

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON SUBSTANCE ABUSERS IN CONTACT WITH THE
POLICE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF STIGMATIZATION THEORY**

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ABSTRACT

Social order is maintained through a set of laws, norms, customs, and traditions. Individuals who violate moral values, commit crimes or disrupt order for whatever reason are ostracized and stigmatized by society. Furthermore, individuals with drug dependence are devalued and rejected by the society. Substance abusers who are ostracized by the society they belong to, tend to commit crimes to survive or obtain the substance they are addicted to. Police officers are the first to encounter substance abusers who commit crimes, and therefore the communication skills of police officers gain importance at this point. It is considered that effective communication by the police officer who interacts with the substance-addicted individual can lead to a positive change in the individual's life. It is evaluated that the effective communication established by the police will reduce the tendency of substance abusers with poor communication skills to commit crimes or make them get rid of the substance they are addicted to.

In this study, it is aimed to prove the idea that police officers with strong communication skills will bring positive changes in the lives of substance abusers. In this context, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 14 substance-addicted participants who were subjected to judicial proceedings within the scope of the fight against drugs and stimulants in Ankara. The communication skills of police officers were examined in terms of interpersonal communication. It was also investigated what kind of changes occurred in the lives of substance abusers who were stigmatized by society after they contacted the police. Based on the findings, it was concluded that substance abusers who have encountered police officers with strong communication skills are willing to make positive changes in their lives.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication, Communication Skills, Police, Substance Addiction, Stigmatization Theory

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DAMGALAMA KURAMI ÇERÇEVESİNDE POLİS İLE İLETİŞİME GEÇEN MADDE BAĞIMLILARI ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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ÖZET

Toplum düzeni; birtakım kanunlar, normlar, örf ve adetler aracılığıyla sağlanır. Ahlaki değerlere aykırı davranan, suç işleyen veya ne sebeple olursa olsun düzeni bozan bireyler toplumca dışlanır ve damgalanır. Uyuşturucu ve uyarıcı madde kullanan bireyler de toplum içerisinde kabul görmeyerek değersizleştirilirler. Ait olduğu toplum tarafından dışlanan madde bağımlıları, hayatını devam ettirebilmek veya bağımlısı olduğu maddeyi temin edebilmek için suç işleme eğilimi gösterirler. Suç işleyen madde bağımlısı bireyler ile ilk iletişime geçen polislerdir ve dolayısıyla polisin iletişim becerileri bu noktada önem kazanmaktadır. Madde bağımlısı birey ile etkileşime giren polis memurunun etkili iletişim kurabilmesi, bireyin hayatında olumlu bir değişikliğe sebep olabileceği düşünülmektedir. Polisin kurmuş olduğu etkili iletişimin, iletişim becerisi düşük olan madde bağımlısı bireyin suç işleme eğilimini düşüreceği veya bağımlısı olduğu maddeden kurtulmak isteyebileceği değerlendirilmektedir.

Bu çalışmada iletişimi güçlü olan polislerin madde bağımlılarının hayatlarında olumlu değişimler sağlayacağı düşüncesinin doğrulanması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Ankara ilinde uyuşturucu ve uyarıcı madde ile mücadele kapsamında hakkında adli işlem yapılan 14 madde bağımlısı katılımcı ile yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Kişiler arası iletişim bağlamında polislerin iletişim becerileri değerlendirilmiştir. Toplum tarafından damgalanan madde bağımlılarının polis ile iletişime geçtikten sonra hayatlarında ne tür bir değişim olduğu araştırılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular ışığında iletişim becerisi yüksek polisler ile karşılaşan madde bağımlılarının hayatlarında olumlu yönde değişim yapmak istedikleri sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kişilerarası İletişim, İletişim Becerisi, Polis, Madde Bağımlılığı, Damgalama Kuramı

INTRODUCTION

The fact that human beings are social beings and their need to belong to a community are inherently interrelated. In order for people to live together harmoniously in a society, some norms and regulations are required. Social structures are built on social order. This order develops by benefiting from cultural backgrounds, customs, and traditions. Social order and stability are ensured when individuals act in line with the principles that they have internalized from various sources such as religion, tradition, family upbringing, and civic consciousness, and that they have turned into a kind of morality (Kılınç, 2015). Although it differs between societies, it is aimed to provide peace and ensure that people live in tranquility. The only way to ensure social order and stability is for an external authority to first establish rules and then force individuals to obey these rules (Kılınç, 2009).

Any action that disturbs the peace is reacted against and not accepted by society. Another important issue is to determine what disturbs the peace in which society. Therefore, factors such as the cultural structure of a society, its history, the living conditions of individuals, education, and family structure determine the society's understanding of order. The ability of interpersonal communication of an individual is influenced by many reasons such as his/her cultural background, past experiences, the way he/she perceives his/her environment, or his/her attitudes (Ünlü, 2019). Concepts such as society, communication skills, interpersonal communication, crime, stigmatization, apprehension of criminals, and social order are closely interrelated.

It is among the duties of the police to prevent a crime that disrupts the social order provided and protected by the rules set by law or to clarify a crime committed. It is the duty of the police to intervene in the event of a crime, unravel that crime, and take the necessary legal actions against the perpetrators (Aydn, 2014). The first person to communicate with a person suspected of a crime is the police. Communication plays a major role in clarifying a crime, collecting evidence, preparing the necessary documents, and bringing criminals to justice. If the police officer is able to communicate effectively with the individuals under suspicion, the victims of the crime, and witnesses, the incident can be clarified. Therefore, individuals who negatively affect society can be apprehended and brought to justice. Mutual communication leads to interpersonal interaction. People influence others with the messages they send and are influenced by the messages they receive from others (Baymur, 1990). A police officer with good communication skills can prevent a suspect from committing another crime later on and can reintegrate him/her into society. The motives, perceptions, tendencies, and attitudes of people affect their communication with others in one way or another (Mc. Whirter & Voltan-Acar, 1984). A criminal who encounters a police officer with poor communication skills may continue to commit crimes for the rest of his/her life, so the criminal may feel worthless to live in society.

Individuals who are addicted to substances are rejected by the society. As a result, they are stigmatized and prone to commit crimes. Thus, the child who has no other choice but to become a criminal will be inclined to commit more crimes. (Aydoğan, 2018, p.67). Substance abusers are perceived by many people as "dangerous and hopeless" and are thought to have the potential to indulge in any form of crime or corruption to fund drug dependency (Hammersley & Reid, 2002). Due to the drugs and stimulants, these individuals with poor communication skills are stigmatized and devalued in society. "Substance abusers live with the idea that they will be ostracized. The most important reason is the circles created by the cultural and social structure. They believe that they will not be respected enough. This situation decreases the addict's self-confidence, affects their social relations, and impairs their social functions" (Ögel, 2014). These individuals, who are stigmatized and unaccepted in society both for the supply of drugs and due to the effects of drugs, are likely to commit crimes. For example, a drug-addicted individual has difficulty in finding a job. Since he/she does not have a regular income, he/she may commit crimes such as theft, looting, and purse-snatching to get the substance he/she is deprived of.

Drug-related stigma can increase negative self-perceptions, encourage overdose (Wolfe, Carrieri & Shepard, 2010), and cause failure to recognize drug-related risks (Barocas et al., 2014; Lang et al., 2013). For this reason, interviews with these individuals, whose communication skills are extremely poor, are important. A police officer who communicates effectively can persuade these individuals with the right guidance and save them from drug dependency. On the other hand, an unhealthy communication with these people can push them even further down. This may even increase their drug dependency.

In the literature review on stigmatization theory, crime, and substance abusers, Hasan DURSUN's study titled "Stigmatization Theory and Crime", published in the Journal of the Union of Turkish Bar Associations in 1997, concluded that an individual who has committed a crime is stigmatized in the society due to his criminal record, has difficulty in finding a job, and to prevent this stigmatization, criminal records should be kept only by the security units and should not appear in front of individuals in a way that will prevent their future work and social life. In Olcay ÇAM and Dilek AYAKDAŞ DAĞLI's study titled "Internalized Stigma, Guilt and Shame Feelings in Alcohol Addicts" published in the Journal of Addiction in 2017, it was concluded that the work, family, and social lives of the person, who internalizes stigmatization, are negatively affected. Alcohol addiction causes loss of reputation economic and economic loss in the individual's life. These negativities lead to increase alcohol consumption and accordingly, the individual is harmed by emotional destruction, shame, and guilt. In Rasim BABAHAÑOĞLU's doctoral dissertation titled "Investigation of the Relationship Between Stigmatization and Family Belonging in Adult Males Subjected to Probation Due to Substance Use" (2020), it was determined that substance abusers who receive emotional support from their families are less stigmatized, and their family relations are better than those who do not receive support. In addition, substance abusers who receive emotional support from health institution employees are less stigmatized than those who do not receive emotional support.

This study aims to evaluate the positive or negative changes in the lives of substance addicts who are stigmatized by society and under suspicion of crime after they communicate with police officers. The aim of this study is to evaluate whether police officers with good communication skills have an effective role in guiding substance abusers with poor communication skills.

1. POLICE AND SUBSTANCE ADDICTS IN THE SCOPE OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

1.1. Interpersonal Communication

The word "communication" is known to be derived from the Latin verb "communicare". Communication is the exchange of information, mutual message transfer, the two-way view of the act of transmission, as well as the transfer of information, a feeling and thought from one party to another, and the transfer of feelings, thoughts, or information to others in every conceivable way (Güz,2002, p.184). "Communication" is a phenomenon that exists in every aspect of our daily lives. Thus, communication can be defined as an essential tool in human relations.

Considering that individuals are in constant communication with other individuals in social life, family relations, and work life, the individual influences the environment or is influenced by the changes in his/her social or business life.

Interpersonal communication is the process of communication between people, who are in mutual communication, by producing information/symbols, transferring and interpreting them to each other. (Dökmen, 2010). Creating meanings within oneself means thinking, internal communication, and exchanging meanings with others (Usluata, 1994). Interpersonal communication, which has a complex structure, is a psychological and sociological phenomenon that differs from person to person and depends on the environment. There are many factors affecting interpersonal communication such as educational status, psychological tendencies, environment, cultural background, age, gender, and position in society. Positive and negative emotions play an important role in interpersonal relationships ((Lyubomirsky& Sin, 2009). All factors affecting interpersonal communication vary from society to society or from person to person, thereby making it more complex. Although emotions such as happiness, sadness, love and anger seem to be universal, the fact that their degrees differ from individual to individual makes mutual and effective communication more indispensable. "Interpersonal communication is the basis of all human communication [...] The interactional feature of interpersonal communication is described in terms of the impact of interpersonal communication on the mutual behavior of individuals. This is a necessary condition for face-to-face communication" (Lazar,2001, p.52).

In the natural flow of life, individuals are in contact with their families at home, their friends in their social lives, their teachers in their schools, and their doctors in the hospitals. Similarly, people who are victims or under suspicion of any crime are in contact with the police. However, the communication between the individual under suspicion of a crime and the police differs from other interpersonal communication in terms of "communication skills". The process of healthy communication with people with criminal tendencies brings along a number of difficulties. In this context, the communication skills of the police and their approaches to substance abusers become more important.

1.2. Police and Communication

In our country, the Police Department is a judicial and administrative law enforcement unit under the Ministry of Interior. Policing is one of the oldest and most widespread professions in the world (Fındıklı, 2000). The police officer is defined as a person who has the duty to protect public order and security as well as prevent or detect crimes when they occur. (Sokullu Akıncı, 1990). According to another definition, police are those who are authorized by the state to use legitimate force to enforce the law and maintain order (Fındıklı, 2003; Derdiman, 1997). One of the main duties attributed to the police is to ensure security. This is the most fundamental and primary duty of the police (Göksu & Bilgiç, 2002). Law enforcement refers to organizations such as the Coast Guard, Gendarmerie, and Police that provide protection, security, and prevention services.

Administrative and judicial law enforcement services are structured in these organizations and are carried out by their officers within the framework of the laws and regulations to which they are bound. While the police perform judicial services as judicial law enforcement officers, they perform administrative duties as administrative law enforcement officers (Koç, 2002). Judicial duties begin with the discovery of a crime, continue with the arrest of the suspect or defendant, and end with the collection of evidence and conviction of the defendant (Koç, 2002). In this context, documents such as statement-taking, evidence collection, prosecutor interviews, and notification of defendants' rights are prepared by judicial police officers. In brief, police are in constant communication with citizens. At the same time, the police can prevent crime (administrative law enforcement duty) through their appearance, and verbal or non-verbal communication approaches. After a crime is committed, the arrest of individuals under suspicion of a crime, their statements, and the preparation of investigation documents about the alleged crime (forensic law enforcement duty) require the communication skills of the police.

Communication skills are about establishing an effective bond, persuasion, gestures, and tone of voice. It is realized through actions such as forming appropriate and effective sentences and using sincere or positive expressions. Maintaining effective communication based on understanding and being understood enables individuals to live more harmoniously in society. Effective communication allows individuals to express themselves in a better way. Also, this communication approach can reconnect an individual to life. In this way, it can lead a person who thinks that he/she has failed in life to success. In addition, effective communication helps individuals to improve and maintain their personal relationships and solve their problems (Küçük, 2014). Individuals with optimistic and positive thinking skills are expected to be more compatible with their environment. The communication skills required in the context of assistance are defined as attentiveness, open invitation to talk, minimal encouragement, reflection of feelings, and summarizing (Mc. Whirter & Voltan-Aacar, 1985; Tan, 1989). Individuals with good communication skills can persuade and manage their relationships in their family, social, and professional lives. These people are thought to interact more effectively with other individuals. If individuals are provided with effective listening skills, they can apply these skills to their family, daily life, and even to their communication with the people they encounter at all stages of life. This will eliminate some of their communication problems and conflicts (Gordon, 1993). Individuals who have a positive mindset and can empathize might be considered to have effective interpersonal communication skills. In a study conducted by Tsivilskaya and Artemyeva on university students, a positive point of view on life, optimism, is also an effective factor in the relationships of individuals. They concluded that optimistic students have sufficient self-confidence, accept themselves as individuals, tend to accept themselves as carriers of positivity, have socially admirable characteristics, and have high levels of free will (Tsivilskaya & Artemyeva, 2016, p. 203).

The communication skills of the police are important in communicating with suspected substance abusers. The good or bad effects of interviews with these individuals under the influence of drugs and stimulants are open to debate. Every message sent by the police cannot be adequately perceived by the recipient. Managing this process is a challenging one for a police officer. It is believed that police officers who can listen effectively, empathize, and avoid prejudice can establish healthy communication with substance abusers. It is also considered that police officers who comprehend the importance of the incident, choose the right method of approach, and use gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice efficiently will be able to establish effective communication. Obviously, it is not enough for the police to have good communication skills and approaches. The attitude and communication skills of substance abusers towards the police are also very important.

1.3. Drug Dependency and Communication

The word "narcotic", which comes from the Greek word "narke" meaning "sleep" and was translated into English as "narcotic", refers to addictive substances that have numbing properties, anesthetize, deafen, cause physical and mental dependence, and cause personal, social, economic and social breakdown (Salmaner, 2003, p.135). Drugs, which are natural or chemical substances, affect the central nervous system of the person directly or indirectly. Drugs disrupt the physical and mental balance of the person and destroy the integrity of the body. Drugs have a euphoric effect on the nervous system of the individual, and after a period of time, the individual is unable to continue taking the drug. (Dönmezer, 1987, p.457). When an individual is unable to obtain the drugs, he/she begins to feel physical and psychological deprivation. Accordingly, their social and professional life deteriorates. The person cannot carry out his/her individual activities due to the drugs. A person whose life is affected by drugs is defined as a substance abuser. Addiction is a complication that occurs when a person continues to use drugs despite being harmed, is unable to stop using for a long time, is in constant search for drugs, and gradually increases the amount of drugs he/she uses. (Ögel, Taner, & Yılmazçetin, 2003, p. 28).

Society's isolation of people and the anxiety that people feel in the absence of love push them to use drugs and make them think that they can cope with life only this way (Erbay, Oğuz, Yıldırım, & Fırat, 2016). Individuals' personality traits, family problems, emulation, show of power, psychological problems, and the social environment they live in are closely related to substance use and addiction. Drugs affect individuals' psychology deeply and change their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors negatively. (Taylan & Genç, 2017, p.181). Individuals with drug addiction may have problems expressing themselves or communicating in social life. In their working life, they may face some problems such as incompatibility, and lack of acceptance and respect. Therefore, their interpersonal communication skills are poor. When an individual is under the influence of a substance and feels withdrawal when he/she does not take this substance, it negatively affects communication. As a result, the person becomes angry and aggressive. Therefore, he/she cannot receive instructions in a healthy way.

These drugs and stimulants, which are initially used for pleasure, to get away from problems, and to adapt to the social environment, lead to addiction after a while. Substance addiction leads to behaviors such as over-reactivity, irritability, aggression, and aggression. Therefore, drugs reduce the quality of life of the individual and cause serious harm both in terms of their health and their position in society.

It is a criminal offense to use and possess drugs and stimulants within the borders of our country. Use and possession are punishable under Article 191 of the Turkish Penal Code, while manufacturing and trafficking are punishable under Article 188 of the Turkish Penal Code. In addition, many studies have shown that substance users are considered dangerous, deceptive, and morally unacceptable (Brenner & Von Hippel, 2008). An individual with poor communication skills, lack of control over his/her anger, or abstinence from a criminal substance will not be accepted by society and will be ostracized. This situation is defined by the concept of "stigmatization" in the literature. In the next section, the concept of stigmatization, which constitutes the theoretical basis of this study, is explained.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1. Stigmatization Theory

It is known that the concept of stigmatization was first used in Ancient Greek in the meanings of hole, pierce, wound, and scar. The use of the word in this sense dates back to the Middle Ages when criminals were branded with red-hot iron as an indicator of guilt (Taşkın, 2007). In this context, people who committed crimes were stigmatized and made visible in society. These people were ostracized by other individuals. Today, in a sense close to its semantic root, it is used as an expression of disgrace, humiliation, and low reputation (Goffman, 1963, p. 2). In this context, individuals who commit crimes, act against traditions and perform actions that are not accepted by society will be stigmatized by the people and excluded from society. People who use drugs and stimulants are not accepted by the majority of society. They are seen as tainted by their addiction. In stigmatization as a social phenomenon, the stigmatized person is reduced from being "a part of the whole, a normal person" within a group or community to a stained and handicapped person who is degraded to the point of being ignored (Goffman, 1963, p. 3). In this context, in societies where the use of drugs and stimulants is not considered normal, drug addicts will be ostracized, seen as worthless individuals, and not seen as part of society. In countries where drug use is not considered a crime and is considered an ordinary habit, the individual will not be ostracized. Although stigmatization has universal dimensions, it also has a local characteristic as it is based on the cultural and ethnic structure of the society (Meşe, 2014, p. 546). Therefore, who will be stigmatized, who will be excluded, or who will be ostracized varies according to the customs, laws, and general judgments of society. According to Leary and Schreindorfer (1998), individuals are stigmatized or socially excluded according to the following four factors:

- 1) Endangering the health or safety of others (being dangerous, committing a crime, or being ill or contagious),
- 2) Deviating from group norms (not following community rules, laws, customs, and traditions),
- 3) Not contributing enough to the welfare of the social community in which they live (being irresponsible, lazy, selfish, or closed to sharing),
- 4) Causing negative reactions in others (having maladaptive attitudes or behaviors, having an eccentric appearance).

People who are stigmatized by society are seen as less valued. These individuals cannot find a job or practice a profession. Substance addicts who are not accepted by their families are almost not considered as human beings. The labels attached to a person affect the behavior of others towards that person and ultimately play a fundamental role in the interaction of that person with others (Göksu & Karakaya, 2009). It is very difficult for individuals who are excluded and stigmatized to get rid of this stigma. These individuals, who think that they will not be accepted by society again, cannot give up their lives and addictions. Therefore, substance abusers can be expected to stay in contact with other stigmatized individuals and cut off communication with the society from which they are excluded. Individuals who have a label in front of their name in a society where they cannot communicate and are not accepted are expected to have an aggressive attitude. Concepts such as bullying, mobbing, abuse, scapegoating, harassment, workplace trauma, and health-threatening leadership are intertwined with stigmatization (Yaman, 2009).

In this perspective, since the use of drugs and stimulants endangers public safety, the substance abuser will be stigmatized. Studies show that stigmatization is much higher in drug addiction compared to mental illness (Singleton, 2010) and indicate how stigma spreads to other members of the family (Corrigan & Shapiro, 2006). In this study, the communication of individuals who are stigmatized by society as a result of drug and stimulant use with police officers while under suspicion of crime will be examined.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This study was designed to observe the level of communication between police officers and people under suspicion of a crime and to determine whether there are any positive or negative changes in the lives of substance abusers as a result of this communication. The basis of the research is to determine whether the communication of substance abusers with the police in the context of stigmatization theory is a deterrent phenomenon in the use of drugs and stimulants or criminal acts. In this study, individuals who were substance abusers and under suspicion of a crime and who had contacted the police in Ankara province were evaluated.

4. RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLING

The qualitative research method was applied in this study. In qualitative research, which focuses on the different and deep nature of human-specific individual characteristics, the researcher focuses on deep and specific data obtained from smaller study groups rather than large samples (Baltaci, 2019, p. 369). Qualitative researchers try to understand the environments in which people live, their feelings and thoughts, the symbols, rituals, customs, and traditions specific to the society they belong to, institutional structures, individual roles, and similar human-related things. In addition, the possibilities of this method are utilized to understand the context or environment in which the participants in the study address a problem or issue (Berg, 2019, pp. 20, 40).

In-depth interviews were used as a data collection method to analyze the interpersonal communication between police officers and substance abusers. Semi-structured in-depth interviews enable participants to explain the world they observe or experience in their own words. Interviews were conducted with 14 substance abusers residing in Ankara, who were subjected to judicial proceedings for drug and stimulant offenses. This number was deemed sufficient for the pilot study in terms of the purpose of the study and time. The ages of the participants were distributed between 19 and 37. Three of the participants were female and 11 were male. Focus group interviews were conducted and completed with 14 participants reached through snowball sampling. A total of 25 questions were asked to each participant. While preparing the questions used in the interviews, the literature on interpersonal communication, communication skills, and stigma theory and the questions used in previous studies were utilized.

The questions used in the interviews were categorized into two sections. In the first section, the first 10 questions were related to communication skills and interpersonal communication. In the second section, there are 15 questions about whether there are any changes that occur after interpersonal communication and about the stigmatization theory. Since the questions are provided in a more detailed and extensive manner in the section where the analysis and comments are made, they are not included in the method section. Depending on the grouping of the interview questions, two analysis sections were formed as follows: 1. Interpretation of observations on communication skills and interpersonal communication between police officers and substance abusers. 2. Interpretation of the observations on the struggle against the stigmatization of substance abusers and individuals under suspicion of a crime and the changes in criminal behavior and substance use after the forensic investigation. The collected data were interpreted with descriptive analysis methods. This analysis aims to organize, interpret, and present the findings to the reader with the descriptive analysis method by including direct quotations to reflect the thoughts of the participants.

5. FINDINGS AND COMMENTS

1- In the study, the participants were, first, asked questions about the communication skills of police officers. In this context.

5.1. Communication Skills of Police

The question "Do you think that a police officer completely understands you when you express your feelings and thoughts?" was asked. Seven participants answered, "(...) when I communicate with the police, I do not think that they completely understand my feelings and thoughts (...)". These participants thought that the police did not understand them and did not care about their feelings and thoughts. Four participants stated that "(...) I have encountered the police many times before because I committed a crime. The police understood what I said. I was able to express my feelings and thoughts easily. I was able to understand what they said to me. (...)", "(...) when I communicate with the police, I think they completely understand my feelings and thoughts. There were police officers to whom I could tell my troubles and problems. I think they understand me. (...)", "(...) when I communicate with the police, I think they completely understand my feelings and thoughts (...)", "(...) when I communicate with the police, I think they completely understand my feelings and thoughts. There were police officers who did not ask me any questions. On the other hand, there were police officers who talked to me for a long time. (...)". These participants stated that the police understood them and that they could easily share their feelings and thoughts. Two participants stated that "(...) I have encountered police officers many times due to criminal actions. There were some who listened to me and some who did not. Some ostracized me, but there were also those who listened to me about my feelings and thoughts. I also agree with them because it is difficult to struggle with drugs. (...)", "(...) when I communicate with the police, I think they completely understand my feelings and thoughts. However, there were also police officers who did not listen to me, or I thought they did not understand me. (...)". These participants stated that they had encountered the police many times and that there were police officers who understood them as well as police officers who did not understand their feelings and thoughts. One participant stated that they were otherized by the police.

The question "Can you easily ask the police a question you have in mind and get an answer in an explanatory way?" was asked. Ten participants answered, "(...) when I have a question in my mind, I can easily ask the police and get the answer (...)". Two participants answered as follows: "(...) I cannot easily ask questions to the police when I have a question in my mind. I cannot get an answer when I ask a question. (...)". One participant answered as follows: "(...) I cannot easily ask questions to the police when I have a question in my mind. I think they will show a reaction to me because I use drugs. (...)", and one participant answered as follows: "(...) I cannot easily ask questions to the police when I have an issue in my mind, but I get an answer when I ask. (...)". It was thought that most of the participants could easily communicate with the police. One participant responded that he could not ask questions to the police because he was worried about getting a reaction for using drugs.

Actually, he tried to explain that he could not ask questions to the police because of his lack of communication skills. It was understood that the two participants could not easily communicate with the police.

The question "Do the police offer solutions or help you with your problems?" was asked. Six participants stated that the police offered solutions to their problems, and a few of them answered as follows. "(...) when I asked the police for help, they helped me. Once I was slandered about something I was innocent of, but the police helped me and revealed that I was innocent. (...)", "(...) there were police officers who talked to me as if they were talking to their children to help me quit drugs. They gave me advice. These conversations kept me away from drugs from time to time. (...)", "(...) when I asked the police for help, they helped me. They told me the truth. They told me about the harms of drugs. They told me that I could always go to them to quit. (...)", "(...) When I asked for help from the police, they helped me. Once they even helped me with my probation regarding the change of address when I moved. (...)" When the responses are evaluated, it is understood that the police officers who communicated with these participants encouraged and helped the substance abusers to quit drugs and made efforts to understand the innocence of the innocent ones. The police officers' close and sincere behaviors towards them had a positive effect. Six participants stated that the police officers they contacted did not offer solutions or help them with their problems. The fact that the police officers were not interested in the problems of substance abusers had a negative impact on the participants. One participant stated that he did not ask for help from the police. A participant answered as follows: "(...) there were some of the police officers I contacted helped me, but there were also police officers who did not help me or did not offer a solution (...)". The fact that the police officers were inclined to help or offer solutions during the communication process was evaluated as contributing to the prevention of crime in the process of judicial proceedings and the subsequent process of the suspects.

The question "Do the police use gestures, facial expressions, or tone of voice effectively?" was asked. Eleven participants stated that "(...) the police use gestures, tone of voice and facial expressions effectively when they talk to me. (...)", one participant stated that "(...) I do not think that the police use gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice effectively when they talk to me. Maybe the reason is that they meet us as criminals. Maybe it would have been different if we met outside (...)", and two participants answered as "(...) I did not pay attention to the gestures and facial expressions of the police officers while they were talking to me, but their tone of voice affected me positively (...)." The correct and effective use of gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice in the communication process is important for the message to be more effective and understandable. The majority of the participants stated that the police used gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice effectively. In addition, the fact that one of the participants used the expression "(...) Maybe it would be different if we met outside. (...)" may have caused the stigmatized person to think that they would not be accepted by the police due to their marginalization in society.

5.2. Attitudes and Behaviors of the Police Towards Substance Abusers

The question "Do the police show patience when listening to your thoughts?" was asked. Eleven participants stated that the police listened to them patiently, while two participants stated that the police did not listen to them patiently. One participant said, "(...) there were police officers who listened to me patiently and there were police officers who did not listen to me. (...)". The majority of the participants think that the police officers were patient while listening to them. It is known that listening patiently has an important place in the communication process. Communicating with someone who listens patiently reinforces interpersonal trust. Also, listening to someone patiently is important in the formation of a sense of trust between the police and substance abusers.

The question "Does the police make eye contact with you while trying to talk?" was asked. Thirteen participants said that the police made eye contact with them. One participant replied, "(...) police officers do not make eye contact with me very often when they talk to me (...)". Making eye contact in the communication process is important to make the person feel cared for and to show that they are being listened to carefully. This makes the person show positive emotions. The fact that most of the participants stated that the police officers made eye contact with them may indicate that the communication process was effective.

The question "Are the police prejudiced when they talk to you?" was asked. Fourteen participants stated that the police were prejudiced towards them. Participant 10 said, "(...) the police are prejudiced because I use drugs. There were also police officers who were harsh with me because I use drugs, but there were also police officers who listened to me without prejudice. (...)", participant 13, "(...) because I use drugs. Police officers treat me with prejudice. They are prejudiced because they talk to me about an incident or crime, but I know that it is not about me, but about the crime committed. (...)", participant 1, "(...) the police treat me with prejudice because I use drugs. Thinking about my well-being, they ask me if I have not quit drugs yet. (...)", participant 14 said, "(...) the police are prejudiced against me because I use drugs. They do not think that I am telling the truth when I tell an incident. However, there were police officers who understood me or believed that I was telling the truth (...)". Prejudice, which is the result of stigmatization, negatively affects the communication process in interpersonal communication. Prejudice can completely break communication or cause misunderstandings. Prejudiced behavior can also make the other person feel worthless and destroy the concept of trust. Most of the participants stated that the police were prejudiced because the police thought that the participants were lying to them.

The question "Do the police establish a sincere and close relationship with you?" was asked. Eight participants stated that the police have a close relationship with them. Two participants stated that the police do not establish a close relationship with them. Four participants stated that there were police officers who were close to them and those who were not.

Participant 4 said, "(...) the police have a close relationship with me. I have even worked as an informant for them to fight against drugs. (...)", participant 5 said, "(...) among the police officers I communicated with, there were some who were friendly and treated me closely, but there were also police officers who did not treat me closely. I get better energy from friendly policemen. I want to listen to them more. (...)", participant 8, "(...) there were also policemen who had a sincere relationship with me. However, there were also police officers who were not close to me. What I mean by sincerity is that they treat me well and approach me with a smiling face. (...)", participant 10, "(...) the police treat me with prejudice because I use drugs. There were also police officers who treated me harshly because I used drugs, but there were also police officers who listened to me without prejudice. (...)", participant 1, "(...) police officers establish a sincere relationship with me. There are police brothers whose names I know, whom I can call whenever I want. They call me from time to time and ask how I am (...)". According to the participants, the policemen's friendly, close, and loving approach is an indicator of sincerity. Sincerity supports the phenomenon of trust during communication. The fact that police officers were close to substance abusers, called them from time to time, and asked how they were doing made the participants feel valuable. Ensuring the phenomenon of trust between the police and the drug addict enabled a participant to become an informant. Based on the answers given by the participants, it can be said that sincerity causes positive emotions and behaviors in substance abusers.

The question "Do you think that the police put themselves in your place (empathy) when they talk to you?" was asked. Six participants stated that they did not think that the police showed empathy. Six participants stated that the police showed empathy. Participant 7 said, "(...) police officers who have children at my age, empathize (...)", participant 13 said, "(...) I think that police officers empathize. I feel that they put themselves in the victim's place. When they get angry with me, or give me advice, I feel that they put themselves in my place (...)", and participant 14 said, "(...) I think that the police put themselves in my place. For example, I was caught in an incident. When I met with the police, he said to me "This is what I would do if I were you". (...)". One participant answered as "(...) I don't know whether the police put themselves in my place, but they didn't treat me badly. (...)". Another participant responded that "(...) some of the police officers I encountered were able to empathize, but some were not (...)". The phenomenon of empathy is effective in interpersonal communication and in the correct interpretation of the transmitted message. It plays a role in opening the transmitted code in the closest way to the truth. Communicating with people who can empathize is important in terms of feeling understood. Some of the participants stated that police officers cannot empathize while others stated that they can.

The question "Do you feel worthy when talking to the police?" was asked. Ten participants stated that they did not feel worthy when talking to the police. One participant stated that he felt worthy when talking to the police, "(...) I feel worthy when the police talk to me without getting angry or when they warn me to stop doing drugs (...)". Three participants stated that there were police officers who made them feel worthy and there were police officers who did not make them feel worthy.

Participant 6 said, "(...) there were police officers who listened to me and made me feel worthy when I talked to them. However, there were also those who made me feel worthless (...)". The majority of the participants stated that they did not feel worthy while communicating with the police. Participants think that being under suspicion of a crime, being a substance abuser, and having judicial proceedings against them in police stations affect this process.

2- Finally, the participants were asked: " the questions on stigmatization and the changes following the communication ". In this context

5.3. Substance Abusers and Stigmatization

The question "Can you get rid of substance addiction when you want to or get help?" was asked. All the participants said that they could get rid of substance addiction when they wanted to or when they received help. Participant 2, "(...) I know that I can quit this substance when I want to. However, I cannot quit without medication. (...)", participant 4, "(...) I do not think I can quit this substance when I want to, but if I am helped, I can get rid of it on the condition that I am treated. (...)", participant 7, "(...) I believe that I will get rid of it when I want to. I tried myself from time to time. There were times when I quit. There were also times when I went to my hometown to quit using them. (...)", participant 11, "(...) I don't think I can quit the drugs whenever I want. However, I think I can quit if I get treatment. I want to get rid of drugs. (...)", participant 12, "(...) I know that I can quit the drugs whenever I want. However, I have never tried to quit drugs before. (...)", participant 14, "(...) I know that I will quit the drugs whenever I want. I have quit before, but I cannot get rid of it without help. (...)". Participants believe that they can quit substance addiction whenever they want. However, a few participants tried to quit but were not successful. All participants stated that they wanted to quit drugs, but none of them had quit. One participant stated that he did not drink for four years and then started again. It can be seen that the process of getting rid of substance addiction is not easy.

The question "Do you feel personally weak because you are a substance abuser?" was asked. Ten participants stated that they felt weak because they were substance abusers. Participant 1 said, "(...) I feel weak. I don't think I can afford even a five-year-old child. (...)", Participant 2 said, "(...) I feel very weak. I have no self-confidence. I do not believe that I can be successful in something. (...)", participant 11, "(...) I feel very weak. I feel helpless and lack of self-confidence. (...)", participant 13, "(...) I feel very weak when I use drugs. I feel helpless. (...)". Four participants stated that they did not feel weak because they were addicted to drugs. The majority of the participants see themselves as weak because they are substance abusers. In substance addiction, it is understood that they find themselves weak and vulnerable when they cannot access drugs. Feeling deprived and thinking that they are needy and helpless when they cannot access drugs triggered a lack of self-confidence.

The question "Do people see you as dangerous because you are addicted to drugs?" was asked. Six participants stated that people around them saw them as dangerous because they were substance abusers.

Six participants stated that people around them did not see them as dangerous because they were substance abusers. Participant 8 and Participant 11 stated that they hid the fact that they were substance abusers and therefore people around them did not see them as dangerous. It is usual to approach individuals who are stigmatized in society with prejudice. Looking at the answers given by the participants, some of them said that they were seen as dangerous in society. Some of them said that they were not seen as dangerous because they hid the fact that they were substance abusers. They think that they will be seen as dangerous when it is known by society that they are substance addicted.

The question "Do you think people stay away from you because you are a substance abuser?" was asked. Three participants stated that people do not stay away from them because they are substance abusers. Two participants stated that some people stay away. One participant stated that no one stayed away from him/her because no one knew that he/she was addicted to drugs. Seven participants said that people stay away from them because they are substance abusers. Participant 5 said, "(...) I think some people stay away from me. I feel that they want to get away from me. (...)", participant 10 said, "(...) I think people stay away from me. They don't want to communicate with me (...)", participant 13 said, "(...) I think people stay away from me. When I take alcohol or drugs, my family moves away from me. (...)". One participant responded, "(...) I don't think people stay away from me, but I feel like we are people from a different world. (...)". Looking at the answers given by the participants, it is understood that people stay away from individuals who are known to be substance abusers and avoid them. Substance abusers who realized that people avoid them felt that they were excluded or marginalized.

The question "Can you share with everyone that you are a substance abuser?" was asked. Three participants stated that they could share their substance addiction with everyone. Eleven participants stated that they could not share their situation with everyone. Participant 1, "(...) I don't share it with everyone because I am ashamed, but people understand when they look at it. (...)", participant 2, "(...) I don't share that I am a substance abuser with anyone because I am ostracized when I share it. (...)", participant 4, "(...) I cannot tell everyone that I use drugs because I am afraid that they will ostracize me. (...)", participant 8, "(...) I don't tell anyone that I am a substance abuser. I don't want anyone to know that I use substances. I don't tell because I know my father will react and I don't want them to be upset. (...)", participant 9, "(...) I cannot share with everyone that I am addicted to substances. I am afraid that they will approach me with prejudice. (...)", and participant 10 answered, "(...) I cannot share that I am a substance abuser with everyone. I hide it because I think they will distance themselves from me. (...)". The participants felt the need to hide their substance addiction from the people around them. One participant was worried that he would get a reaction from his family. Most of the participants felt the need to hide their substance addiction because they were ashamed or afraid of being ostracized. It was observed that the phenomenon of marginalization mentioned in the stigma theory caused some behaviors such as hiding, running away, and concealment in the individual.

The question "Do you have difficulty in finding a job as a substance abuser?" was asked. Four participants stated that they did not have difficulty in finding a job because they were substance abusers. Seven participants stated that they had difficulties in finding their jobs because they were substance addicted and that they were not given any jobs. Participant 2 stated, "(...) I have difficulty in finding a job. No one gives me a job because I use drugs. (...)". Three participants responded to this question as follows; Participant 5, "(...) I have never tried to find a job. I cannot find the strength to work because I use drugs. (...)", Participant 13, "(...) I do not have difficulty in finding a job. Because I do not say that I use drugs. I do not expose it. (...)" Participant 14, "(...) I don't have difficulty finding a job, but I can't work on my own because I'm addicted to substances. (...)" Most of the participants stated that they had difficulty in finding a job because they were substance abusers. They stated that they were not given a job because they were substance abusers. In this context, it is understood that individuals who are stigmatized in society have difficulty in finding a job. The reasons for not hiring people with substance addiction are that they do not inspire confidence, are seen as dangerous, are thought to cause problems, or are considered to be unable to work consistently.

The question "Do you think that you are not respected in your social and work environment because you are a substance abuser?" was asked. Eleven participants stated that they were not respected in their social and work environments because they were substance abusers. Participant 2 said, "(...) because I am a substance abuser, people around me do not respect me, I feel this very intensely. (...)" Participant 13 said, "(...) because I am a substance abuser, people around me do not respect me. I always hang out at home because I cannot socialize. (...)". Two participants did not think that they were not respected because they were substance abusers. One participant said, "(...) I do not tell anyone that I am a substance abuser. For this reason, I have never been disrespected (...)". According to the stigmatization theory, an individual who is labeled in society is not respected in his/her work and social environment. The majority of the participants stated that they were not respected in their environment because they were substance abusers. A few of the participants stated that they were respected because they hid their substance addiction. He thinks that he will not be respected if he does not hide the fact that he is a substance abuser.

The question "Do you feel worthless in your neighborhood because you are a substance abuser?" was asked. Five participants stated that they did not feel worthless because they were substance abusers. Nine participants stated that they felt worthless because they were substance abusers. Participant 2 said, "(...) I feel worthless because I am a substance abuser. I think I would have gained value in society if I had not used drugs. (...)", participant 3 said, "(...) I feel worthless because I am a substance abuser. When I quit drugs, I did not feel worthless at that time. (...)" and participant 14 stated, "(...) I feel worthless because I am addicted to drugs. If I had not used drugs, I would have felt valued. (...)". The majority of the participants stated that they felt worthless because they used drugs. Feeling worthless because they are substance abusers is closely related to their exclusion from society.

The fact that society sees them as dangerous, does not respect them, ostracizes them, and stigmatizes them as substance abusers is effective in the process of feeling worthless.

The question "Do you see substance addiction as a disease?" was asked. Eight participants consider substance addiction as a disease. Participant 1 said, "(...) it is a disease. I feel relieved when I take drugs, but I feel very sick when I don't. You completely surrender your body to that substance. (...)", participant 9, "(...) substance addiction starts as a choice and then turns into a disease. (...)", participant 11, "(...) substance addiction is a disease. When I do not use drugs or when I feel withdrawal, I feel weak and painful (...)". Six participants stated that they did not see substance addiction as a disease. Participant 4 responded, "(...) substance addiction is not a disease but a choice (...)". Most of the participants saw substance addiction as a disease and argued that it should be treated. Some of the participants thought that substance addiction was not a disease but a choice.

The question "Do you consider yourself inferior to other people because you are a substance abuser?" was asked. Nine participants stated that they considered themselves inferior to other people because they were substance abusers. Participant 12 answered, "(...) Yes, I see myself as weak and inferior. I lack self-confidence. (...)". Five participants stated that they did not consider themselves inferior to other people because they were substance abusers. Most of the participants stated that they considered themselves inferior to other people because they were substance abusers. According to the stigmatization theory, individuals who are labeled in society are not respected, or worthy and are ostracized, so they see themselves as inferior and inadequate. The fact that substance abusers see themselves as inferior, inadequate, or weak is related to the stigmatization in their environment.

5.4. The Importance of Communication Skills of Police for Substance Abusers

The question "Did you think about quitting drugs after contacting the police?" was asked. Ten participants stated that they wanted to quit drugs after contacting the police. Participant 1 said, "(...) I thought about quitting drugs when the police caught me, and I even quit at that time. I had the necessary treatments, quit the drugs, and did not drink alcohol for 4 years. (...)". Participant 3 said, "(...) I thought about quitting drugs after I contacted the police. I quit a few times, but I succumbed to addiction and started again. (...)". Participant 5, "(...) after I contacted the police, I thought about quitting drugs. The police talked to me very effectively. My mother and father also talked to me, so I accepted the treatment, but then I succumbed and continued using. (...)". Participant 7, "(...) After I contacted the police, I thought about quitting drugs because when they treated me well, advised me, and were warm, I thought I should face the mirror and get rid of it. (...)". Participant 10, "(...) after I contacted the police, I wanted to quit drugs after the police treated me well and wanted to help me. (...)". Participant 12, "(...) after I contacted the police, I thought about quitting drugs. I realized that it was harming me. (...)", participant 13, "(...) when the police caught me, I thought about quitting drugs, I even thought about quitting drugs by selling my house and moving away from my social environment. (...)". Participant 14, "(...) When the police caught

me, I thought about quitting drugs, I even quit at that time, but the addiction was always more dominant. Right now, I want to get a chip implant (...)". Four participants stated that they did not think about quitting drugs after contacting the police. The majority of the participants stated that they thought about quitting drugs after contacting the police. While some of them were affected by the effective communication established by the police with them, some of them wanted to quit drugs because they were uncomfortable with their position. From the answers given by the participants, it can be concluded that police officers who can communicate effectively create the desire to quit using drugs.

The question "Did you regret the crime you committed after contacting the police?" was asked. All fourteen participants stated that they regretted the crime they committed after contacting the police. Participant 2 said, "(...) After I contacted the police, I regretted my drug use very much because I realized that it did not bring me to a good place, it harmed me, I did not live humanely. (...)", participant 3 said, "(...) After I contacted the police, I regretted the crime I committed, but I committed a crime again to obtain drugs. (...)", participant 5 said, "(...) after I contacted the police, I regretted the crime I committed many times. It is a bad thing to be a criminal at police stations instead of taking a bath at home, having a nice meal, and reading a book, so I regretted it many times after I contacted the police. (...)", participant 7, "(...) I regretted the crime I committed after I contacted the police, but I committed a crime again for drug supply. (...)", participant 10, "(...) I regretted the crime I committed a lot after I contacted the police. They made me realize that I had harmed myself. (...)", participant 14, "(...) the police told me that what I did was a mistake, and I regretted the crime I committed very much. The police opened my eyes. They made me realize that I had harmed others and myself (...)". All the participants regretted the crime they committed after contacting the police. It is understood that the police informed the substance abusers about the seriousness of the crime they committed, the damages they caused, and the consequences and convinced the participants in this regard. It is also understood that the police informed the addicts about the damage caused by substance addiction and the decreased quality of life, and the participants who thought about it regretted the crime they committed.

The question "Did you want to commit a crime again after contacting the police?" was asked. One participant stated that they did not commit a crime after contacting the police. Seven participants stated that they did not want to commit a crime after contacting the police, but they had to commit a crime because they could not get rid of their drug addiction. Participant 5 said, "(...) I did not want to commit a crime again after I contacted the police, but I could not quit my addiction. (...)", participant 7 said, "(...) I tried to stay away from crime after I contacted the police, but I committed a crime again for drug supply. I saw it as a small mistake. (...)", participant 8, "(...) I did not want to commit a crime again after contacting the police, but judicial proceedings were taken against me several times due to drugs. (...)", participant 9, "(...) I did not want to commit a crime after contacting the police. However, I was caught several times for drug use because I could not get rid of addiction. (...)". Six participants stated that they did not want to commit a crime after contacting the police.

All of the participants said that they did not want to commit a crime again after contacting the police. However, they stated that they could not get rid of drug addiction and that they had to commit a crime to obtain this substance. It is thought that drug use is related to the phenomenon of committing a crime.

The question "Did you think that you would be worthy in society after contacting the police?" was asked. Eight participants thought that they were valued in society after contacting the police. Participant 1, "(...) after the police warned me, I quit drugs and gained a place in the society. I felt worthy. (...)", participant 6, "(...) after I contacted the police, I felt worthy in the society after I quit drugs. (...)", participant 7, "(...) after I contacted the police, I felt worthy in the society. Since the police officers who approached me well made me feel worthy, I felt that I would be worthy in society when I quit drugs. (...)", participant 13, "(...) I think I will gain value in society after contacting the police, but I think I should move away from my social environment. (...)". Five participants stated that they did not think that they would be worthy in society after contacting the police. Participant 3 stated, "(...) I did not feel worthy in society after I contacted the police. (...)". Another participant said, "(...) I did not think that I would gain value in society after I contacted the police, because I never felt worthless. (...)". Some of the participants thought that they would quit drugs and be worthy in society after communicating with the police. In the interviews with police officers with good communication skills, the substance abusers felt worthy.

The question "Has there been a change in your life after communicating with the police?" was asked. Five participants stated that there was a positive change in their lives after communicating with the police. Participant 1 said, "(...) Yes, it has changed. I have two children and I spent better time for them. I worked and provided for my house, but after I started drugs, my order was disrupted again. (...)", participant 4, "(...) Yes, it happened. I wanted to quit drugs. I wanted to put my life in order, but I could not put my life in order because I could not find a job. (...)", participant 7, "(...) after I contacted the police, I tried to live a more orderly life. I came across police officers who touched my life. I used to use heroin before, but I don't use it anymore. I use addictive substances sometimes; I go to work regularly, and I try to put my life in order. (...)", participant 8, "(...) yes it happened. After I contacted the police, I tried to stay away from crimes and drugs. I tried to put my life in order. I realized that drugs did not help me. (...)", participant 13, "(...) Yes, it did. I wanted to put my life in order. I didn't want judicial proceedings to be taken against me again. I plan to quit drugs and alcohol. (...)". Nine participants stated that the police did not contribute positively or negatively to the changes in their lives because they could not get rid of drug addiction. Participant 2 said, "(...) No, it did not happen because I could not get rid of drugs. The police did not help me to get rid of this addiction. (...)", Participant 3 said, "(...) there was no change in my life after I contacted the police. Because I couldn't get rid of my drug addiction, I had to commit crimes. (...)", participant 9, "(...) No, it didn't happen because I couldn't get rid of drugs. The police wanted to help me and talked to me, but I couldn't quit drugs even though I wanted to quit drugs. (...)", participant 12, "(...) No, it didn't happen because I continued to use drugs. I continued to commit crimes because I used drugs.

The police didn't help me in this direction. (...)". Most of the participants stated that there was no change in their lives after contacting the police. The reason for this was that they did not give up using drugs. Since they could not get rid of their drug addiction. They stated that even though the police raised awareness, there was no change in their lives.

CONCLUSION

Substance abusers feel withdrawal (muscle and joint pain, fever, chills) when they do not take drugs and stimulants. Therefore, they must obtain enough drugs and stimulants during the day to avoid any seizures or crises. Drugs are difficult and costly to obtain. Drug addicts are vulnerable to committing crimes in order to buy drugs and stimulants. By committing crimes such as theft, prostitution, looting (extortion), and abuse of trust, they seek solutions to buy drugs. Police forces take judicial action against drug addicts within the scope of both the criminalization of drug use and the crimes committed to obtain drugs.

Substance addiction causes emotional, physical, and perceptual atrophy. For this reason, it is difficult to communicate effectively with a substance-addicted individual. Both in society and in any institution, substance abusers have problems in the communication process. As stated in the stigmatization theory, substance abusers are not accepted and respected in the society. The fact that the individual, who has both communication problems in society and is stigmatized, also commits a crime, and appears before the police will put the person in a more deadlock. Therefore, establishing effective communication with the person will facilitate the process. Therefore, police officers have a key role in communication. The communication of the police with an individual who is ostracized in his/her work and social life, and who commits a crime, can draw a positive or negative path for the substance abuser.

In the interviews conducted with the participants within the scope of this study, it can be seen that police officers with good communication skills cause positive changes in the lives of substance abusers such as quitting drugs, feeling worthy, finding a job, and strengthening social relations. In the answers given by the participants, they stated that they were understood by the police even if they thought that some police officers were prejudiced against them. Although the prejudices are reasoned by stigmatization, these behaviors cause negative results in communication. It is seen that the attitudes of the police officers that they understand the feelings and thoughts of the participants balance the positive and negative emotions. It is thought that the reason why the participants felt worthless while communicating with the police is due to the fact that they communicated with the police while they were suspects, a judicial process was initiated against them, and they gave statements as suspects.

After the interviews, it was understood that the police used gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice effectively. As a result, it is thought that there is effective communication and interaction between the police officers and the participants.

Participants stated that police officers listened to them patiently and empathized with them. Most of the participants stated that police officers established close relationships, gave advice, and strengthened their desire to quit drugs. Most of the participants realized the nature, reality, and consequences of their criminal actions after communicating with police officers. Therefore, they regretted them and wanted to quit drugs. Thus, the fact that police officers communicate with substance abusers effectively, empathize with them, listen to them patiently, use gestures, mimics, and tone of voice in an efficient manner shows that they can influence the thoughts of substance abusers with poor communication skills.

The participants stated that the police officers they encountered were prejudiced, did not listen to them patiently, and understand their feelings and thoughts. However, even these participants stated that they were willing to quit drugs when they interacted with empathetic and optimistic police officers. These participants did not want to commit crimes and on the contrary, regretted their criminal actions in the past. In addition, it is seen that police officers' skills such as being in communication with substance addicts, empathizing, listening patiently, and using gestures, mimics, and tone of voice effectively can positively influence the thoughts of substance abusers with poor communication skills. However, even though the participants were willing to get rid of substance addiction after contacting the police, the predominance of drug addiction prevented them from overcoming the situation.

The prejudiced attitude of security forces during judicial proceedings towards substance abusers, who are ostracized and disrespected by society and therefore see themselves as weak, vulnerable and powerless, may push them to despair. The individual who is ostracized both by society and state institutions will feel that he/she is not accepted anywhere and will become more dependent on the substance he/she is addicted to. In this context, substance abusers whose communication with their environment is interrupted and who become isolated will tend towards crime further. Based on the findings, it has been evaluated that there is a connection between the communication skills of police officers and the substance abusers' willingness to quit drugs and reorganize their lives. Therefore, with effective communication, an awareness can be raised to understand the damages caused by substance abusers to their environment and themselves. It was observed that as the communication skills of the police increased, the willingness of substance abusers to get rid of drugs increased, and the occurrence of some positive emotions and attitudes such as seeing themselves as worthy and respected in the society they live in were also observed. Considering the findings, it is thought that providing education to improve the communication skills of police officers working in forensic units and raising awareness will contribute to the reintegration of substance abusers into society. Since this study is a pilot study, generalization is not appropriate. In order to make generalizations, it is thought that conducting a larger-scale research within the framework of stigmatization theory will contribute to understanding the results of effective communication between police and substance abusers.

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