



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Attitude towards Drug Addiction among University Level Students  
in Pakistan**

**Dr. Wajiha Kanwal<sup>1</sup> Hamid Ali Nadeem<sup>2</sup> Sher Muhammad Awan<sup>3</sup>**

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Wah Pakistan
2. Lecturer, EPPSL Department, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad
3. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hamdard University Karachi, Islamabad Campus Pakistan

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**ABSTRACT**

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**\*Corresponding Author**

Sher.m.awan786@gmail.com

This study investigated the attitude of youngsters (males and females) towards drug addiction. This study was basically based on survey method that was conducted on college and university students of Islamabad between age groups of 18-28, participants were just 60; 30 males and 30 females; in order to collect data from participants we set some questions in questionnaire based on likert scale, some having positive scoring while others have negative, in order to find out; whether there is more positive attitude of males towards drug addiction as compared to females. Validity of tool was checked by expert's opinion. In this research study we came to identify various factors due to which involvement of youngsters towards drug addiction takes place, those are; like genetic inheritance, peer influence, parental influences, family environment, to get relief from stress or trauma like conditions, to avoid boredom, for fun or sometimes relaxation purposes, or might be used as a trend or for following fashion etc. So we find these numbers of causes mentioned above; that lead youngsters towards drug addiction. Results were computed in the form of means and percentages. Mean found in males was 43, and that in females was 37 whereas results of percentages was found to be in males was 53.14% and in females were 46.58%, so the results in terms of mean and percentage indicate that attitude of males are more positive towards drug addiction than females.

**Introduction**

"Drug addiction means a level of drug abuse, which is followed by drug dependence, drug tolerance and drug abolition". Desire to take drugs becomes uncontrollable to an extent, and in turn brain functioning and behavior as well can be effected by the outcomes of consistent drug usage. Hence, many people begin to take

drugs even after long periods of temptations. Drug addiction is nothing new, but Pakistan is facing a true long-term problem. There are number of factors that lead youngsters towards drug addiction, like genetic inheritance, peer influence, parental influences, family environment, to get relief from stress or trauma like conditions, to avoid boredom, for fun or sometimes relaxation purposes, or might be used as a trend or for following fashion etc. Likewise, environment is playing a major role in influencing attitude of youngsters towards drug; according to another document, it is clearly stated that children who consumes drugs, having their parents used to of drugs. As children feel that this drug consumption is normal as they see their parents doing practice of it. Similarly, it is a common observation, the children with lack of parental care and who have very harsh environment and treated badly at home, having unhappy families, youngsters from that homes are more addicted of drugs. Whereas, some bad experiences in life cause tremendous stress in person's life so that one is likely, start taking drugs as self-medication and cure. According to cognitive dissonance theory, sometimes conflicts arises in perceptions , about which we need to worry about , that brings changes in our attitude and this is just because we can't justify that we were involved in attitude conflicting behavior and when we feel it to be explained and justified in essence to our hard decisions. According to Beman, in schools, where students get drugs easily, there are more chances of students involved with alcohol and they take drugs and drink as well. According to Pearlman (1988), he gave system theory, according to him he emphasizes to focus on this prevailing fact that individual's behaviors depends upon people in their surroundings to whom they interact with, system theory also proposes, that behavior of person and society with which it interacts even cause problems for those who are involved with. It also drew our attention towards a fact that how a behavior of family of drug addicts changes and how family copes with society. Behavior and as well as attitudes are based on our feelings, likes, dislikes, it becomes more strong when based on positive/ good or bad/negative experiences. Attitude basically makes someone liable to respond towards conscious thought, emotionally or behaviorally to a specific object, person or situation in specific way. Attitude has three main components: Cognitive (one's belief), affective (feelings and evaluations), behavioral (action towards the attitude object). Another definition of attitude change is provided by Daryl Ben's self-perception theory emphasizes on the fact that people bring changes in their attitude just to make themselves satisfy their own previous behavior. Attitudes are formed in different ways, children normally possess attitude like their parents attitudes, as they follow and observe them most. It is made through direct experiences. It is an established fact that children imitate things that are in direct observation of them, whether it is cloth, beverages, style, the more positive attitudes that they like most through different experiences. Another study by Albarracin and Johnson on psychology of attitudes, motivation and persuasion (2018); in his book he refers to different components of attitudes in which beliefs, intentions, goals, attitude change and attitude formation etc were discussed on. In these studies they explained that people attitudes towards objects, things depends upon their liking, biasedness, prejudices. For example positive attitude of person towards a certain thing, may shows negative attitudes of other person towards the same object. (Helper and Albarracin, 2013) According to Omellete and Wood (1998), they explained through

their meta-analysis, that past experiences and behavior had a strong impact on future behavior and this is through strong intentions, those are favorable to situations and evented behaviors that in essence shape their or formulate their future behavior. (Albarracin and Johnson)

Habit forming substance that is used as a physical or psychological need, their rate is increased to produce the same effects as produced by minor dose. Drug addiction means excess use of drugs, which is followed by reliance on drugs, drug compassion and drug abandonment. (Eagly and Chaiken, 1995). There is a possibility of change in attitude through effective and cognitive aspects that can be determined, just by invigorating and effective or emotion node. In a particularly effective network, in order to resist the persuasion and attitude change, it is possibly a difficult step to produce counterargument to it. (Eagly and Chaiken, 1995)[6] Anderson (1983) states that by invigoration of a single point can cause changes in inter structural placement of associable network of it.

### **Literature Review**

University going students reliance on various causes of drug addiction and about its remedies to cure were studied by Okan Can Cinakoglu, Guler Lsin (2004). Examination of attitude scale shows information regarding gender and its association effect. It shows more positive attitude of men towards drug exposition. Drug users had more negative effect on the attitude as shown through results. Studies identify that certain factors expand the possibility of misuse of drug. And in this scenario people who use drugs at high rate are youngsters. The age group between 18-29 have greater rate of drug abuse than other groups for both men and women (Yothng et al, 2002). It is proved that university students are more influenced towards drug addiction. Peer and group norms also put pressure which increase the rate of drug addiction.

Another study that give reference on practice, attitude and knowledge regarding drug addiction in public school between secondary students in Lagos by Foluke Adenike and Abdul Hakeem (2013), their findings regarding this survey are that 50% of students actually understand dangers and destruction caused by drugs and problems emerged by drug addiction. Still 58.5% of them show positive attitudes to use illicit drugs, many of them are socially acceptable drugs, but there is a risk of that, which leads them in later life to strong ones like initially they use tobacco, cannabis and alcohol etc. So sales of drugs should be monitored and education regarding drugs should have to be strengthened in schools and universities.

Research studies by Weil Cornell Medical College (Oct 3, 2009) describes important ways; those how parents and peer impact on youngsters i.e. teenagers to drink, smoke and use Marijuana as a result. According to their results, attitude of boys and girls vary in this aspect, addiction of smoking leads teenagers to use further multiple drugs. A clinical psychologist owner of rehabilitation Centre, said that addiction of everything is bad, either it is of narcotics, alcohol or of idealism.

Kauffman, Silver and Paulin (1997) observed gender differences in conception of drug addiction and acknowledgement for causes and precautionary measures. Their study shows a common gender differences; it is a strong belief of women's that main reasons for drug addiction are environmental and biological factors. Further, women's also reveals that environment and situations cause relationship problems and stress.

According to another document "Drug and Alcohol Dependence", it is clearly stated that children who consumes drugs, having their parents drug addicted in history. As children feel that this drug consumption is normal as they see their parents doing frequent practices in front of them. A Classic Theory states; unpredictability in behavior and attitude which is given by Leon Festinger's, based on disagreement in perception of people that vary individual to individual which relies on the facts that people lose control of their behavior or facilities if they are ingrained in very large amount.

The Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA, 2009) reports that people who tried marijuana once, their ratio is 1 out of 10. Drugs that are most commonly used are Indian hems, cocaine, heroin etc., and in turn addiction of these kinds of drugs taken them to anti-social activities like armed robbery and rape like things. According to World Health Organization, 230 million people or out of every 20, 1 is vulnerable, that are according to estimation are used to of illicit drugs at least once in 2010. According to the study that is carried by Organization of African Unity (O.A.U), they said that 48% of youngsters between ages of 15-26 years have already taken and are used to of some sort of drugs.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (Health and Human Services Department, United States 2007), report reveals about youngsters that mean age of teenagers which are addicted to drugs are 13 years. Friis and its colleagues research studies shows young people attitude towards illicit drugs, their findings concludes that attitude of young men towards drugs that are illicit are more positive as compared to young women, it also shows that young people who are unemployed , being single, smoking tobacco etc were showing positive attitude towards illicit drug use.

A study carried by Cristina Pillon et al, objectives for their research work were to explain relationships in usage of drug, gender as well as changes in attitude that leads to risk behavior (2005). According to their findings in university students, in sample of 200 having 50% in ratio both males and females between ages of 18-26years, results shows that females students are more habitual to consume tobacco, alcohol than male, still percentage of drug usage in males are higher as compared to female students, male students were driving vehicles in influence of alcohol and more male students are involved in fights and social issues, so it concludes that there is association between gender and drug consumption especially tobacco and alcohol.

As research studies on exploring attitudes shows that thousands of and more attitudes humans have regarding family, friends, according to their preferences and

much more. Studies on attitudes also clarify that there is heritability of some attitudes through genetic transfer from parents to children (Olson, Vernon, Harris and Jung, 2001) and some other things that formulate our attitude are the experiences; either through direct or indirect means (Dehouwer, Thomas and Baneyans, 2001).

But meanwhile (Bourgeois, 2002), he justifies that attitudes that are based on heritability are very powerful, strong and resistible, can't be changed easily as they are coded in our genes and are inherited attitudes are useful in humans, our approach of attitude would lead us to solve issues effortlessly and timely with accuracy most of the times, therefore attitudes are judgements that can be determined by normal kind of techniques for measurements that is used by social psychologist, (Banaji and Heiphetz).

Research focus was on attitude-behavior consistency that if a person already dislikes smoking due to its harmful consequences, purchase price etc., but peers influence one to use it, but because person is having strong dislikes already but apart from the fact, one might change its attitudes due to the social situation as behaviors that are formed are consistent with the attitude formulations. Attitudes can be observed and measured through interviews, self-reports and through facial expressions. Attitudes can be evaluated, its strength can be judged as strong as it comes in mind (attitude strength) (Fazio, 1990-1995); Petty and Krosnick, (1995). Behavior and as well as attitudes are based on our feelings, likes, dislikes, it becomes more strong when based on positive/ good or bad/negative experiences.

### **Material and Methods**

The methodology used for this study was survey method, the survey aimed at finding attitude of youngsters towards drug addiction; in which questionnaire was used as research tool having 15 items, in which four are positive and 11 are negative items that were used to check out the responses of youngsters (males and females). This close form questionnaire with five point likert type rating scale was used for scoring of positive items as well as scoring for negative items that is used to measure attitude of youngsters (male and females) towards drug addiction. Validity of the tool was checked by experts from AIOU. Our population that was used as a sample was targeted from colleges and universities of Islamabad, that were from students of M.sc and B.sc i.e. 30 males and 30 females between age group of 18 to 28 years. After taking responses of youngsters on questionnaire, results were computed in the form of mean and percentage evaluation.

## Results and Discussion

A sample of 30 boys and 30 girls were taken from different colleges and universities of Islamabad. The score of the students on the given instrument were computed. Table#1 consists of mean and percentage evaluation of males' scores that are 43 and 53.14%.

**Table 1**  
**Percentage and mean evaluation of males scores on attitude towards drug addiction**

Total no. of males	Mean	Percentage %
30	43	53.41 %

Table 1 shows the mean and percentage of male scores. The mean calculated for the males scores on attitude towards drug addiction are 43 whereas percentage of males score are 53.41%.

**Table 2**  
**Percentage and mean evaluation of females scores on attitude towards drug addiction**

Total no. of males	Mean	Percentage %
30	37	46.58%

Table 2 shows the mean and percentage of female scores. The mean calculated for the females scores on attitude towards drug addiction are 37 whereas percentage of females score are 46.58%.

The results indicate the difference of scores among males and females. Males mean score is higher than females which seem to indicate their more positive attitude towards drug addiction. And as Anderson's research, hence we come to know that inter-structural formation of an associative network can be modified and changed by triggering an effective and intense node, variation in an attitude can be possible, as males have more effectual circle in our society as females in comparison therefore, females show less positive attitude towards drug abuse.[7,19,20]

## Conclusion

As males have more interaction with society and peer pressure and some other common factors lead them showing more positive attitude towards drug addiction and influenced them towards habit of taking drugs for relaxation, sometimes as fun, sometimes in following trends and fashion etc, so we can say that there are more negative effects on attitude of males due to drug addiction as compared to females.[19,20] Studies also shows that some of the factors increase the possibility of misuse of drug, in this people who use drugs at high rate are youngsters. The age group between 18-29 have greater rate of drug abuse than other groups in both males and females as also said by Yothng et al. (2002)

Conclusion as in above paragraph

### **Recommendations**

- Develop a relationship with strong bonding with your children from their childhood stage and build confidence in them by motivating them and motivating positive behavior.
- Present good behavior in front of your children by avoiding drinking, using illicit drugs and avoid smoking, because children imitate and model the behavior of their parents.
- Promote healthy life approach by encouraging balanced diet including exercises.
- We have to set forth the proper agreement in form of plan about usage of drugs.
- Encourage your children to develop power of decision making and sense of responsibility from early adolescent age.
- Make yourselves up to date about emerging drugs and their availability, so that you can guide your children in right direction.

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