THE ROLE OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN HELPING EX-DRUG USERS REGAIN THEIR CONFIDENCE TO RETURN TO SOCIETY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in the form of phenomenological approach. Iinterviewss were taken place in several places in Jakarta. This study also employed questionnaires to triangulate the instruments. The research is defined into two major aspects namely to know what the purpose of students to use drugs and to know how they regain confidence to return to society. To obtain a clear point of view from the participants as they have experienced the phenomenon, in-depth interviews and questionnaires were employed in this study. In-depth interviews were conducted to understand how participants experienced the phenomenon, while questionnaires were distributed to support the data gained by interviews. This study involved 9 participants for in depth interviews, namely 3 (three) ex drug users, 2 (two) parents, 2 (two) psycho-therapists to obtain information regarding the approach in handling drug users and 2 (two) police officers while the questionnaires were distributed to 30 (thirty) members of society to obtain information regarding their perception on drug abuse by students. The research proved that interpersonal communication plays a significant role in helping ex drug users regain their confidence to return to society.

Keywords: drug abuse, confidence, interpersonal communication

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there are a lot of students and employees who loose the opportunities and jobs because they have to stay in prison. During in prison, a drug user could turn into a real criminal as a result of social interaction with criminals in prison. Prevention and treatment of drug users are complex issues that still need to be best carried out. The negative impact of drug abuse had been proved in our generation, among others physical damages of brain, heart, lungs, nerves, as well as mental disorders as a result of the weakness of immune system. The virus is easily entered such as Viral Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS. In fact the use of narcotics, psychotropic drug, and other addictive substances (drug) for a variety of purposes have existed since long time ago. The problem arises when narcotics and drug are used excessively so that it tends to be abused. The survey results prove that those who are at risk of falling in the drug problem are children who were born from a family that had a history of domestic violence, raised a family of broken home or have problems of divorce, are stressed or depressed, having personally unstable or easily influenced, feel not having friends or wrong in the social intercourse. For reasons mentioned above it is necessary to equip parents so that they can participate in preventing their children involved in drug abuse. Parents have to maintain the relationship with all family members well by building good communication

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as stated by Onken L.S. & Blaine J.D (1990). The main problem identified in this study was drug abuse by students, especially those who live in big cities such as Jakarta. However, the fundamental purpose of the study was to explore the role of interpersonal communication in helping ex drug users to regain their confidence to return to society with a phenomenological approach as Cresswell (2003) stated that a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon; it is an approach that focuses on how life is experienced by those who are involved.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to DeVito (2009) interpersonal communication is the communication that takes place between people who are in some ways "connected". Interpersonal communication would thus include what takes place between a son and his father, an employer and an employee, two sisters, a teacher and a student, two lovers, two friends, and so on. Although largely dyadic (two persons) in nature, interpersonal communication is often extended to include small intimate groups such as the family. Even within a family, however, the communication that takes place is often dyadic - mother to child, father to mother, daughter to son, and so on (DeVito, 2009). Because of this interdependency, interpersonal communication is inevitably and essentially relational in nature; interpersonal communication takes place within a relationship, it impacts the relationship, it defines the relationship. The communication that takes place in a relationship is in part a function of that relationship.

Little John and Foss (2009) explained about Social Penetration Theory which states that people meet, get acquainted and know each other by particular situations and conditions. After they feel comfortable each other, they can increase their relation becomes more intimate. It shows how important interpersonal communication in building the relationship. DeVito (2009) said that the way we interact, will influence the kind of relationship we develop. If we interact with another person in friendly ways, we're likely to develop a friendship. If we regularly express respect and support for each other, a respectful and supportive relationship is likely to develop.

One of the most difficult challenges facing families today is finding time to spend together. According to Graham & Crossan (1996) state in Wall Street Journal survey that 40% of the respondents stated that lack of time was a greater problem for them than lack of money. Researchers have discovered a strong link between communication patterns and satisfaction with family relationships (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990). In fact, one researcher discovered that the more positively couples rated their communication, the more satisfied they were with their relationship five and a half years later (Markman, 1981).

In developing and maintaining the relationship, both of the persons must give equal ratio of rewards since they wish to have relationship that are equitable. All primary relationships and families have several qualities that further characterize this relationship defined roles, recognition of responsibilities, shared history and future, and shared living space (DeVito 2009). When one has got a problem, he needs someone who can give support by positive words as **A**ronson, Cohen & Nail (1998) and Aronson, Wilson, & Akert (2007) state that we have to remind ourselves of the success with affirmations, focus on our good deeds, on our positive qualities, strength and virtues, and on our productive and meaningful relationships with friends, loves ones and relatives. Therefore, in motivating someone, we need to remind him about his former achievement and success by using affirmation in terms of " I am, I can, and I will statements (DeVito, 2009). So, the role of family, couples or close friends is highly significant to regain self confidence. Onken LS, Blaine JD, Battjes R (1996) also state that the development of effective behavioural treatments for drug abuse and dependence must focus on the treatment that have been found to be effective in Stage II randomized clinical trials, namely : contingency management, cognitive behaviour approaches, motivational interviewing, and family/couples approaches.

PARTICIPANTS

This study involved the following participants for in depth interview, namely 3 (three) students who consumed drugs before, 2 (two) parents, 2 (two) psycho-therapists working at the Center of Rehabilitation to obtain information regarding their approach in handling drug users. Interview was also conducted with 2 (two) police officers to gain more detail information regarding the major factors of drug abuse by students and the further treatment. The questionnaires were distributed to 30 (thirty) members of society to obtain information regarding their perception on drug abuse. Moreover, researcher conducted the questionnaires to quantify the qualitative data of interviews. Questionnaires were distributed randomly to the society in Jakarta.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

In depth interview

As mentioned above, interviews were conducted in obtaining information from 3 (three) ex drug users, 2 (two) parents, 2 (two) psycho-therapists and 2 (two) police officers. Interview was chosen because it is a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out as stated by Robson (2002). Individual interview was done for obtaining in-depth information from the former drug users specifically to answer the research questions. In this study, semi structured interview was employed because it allowed the researchers the opportunity to direct the interview more closely, to have a pre-determined set of questions while simultaneously allowing the interviewees sufficient flexibility to shape the flow of information given (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). Interview was voice-recorded to count towards the validity and reliability of the study. Interview can provide the opportunity to ask more questions and be given explanations if necessary. It is also adaptable and relatively flexible as Robson (2002) states that the interviewer can ask more questions, if the answer does not come up to expectations. In addition Robson (2002) also says that it is appropriate to use the interview when the individual perceptions of processes within a social unit are to be studied. During the interviews with the ex drug users, the parents, the therapists, and the police officers the semi-structured interview was applied which has predetermined questions, but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer's perception of what seems most appropriate. Questions' wording can be changed and explanations given; in particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones included as stated by Robson (2002, p. 270).

Self-completion Questionnaires

The self-completion questionnaire is a form of survey which involves written questioning in which it is delivered to the respondents by mail or handed to them personally by the researcher in their homes, at work, school or any other place according to Robson (2002) and Sarantakos (2005). The participants fill in the answers by themselves, and the questionnaire is returned to the researcher after completion. In this study, self-completion questionnaire is employed as one of the research instruments because of its advantages to this particular research. Questionnaire was designed in a semi-standardized one which contains a moderate structure. As Sarantakos (2005) says that it allows some flexibility for the respondents in answering the questions. In order to obtain the participants' views on specific issues as well as their general views on the topic. The combination of closed-ended questions which offered a limited set of responses or options that the participants had to choose and open-ended questions which offered broad views of the participants on the topic had been applied. Finally, the authors agree with Robson (2002) who advises to cut down open-ended questions to a minimum as well as Wisker (2001) who suggests to put the most simple and obvious questions at the beginning and make them more complicated since this will keep the participants with us and not make them confused at the start.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

As we know that there are three types of reliability referred to in conventional research as stated by Kirk and Miller (1986), which relates to: 1) the degree to which a measurement, given repeatedly, remains the same; 2) the stability of a measurement over time; and 3) the similarity of measurements within a given time period. Bell (1987) said that whatever procedure for collecting data is selected, it should always be examined critically to assess to what extent it is likely to be reliable and valid.

Reliability is whether a test or procedure gives similar results under the same conditions on all occasions; while validity is the extent an item measures or describes what it is supposed to do. In order to increase validity in this study, triangulation was employed. Before the interview and distribution of questionnaires, the authors piloted them to two students and two colleagues, requesting their opinion and modifications were made accordingly. From the piloting process, it was known that the open ended questions should be limited before distributing the questionnaires to prevent misunderstanding of the meaning of each terminology. Finally, the method of ‘triangulation’, whereby the authors obtained the information not only from the questionnaires but more than one tool was employed in this study. The above factors are to extent and ensure the validity of the study.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The technique of analysis used is an interactive analysis. As Miles and Huberman (1984) said that in this analytical model, the three components of the analysis of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification activities conducted in an interactive form with the data collection process as an ongoing process, repetitive, and continuously to form a cycle. Furthermore, researchers only move between the three components of the analysis, thus forming a cyclic pattern. Data reduction can be defined as the process of selecting, focusing on simplification, abstraction, and transformation of dummy data that emerged from the written record in the field. Thus the data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, classify, direct, dispose of unnecessary and organizing data in a way such that its final conclusions can be drawn and verified (Patton, 1990).

Ex-drug Users Data

Research shows that the main factor that lead the students to drugs is family problems. Out of three ex drug users who were interviewed, all of them said that they came from broken families. Two of them said that it happened when they were 19 years old since the parents divorced and since then they had never communicated intensively with their parents. Another one said that he knew drugs when he was 13 years old. It is not because of the parents who divorced but it was more of less harmonious family. His parents were very busy running business and he then felt neglected eventhough he came from economically able family. It is proven that the role of family which is implemented in the form of communication is very significant in shaping the character of an individual. This corresponds with what DeVito (2009) stated that all primary relationships and families have several qualities that further characterize this relationship defined roles, recognition of responsibilities, shared history and future, and shared living space. When we asked them who the most important person was that helped them stop from the drug addiction, all the three participants said that it's their relatives. One stated "I remember when I was in prison, there was no one came and saw me except my aunt. She kept saying " You are a good boy, You can change your life. You can be successful." Another participant said " my sister is the one who had taken me to the right way before I lost everything....she always remind me with the moment I won the sports championship in Junior High School." The participants then explained how their relatives communicate with them to build confidence. They agreed that motivation is the most important factors. All the positive words were motivating. "She never says something bad about me....it really builds my self-confidence." This conforms the statement of **A**ronson, Cohen & Nail (1998) and Aronson, Wilson, & Akert (2007) which says that we have to remind ourselves of the success with affirmations, focus on our good deeds, on our positive qualities, strength and virtues, and on our productive and meaningful relationships with friends, loves ones and relatives. When asked about the barriers faced when trying to return to the society, all the three participants said that at the beginning it's very hard, felt afraid, and inferior, felt that nobody wants to listen to them. That is why they needed someone who could give support, encourage and motivate them. The link between self—confidence and motivation is also pervasive in the psychology literature (Bandura, 1977) , according to whom beliefs of personal efficacy constitute the key factor of human agency .

Parents Data

In this study, 2 (two) parents who's children also involved in drug abuse when they were in school were interviewed. From the infomation obtained, we knew that interpersonal communication plays an important role in preventing students involved in drug abuse. The first parent asserted that today more and more parents are unlikely to give attention to their children and there is always no time to communicate. One of the most difficult challenges facing families today is finding time to spend together. This conforms with what Graham & Crossan (1996) state in Wall Street Journal survey that 40% of the respondents stated that lack of time was a greater problem for them than lack of money. Parents generally only assign responsibility for the child supervision to the school. Parents should be a discussion partner for their children. Whatever said by child, neither good nor bad news, needs to be heard properly, and parents should encourage children to dialogue openly and deeply. Parents also should be a place to ask for his children so as to provide an explanation if the child asks, including drug problems. "I reliazed that at that time, I was too busy working so I never had quality time with my children," said one of the parents. Communication is very important in the family, not only in the form of verbal language but also non-verbal language such as touch and cares. This is in accordance with what was said by Epstein, Bishop, Ryan, Miller, & Keitner, (1993) that family communication refers to the way verbal and non-verbal information is exchanged between family members.

Interpersonal communication has a very big role in shaping attitudes, behavior and character of a child. Unfortunately not all parents understand this. When asked about the best prevention should be applied so that students do not fall into drug abuse, both parents said that every family must apply openness. Parents play a huge role in creating or developing rules or cultural traditions in home such as eating together, praying together, recreation at a particular time. Recreation does not always have to be expensive. It could also be done with gardening together, or doing housework together at holiday time. Parents also need to know their children's friends. When children bring friends home, join them. This habit will make children and their friends become familiar with the parents. However, parents should cooperate with the school where their children study. " Now, I am actively involve in school committee. We have a regular sharing session among parents and teachers, but the problem is that when the school asks parents to be present, not all of them come." From the interview with parents we know that there are still many parents who think that communication between teachers and parents is not so important. The reason is that they are busy working. They forget that a lack of communication is actually the root of the problem of child involvement with drugs. When the children were found using drugs, the parents then blame the teachers.

Both parents also said that they have experienced in handling their children who involved in drug abuse until they return to school. "First, it was hard for my son to adapt with the school environment, with friends, teachers, and school staff but I do believe that communication is the key of all. I personally always try to communicate with my son after I knew that he involved in drug abuse by giving positive words that motivating. "Parents should join a series of group activities that can make them feel as part of the group, and the most important of all is not to forget to give them appreciation with motivating words. We need to cooperate with the teachers by providing good interpersonal communication so that good progress can be seen."

Psycho-Therapist Data

From the interviews with two therapists, I found that communication is the most important factor to build confidence in the therapy of drug users. They agreed that one can't be a therapist of drug users if he doesn't have good communication skills. Both of them said that 85% of the therapy activities are through communication. That's why if someone is interested in working here, he or she must be able to communicate well with people from different background, ages, and status, otherwise the therapy will not be going smoothly. When asked about the steps to implement the therapy to drug users, both of them said that the first step is that we have to meet, get acquainted and start building communication with the drug users. " Persons who were addicted to drug, most of the time they are introvert and do not want to communicate with people they don't know. After they know us, then gradually we can invite them to talk....." This conforms the Social Penetration Theory (Little John and Foss, 2009) who states that people meet, get acquainted and know each other by particular situations and conditions. After they feel comfortable each other, they can increase their relation becomes more intimate. Both therapists also agreed that after they managed to build a basic communication with them, always try to make the situation that you are their friends not their parents, not their teacher, not their lecturer. The purpose of maintaining this situation is in order that they will feel more comfortable and do not hesitate or shy to express their feeling. This corresponds with the statement of DeVito (2009) about equity theory which states that in developing and maintaining the relationship, both of the person must give equal ratio of rewards since they wish to have relationship that are equitable (DeVito 2009). The next step is that therapists have to focus on the development of effective behavioural treatments for drug abuse and dependence including contingency management, cognitive behaviour approaches, motivational interviewing, and family/couples approaches and on the major categories of drug dependence (opioids, cocaine, and marijuana dependence), as stated in Onken LS, Blaine JD, Battjes R (1996) saying that the development of effective behavioural treatments for drug abuse and dependence must focus on the treatment that have been found to be effective in Stage II randomized clinical trials, namely : contingency management, cognitive behaviour approaches, motivational interviewing, and family/couples approaches. From all these steps, it can be seen that communication has the biggest role in the therapy for drug users, starting from contingency management, cognitive behavioural approach, motivational interviewing and family/couples approaches. The therapists also said that drug-dependent adults who received motivational interviewing had significant reductions in drug use, compared to a delayed-treatment control group. Therefore the rehabilitation center had a rule that twice a week, patients must be visited by their families and be given a chance to talk and share everything, so good interpersonal communication can be built. Besides verbal language, non verbal language also played a significant role such as smiling, shaking hands, eye contact and head nodding. "As a psycho-therapist, you have to bear in mind that your position is always becoming their friend, not their mentor or teacher or parents. By doing so, then the patient will feel more relaxed so they will not be afraid to talk. So, basically communication is the foundation."

Both therapist also said that to build the self confidence of drug users, we have to realize that it is a matter of when we feel good about ourselves, about who we are and about what our capabilities are, so then we will perform better. Basically, when someone feel that he is good, he is able, most probably he will have the ability to do it. The first treatment is try to increase their positive beliefs, embed in their mind that they are good, they are strong, they are important, they have potentials. The second is to recall their memory that they are not alone, they have a lot of people who care for them surroundings, and third to talk about their achievements and successes, to encourage them, to think about their positive qualities and do not think about their mistakes. Always make some key words familiar to them like I can. I am able, I am strong etc as what DeVito (2009) states that the word 'affirmation' is used to refer to positive statements about yourself, statements asserting that something good or positive is true of you. One useful way to look at self-affirmation is in terms of " I am", "I can", and "I will" statements.

Police Officers Data

From interviews with two police officers, I got informations that the major cause of drug abuse of students in Indonesia is family problems such as lack of parents' attention. A lot of parents in big cities are busy working so they do not have time to meet and communicate well with their children. Without having good basic communication with their parents, it is easy for children to be influenced by the environment surroundings. So, the role of communication is very fundamental to avoid drug abuse by students. Both of the police officers agreed if drug users are actually only victims. However, when asked about the treatment to drug users, they have different opinion. One of them said the best treatment for drug users is rehabilitation. In rehabilitation center, drug users can be taken care by professional therapists who have been trained how to communicate with them so that they can get good recovery. On the other hand, the second officer said that imprisonment is still needed in order to apply deterrent effect to the society. "If drug users are only brought to the rehabilitation center without any law sanction, I personally think that they will do the same thing after returning to society." Such different opinion can happen because of the double track system of law regulating drug users in Indonesia which says that drug users can be prisoned or rehabilitated based on the judge's decision. Indonesian Law on Drugs regulating the rehabilitation is stated on article 54, 55, 56, 57, 58 and 103. To my point of view, the government of Indonesia should be more strict and not bias in setting the policy which make people confused. In one time, drug users can be prisoned, but at a different time, they can be directly taken to the rehabilitation center without due process of law.

Questionnaires Data

The questionnaires were distributed to gain the data to support the findings from the interview as the main instrument in this study. The questionnaires were distributed to 30 members of society. The main purpose of applying this strategy is to know about the perception of society towards ex drug users, and what we should do to help them. It consists of ten questions in which they were a set of combinations of close-ended and open-ended questions. When asked about the cause of students to consume drug, 60% said that it is because of lack of parents' attention. Another 27% agreed that this is caused mostly just for a life style reason, and the rest 13% said that it is because of friend's threat (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The cause of students consume drug most

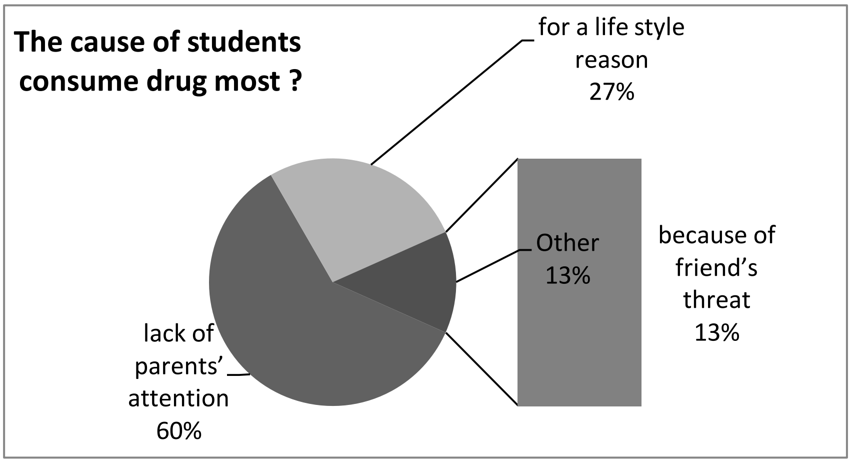


Figure 2. The most important person that helps drug users build self confidence

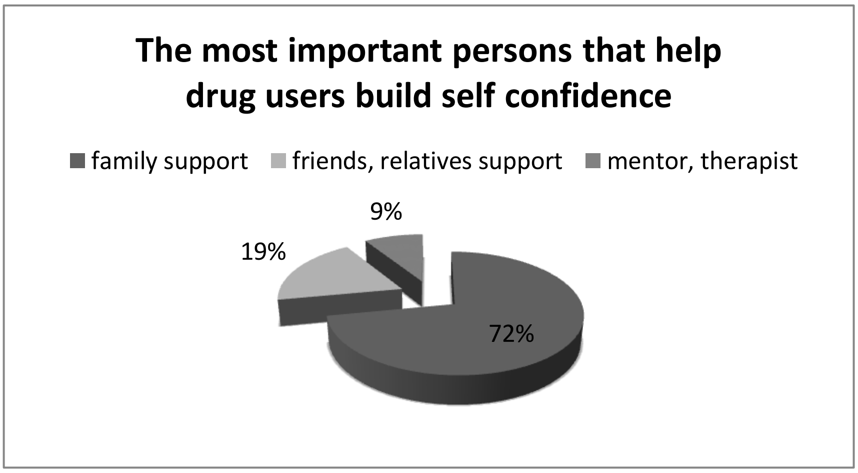
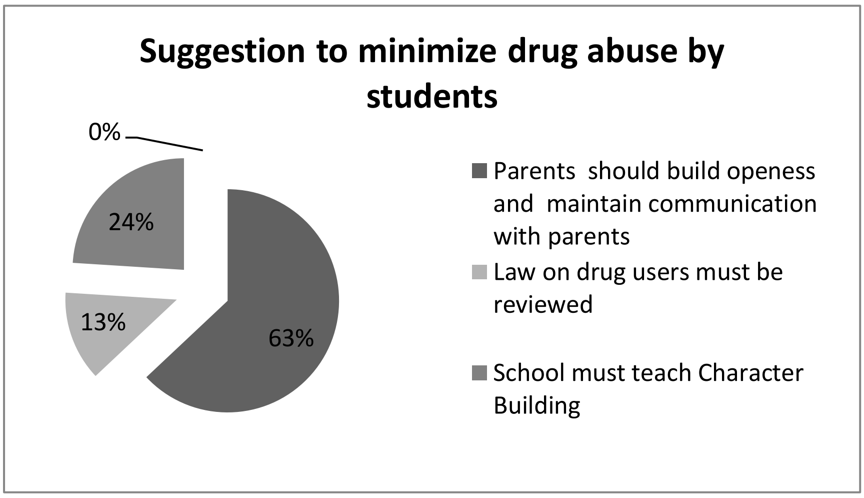


Figure 3. Suggestion to minimize drug abuse by students



When the research participants were asked about their opinion about the best way of building self confidence of ex drug users, 72% said that the support from family in the form of maintaining good communication is the most important factor. Whereas 19% said that support from friends, colleagues, relatives is the most important. The rest 9% of the participants said that the important thing for drug users to build their confidence lays on the therapists (Figure 2). When the participants were asked about their suggestion to minimize drug abuse by students, 63% said that parents should build openness among all family members and maintain good communication, 24% said that schools must teach character building in order to prevent drug abuse. Whereas 13% of the participants said that the Law must be reviewed, so it can apply deterrent effect to the society (Figure 3).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication plays an important role in building self confidence of ex-drug users to return to society. Interview with teachers and therapists gave us a picture on how positive words are motivating and able to regain self confidence of drug users. Even, a rehabilitation center had a rule that twice a week, patients must be visited by their families and be given a chance to talk and share everything, so good interpersonal communication can be built. The interviews with police officers gave us a description on how important interpersonal communication implemented in every family to avoid children from drug abuse. From the interview, we knew that there is still bias in the policy on drug abuse in Indonesia, eventhough both officers said that drug users are victims, however they can be rehabilitated or prisoned depending on the judge's decision. Finally, further study is needed to examine the pro and contra of Indonesian policy regarding the regulations for drug users. Should they be rehabilitated or imprisoned. Up to the present time, there has no research which discusses about this matter.

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