug issues and which have been addressed through separate initiatives and in different countries.

For example the campaign has been taking place in South Africa and in many African countries since 1998 and a number of phases have focused on particular drugs, depending on emerging drug trends. Australia also took the campaign very serious in 2005, but the most recent phase of

the campaign took place from December 2010 to June 2012. It was designed to contribute to a reduction in the intake of ecstasy and other illicit drugs among young Australians, by raising awareness of the harms associated with drug use, encouraging and supporting decisions not to use them arbitrarily. The campaign featured radio, print, outdoor, online and in-venue advertising. Youth marketing activities and sponsorships were also used to target youth by engaging them in meaningful ways. In the United States of America, the National Congress created the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign in 1998 to prevent and reduce youth drug use. The media campaign has two distinct areas of focus: a teen-targeted Above the Influence (ATI) Campaign, and a young adult-targeted Anti-Meth Campaign.

In South East Asian countries, drug abuse and the problems associated with it are prevalent. For instance, opium has traditionally been used for treating illnesses and alleviating physical and mental stress, as well as for recreational and social purposes. The prohibition of the sale and use of opium in Burma, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand forced many habitual opium users to switch to heroin. Over the past two decades there has been an increasing trend towards drug use, often involving experimentation with more than one substance, among youth in and out of school.

Drugs can be detrimental to human life and can badly affect their personal relationships, ability to study and work, mental health and quality of life. It is important to note that media campaign on drug abuse is not merely to spread information about the negative impact of drug abuse, but also to help the people especially new generation about how to make their own choices, avoid situations where they can be exposed to drugs that can damage their life., .

This paper discusses how effective media campaigns are on drug abuse; the strategies of media to avert the society from stigma of drug abuse and to prevent the adolescents from drug abuse. These will be discussed from Islamic point of view regarding the matter.

World campaign against drug abuse

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is leading the global campaign to raise awareness about the major challenge that illicit drugs represent in the society as a whole, and especially for the young. The goal of the campaign is to mobilize support and inspire people to act against illicit drug use. UNODC encourages as many awareness-raising activities as possible around the globe and invites individuals, non-profit organizations, the private sector and UN member states to get involved by:

- Organizing outreach or institutional events to mark 26 June, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.
- Spreading the word about the campaign through your own networks and contacts.
- Using the campaign slogan and logo in promotional products, websites and social media.
- Donating funds to your local NGO in support to drug prevention and treatment efforts, or making in-kind contributions to the campaign and related events (<http://www.unodc.org>).

It is the responsibility of the whole world to combat drug abuse and preserve the universe from extinction. Man is the center and meaning of the universe because Allah has fully entrusted us with His purpose. Allah did not commit Himself to any of the millions of other created items. He committed Himself only to man and entrusted man with His purpose. After He had created

the heavens and the earth, with the plant and animal lives, He called the angels and said: “ Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth. They said: will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood...” (Qur’an. Al-Baqarah 2:30).

We as human beings forget who we are. We do not regard ourselves as Khalifah of Allah on this earth, we do not even feel being higher than the animals, as those who have authority over all of the creation. Allah says: “ And indeed We have honoured the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with *At- tayyibat* (lawful good things), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment”(Qur’an.Al-Isra’15:70).

But we have to realize that we are higher than the animals and all other living things. We have to put ourselves in the right position and respect ourselves not to distroy ourselves and the earth.” And do not do mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order” (Qur’an. Al-A’raf 7:56).

Importance of media campaign

Before discussing media campaign on drug abuse, it is important to have clear understanding of what media is...To understand what exactly the media is, it is important to first define the term “media.” Even more specifically, we want to know about the mass media.

Media, like data, is the plural form of a word borrowed directly from Latin. The singular singular form of media is medium. It early developed to mean “an intervening agency, means, or instrument” and was first applied to newspapers two centuries ago. In the 1920s media began to appear as a singular collective noun, sometimes with the plural Medias. This singular use is now common in the fields of mass communication and advertising, but it is not frequently found outside them: The media is (or are) not antibusiness (<http://dictionary.reference.com>).

Although many different meanings and interpretations may exist in respect of the term “mass media,”. For the purpose of this paper, we can say that the mass media is a group that constructs messages with embedded values, and that disseminates those messages to a specific portion of the public in order to achieve a specific goal.

Types of Media

There are three main types of news media: print media, broadcast media, and the Internet.

1. Print Media. The oldest media forms are newspapers, magazines, journals, newsletters, and other printed materials. These publications are collectively known as the print media.

2. Broadcast Media. These are news reports broadcast via radio and television. Television news is hugely important in the United States because more Americans get their news from television broadcasts than from any other source. Television is the preeminent mass medium among adolescents. The typical American child can spend more time watching television than he or she will spend on any other single activity, including going to school or interacting with friends. All this time being spent watching television undoubtedly provides adolescents with many learning opportunities. Many research suggest that behavioural learning does occur during viewing (Pearl et al. 1982; Roberts 1983).

3. The Internet is slowly transforming the news media because most of the people nowadays are relying on online sources of news instead of traditional print and broadcast media.

According to Donna Halper (2013) the word "media" did not come into common use until the late 1950s. Prior to that, it was generally called the "press." There was mainly the print press (publications that were printed, and required you to know how to read-- newspapers, books, and magazines). But gradually, along came other forms of communication-- in the late 1800s, there were recorded music and movies (which at first were silent, but one could watch them, and read the title cards). In 1920, along came radio; talking pictures were perfected by 1927; and by the late 1940s, there was the discovery of television. Finally, by the early 1990s, wider access to the internet occurred (the precursor to the internet was ARPANET, a network used by the military in the late 1960s, but the average person had no access it at that time. So, the different types of media include newspapers, books and magazines; recorded music; movies; radio; television; and the internet.

The use of mass media campaigns to reduce health problems in the society gained momentum in the 1970s, with an initial focus on improving cardiovascular health. The positive results obtained by the first campaigns led to their further use in areas as diverse as heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning and domestic violence. From the 1970s on, media campaigns were increasingly used in the prevention of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use.

Mass media campaigns in public health disseminate information about health, or threats to it, in order to persuade people to adopt positive behavioural changes. They are usually carried out via television and radio, newspaper or magazine advertisements, billboards and road posters. They can also use the Internet, text messaging and e-mail. Public health media campaigns are generally undertaken by public bodies and may be standalone interventions or they may be integrated into complex social marketing programmes, and may encompass several rounds of delivery.

The potential of mass media campaigns lies in their ability to propagate simple and focused messages to large audiences repeatedly, over time, at a low cost per capita. It is also assumed that they are able to reach a large and heterogeneous proportion of the population (Wakefield et al., 2010).

Campaign elements

The Media Campaign on drug abuse used primary prevention communications through advertising, public relations and promotions, resource development and online communication activities. It incorporated the development and implementation of information and resources using stakeholder networks and media in high-risk settings where illicit drug use can take place.

Emerging trends regarding illicit drugs were considered to inform the campaign's development and implementation. There are three elements that are urgently needed to support the media campaign against drug abuse, namely parents, society, and authority or government.

1. **Parents.** The Media Drugs Campaign aims to support parents of 13–17 year olds in their efforts to discuss and discourage illicit drug use with their children. Parents will have access to clear strategies and resources such as fact sheets and online information regarding illicit drugs, including contact information for the support, counselling and drug treatment services available to help their children avoid their use.

One of the most effective deterrents to drug abuse among young people is a parent who wants to spend much time with them – someone who talks with them about their friends, what goes on at school, the sports they play and what interests them.

It is necessary to state here that Islam enjoins parents to play their role in training and educating their children, the role of the Muslim father goes beyond providing financial support to his family. It is his responsibility to provide his family with a loving and peaceful atmosphere and protect them from any danger. This is what we can infer directly from the Qur'an and the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Allah says, O you who believe, save yourselves and your families from torments of Hell, whose fuel is humankind and stones) (At-Tahrim 66: 6).

2. Society. A human society is a group of people involved in persistent interpersonal relationships, or a large social grouping sharing the same geographical or social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Media campaign in society needs a very serious and affective system, in that regard, Cartwright (1949) mentioned that early campaigns were based on providing information or avoiding fear. They were often successful at changing knowledge, less often successful at changing attitudes, and rarely successful at influencing behavior change (Atkin 1979; Flay 1981; Flay et al. 1980). Over 30 years ago, Cartwright (1949) outlined three stages that a campaign must go through to influence behavior:

- i) create an appropriate cognitive structure (i.e., what people know and understand).
- ii) create an appropriate motivational structure(i.e., what people want to do).
- iii) create an appropriate action structure (i.e.,what people actually do and how this can be facilitated).

3. Authority. Authority means is power or right, usually conferred on people because of rank or office, to issue commands and to punish for violations. Authority here implies government or any power controlling the people. According to Islam, everybody has some type of authority and he must be responsible for whoever is under him. "Every one of you is like a shepherd responsible for those under his or her care; a man is a shepherd and responsible for the welfare of his family; a woman is a shepherd responsible for her household."(Hadīth. Bukhari. Kitāb al-Jum'ah. Bāb al-Jum'ah fī al-qura wa al-Mudn. #853).

Key overall messages of media campaign

- There are specific risks and harms associated with using ecstasy;
- There are real risks and harms associated with using illicit drugs;
- There are real benefits to not using ecstasy and other illicit drugs; and
- There is a range of information available on the facts about using ecstasy and other illicit drugs.

Using social media in campaign

The problem of drug abuse is a general problem that involves everybody, it is just like a war. When it takes place in your neighborhood or country, you must prepare to defend and fight for your life and your land. This is not a matter of choice but it is natural by human instinct (fitrah). According to Faisal(1997), human instinct is the concept that there is a set of inherent distinguishing characteristics, including ways of thinking, feeling and acting, that humans tend to have. God has created every human and declared the that everyone will bear the fruits of his good deeds and burden the consequences of his evil ones. God says in the glorious Qur'an " By

the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right; Truly he succeeds that purifies it, And he fails that corrupts it” (Qur’an. Ash-Shams 91:7-10). He also says “ Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds” (Qur’an. Al-Muddaththir 74:38).

However, human nature dictates a subconscious need for integration; integration with others of its own kind. God has declared this concept clearly in the Holy Qur’an” O mankind We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full Knowledge and is well-acquainted (with all things) (Qur’an. Al-Hujurat 49:13). This is a fact that is unambiguously apparent and present throughout the human history (<http://kep.org.sa>).

How to use social media (blogs, Twitter, social networking) in your “stop drug abuse” campaigns and why you should be doing It.?

What we have to know first and foremost is that social media and new media or new technologies, are changing the ways people interact in all areas of life (Alhailah, 2004). Social networking, mobile phones, blogs, wikis and a range of other recent innovations are quickly being adopted by campaigners looking to maximise the impact of their campaigns for the purpose of change in their society. Allah (SWT) says: “God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves” (Qur’an. Al-Ra’ad 13: 11).

New media stands in contrast to ‘old media’, which include print, TV and radio. New media are closely related to the term ‘web’ or ‘websites’, which emphasise the interactive and two-way nature of the experience provided.

It can be confusing starting out in this area as social media and new media are terms that are often used interchangeably, but for some people they can hold slightly different definitions. People using new media have quickly come to expect an opportunity for dialogue, rather than a straight presentation of information (Tim O., Brian D & Philip R. 2003). Many organisations, from all sectors, have changed their websites. Their old sites served primarily as ‘e-brochures’ for their work. Newer websites are often closer to ‘an online focus group’ which allow organisations to receive, as well as share and create information.

Why new media?

As popular as the idea of new media has become, there are still limited resources on how it can and does relate to campaigning. Here are some of the key reasons why new media is being used by campaigners:

New media reach greater numbers of people

There is a huge difference in potential reach between a paper petition and an e-petition. The first reaches a very few people while the other can easily reach every angle of the globe. This means that slogan “ stop drug abuse” can be heard all over the world, then it can become a rescue for the whole world (*Rahmatan lil ālamīn*).

New media engage a younger audience

An estimated 70 per cent of young people in Malaysia actively, confidently and regularly use the internet. Social networks such as Facebook provide an entry-point for campaigns and organisations looking to communicate with young people, in an environment in which they are already comfortable interacting.

New media save money

The cost of hiring people for fund raise, circulate petitions, phone supporters and hold meetings can be incredibly expensive. These costs cannot be eliminated, but they can often be considerably reduced by, for example, using email messages or text messages to communicate with supporters.

New media can work outside of your group's 'reach'

Accessibility issues – whether in relation to physical mobility, geographic area, or organisational remit – can often be overcome through the use of new media tools. You can give house-bound supporters the chance to write to their Member of Parliament (MP) or sign a petition directly through a website. You could also use the internet to gain supporters from across the country, despite your group being based in a small patch of West Kuala Lumpur. The people you reach and involve can be expanded vastly through new media.

New media can increase your speed of communication

Traditional mail and personal phone calls cannot get a message to a large number of people as quickly as campaigners often need them to. Sending a mass text message or [Twitter](#) update to campaign supporters immediately before action is required can help to reach a large number of supporters instantly and affordably.

Top tips on new media

There must be a very good planning and hard work in spreading the message of “stop drug abuse”. Indeed the good planning is the key of success in all activities. In the authority of Abu 'Amr, though others call him Abu 'Amrah Sufyan bin 'Abdullah, *radiyallahu anhu*, who said: I said: "O Messenger of Allah, tell me something about Islam which I could not ask anyone about save you." He answered: "Say: 'I believe in Allah', and then stand firm and steadfast." (Hadīth. Muslim. Kitāb al-Imān. Bāb Jāmi' Ausāf Al-Islām # 38). Stand firm in the above Hadīth means good planning and hard work. According to Ibn al-Qayyim, there are five conditions to achieve stand firm and steadfast in our performance:

1. The act should be done for the sake of Allah alone (*ikhlas*).
2. It should be done on the basis of knowledge (*ilm*).
3. Performing *ibādah* should be in the same manner that they have been commanded.
4. To do it in the best way possible.
5. Restricting oneself to what is lawful while performing those deeds.

In the light of the above Prophetic guidance and the explanation of Ibn al-Qayyim, the following tips help in our Media Campaign against drug abuse.

1. Build a strong database for your campaign

Strength in size, but more importantly, depth of information is crucial to a strong database. The more you know about the people you are contacting, the more precisely you can target your communication to them. This must be balanced with the need to make sure your sign-up forms are not too long. One solution is to allow people to add more detailed profile information as they become more engaged in your campaign. Knowing people is very essential in all aspects. Allah says in the Holy Qur'ān: “O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things) (Qur'ān. Al-Hujrāt 49:13). Knowing the people is a core of success in media campaign. There

are a lot of institutions and non-government organisations in Malaysia that media practitioners can contact and work with in order to get information regarding drug abuse.

2. Self accountability (*Muhāsabah*). This should be done twice: Firstly, before we start doing campaign, ensure that it pleases Allah, and we do it for His sake only, realizing the right way it should be done. Secondly, after the action has been done, to check whether we have achieved our aim, and to check for defects and shortcomings, and that we still could have done it better by not being satisfied with our action. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'ān "Do deeds! Allah will see your deeds, and His Messenger and the believers" (Qur'ān. Al-Taubah 9:105).

3. Use brief, focused communication

One challenge presented by changes in technology has been the decrease in people's patience with lengthy communication. Barack Obama's presidential e-campaign rarely sent supporter emails of more than 200 words. The emails often featured video and usually contained only one key 'ask', such as a small donation or volunteer action, with a single weblink attached. It is not necessary for a speech to be long and famous, even a short one can be great, if it has the ability to mesmerize and inspire the audience. Most of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are good examples for Famous Short Speeches, such as: (*Al-Kalimatu Al-Tayyibah sadaqah*), means: A good word is charity (Hadīth. Bukhāri. Kitab al-Adab. Bāb Tayyib al-Kalimah. #5677). Another example of very effective short speech is: "I have a dream" by Martin Luther King Jr., which was delivered on 28 August, 1963 at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. It was a path-breaking moment for the Civil Rights Movement in America. Given to an audience of more than 200,000 people, this speech was ranked as the top American speech by a 1999 poll of scholars(<http://www.buzzle.com>).

4. Make your campaign personal

One of the major shifts in new media campaigning has been the need to personalise contact with supporters. Targeting the right people with the right messages, so they do not feel like 'a number', has proven to be crucial in strong e-campaigns. Think about how you feel when you get an email that has your name on it and specific information about your interests, rather than a longer, more generic email that is aimed at a large range of different people.

5. Strategise for different levels of campaign engagement

Design your e-campaign to take supporters 'up a ladder', moving them from one activity, to the next, in an intuitive way. If a supporter signs a petition, your website could then suggest that they write a letter to their MP, or you could send them a follow-up email the next day asking them to do this. If the supporter writes a letter to their MP, you could then invite them to a local organising meeting.

At the same time, you need to bear in mind 'the overload factor', where supporters get fed-up because you are asking too much of them.

6. Striving for improvement (*Tahsīn*). Things done half ways are never done right. That is why we have to make improvements in all that we do (daily activities, work, actions, good deeds, *ibādah*, etc.) as one of our objectives (Altalib, 1994). Sometimes it can be disheartening to think that there is always room for improvement. It is one field of work where you often hear, "that

was good, but what would you have done better?" It is nice just to get a pat on the back – and good management will always be aware of this and not keep pushing. There is a time and a place for that. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: " And who is better in speech than he who says: My Lord is Allah, and then stands firm (acts upon His Order), and invites men to Allah, and does righteous deeds..." (Qur'an. Fussilat 41:33).

7. Coordinate online and 'offline' campaign activism

If you are organising a publicity stunt or holding a public rally, may be it would also be a good time to launch a new 'write to your MP' e-tool or something similar. If you can get your story into people's minds in advance, extensive research shows that they are more likely to open your email about the story. If they open the email, they are more likely to take action (<http://knowhownonprofit.org>).

8. Blaming oneself for not doing it perfectly after it has been done. Self blaming here is a positive one by using it as a motivation, and by aiming for improvement and having the intention of doing things better next time. This leads to making another commitment and continual commitments to improve our performance. Blaming oneself is a praise worthy in Islam, it is even requested not to feel superior or infallible. Allah (SWT) says: "So ascribe not purity to yourselves. He knows best him who fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him) (Qur'an. Al-najm 53:32).

What about the effects or impact of Media Campaigns against drug abuse on the country chosen as the study area?

This is a major sub-heading that you have omitted in your discourse. You need to inform us how media campaigns have influenced positive behaviour of the citizens in area of drug abuse.

Conclusion

There is growing and consistent evidence that shared viewing and directed interaction with adolescents about what they view can affect the influence of a programme dramatically. Verbal labelling and role-playing have both been used successfully in media campaign against drug abuse.

Mass media campaigns are employed in public health to disseminate information about health, or threats to it, in order to persuade people to adopt behavioural changes. They are usually carried out via television and radio, newspaper or magazine advertisements, billboards and road posters. They can also use the Internet, text messaging and e-mail. Public health media campaigns are generally undertaken by public bodies and may be standalone interventions or they may be integrated into complex social marketing programmes, and may encompass several rounds of delivery.⁹

The social networking, mobile phones, blogs, wikis and a range of other recent innovations are quickly being adopted by campaigners looking to maximise the impact of their campaigns for the purpose of combating drug abuse.

Key facts

- It is an increasingly serious threat to global public health that requires action across all government sectors and society.
- Media campaign on drug abuse is present in all parts of the world. New resistance mechanisms emerge and spread globally.
- Drug abuse is well spread and even growing in many parts of the world. Therefore, a lot of institutions show concern and they include Media.
- Available data on information suggest that there is an association between higher levels of poverty, lack of education and carelessness of some parents with increased levels of drug abuse.
- Drug abuse is a global issue that needs collective effort to tackle and the role of media campaign in that is very important.
- Establishing a strong team and a day-to-day plan are important for any successful social media campaign. And the campaign's goal was to keep the community informed about the danger of illicit drug use and the overall progress of organisations and Media campaign on drug abuse.

This study has highlighted the nexus between drug abuse and the media campaigns aimed at curbing the social malaise from Islamic perspective. The ugly phenomenon is not peculiar to a particular country or continent but being universal, Therefore, all well-meaning individuals, governments and organizations need to rise up and fight against the social scourge because of the adverse effects it exerts on individuals, families, lineages, countries and the entire globe, This is necessary in order to save humanity from perennial dangers associated with drug abuse and save humanity from total extinction.

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