



A Comparative Study of Substance Abusers and Non-Abusers on Peer Pressure, Tendency to Risk Taking Behavior and Anxiety

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Abstract:

The objective of this study is to examine interpersonal relationships, tendency to risk-taking behavior, and anxiety among substance abusers and non-abusers. A cross-sectional research design was used, and the study was conducted on young adults/ students living and studying in Rawalpindi and Islamabad from September 2019 to December 2019. A convenient and snowball sampling technique was used for data collection from community sample young adults (n = 138; age range from 17-35 years). Self-report measures that are Zung self-rating anxiety scale, Susceptibility to peer pressure self-esteem and health locus of control, and risk-taking questionnaire were used for the data collection. Participants were categorized as substance abusers and non-abusers through independent sample t-tests. A Bivariate Pearson correlation was also calculated. Risk-taking behavior and peer pressure are positively correlated with each other. Anxiety and Risk-taking have negatively correlated to each other. Anxiety affects both abusers and non-abusers equally. Substance abusers scored high on peer pressure and risk-taking behavior as compared to non-abusers. Females are more susceptible to peer pressure as compared to males irrespective of drug intake. Substance abuse has little to do with anxiety. The study was conducted only in Islamabad and Rawalpindi regions where respondents were only young adults/ students, yet, in the future, researchers could use a large sample size and could conduct the study in more than two regions. They could also expand it to the whole country and might include older citizens too to get verifiable facts generalize the results.

Key Words: Substance Abusers, Non-Abusers, Peer Pressure, Risk-Taking Behavior, Anxiety.



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Introduction

Substance is defined as a material with a chemical composition whereas Substance use refers to the use of drugs, prescribed or non-prescribed. Substance abuse is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use causing clinical distress. There are different varieties of substances like Alcohol, Heroin, Cannabis, Tobacco, Smoking, Shisha smoking, Ice, ecstasy, cocaine, etc.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, having one or fewer drinks per day for women and two or fewer drinks per day for men is considered moderate. But if it exceeds this amount, this is Substance Abuse (Ben-Ari & Skvirsky, 2024). Another drug, Heroin is a white or brown powder or black sometimes. Highly pure Heroin is smoked, sniffed, or snorted, and Impure Heroin is injected into veins and muscles through injections. Further, Cocaine, also known as Coke, snow, rock, or blow, comes in different forms but the most common is a fine white powder. Some snort it; some rub it into the gums or dissolve it in water and inject it into the needle. Another drug, Cannabis, is depressant. There are three forms of psychoactive Cannabis: Marijuana, Hashish, and Hash Oil. Marijuana is dried leaves and flowers of plants and is smoked through a pipe or cigarette. Hashish is dried cannabis, and it is baked or smoked. Hashish oil is the strongest form and is extracted from leaves. It is spread on the tip of a cigarette or paper and smoked. The most recent drug, Ice, is an efficacious form of myth that can be smoked in a similar way to cocaine. Ice is used by placing it in a glass pipe, heating it, and then inhaling the vapors. Ice is used by placing it in a glass pipe, heating it, and then inhaling the vapors. The most trending drug, Tobacco is consumed in different ways such as cigarettes, hookah, and chewing.

Drug research used in Pakistan (2013) was conducted by the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. According to this report, Cannabis has a prevalence of 3.6 % of the population and is a highly commonly used drug. Most drug users were 25 to 39 years of age. Around 19000 people are estimated to have used ice during the past year. Men are found to use more than women. 4.25 million Drug abusers are substance dependent and require proper treatment for drug use disorders. There are 100000 heroin users according to the study. 430000 people inject drugs. 4.25 million People are suffering from drug use disorders. 3.6 % of the population used Cannabis in 2013. 80% of people use heroin while one-third, 33% use opium. Please injecting drug use causes the spreading of HIV and other blood borne infections. 37.8% of people suffer from HIV. In KPK, 10.9% of the adult population use drugs. 140000 people use heroin 84000 use opium 1.4 % of the population use periods in KPK. 13000 people in Baluchistan took ice. The prevalence of injecting drug users is 0.3%. Incent 4.3% of people used Cannabis last year. 570000 people use Opioids. Punjab has 480000 heroin users and 86000 opium users. The approximate age range of Cannabis, heroin, and opium was 32 to 34 years, 30 to 39 years, and 40 to 44 years respectively.

A relationship is how two people or groups feel and behave towards each other. Individuals who are suited with each other go for an interpersonal relationship (Kim & Hatfield, 2004). There are different kinds of interpersonal relations like family, love, platonic, professional and friend relationship. First, Family relationships include those individuals that are connected by blood or marriage (Ben-Ari & Skvirsky, 2024). Another kind of Interpersonal relation which is established by belief, affection, warmth and closeness is called love. On the other hand, a relationship that exists between two individuals without any feelings or sexual interaction is referred to Platonic relationship. Professional relations occur when one individual appeal and is granted professional help from trained source. Friendship is a reciprocal relationship. Both parties attain enjoyment from their interaction.

Risk taking can be characterized as embracing an undertaking or activity that includes a test an individual take to get a type of advantage, when there is a component of vulnerability engaged with the outcome. Risky behaviors include a broad list which include unprotected sex that leads towards serious health issues like unwanted pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, violation of traffic rules or country laws that can put people in life threatening situations, drugs intake or substance abuse that is not only harmful for physical health but also for mental health. Most teenagers or young adults start substance use for friend group acceptance or take a break or relaxation from hectic routine or problematic relationships. Social media stars are great influencers for teenagers nowadays for taking risks like walking at the edge of the rooftop, drinking bottle full of alcohol, smoking a cigarette, or eating a bowl of extra spicy food and many more like.

Anxiety is a term which serves the purpose of describing the compound structure of a person and his situation of surroundings. It is a trait and a state and anxiety as a state is just that temporary mood that people or individual feel in response to some external or internal stimuli, anxiety as a trait is inherited part of personality in which individual feel this emotion as in any way (Dieman, Pamella, & Shope, 1987).

Material and Methods

The study used cross sectional descriptive research design (Sekaran, 2010). The Sample size comprised of 138 individuals including abusers and non-abusers, age ranged from 17-35. The Krejice and Morgan (1970) table was used to determine the sample size. Participants were categorized as substance abusers (n=60) and non-abusers (n=78) through independent sample t-test. It was further categorized into males and females. Sample was taken from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Informed consent has been taken from every individual before data collection. Originally, the sample size decided by the researchers was 200 but, due to limited time and abusers consenting to take part in the study, we could include 60 abusers and 78 non-abusers. For research, sample was drawn from both normal population and drug abusers of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Permission from higher authorities of the universities and bars has been taken for collecting data. Convenient sampling and purposive sampling methods were used. After getting consent, participants filled in questionnaires. Questionnaires used were for identifying the tendencies of risk-taking behavior, anxiety and effects on interpersonal relations. The study was a complete quantitative study. For the analysis and interpretation of the data, Statistical Procedures for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used.

Result and Findings

The participants were educated, and their age ranged from 17 to 35 years. Alpha reliability of Zung anxiety rating scale, susceptibility to peer pressure, self-esteem, health locus of control, and risk-taking questionnaire were quite satisfactory. The correlation coefficient of 0.22 ($p < .001$) showed significant positive correlation between peer pressure and risk taking.

Results depicted that there is a positive correlation between peer pressure and risk taking. Meanwhile as per our predictions anxiety and risk-taking are negatively correlated. Contrary to our expectations, results from an independent t-sample test showed that participants clustered as substance abusers ($M=2.87, S.D=.40, N=59$) scored higher on anxiety as compared to non-abusers ($M=1.99, S.D=.41, N=79$) $t=.2$, two tailed and same analysis showed that female substance abusers ($M=3.02, S.D=.47, N=21$) have more anxiety as compared to male substance abusers ($M=1.95, S.D=.37, N=39$). Mean and standard deviations of male and females of non-abusers were also computed. Mean differences of gender were computed. Among male and females there is a significant difference on risk taking behavior. Mean column indicates that male non-abusers scored higher on risk taking behavior ($M=4.98, S. D=.81, N=35$) as compared to female non abusers ($M=3.15, S.D =.80, n=43$). Analysis revealed that there is difference between substance abusers and non-abusers on studying variables.

Table 1

Cronbach's Reliabilities, Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Bivariate among Study Variables (n=138)

	Variables	Items	α	1	2	3
1	Anxiety	20		-	.09	-.01
2	Peer pressure	7		-	-	.22**
3	Risk-taking	10		-	-	-
	Mean	-		1.95	1.49	2.69
	SD	-		.37	.23	.80

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Differences in Anxiety, Peer Pressure, and Risk Taking Among Substance Abusers and Non-Abusers (n=138)

Variables	Abusers (n=60)		Non-abusers (n=78)		t (136)	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		LL	UL	
Anxiety	1.97	.40	1.99	.41	.28	-	.12	.04
Peer pressure	1.52	.24	1.74	.18	6.02	-	1.59	1.03
Risk-taking behavior	2.83	.82	3.14	.72	.68	-.29	-.14	0.4

*p<.05, **p<.01.

Table 3

The difference in Anxiety, Risk-Taking, and Peer Pressure Among Substance Abuser and Non-Abuser Males and Female (n=138)

Variables	Abusers (n=60)				Non-abusers (n=78)				t(136)	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Male		Female		Male		Female			LL	UL	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD				
Anxiety	1.95	.37	3.02	.47	1.93	.37	3.20	.42	.41	.13	.36	2.53
Peer pressure	1.49	.23	4.79	.22	4.01	.20	1.72	.15	1.13	.07	.20	14.66
Risk-taking behavior	3.73	.80	3.17	3.13	4.98	.81	3.85	.80	1.88	.04	.76	.57

Discussion and Conclusion

Regardless of budding research on substance abuse, peer pressure, risk-taking, and anxiety. This current study focuses on a research gap that addresses these three variables in one study and their effect on substance abuse after considering our emerging young population. The three scales used in this study were the Zung anxiety rating scale, Susceptibility to peer pressure, self-esteem, health locus of control, and risk-taking questionnaire. Their reliability coefficients were satisfactory. At first present research depicts a relationship between risk-taking and peer pressure. in an alliance, both these factors contribute to substance abuse, and according to our results, there is evidence of a prevailing rate of peer pressure and risk-taking among substance abusers. According to previous research, peer pressure and risk-taking behaviors are more common among substance abusers than non-abusers. As far as a variable of anxiety is concerned, our study is not in alliance with the level of anxiety among substance abusers. According to our results, the level of anxiety is higher among substance abusers as compared to non-abuses which is not confirm our hypothesis about this studying variable. When we compute our demographic variable i.e. gender, one common aspect we observe is that the level of anxiety in both female substance abusers and non-abusers is high as compared to males in both categories which is also confirming our hypothesis. Substance abuse is something that is growing its toxic roots in our budding young population and affecting their physical and mental health. The increasing level of anxiety among adolescents is alarming. so, it is suggested that our medical practitioners should take note of this and try to create awareness about this. it can also be suggested that we should adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Limitations and Future Directions for Research

The study was conducted only in Islamabad and Rawalpindi regions where respondents were only young adults/ students, yet, in the future, researchers could use a large sample size and could conduct a study in more than two regions. They could also expand it to the whole country and might include older citizens to get verifiable facts to generalize the results.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no clash of interest.

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