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A CASE STUDY OF SMOKING HABITS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KARACHI CITY: PREVALENCE AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS

Madiha Kamal¹, Sara Raiq², Muhammad Asif Shamim³, Hira Mujahid⁴

¹Senior Lecturer Bahria University Karachi, Pakistan

²Assistant Professor University of Buner

³Department of Business Administration & Department of Accounting and Finance
Salim Habib University, Karachi

⁴Institute of business management, Karachi

E.mail: [1madihakamal@live.com](mailto:madihakamal@live.com), [1Madihakamal.bukc@bahria.edu.pk](mailto:Madihakamal.bukc@bahria.edu.pk)

Corresponding Author Email: [2rafiqsara@yahoo.com](mailto:rafiqsara@yahoo.com), [3asif.shamim@shu.edu.pk](mailto:asif.shamim@shu.edu.pk),
[4hirathesis@gmail.com](mailto:hirathesis@gmail.com)

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ABSTRACT:

This research analyzes the prevailing trend of smoking among youth belonging to numerous universities in the metropolitan city of Karachi. The study aims to report the prevalence of student smoking activity by taking several significant factors into account. For primary data collection, a survey questionnaire, containing close-ended questions was floated and responses of 123 students belonging to diverse universities in Karachi were recorded. The findings of the study stressed the conclusion that male students are likely to smoke more as compared to female students. The study also reported significant contributors from other variables like family behavior toward smoking and peer encouragement. Concerning smoking trends, this study shows students' characteristics as well such as smoking 100 cigarettes in life and smoking a whole cigarette in the past 30 days, etc. Other personal opinions and social factors included the reason for smoking, students' attitudes toward smoking on health, perception of having smoke-free public places, and intention to join cessation programs to quit smoking. The study also puts light upon relevant kinds of literature that shows similar indication in this regard.

INTRODUCTION:

The practice of combustion and inhalation of tobacco, whose history can be traced back to 5000 BC, is called smoking. Numerous studies reveal the alarming situation of the high practice of smoking in the world. The World Health Organization (WHO, 1979) has defined tobacco smoking as an endemic. Smoking does not only cause a smoker's life at risk but the environment and the surrounding people are also affected by smokers' smoking (second-hand smokers). Pakistan is a developing country with an astounding population of almost 160 million people which has the 18th largest cigarette market in the world. Presently, Pakistan is on the edge line of devastating health and economic crisis with the use of tobacco; rising abruptly among its youth. Smoking serves to be one of the leading causes of preventable deaths. Smoking is an expensive habit. Apart from premature illness and impermanence, smoking puts an additional financial liability on smokers, their families, and the country as a whole. Among young grown-ups, especially university students in Pakistan, the trend of smoking is 15% with the majority being male smokers. The reason young people start to smoke is complex and multi-faceted. It contains a host of cooperating biological, genetic, psychological, economic, and social variables. The harmful side effects of smoking include ischemic heart disease, chronic obstructive airways disease, and several cancers. Smoking also results in coronary artery disease.

Various factors have been identified as a cause behind the prevalence and acceptance of smoking among university students in Karachi. Parental smoking behavior tends to play a major role in smoking initiation and escalation. Many studies claim that youth having at least one parent with a smoking habit begins smoking themselves. Other studies indicate the direct influence of friends' smoking habits on a person's smoking behavior. People who never smoked are likely to begin smoking if their close friends smoke.

Exposure to smoking in smoke-occupied and smoke-free places also matters. Data collected from California suggests that people who used to live in smoke-free places were significantly more active to make a quick attempt and get success in quitting smoking than those who lived in contrary locations. The rationale to conduct this study on university students of Karachi is given foremost importance since the pattern of smoking among youth has had somewhat a diverse course in a way that smoking rates for high school students began to increase in the early 1990s and did not decrease until the end of the decade. If the current smoking trends continue, 5.6 million youths alive today will eventually pass away before time.

RESEARCH AIMS AND SUB-ORDINATE OBJECTIVES:

This study aims to evaluate the smoking trend, reasons, and the potential relationship between smoking cigarettes and various social factors among university students of Karachi which is a metropolitan city in Pakistan. For this reason, an initial estimate of the prevalence of cigarette smoking among a selected population of university students in Karachi was initiated by the students of Bahria University, Karachi Campus.

The followings are the sub-ordinate objectives of this research:

1. Estimation of the number of smokers and non-smokers currently present in different Universities in Karachi.
2. Reason for smoking.
3. Estimation of cigarette smoking relationship with family smoking habits, close friend smoking habits, and smoking at home.
4. The attitude of students towards its acceptance is a major health consequence.
5. Estimation of students' intention to have smoke-free places.
6. Estimation of smokers' intention to join cessation programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Smoking endures being a major Public Health issue in Pakistan. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) has found that the boy-to-girl tobacco use ratio has shrunk from 7:1 to 2:1 as it used to be, nearly a decade ago. This indication of the closing gender gap in terms of tobacco use is accurate for both rural as well as urban women. An estimated 12.4 percentage of boys and 7.5 percent of girls use tobacco in Pakistan and an estimated 2.3 percent of boys and .6 percent of girls smoke in Pakistan. Cigarette advertising tends to increase young people's risk of smoking. In Pakistan, tobacco companies are appealing to adolescents by using heroes and role models (Simpson, 2002) and by offering costly prizes, such as gold and air tickets for overseas tours. Therefore, its prevalence in adolescents and healthcare professionals is frightening. (Rozi et al.) Reported 24% pervasiveness of current smoking (30 days prevalence) among college students studying in private and public colleges in three towns of Karachi. Another study conducted in Karachi on school-going adolescents reported the prevalence of current smoking to be 13.7%. In Karachi (Merchant et al, 1998) ex-smokers reported spending 25% of the total household income on this practice. Other studies have reported parental or relatives smoking as encouragement on the initiation of smoking. A study (Khuwaja et al.) testified that widely held adolescents were exposed to passive smoking mostly my father smoking at home. In a survey (Mal et al.), 11.7% of customers of air-conditioned public transport identified smoking while traveling and while divulging other passengers' cigarette smoke.

More than one-third of the population in Pakistan lives in poverty (Ministry of Population Protection, 2002). Smoking is increasingly emerging as a major issue of public health. Forty-seven cigarette brands are available in the country, including some of the world's highest concentrations of tar and nicotine (Asghar and Jan 1989). In a survey, the average age of students who began smoking in Pakistan was 17 years, with 88 percent starting before their 21st birthday (Hussain et al, 1995). Community-based surveys (Alam, 1998 & Shah et al, 2001) have shown that 36% to 44% of adult males smoking has been registered in different parts of the world. A study (Zaidi et al.) demonstrated that displaying pictures of complications of smoking (e.g. patients with oral cancer, those using electronic voice boxes, and patients on ventilators for respiratory support) on cigarette packs was considered effective in limitation of this habit among high school students. Results from the study (Bhanji et al.) confirmed

that while aware of pulmonary complications, the majority of female smokers did not have information about cardiovascular & obstetrical complications arising as a consequence of smoking (e.g. low birth weight, premature birth, congenital anomalies, and stillbirths).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY:

Primary Data:

The data collected was based on primary research and implicated a quantitative analysis followed by a structured survey questionnaire having close-ended questions.

RESEARCH SAMPLE AND TECHNIQUES:

A cross-sectional survey was conducted electronically targeting a random sample of 123 youth currently studying in a reputable university in the metropolitan city of Karachi, Pakistan from April 12 to April 14, 2019.

METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS:

Non-smokers were defined as those who have smoked no or less than 100 cigarettes in their lives till now, those who approve to have smoke-free public places, and those who have attempted or maybe attempt in the future to join cessation programs to quit smoking. On the other hand, smokers were defined as those who were currently smoking based upon the reasons asked in a questionnaire and those who have smoked more than 100 cigarettes until now and have no intention to join cessation programs to quit smoking in the future as well.

Demographic data comprised of information such as gender (male, female), age, community status (rural, urban), and university name was included. The rest of the questions were asked about the prevalence of smoking among university students in Karachi by considering smoking culture among family members, close friends, and other psychosocial and motivational factors.

Regarding smoking status, respondents were asked about 'your smoking status' with possible responses being: 'smoker and non-smoker'. Respondents (both smokers and non-smokers) were then asked about their family smoking status (parents and siblings) with possible responses being: 'Yes (if at least one of them smokes), No (when none of them smoke) and I do not know (when they were not sure about their smoking behavior)'. The student respondents were also evaluated based on their smoking behavior by asking questions such as if they have ever smoked 100 cigarettes in their lives, respondents' smoking behavior at home, and whether they ever smoked a whole cigarette in the last 30 days. The influence of peer pressure was also given concern by asking several close friends who smoke. Questions were also asked about the reasons for starting smoking, how would they rate smoking habit on a scale of 1-3 being: 1 (bad for health), 2 (Not bad for health), 3 (Neutral or no response), their attitude towards having smoke-free public places and their intention to join any cessation programs to quit smoking.

RESEARCH ETHICS ISSUES:

Informed consent was obtained and student respondents were made sure of the confidentiality of the information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

This study reports the trend of smoking behavior among students belonging to several universities in Karachi. Around one-third of the adult population around the world is engaged in smoking (47% men and 7% women). Not only this, but tobacco consumption also causes about 10,000 deaths each day. This body of evidence demonstrates how different social and motivational factors can influence smoking initiation and consumption.

The characteristics presented in this report convey a clear message of the addictive nature of smoking cigarettes. Craving smoking case of some students was also identified as a barrier to smoking cessation

The domestic environment is a key factor as well. A previous study conducted in Karachi has also found a significant relationship between the prevalence of smoking in adolescents and smoking among their parents, uncles, peer smoking, and spending leisure time outdoors.

Academic stress relief due to the tough course of studies also influences its initiation. Other than this, many psychological factors also play a vital role such as people with low self-esteem and teenage youth with behavioral issues tend to have a higher risk of having smoking as a habit. Teenagers are also easily trapped by cigarette advertisements. Quite a lot of studies have concluded that ads are one of the main sources in the promotion of teenage smoking.

Roughly 90% of lung cancer cases in men and 79% in women are reported due to smoking. A recent poll conducted by Gallup Pakistan revealed that the majority of people support a complete ban on smoking in public areas. It has also been stated that 47 brands of cigarettes in Pakistan have 87% tar and 78.7% nicotine, causing irreparable damage to health.

Demographic & Family Influence Analysis

Characteristics	Smokers n= (%)	Non-smokers n= (%)	Total Responses n= 123(%)
Gender	14(17.22)	105(129.15)	119(146.37)
Male	12(14.76)	26(31.98)	38(46.74)
Female	02(2.46)	79(97.17)	81(99.63)
Age	14(17.22)	109(134.07)	123(151.29)
Below 18	0(-)	03(3.69)	03(3.69)
18-25	14(17.22)	103(126.69)	117(143.91)
26 or more	0(-)	03(3.69)	03(3.69)
Community where you live	14(17.22)	109(134.07)	123(151.29)
Urban	13(15.99)	87(94.83)	100(123)
Rural	01(1.23)	22(27.06)	23(28.29)

Parents smoking status	14(17.22)	105(129.15)	119(146.37)
Yes	07(8.61)	26(31.98)	33(40.59)
No	03(3.69)	40(49.2)	43(52.89)
I don't know	04(4.92)	39(47.97)	43(52.89)
Siblings smoking status	14(17.22)	109(134.07)	123(151.29)
Yes	06(7.38)	22(27.06)	28(34.44)
No	06(7.38)	43(52.89)	49(60.27)
I don't know	02(2.46)	44(54.12)	46(56.58)
Ever smoked at home	14(17.22)	109(134.07)	123(151.29)
Yes	08(9.84)	103(126.69)	111(136.53)
No	03(3.69)	03(3.69)	06(7.38)
I have never smoked	03(3.69)	03(3.69)	06(7.38)

The table mentioned above shows the smoking behavior among students of different universities in Karachi concerning their gender, community, age, and family background. The majority of smokers were found to be belonging to a male gender while the majority of non-smokers were females. It also shows that all of the smokers are between the age group of 18-and 25 and belong to the urban community. Moreover, the data collected pointed out that at least one parent of the majority of smokers smoked while the sibling's analysis, showed equal stats. It further throws light upon the attitude of a smoker and non-smoker (including those as well that occasionally smokes), indicating that out of identified smokers 8 of them tend to smoke at home, and 103 non-smokers do so.

Smoking behavior and Peer influence Analysis

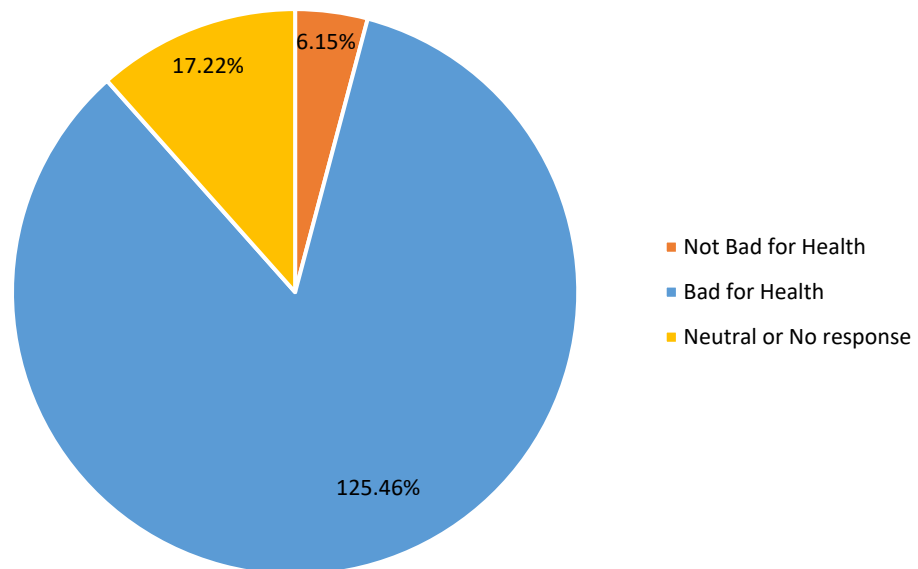
Characteristics	Smokers n= (%)	Non-smokers n= (%)	Total n= 123(%)
Smoked 100 or more cigarettes in life	14(17.22)	106(130.38)	120(147.6)
Yes	12(14.76)	04(4.92)	16(19.68)
No	02(2.46)	34(41.82)	36(44.28)
I have never smoked	00(-)	68(83.64)	68(83.64)
Smoked a whole cigarette in the last 30 days	14(17.22)	105(129.15)	119(146.37)
Everyday	08(9.84)	00(0)	08(9.84)
Some days	06(7.38)	09(11.07)	15(18.45)
Some days	00(-)	96(118.08)	96(118.08)

I have never smoked			
Number of closes friends that smoke	14(17.22)	101(124.23)	115(141.45)
1	01(1.23)	29(35.67)	30(36.9)
3	04(4.92)	13(15.99)	17(20.91)
5	05(6.15)	23(28.29)	28(34.44)
More	04(4.92)	28(34.44)	32(39.36)
None	00(-)	08(9.84)	08(9.84)
Perception of smoking for health	14(17.22)	107(131.61)	121(148.83)
Not bad	01(1.23)	04(4.92)	05(6.15)
Bad for health	11(13.53)	91(111.93)	102(125.46)
Neutral	02(2.46)	12(14.76)	14(17.22)
Smoke-free places	14(17.22)	107(131.61)	121(148.83)
Definitely yes	06(7.38)	65(79.95)	71(87.33)
Probably yes	01(1.23)	09(11.07)	10(12.3)
Definitely no	03(3.69)	25(30.75)	28(34.44)
Probably no	04(4.92)	08(9.84)	12(14.76)
Intention to join any cessation programs in future	14(17.22)	108(132.84)	122(150.06)
Yes	03(3.69)	11(13.53)	14(17.22)
No	04(4.92)	06(7.38)	10(12.3)
Maybe	07(8.61)	10(12.3)	17(20.91)
I do not smoke anymore	00(-)	26(31.98)	26(31.98)
I have never smoked	00(-)	55(67.65)	55(67.65)

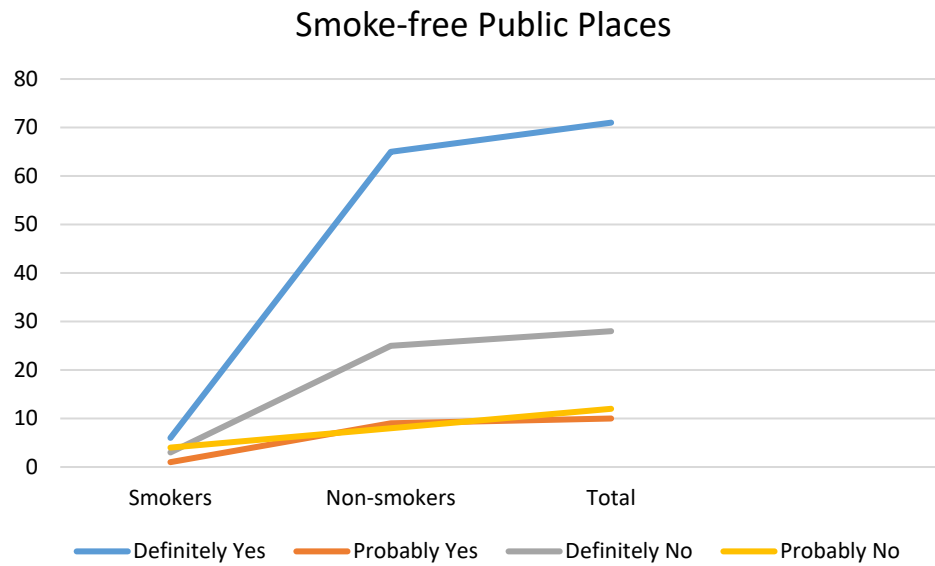
The table mentioned above shows the fluctuating smoking behavior of students from various universities. The information presented in the table indicates the actual number and percentages of students based upon certain factors such as

100 cigarettes smoked in life, smoking a whole cigarette in the last 30 days, etc. depicting 17.22% smokers and 130.38% non-smokers and, 17.22% smokers, and 129.15% non-smokers, respectively. The table further showed the peer influence on smoking behavior of students given that out of 17.22% of smokers, the majority of their friend circle had 6.15% of close friends that smoke. On the other hand, out of 124.23%, non-smokers had at least one smoker close friend which makes 35.67% out of the total estimate. Similar data was gathered for other influential factors such as the perception of smoking on health, attitude toward having smoke-free public places, and intention to join cessation programs to quit smoking that is shown via the following graphs.

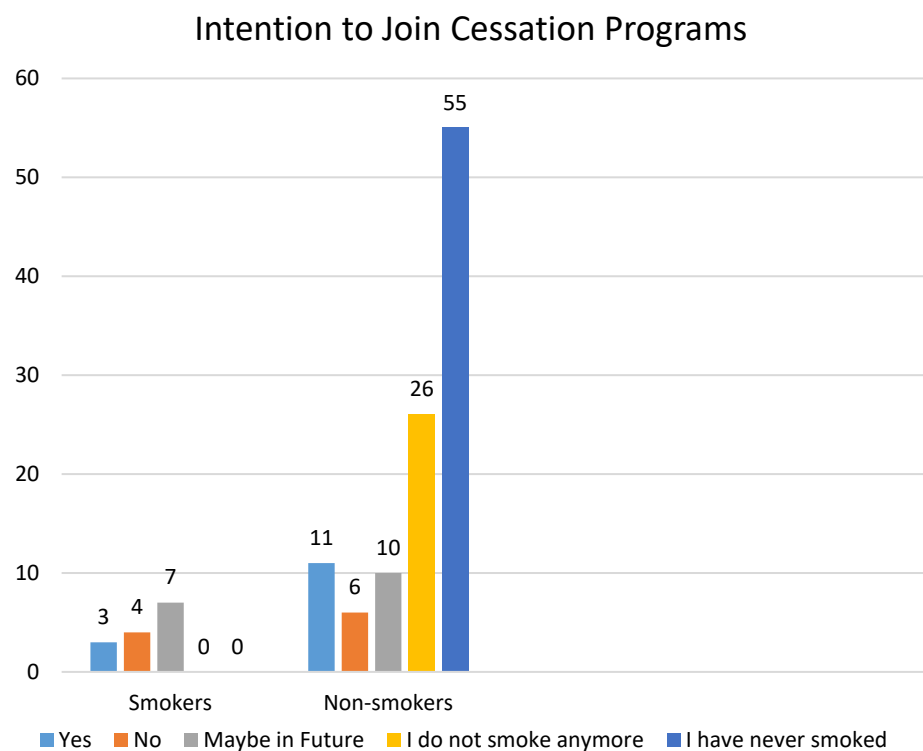
Perception of Smoking on Health



The graph represents student respondents' perception of smoking on health revealing 102 out of a total of 121 respondents exhibited their approach of smoking on health as a bad consequence.



The graph representing the attitude of students toward having smoke-free places



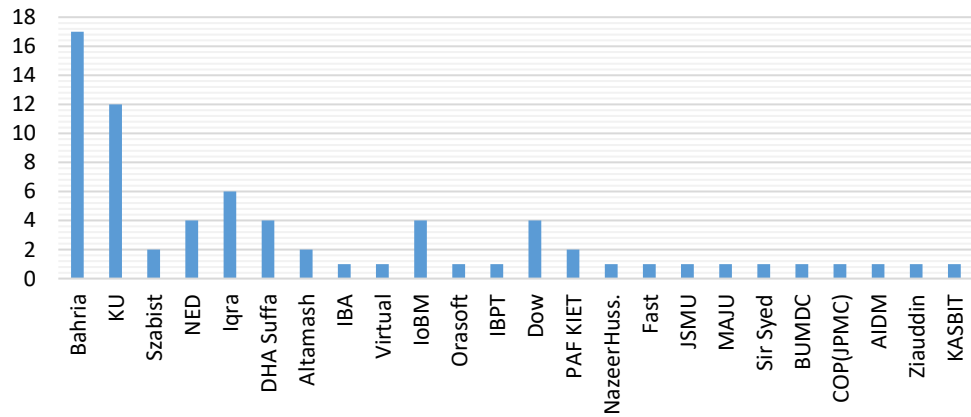
shows 87.33% out of 148.83% of total respondents (smokers, non-smokers) unveiled a positive relationship toward having smoke-free places.

The graph highlights the tactic of smokers and non-smokers respectively toward initiation of joining cessation programs to quit smoking, narrating 7 smokers out of 14 predicted to join it in the future.

Distribution of Participants by University

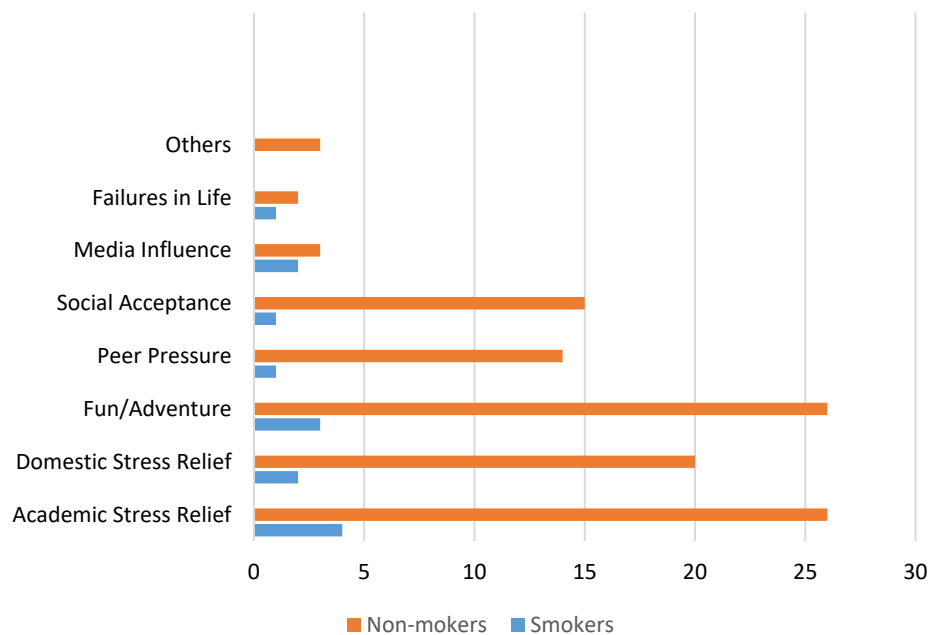
University Name	Number of students 110 responses out of 123
Bahria University, Karachi Campus	17
Karachi University	12
Szabist	02
NED University of Engineering and Tech.	04
Iqra University	06
DHA Suffa University	04
Altamash Institute of Dental and Medicine	02
IBA	01
Virtual University	01
IoBm	04
Orasoft Institute	01
IBPT	01
Dow University of Health and Sciences	04
PAF KIET	02
Nazeer Hussain University	01
Fast Nuces	01
Jinnah Sindh Medical University	01
Muhammad Ali Jinnah University	01
Sir Syed University of Engineering and Tech.	01
Bahria Dental and Medical College	01
COP (JPMC)	01
AIDM	01
Ziauddin University	01
KASBIT	01

Graphical Representation



Reason for Smoking

Graphical Representation



The graph emphasizes that the majority of smokers implicated academic stress relief to be the foremost reason for smoking while non-smokers suggested academic stress relief and fun/adventure go hand in hand.

CONCLUSION:

This study focuses on trends of smoking among university students of Karachi unveiling through different personal and social factors. The prevalence of smoking seems of major concern among male youth. However, with the rise of other influential variables such as peer pressure, it has started taking place among young girls as well thereby indicating that significant initiatives should be aimed at the introduction of health education services for our society's teenagers, teens, and youth. This can be achieved by using the same media as a platform for awareness which is also an encouraging aspect of smoking prevalence among youth. Schools, colleges, and universities must introduce workshops and different prevention campaigns to minimize their commonality and inform them about the dangers of passive smoking, prevent smoking at home, especially in the presence of children, and ban smoking activity from public places and workplaces. For our research, we considered information such as family smoking behavior, peer influence, and personal attitudes of a person whilst keeping in mind other different social and environmental characteristics. The data gathered via a survey questionnaire consisted of a total of 14 smokers. However, out of this number 12 were found to be male, and only of them were female which shows that the trend of smoking among youth is more common in males as compared to females. The smokers also resulted that they might begin taking cessation programs in the future to quit smoking. On the other hand, the majority of both smokers and non-smokers agreed on smoking is bad for health and emphasize having smoke-free public places. Smokers also stressed upon academic stress relief is the most significant reason for smoking.

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