

Parent-Child Relationship and Teenager Substance Use in Pakistan

Muhammad Hassan Niaz^{1*}, Adeena Rasheed², Anosha Ahmed²**Abstract**

The objective of the study is to examine the parent-child relationship and teenager substance use in Pakistan. It was a cross sectional study conducted with the general population of Multan from January 2023 to June 2023. The sample was consisted of 30 teenagers selected through purposive and snowball sampling. The Child-Parent Relationship Scale (Short Form) and Drug Abuse Screening Test were administered to collect the data. Results showed a positive correlation with conflict and substance use. Regression analysis shows an increase in substance use with the increase in child-parent conflict. Parents and teenagers should establish positive and healthy relationship, set clear rules, enjoy quality time together, and maintain a moderate amount of parental supervision.

Keywords: Family Bonding, Pakistani Youth, Parent-child Relationship, Substance Use, Teenager

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Introduction

Substance use refers to the use of drugs and/or alcohol in a casual, adherence to prescription guidelines, irregular, or even one-time manner. For some people, regular substance use does not equate to abuse. Even though it's expected, some people can use these substances on a regular basis in a moderate amount without experiencing any negative physical or psychological effects. Numerous factors, such as genetic vulnerability, social pressures, environmental stressors, personality traits, and mental health issues, can contribute to substance use (Nawi et al., 2021).

Family bonding occurs when try to strengthen bonds and establish a connection with family. This can be accomplished through creating memories, learning something new together, or over family dinners (Kuendig & Kuntsche,

2006). Parenting is the most fulfilling job that we will ever have, but it's not without its challenges. Even in the best of situations, parenting can be challenging. It takes a lot of time as well (Frosch et al., 2019). Numerous duties come with being a parent, including providing for children's needs, educating them, and mentoring them through life. An adult assumes the role of providing for the needs of their child and offering guidance as the child grows into adulthood, creating a special bond known as the parent/child relationship. Strong parent-child relationships can contribute to better outcomes for children, as parents always want what's best for their children (Lanjekar et al., 2022).

Our lives can be positively or negatively impacted by our relationship with our parents. Teenagers' lives are greatly influenced by their parents. The decisions that children make in life can be influenced by the relationship between a parent and their offspring as well as between them (Brianna, 2011). As a coping strategy for family conflict, parents who argue a lot may create a home environment where substance use is more likely in their kids. On the other hand, a solid and positive relationship with parents

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can offer a protective atmosphere that is associated with a decreased likelihood of substance abuse (Daniel et al., 2020).

Parental meddling or control over their emotions, thoughts, and feelings by instilling guilt, withholding affection, humiliating, manipulating their sense of emotional security, and/or undervaluing their viewpoint. The following types of relationships can be classified as caregiver-specific categories: avoidance relationships (parents responding to their child's wishes), ambivalent relationships (child feeling insecure connection with parents), secure relationships (child dependent on parents about their needs, beliefs, and want their parents in every situation), and disorganized relationships (provide a secure environment for child). A child's (or adult's) relationship with their parents influences how they will act around other people when their parents are not around. It may be difficult for parents to trust their adolescent to make decisions on their own when it comes to relationships, careers, and other big issues (Usman et al., 2023).

The impact of parent-child relationships on a child's mental health, the emergence of antisocial behavior, and the development of complex issues in the child's later years. Adolescents who experience a lack of positive relationships in their parents are more vulnerable to high-risk behaviors like substance abuse. The risk factors include ineffective parenting, dysfunctional family, chaotic home environments, the influence of parents or siblings who have substance abuse issues, and a lack of bonding or insecure relationships with parents. Severe family disruption can cause emotional distress, and cause the child to feel isolated. Alcohol and drugs may be used to help manage the stress and fears these adolescents face (Curtis et al., 2019; Mirzaei-Alavijeh et al., 2015).

A barrier between a parent and their child is created when there is dysfunction in the home. A child will grow away from their parents if there is constant fighting and

arguing in the home. They experience psychological trauma. Because they don't feel like they have anyone to turn to, children start abusing substances. Tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana might provide them with the much-needed escape or coping method. It relieves them of their tension and rejection by their parents. Because their parents have yelled, they believe it is okay to do so. They have been given a poor example. What their parents think is irrelevant to them. They have no one to disappoint or let down (Rodriguez-Ruiz et al., 2023). Teens are more likely to use drugs when there is a bad relationship between their parents and themselves. Teenagers who experience family disconnection are more likely to experiment with and develop a chemical addiction. They find it difficult to cope with the death of their intact family are especially impacted, and this frequently results in acting-out behaviors, such as substance abuse (Malik et al., 2023).

This study aims to look at the connection between family conflict, teen substance use, and parent-child relationships. This study offers a closer look at the relationship between family bonds and dysfunction in the home, as well as contributing to the body of research on the association between teen substance use and family bonds.

Method

Research Design & Sampling Techniques

It was the cross-sectional study. The purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used.

Participants

The sample size was 30 teenagers selected from the general population of Multan. A small sample size has some reasons. Teenagers were not willing to participate in study due to fear of parents, expulsion from school and cultural sensitivity. Willing subjects also showed worry about confidentiality for substance use due to educational career and family fear. But in small sample size detailed in depth

interview possible and it can give deep understanding with significant findings.

Inclusion Criteria

The only teenager subjects, boys or girls, 13 to 19 years of age group, living in Multan, with using any kind of substance (e.g., tobacco, illicit drugs, alcohol, ice, sheesha or any form of substance) and having relationship problem with parents, and also willing to participate were included in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

The subjects more than 19 years of age, without substance use, without any child parent relationship problems, any other medical and psychiatric morbidity, organic syndromes were excluded from the study.

Instruments

Demographic Sheet

All the information regarding demographic details was collected on the prescribed proforma. The socio-demographic information including age, gender, locality and education were collected.

Child-Parent Relationship Scale

To measure the relationship with parents, Child-Parent Relationship Scale (Short Form) (Driscoll & Pianta, 2011) was used. It is a self-report tool. This widely used self-report tool examines both the good and bad aspects of the connection between parents and children. It has two subscales: Conflict and Closeness. It is 15 items and 5-point Likert scale. Each question scores from 1 to 5 (1: Definitely does not apply, 2: Not really, 3: Neutral not sure 4: Applies somewhat and 5: Definitely applies). In conflict sub scale, consisting of 08 items, measures the extent to which a parent believes their relationship with their child is negative. The closeness scale, consisting of 07 items, evaluates how much a parent believes their relationship is marked by warmth, affection, and open communication. A relatively low correlation between the conflict and intimacy scales of the CPRS indicates that they represent two different domains of parent-child relationships ($r = .16$). In

Conflicts ($\alpha = .83$) and Closeness ($\alpha = .72$). Conflict relationship traits including disagreements, resentment toward one another, disobedience, rejection of self-control, and unpredictable behaviour are all part of conflicts. The degree to which parents feel that their relationship with their child is warm, emotional, and cosy is referred to as Closeness.

Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST)

The DAST is used to diagnose the substance abuse. It also assesses the severity level of the substance abuse. All questions are marked either yes or no and contain 1 or 0 scores respectively. All the scores are added to get a total sum which is then used to categorize severity level. DAST has 12 questions (Gavin et al., 1989).

Procedure

The study was conducted between January 2023 to June 2023 on general public of Multan. The study participants also completed the standardized tools to measure the relationship with parents and DAST.

Analysis

The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for frequencies and percentages. The correlation and regression analyses were computed. The results were depicted in the form of tables.

Ethical Considerations

This study also followed all the ethics. As a low risk study, close attention to teenagers' confidentiality and informed consent was paid. Verbal and written informed consent were taken from the teenagers. They were fully aware of the purpose, procedure and potential risks of the study. Confidentiality was also ensured because teenagers were fearful about educational career due to substance use. Also ensured they does not stigmatize or any harm regarding their educational career.

Results

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N=30)

| Characteristics (n=30) | | n | % |
|------------------------|------------|----|--------|
| Age | 13-19 | 30 | 100% |
| | | | |
| Gender | Boys | 25 | 83.33% |
| | Girls | 05 | 16.67% |
| Locality | Urban | 23 | 76.67% |
| | Rural | 07 | 23.33% |
| Education | Uneducated | 07 | 23.33% |
| | Matric | 08 | 26.67% |
| | FA | 11 | 36.67% |
| | BA | 4 | 13.33% |

Table 1 shows demographic details of subjects. All the subjects 30 (100%) were teenagers and majority of the subjects 25 (83.33%) were boys, 23 (76.67%) were

belonged to urban area, 23 (76.67%) were students and 11(36.67%) were intermediate students.

Table 2

Regression Analysis (N=30)

| Variables | β | SE | t | p |
|--|---------|-----|-------|------|
| Child-Parents Relationship (Conflict) | .75 | .20 | 3.75 | .001 |
| Child-Parents Relationship (Closeness) | -.40 | .15 | -2.67 | .12 |

Dependent Variable: Substance use

R-square = .62, F-Statistic = 12.45 ($p < .05$)

Table 2 shows the regression analysis results. For every unit increase in Child-Parent conflict, substance use increases. The F-Statistic represents the over all

significance of the regression model, $p < .05$ shows results are significant of the regression coefficient.

Table 3

Correlation between Child-Parent Relationship and Substance Use (N=30)

| Variables | M | SD | Conflict | Closeness | Substance Use |
|---------------|-------|------|----------|-----------|---------------|
| Conflict | 78.61 | 5.72 | - | .22** | .91** |
| Closeness | 15.92 | 2.11 | | - | .31 |
| Substance Use | 8.42 | 1.21 | | | - |

** $p < .01$

Table 3 shows a positive correlation with conflict and substance use.

Discussion

The current study investigated on the relationship between teen drug usage in Pakistan and parent-child relationships. The results point to a strong link between teenage drug use and the quality of parent-child relationships. In particular, teens were more likely to use drugs if they reported having worse parent-child connections.

Pakistani culture, over time, traditional family structures have changed. Numerous studies have revealed that children benefit greatly from spending time with their parents and feeling close to them. It was discovered that difficulties arise in families when the parent-child bond is strained, particularly for teenagers. Teenagers always most prone to being addicted. A child's likelihood of using drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes is decreased when they have a close, healthy relationship with their parent. A child is more inclined to talk to their parents when they feel valued and at ease with them. They'll continue to communicate with their parents. Researches proved that a lot of teenager's experience stress due to issues with family or unhealthy relationships and it is leading cause of substance use (Curtis, et al., 2019; Lanjekar et al., 2022).

This study, all the subjects 100% were teenagers, majority of the subjects 25 (83.33%) were boys, 23 (76.67%) were belonged to urban area, 23 (76.67%) were students and 11(36.67%) were intermediate students. Regression analysis of Child-Parent Relationship shows as increase in Child-Parent conflict with substance use shows results are significant of the regression coefficient. There is a positive correlation with conflict and substance use. It is in accordance with other studies, in which all subjects were teenagers and especially heaving child-parent relationship issues (Kuendig & Kuntsche, 2006; Mirzaei-Alavijeh et al., 2015). According to United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), Pakistan is one of the 10 countries where drug abuse

is growing rapidly and around 4.25 million people were found addicted to any drug according to a survey. The mean age of respondents in this survey was around 28 years and 14% of the respondents were between 15-20 years. Thirty five percent of respondents reported that they started drug abuse in teenage years. The survey found the family conflict as the most frequent triggering factor in drug abuse initiation (Ochani et al., 2023). A recent and growing trend, the abuse of "Sheesha" in conjunction with cannabis (charas) and other drugs is being committed by both boys and girls, primarily from the upper socioeconomic strata who reside in upscale urban areas. The thematic analysis of one study in Pakistan showed family cohesion, communication patterns, familial support, decision-making, parental control and supervision, family avoidance, conflicts, child parent relationship and emotional expressions are important factors in teenagers substance use (Masood & Sahar, 2014).

Our findings suggest that, given the cultural focus on family connections and social norms, parent-child relationships may be even more important in Pakistani teenagers' substance use. In Western countries, parent-child relationships, autonomy and individualism are highly valued, on the other hand, in Pakistan, teenagers can encounter a more collectivist attitude, wherein parental expectations have a significant influence on their choices, especially those pertaining to substance abuse. Families have a significant impact on a child's decision to use drugs or not. It's likely that the child won't care if the parents don't seem to care. Other researches have indicated that adolescents are adversely impacted by parental displays of anger, arguments, and other negative emotions. Conflicts between parents and children and a lack of regulations raise the risk of teenage substance use (Merianos et al., 2020). A survey done on 1500 teenagers (18-19 years), used scale Strictness Supervision

scale and it was found teens with more permissive parents drank more alcohol than teens with more authoritative parents (Wood et al., 2004). One study by Mirzaei-Alavijeh et al., 2015 results also indicated a significant relation between child-parent relationship (Conflict and Closeness) and substance use and its preventions. Researchers discovered that teenagers with parental conflicts and inadequate parental supervision and emotional support were more likely to use cannabis (Haugland et al., 2019). Moreover, marijuana use was associated with risk factors such as inadequate parental involvement, rules, supervision, and positive parenting during adolescence (King et al., 2015).

Parents must set some ground rules and have a conversation with their kids about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use. Parents need to communicate their feelings to their kids about substance use. Studies indicate that teenagers might be considerably discouraged from participating in dangerous behaviours by having good parental participation, which is defined by open dialogue, trust, psychological and emotional support. Having a positive relationship with their adolescent child will help parents' mentor and counsel their adolescent child about the risks of substance abuse and how to deal with peer pressure, among other things (Malik et al., 2023; Usman et al., 2023).

Conclusion

We concluded there is significant relation between parent-child relationship and teenager substance use. Parents and teenagers should establish positive and healthy relationship, set clear rules, enjoy quality time together, supportive connection and maintain a moderate amount of parental supervision.

Limitations and Suggestions

The study has some limitations and suggestions. As the sample size was small and only from general population. It cannot give results of all population. This study is self-reported by teenagers, which

may be biased or incomplete due to career worry and stigma. Teenagers may be under reported due to cultural, educational and legal consequences. We did not provide interventions in this study. It is suggested that the future study should be on large sample size and also from different institutions, different socioeconomic background and it will help in generalizing the results. Longitudinal study can help to monitor changes in parent-child relationships and drug usage trends over time, providing more clear and deeper understandings of causality. Future research should also focus on preventions, counselling, psychotherapies, family therapies on individual level and to improve child-parent relationship. Awareness lectures and workshops need to conduct at institutional level.

Implications of the Study

This study can help the policy makers to develop substance use preventions programs that address and deal family conflicts, improve communications, child parents' relationships and school curriculum. Study results also enhance to understand different parenting styles, healthy environment and minimize the risk of substance use. Therapeutic interventions, awareness campaigns, family support, school-based programs and peer influences can lead comprehensive strategies for reducing the substance use in teenagers.

Contribution of Authors

Muhammad Hassan Niaz: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

Adeena Rasheed: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft
Anosha Ahmed: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by the authors.

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Data Availability Statement

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [M.H.N.] upon the reasonable request.

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