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Relationship between Personality Traits and Readiness for Substance Abuse

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The current investigation was carried out to explore the correlation between personality traits (specifically sensation seeking, assertiveness, psychological toughness), with the readiness for substance abuse in the male and female population of Arak city.

Methods: Employing the correlation method, the study encompassed all married individuals in Arak city during 2023. The sample, comprising 400 participants (200 women and 200 men), was chosen through stratified random sampling. The research utilized four standardized questionnaires for data collection purposes.

Results: Findings indicated a positive and significant association between sensation seeking and readiness for substance abuse among men, contrasting with the absence of such a link among women. While no connection was observed between psychological toughness and readiness for substance abuse in women, a reverse correlation was noted in men, where an escalation in toughness coincided with a reduction in readiness for substance abuse. Noteworthy was the significant relationship between assertiveness and readiness for substance abuse in women, which was not found in men.

Conclusions: The results substantiate the notion that the mental well-being of parents may diminish their preparedness for engaging in substance abuse, consequently leading to positive impacts on the academic and emotional achievements of students.

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Introduction

With a realistic perspective on the issue of drug addiction and substance abuse, it is clear that opioid abuse has existed for centuries and continues to affect virtually every country. Despite being universally recognized as an unsocial and harmful habit; opioid abuse still impacts various segments of society. Today, a significant number of individuals, from teenagers to middle-aged adults, use and become dependent on these substances (Piri & Direkvand Moghadam, 2021). Drug abuse is a critical issue alongside demographic crises, poverty, the nuclear crisis, and the environmental crisis. Currently, about 15 million people worldwide are concerned with both official and unofficial drug use. Addiction is an active and dynamic phenomenon. According to the World Drug Report (Directorate General of International Relations of the Drug Enforcement Administration, 2000), at least 134 countries faced drug abuse problems in the 1990s. Three-quarters of these countries reported heroin abuse, and two-thirds reported cocaine abuse.

Addiction is also a hidden problem, presenting serious methodological challenges to researchers studying such behaviors. The tendency towards a behavior is the first step in its manifestation, and the inclination to use drugs is considered the onset of dependency. Addiction encompasses a set of physiological, behavioral, or cognitive phenomena where substance use takes precedence over previously valued behaviors (Rezaei Fard & Heidari, 2022).

The first documented report on drug use in Iran dates back to the 17th century. The earliest official statistics on the number of users in Iran are from 1948, when there were 1,025,000 opium addicts out of a total population of 14 million. By 1975, there were an estimated 30,000 heroin addicts, some of whom injected the drug. In June 1975, official statistics reported 169,502 registered drug addicts in Iran. A 2003 epidemiological survey by the Ministry of Health and the Narcotics Control Headquarters reported at least 3.7 million drug addicts, though this figure was never published due to methodological issues (internal report, 2015).

In our own country, recent research (2007) indicates that addiction is one of the four major concerns for people, alongside inflation, unemployment, and personal insecurity, highlighting widespread public anxiety about this issue. Addiction is like an iceberg, with only its visible part seen by society. The hidden part, which lays the groundwork for this phenomenon, significantly affects the population in terms of number, growth rate, and age group involved (Rezaei Fard & Heidari, 2022). Identifying addiction as a contemporary disease necessitates using the most

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accurate methods available for study. Addressing any danger requires understanding its underlying dimensions (Ketabi et al., 2008).

Previous studies indicate that individuals with high levels of excitement and sensation seeking, as well as those with less emotional stability, are more prone to addiction. Research by Ketabi et al. (2008) using Cloninger and Eysenck's personality systems found higher levels of novelty seeking in drug addicts. Cooper et al. (2003) also showed higher levels of sensation seeking in addicts compared to non-addicts. Chugani et al. (2020) found similar results, linking sensation seeking and emotional instability to addiction. Studies by Kaur (2016) and Randhawa (2018) also highlighted significant differences in personality traits between addicts and non-addicts.

Other studies, such as those by Khalily (2009) indicated that adolescents with certain personality traits are more likely to use drugs. Research by Norbury and Husain (2015) emphasized the importance of sensation seeking and novelty seeking traits in addiction.

Research by Khodarahimi (2015) identified factors such as age, risky behavior, socioeconomic status, and a history of substance use as related to addiction among Iranian students. Additionally, substance abuse is often associated with mood and behavioral disorders (Starcevic & Khazaal, 2017). Studies by Hünler and Gençöz (2005) and Asefi Far et al. (2022) showed relationships between drug use, marital satisfaction, and religious therapy's positive effects on addiction recovery.

Conducting similar research to identify societal strengths and weaknesses is crucial for developing more effective prevention strategies. The main objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between personality traits (excitement seeking, self-expression, psychological toughness) and readiness for drug addiction in overweight men in Arak city. In summary, this research aims to elucidate the relationship between personality traits and addiction readiness in the context of Arak city, providing insights into effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Material and Methods

The current research is applied in terms of purpose and correlational in terms of method. The research population includes all married men and women of Arak city in 2022 who have at least two years of married life experience and are at most 45 years old. In order to select a sample, in

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order to select a random sample, the researcher visited the centers of married people and asked them to participate in the research by explaining the objectives of the project. Therefore, sampling was done in places such as shopping centers, local clinics, schools (people who came to register their children), etc. In this research, despite the researcher's efforts to randomly select people, people who voluntarily answered the questionnaires have participated in the research, and therefore the sampling has faced such limitations. The research sample is 400 people (including 200 women and 200 men are selected by simple random sampling from men and women of Arak city.

Instruments

Addiction Potential Scale (APS): This scale is a psychological assessment tool designed to measure an individual's propensity or vulnerability to developing substance addiction developed by Weed et al. (1992). The APS evaluates various personality traits, behaviors, and psychological factors that are associated with the likelihood of substance abuse and addiction. The APS is designed to be a reliable and valid measure, meaning it consistently produces accurate and meaningful results. It has undergone psychometric testing to ensure its effectiveness in predicting addiction potential (Weed et al., 1992).

Sensation Seeking Scale (SSS): This scale developed by psychologist Marvin Zuckerman, is a psychological assessment tool designed to measure an individual's propensity for sensation seeking, which is the need for varied, novel, and intense experiences and the willingness to take risks for the sake of such experiences (Zuckerman, 2007). The SSS has been shown to have good reliability and validity, making it a trusted tool for measuring sensation seeking. It has been validated across different cultures and populations, reinforcing its applicability in diverse settings (Zuckerman, 2007).

The Wolpe-Lazarus Assertiveness Inventory: This inventory is a psychological assessment tool designed to measure assertiveness, which is the ability to express one's thoughts, feelings, and needs directly, honestly, and appropriately while respecting others' rights. Developed by Joseph Wolpe and Arnold Lazarus (Al-Masri, 2020), this inventory assesses various aspects of assertive behavior, providing valuable insights into an individual's interpersonal functioning. The Wolpe-Lazarus Assertiveness Inventory has been shown to have good reliability and validity, making it a

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trusted tool for assessing assertiveness. It has been validated in diverse populations and contexts, ensuring its applicability in different settings.

Mental Toughness Index: This scale is an assessment tool designed to measure psychological toughness, a personality trait characterized by resilience, confidence, and the ability to cope effectively with stress and adversity (Gucciardi, 2012). Psychological toughness is often associated with mental fortitude, emotional stability, and the capacity to remain focused and motivated under challenging circumstances. The Psychological Toughness Scale has been shown to have good reliability and validity, making it a trusted tool for assessing psychological toughness. It has been validated in diverse populations and contexts, ensuring its applicability in different settings (Gucciardi, 2012).

In order to investigate the hypothesis of the research, Pearson's correlation coefficient between the test subjects' willingness to addiction score and the variables of sensation seeking, psychological toughness and assertiveness has been investigated.

Results

Hypothesis (1): There is a relationship between sensation seeking and readiness for addiction in women and men of Arak city. Descriptive findings and correlation coefficient between these two variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Relationship between sensation seeking and readiness for addiction in women and men

Group	Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	P
Female	Readiness for addiction	200	31.62	14.01	0.073	0.13
	Sensation seeking	200	13.54	5.85		
Male	Readiness for addiction	200	33.45	17.91	0.53	0.01
	Sensation seeking	200	18.34	6.87		

Hypothesis (2): There is a relationship between psychological toughness and readiness for addiction in men and women of Arak city. Descriptive findings and correlation coefficient between these two variables are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2. Relationship between psychological toughness and readiness for addiction in women and men

Group	Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	P
Female	Readiness for addiction	200	31.62	14.01	0.094	0.17
	Psychological toughness	200	79.52	8.24		
Male	Readiness for addiction	200	33.45	17.91	-0.21	0.05
	Psychological toughness	200	77.59	8.31		

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between assertiveness and readiness for addiction in women and men of Arak city. Descriptive findings and correlation coefficient between these two variables are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Relationship between assertiveness and readiness for addiction in women and men

Group	Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	P
Female	Readiness for addiction	200	31.62	14.01	-0.15	0.05
	Assertiveness	200	17.39	3.05		
Male	Readiness for addiction	200	33.45	17.19	0.12	0.07
	Assertiveness	200	18.65	2.44		

Discussion

The findings of the present study indicate a positive and direct relationship between men's sensation seeking and their willingness to become addicted. In other words, as the sensation seeking increases, so does the readiness for addiction among men. This is supported by Hashemi et al. (2019) that indicated that personality traits are coincidence in drug users. Similarly, Evans et al. (2006) indicated that patients with Parkinson's disease (PD) exhibited lower levels of sensation seeking and higher scores for depression and anxiety. Additionally, they were less likely to have ever smoked and had lower caffeine and alcohol consumption. Conditional logistic regression analysis indicated that the inverse relationship between PD risk and sensation seeking was independent of smoking, caffeine, and alcohol intake. Furthermore, low sensation seeking partially accounted for the observed effects of caffeine and alcohol intake on PD. However, the impact of smoking was only slightly diminished when sensation seeking was included in the regression model.

Furthermore, the study revealed no relationship between psychological toughness and readiness for addiction in women. However, an inverse relationship was observed in men, suggesting that

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higher psychological toughness correlates with a decreased readiness for addiction. Khatami and Javidi (2020) stated that there is a significant relationship between addiction potential indices and the tendency for drug abuse, meaning that the addiction potential increases with the increase in the tendency to drug abuse.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that self-expression skills receive greater emphasis in educational programs for women and girls. The high number of variables and corresponding questions in the questionnaire led to fatigue and impatience among some participants, potentially affecting the honesty of their responses. This, in turn, could have influenced the test results, especially considering that some questions probed very personal issues.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by ethics committee of Islamic Azad University.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection and analysis. The author contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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