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A COMPARATIVE STUDY: PSYCHOLOGICAL MALADJUSTMENT BETWEEN DRUG ADDICTS AND NON-DRUG ADDICTS IN PESHAWAR

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the degree of psychological adjustment/maladjustment among male drug addicts in Peshawar. For this purpose, a representative sample of 200 participants ($N=200$) including 100 drug addicts, having age-range of $M=32.83$ and $SD=8.90$, selected from Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar and Dost Welfare Foundation, Peshawar, while, 100 non-drug addicts, with age-range of $M=26.80$ and $SD=4.45$, was selected from general population. The demographic information of the participants was recorded using a personal data sheet. For the assessment of psychological adjustment/maladjustment, Urdu version of Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Riaz, 2011) was administered. The results showed higher level of psychological maladjustment among drug addicts as compared to non-drug addicts. Significant difference between the two groups on total score of PAQ ($p < .001$) was also evident in the study. It was concluded that drug addicts suffered from severe psychological distress in terms of aggression/hostility, dependency, low self-adequacy, emotional instability, emotional unresponsiveness, and negative worldview.

INTRODUCTION

Drug addicts are found to be associated with various psychological as well as emotional difficulties as compared to non-drug addicts (Terracciano, Lockenhoff, Crum, Bienvenu & Costa, 2008). For instance, Kuppens and his associates (2010)

studied drug addiction as characterised by psychological distress, emotional disturbances and lack of overall mental well-being. They found that the inability to continue an adjusted or stable relationship with others and divergent thought pattern with reflections of emotional instability and feelings of unworthiness meet the major diagnostic criteria for such individuals, hence, labelling them as 'lack of fit' as suggested by Pervin (1968). The present research examines the close association between psychological maladjustment and drug addiction by analysing maladaptive patterns of emotions, low self-esteem and aggression among the drug addicts of Peshawar. To understand the phenomenon of psychological maladjustment as an important feature of drug addicts, it is important to know drug addiction in connection with psychological distress from the perspective of relevant researches.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Medical practitioners often define drug addiction as long lasting alterations in brain activity caused due to repetitive intake of fatal drugs irrespective of the knowledge of their life threatening effects on individuals. The change in normal brain structure simultaneously leads to malfunctioning in the brain that has greater tendency to persist and transform into destructive behaviours. Koob and Volkow (2016) view drug addiction as substance dependence or substance use disorder that eventually leads to withdrawal symptoms. In addition, drug abuse has been defined as the transition from recreational use to habituation of drugs including alcohol and psychoactive drugs (Everitt & Robbins, 2015). Study by Ramaekers, Jan and Verkes (2019) has revealed that substance abusers have poor mental and physical health resulting in alcohol and drug-related public violence/aggression in Europe. Further, it is evident that adverse psychological effects emerge from addictive use or overdose of drugs such as opioids in the Canada and USA then compared to UK and other countries of the Europe (Helmerhorst, Teunis, Janssen, & Ring, 2017). Serious psychological impairments caused by excessive use of drugs as investigated by Huba, Wingard, and Bentler (1979) include intoxication, withdrawal symptoms, mood disorders, anxiety and stress-related disorders, sexual dysfunctions, sleep disturbances, and cognitive impairments. Moreover, literature also shows that drug addiction leads to several behavioural, emotional and psychological difficulties, thereby, providing a pathway to infer that drug abuse and criminality are strongly connected with each other. For instance, Bacciardi et al (2012) empirically observed that heroin addicts were found to have been involved in crimes against property, physical assault and self-harm such as attempts of suicide. Hunter, Heise, and Johns (2018) also suggested a close linkage between drug abuse and deviant acts, such as theft and robbery.

An essential point of consideration here is to gain knowledge about the possible causes of drug addiction. A large number of theorists and psychologists have presented their remarkable efforts in the field of research in an attempt to understand the personality as well as environmental determinants of drug addiction. For instance, personality theories emphasize that drug abuse is caused by certain personality traits or characteristics of an individual. Donovan and Jessor (2016) found that various personality dimensions including leadership, rebelliousness and

extroversion and lacking diligence were among the major predictors of drug use and dependence. Similarly, socio-cultural theories highlight that individuals are prone to indulge in drug addiction due to external factors in the environment such as observation of parental involvement in drugs, peer group pressure, family disturbances, or academic failure, etc. Study by Sajjadi, Harouni, and Sani (2015) suggests that lack of parental supervision, poor socioeconomic conditions, availability of drugs, and peer pressure were among the major causes of drug abuse among youth.

Furthermore, measuring the hazardous effects of excessive use of illegal drugs among youth has been a focus of concern for researchers over the recent years. According to Ilyuk, Gromyco, Kiselev, Torban, and Krupitsky (2012), individuals involved in psychoactive drugs have found to be highly aggressive and hostile toward themselves as well as others around them. In a study conducted by Dennis (2003), qualitative and quantitative data obtained from Greater Accra, Brong-Ahafo and Upper-East was critically analysed and it was concluded that cannabis users suffered from sudden feelings of anxiety and had paranoid thoughts, whereas, cocaine users were at high risk of developing anxiety disorders. In the same year, identical findings were empirically presented by Hoaken and Stewart (2003) suggesting that cannabis and alcohol intoxication particularly triggered aggression, violent behaviours, and serious criminal activities among individuals. In later years, Rahman, Lesani, and Moqaddam (2012) concluded that drug addicts suffered from severe psychological distress and maladjustment as they were assessed to have serious internalized problems such as aggression and other emotional difficulties including negative worldview and hopelessness. Research by Brecht and Herbeck (2013) also assessed that theft, physical violence and other antisocial activities accompanied by psychological maladjustment were observed among a representative sample of drug addicts. In a similar study conducted by Tripathi, Phookun, Yadav, Srivastava, and Talukdar (2012), 83 male drug addicts having age range between 31-50 years were psychologically examined and the results proved that majority of them were involved in criminal activities due to financial crisis and were psychologically maladjusted.

To sum up, the present research has been carried out to measure the degree of psychological maladjustment among drug users through administering the Personality Assessment Questionnaire, which was originally developed by Rohner and Khaleque (2008). The questionnaire has been later translated into Urdu language by Riaz (2011). Following are the aims and objectives of the study:

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the degree of psychological adjustment/maladjustment among drug addicts and non-drug addicts.
2. To measure the significance difference in scores on personality among drug addicts as compared to non-drug addicts.

HYPOTHESES

1. Drug addicts will score high on psychological maladjustment as compared to non addicts.
2. There will be a significant difference in scores of addicts and non-addicts on Personality Assessment Questionnaire.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used descriptive/causal comparative research design to assess the differences between the two groups of study on the basis of psychological adjustment/maladjustment in terms of the degree of aggression/hostility, dependency, emotional instability, emotional unresponsiveness, self-inadequacy, and negative worldview.

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 200 male participants (N=200) comprising two major groups, i.e. drug addicts (n=100) having age range of M=32.83 and SD=8.90 and non-drug addicts (n=100), with age-range of M=26.80 and SD=4.45. The reason for assessing psychological state of drug addicts in comparison to non-drug addicts is the emergence of increasing number of psychological issues among adults caused due to drug addiction.

Using purposive sampling technique, the desired data was collected from Khyber Teaching Hospital Peshawar and Dost Foundation Pelosi. Both the groups were matched on the basis of demographic variables i.e., age, level of education and employment status. It was observed that the drug addicts used different types of drugs which included hashish, heroin, cannabis, traumales (injections), ratline (tablets), and alcohol. For collection of data and administration of questionnaires, all those individuals who have been in the rehabilitation and treatment centre of Khyber Teaching Hospital Peshawar were approached by taking written permission from the concerned authorities. In order to avoid possible unpleasant circumstances faced by the researcher, special restrictions were placed by the hospital authorities for approaching some highly aggressive male addicts admitted at the DATC (Drug Abuse Treatment Center) Wards of the hospitals. Therefore, required data was collected only from 100 drug addicts for the study.

The comparative group of male non-addicts was accessed using convenient sampling technique and data was collected from them by following the same procedure as used for the group of drug addicts. It was observed that a large number of the respondents belonged to low socioeconomic status as shown in Table 1.

INSTRUMENTS

Following scales of measurement were used for collecting data from the research participants.

1. Demographic Data Sheet.
2. Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Urdu version by Riaz, 2011).

Demographic Data Sheet

Demographic information of the participants was collected using a demographic data sheet devised by the researcher. The information included name, age, educational level, occupation, structure of the family i.e., nuclear or joint, and types and duration of drug abuse.

Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult Paq)

Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ: Rohner & Khaleque, 2008) is a four-point Likert scale with seven subscales that are used for the assessment of the psychological adjustment/maladjustment of individuals in terms of level of aggression/hostility, self-esteem, dependency, emotional responsiveness, self-adequacy, negative world view and emotional stability. The responses range from 'Almost Always True' to 'Almost Never True'. The present study used the Urdu version of this scale, translated by Riaz (2011) with alpha reliability of .73.

Procedure

For the process of data collection, the male psychiatry ward of Khyber Teaching Hospital and Dost Foundation Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were approached through prior written permission from the concerned authorities. After taking informed consent, the participants were briefed about the purpose of the research. They were assured that the information provided by them will be kept confidential and will be used for research purpose only. Afterwards, the questionnaires were administered on the subjects including the Demographic Data Sheet and the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (translated into Urdu by Riaz, 2011). The team of psychologists and social workers who were already working on rehabilitation of drug addicts in Khyber Teaching Hospital and Dost foundation also facilitated the researcher in motivating the participants to actively take part in providing information for the study. As most of the participants belonged to low educational background, therefore, they were provided assistance related to few items of PAQ. For non-addicts, both the questionnaires were administered in the same way. The total time taken by each respondent to fill in the questionnaires ranged from 25 to 30 minutes. The collected information was statistically analysed using SPSS, Version 22.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics as A Percentage of The Sample (Census Data in Percentage)

Characteristic	Drug Addicts (n=100)	Non-Drug Addicts (n=100)
Education level		
Nil	33.5	31
SSC or less	8.5	7.5
12th grade	5.5	6.5
Bachelors	2.5	3
Masters	-	2
Employment Status		
Employed	18.5	17
Unemployed	26.5	27
Business	5	6

Table 2: Psychometric Properties of The Major Study Variables

Variable	N	M	SD	α	Range		Skew
					Actual	Potential	
Aggression/Hostility	200	20.5	6.08	0.619	10-37	10-27	0.517
Dependency	200	22.65	7.02	0.447	12-35	11-30	-0.098
Emotional Instability	200	24.35	4.3	0.769	18-35	15-28	0.151
Negative Self-Esteem	200	19.15	4.13	0.643	13-28	12-27	0.327
Negative Self Adequacy	200	19.85	5.93	0.808	11-34	11-23	0.818
Emotional Unresponsive	200	23.8	4.37	0.706	16-34	16-27	0.075
Negative Worldview	200	20.7	6.45	0.808	10-36	9-24	0.46

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation And T-Values of Drug-Addicts and Non-Addicts on Personality Assessment Questionnaire and Its Seven Subscales. (N=200)

	Drug-Addicts			Non-Drug Addicts			
	N=100			N=100			
Variables	M	SD	SE _M	M	SD	SE _M	t
Hostility	22.23	6.43	1.17	17.76	4.29	0.78	3.87
Dependency	24.76	7.07	1.29	20.53	6.4	1.17	2.42
Negative Self-Esteem	20.2	4.42	0.8	18.1	3.6	0.65	2.01
Negative Self-Adequacy	22.76	6.22	1.13	16.93	3.92	0.71	4.34
Emotional Unresponsive	25.63	4.52	0.82	21.96	3.39	0.62	3.54
Emotional Instability	25.26	4.93	0.9	23.43	3.41	0.62	1.67
Negative Worldview	23.43	7.3	1.33	17.96	3.99	0.72	3.59
Total PAQ	165.3	32.55	5.94	136.6	17.54	3.2	4.25
Note: *p < .01, p** .05, p*** .001							

Table 3 illustrates the score of drug addicts and non-addicts on Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) and its seven subscales. The figures demonstrate that drug addicts scored higher on aggression, negative self-adequacy and emotional unresponsiveness as well as on negative world view as compared to non-addicts. Hence, these scores indicated that non addicts are well adjusted than addicts.

DISCUSSION

For several years, a large number of researches have indicated that drug addicts have been scarcely treated humanely and accepted as part of the social group they belong to. A large number of researchers have suggested the need to initiate effective treatment interventions for drug addicts so as to make them socially desirable individuals. According to findings by Bootzin, Acocella, and Alloy

(1993), drug addicts were perceived as criminals and they were only known for being involved in unlawful and unacceptable activities. Moreover, less concern had been paid with respect to their mental and psychological well-being till nineteenth century. It was further concluded that because of the lack of rehabilitation facilities for drug dependents, they eventually suffered from severe maladjustment and other mental health problems.

As research on drug addicts and the underlying factors has a long history, Mikesell and Hanson (1956) defined the term maladjusted as the individual who perceived himself/herself negatively with no capabilities or potentials to move in a society. In other words, a maladjusted person is the one who is unable to live a life according to social norms and values. Thus, a maladjusted person would not have a clear view about his own cognition, his needs and demands. Unlike a well-adjusted person, the psychologically maladjusted individual is unable to keep a harmony between his inner self and outer environment including the society. As per review of Abraham Maslow's work presented by Bland and DeRobertis (2017), a maladjusted person has low level of self-esteem and negative self-concept and views the world negatively and lacks emotional responsiveness and self-adequacy. Following this notion, a number of studies have been conducted by psychologists suggesting that drug addicts are maladjusted individuals. For instance, in a Russian study conducted by Ilyuk, Gromyco, Kiselev, Torban, and Krupitsky (2012), 311 participants with dependence on opioids, stimulants, alcohol, poly-substance dependence were selected and compared with a control group with no dependence.

Using clinical structured interview, Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory, and State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI), it was revealed that drug dependents showed higher aggression and hostility than the control group. Another study was conducted to explore the relationship between alcohol and violence. The results revealed that excessive use of drugs led to higher levels of aggression among individuals. Further, it was assessed that this relationship is often of a complex nature, with intoxication, neurotoxic, and withdrawal effects observed more often (Hoaken & Stewart, 2003). In Iranian research, a descriptive-analytical study was carried out on 520 students of Kerman's Universities. It was observed that out of the 520 students, 34.62% were drug users; 38.33% used Hookah; 28.35% used Cigarettes; Alcohol dependents were 20.55%; Opium users were 5.55%; Cannabis covered 2.23%; and 1.12% used Heroin. The remaining 340 students (65.38%) were assessed as healthy non drug dependents. More specifically, the results demonstrated a significant difference in comparing the mental health of those students who were drug-users and were assessed to have lower mental health and hopefulness and showed more aggression than the comparative group (Rahman, Lesani, & Moqaddam, 2012).

The possible causal relationship between psychoactive drugs and aggressive behaviour has also been investigated by psychologists over the recent years (Tripathi, Phookun, Yadav, Srivastava, & Talukdar, 2012). Similarly, an extensive study was conducted by Brecht and Herbeck (2013) to measure the effect of

methamphetamine in eliciting violent behaviour among the users. The sample included 350 methamphetamine users who received substance use treatment. 56% of the sample reported to have been involved in violent behaviour, 59% had specific violent criminal behaviours such as committing homicide and rape, etc. Among the violent criminals, 55% were engaged in violent criminal behaviours before they began to use methamphetamine, 12% were involved during the same year of age of initiating, and 33% initiated methamphetamine use before engaging in any violent activity. This provides evidence for the close association between drug abuse and aggression. Another remarkable study was conducted in Iran by Alavi (2011) to explore the psychosocial effects of drug abuse among 300 volunteers. The findings of the research suggested that the participants were active drug users and were involved in theft and prostitution. In addition, they exhibited severe psychological difficulties including depression, lower level of self-adequacy and negative self-esteem. Similar findings were also revealed by Khajehdaluee, Zavar, Alidoust, and Pourandi (2013) in an attempt to assess the relationship between illegal drugs and psychological adjustment/maladjustment among 943 adolescents of grade 9 to 12 using standardized scales of measurement. Further, family history of the sample was also collected. It was observed that 227 respondents were involved in illegal drugs, out of which, 62 used alcohol, 44 used betel nut, 40 used opium, 31 used hashish, 15 used psychoactive pills, only 2 used heroin, and 33 were dependents on other substances. Statistical analysis showed a positive relationship between psychological distress and drug abuse.

Moreover, Hagman (2004) concluded that low self-efficacy is a common characteristic of drug addicts' personality when compared with non-drug addicts. Similarly, a strong relationship between low self-efficacy and drug abuse was found by Torrecillas, Cobo, Delgado and Ucles (2015) in their study on a sample of 181 subjects including 97 males and 84 females. A comparative analysis was made between drug users and a control group using Self-Efficacy Scale (SE) and the Addictive Behaviour Research Interview (EICA). The substance abusers were observed over a period of seven months and specifically during their follow ups, they were reported to have emotional problems including low self-efficacy.

As exploring the causal relationship between emotional instability and drug abuse has been a centre of research for psychologists, literature provides us abundance of researches suggesting emotional instability as a prominent feature of drug addicts. For instance, Sudraba, Rancans, and Millere (2012) studied a sample of 241 drug addicts including 154 men and 87 women with the average age of 37 to 39 years. For this purpose, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory was administered to measure the degree of emotional state of alcoholics. The results showed that all the drug addicted participants were emotionally unstable as compared to normal group. Moreover, according to Khan, Naz, Khan, Khan, and Shah (2015), socioeconomic impacts of drugs are commonly observed in the population who were frequently involved in using narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, alcohol and tobacco. The results revealed a global increase in socioeconomic, psychological, emotional and behavioural problems faced by respondents involved in these drugs. In

addition, mental and physical health related issues were also measured as the negative outcomes of drug dependency.

To elucidate, the studies conducted in the relevant area provide support to the empirical findings of the present research that provides remarkable explanation for the notion that psychological maladjustment is one salient feature of drug addicts as compared to normal population. Constricting the discussion to the major assumptions of the research, hypothesis 1 assumed that PAQ scores will reveal significant differences between personality profiles of drug-addicts and non-drug-addicts. Further, hypothesis 2 stated that high scores on PAQ will indicate high psychological maladjustment than non- drug addicts. For this purpose, Adult Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) was administered. Total PAQ score shown in Table 3 indicated that drug addicts had severe psychological maladjustment. They scored higher on the subscales of hostility/aggression, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsive and negative worldview. On the contrary, non-drug addicts seemed to be well-adjusted. The findings of the current research, therefore, support both the hypotheses as shown in the relevant tables.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that drug addicts are inclined towards psychological maladjustment as characterized by emotional difficulties including aggression, lack of self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness and negative worldview when compared to non-drug addicts.

LIMITATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

Following are the limitations, suggestions and implications of the present study:

- 1.** The results of the present study cannot be generalized over the large population of Pakistan as the sample size was small than required. As the number of rehabilitation centres for drug-addicts is less in Peshawar, therefore, the number of registered drug addicts admitted in the selected hospital/institute was also very small. However, carrying out research on a large sample of drug addicts in future shall lead to more extensive results that will also increase the generalizability of the findings.
- 2.** Although rapport was established between the researcher and the participants before the data was collected, however, the respondents seemed to be reluctant and anxious in providing the required information. It is suggested that the problem may be further controlled in future through giving prior counselling and awareness regarding the research.
- 3.** As majority of the respondents were uneducated, therefore, the items on the scales were read out to them aloud by the researcher. This process made the study become more time consuming than it was actually supposed to be.
- 4.** It is also suggested that drug awareness programs may be promoted by the state for the general population. This will help to create awareness among people regarding drug addiction and its hazardous effects.

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