



EXPLORING THE REASONS AND FACTORS INFLUENCING ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE- A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health. Aim: To explore the reasons and factors influencing adolescents substance use qualitatively. Phenomenologic research tradition was adopted to describe the same. The sample size was obtained based on the guiding principle of data saturation – Six (Three from experimental group and two from control group) information rich participants narration were included. Sampling technique: Intensity sampling technique was adopted. In-depth interviews were used as the data collection method. All the ethical principles were followed. Based on the formulated meaning various sub themes were emerged. The five themes emerged was used to describe the reason and five influencing factors were identified to explain the same

KEYWORDS : phenomenology, adolescence, substance abuse, reasons, factors

BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY:

Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health. Substance abuse is an alarming problem among adolescents in India. Substance abuse is a threat, not only to health of the user but also to his/her family, community and Nation. According to the World Health Organization Report 2022 (WHO), 8 million people die every year due to tobacco consumption. In 2020 around 22.3% of world's population consumed tobacco.

Aim:

To explore the reasons and factors influencing adolescents substance use

Phenomenology

Phenomenology, rooted in a philosophical tradition developed by Husserl and Heidegger, is an approach to discovering the meaning of people's life experiences. Phenomenological researchers ask: What is the essence of this phenomenon as experienced by the by these people what does it mean? Phenomenologist investigate subjective phenomenon in the belief that critical truth about reality are grounded in peoples lived experiences. (Polit & Beck 2017)

Research Question:

Why do adolescents use substances? & what factors influence the same?

Objective:

To explore the reasons and factors influencing adolescent substance use with the view to develop the data collection and intervention tool

Research Methodology

Research Approach & Research Design

Qualitative research approach was adopted for this study. Descriptive Phenomenological research tradition was adopted to understand the adolescent's everyday life experience towards the reasons and factors influencing their substance abuse.

Participant And Sampling Strategies

This comprised of all the Substance abusing Adolescent school children of both boys and girls in the age group of 13-17 years of Madurai who fulfilled the inclusive criteria and signed an assent to take part in this study. The sample size was obtained based on the guiding principle of

Data Saturation – that is, sampling to the point at which no new information is obtained and redundancy is achieved. Six (Three from experimental group and two from control group) information rich

participants narrations were included.

Inclusion criteria: Adolescents who are willing to audiotape their narration.

Exclusion criteria: Adolescents who are not willing to narrate the reasons and factors influencing their substance abuse.

Sampling technique: Intensity sampling technique was adopted.

Part A: Demographic variables

It includes the

- **Personal information of the adolescent:** age, class of study, medium of instruction, area of residence, religion, birth order, no of siblings, up bringing by, educational status, occupational status of parents, life status, marital status, size of the family including self, monthly family income.
- Provoking variables, Substance related variable, Academic compliance related variables.

Part B: Qualitative questionnaire

1. You have agreed to talk to us about your substance use. Can you please explain how it all started? How was it at the beginning – first time? Can you share about all that happened at that time?
2. How did this habit continue? Can you please tell us more about what you thought, who encouraged/discouraged you? Where it happened and so on

The prompts/probes were given wherever required. The sample probes were given below

- How old were you?, What grade were you were?
- Who were you with?, Were they boys or girls?
- Were the same age as you? Older /younger?
- What was the time of the day?, What was the time of the year?

Data collection method

In-depth interview: individual semi structured in depth interviews were conducted among six participants who narrated their experience on reasons and factors influencing the substance abuse. Researchers using an in-depth interviewing approach invest a significant amount of time with each participant employing a conversational format.. They were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher as soon as possible after the interview. Transcribed interviews gave the researcher deep insight into the data. None of the adolescent have withdrawn from the study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance obtained from International Centre for Collaborative Research (ICCR) official Ethics Review Board of Omayal Achi

College of Nursing, Chennai. Formal written permission from the Principal of Omayal Achi College of Nursing, and from the chief educational officers of government schools, commissioner for Corporation schools, and from head master/head mistress of selected schools. All the ethical considerations were followed.

Rigor Of Qualitative Data:

The quality criteria most often cited by qualitative researchers are those proposed by Lincoln and Guba proposed four criteria for enhancing the trustworthiness of a qualitative inquiry: **credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability**. This four criteria represent parallels to positivist criteria of internal validity, reliability, objectivity and external validity. All the rigors of the qualitative research were ensured.

Application Of Colaizzi's Method Of Data Analysis In Phenomenological Research

Transcribing all the subject's description Extracting significant statements creating formulated meaning aggregating the formulated meaning into theme clusters developing exhaustive description identifying the fundamental structure of the phenomenon returning to the participants for validation Extracting significant statements.

Table 2: Examples Of Formulated Meanings And Sub Themes From Significant Statement

s.no	Formulated meaning	Sub themes
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Father separated. Meager income Job during schooling, Sleepless nights Job related pressure, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altered Family dynamics Role conflict Deficient self – regulation Risky job
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Father's job at grave yard, father's friend forced to consume alcohol Fear, Loss of mom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risky job Family dynamics Compulsion for substance use Unable to say no
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No job for the father, Job at fish shop Restless week ends, Breathe also fishy Good income and out of job and extra tips also 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risky job Financial disability Bullying
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Novelty seeking, Boredom, Imitation Low risk perception, Made routine No recreation, Festivals increase the use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> poor coping mechanism Substance abuse, Fear, Peer influence, Boredom Risk taking
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to concentrate ,Sleepless nights Painful nights, Unable to cope, Dual role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial struggles, Coping mechanism Substance abuse, Fear, Habitual, Peer influence
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grief Anxiety Physical symptoms like shivering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altered family dynamics grief Unable to say no Compulsion to use

Theme 1: Altered Family dynamics paved the financial struggles and role conflict **Theme2:** Poor stress management and Deficient self–regulation
Theme 3: Risky job hence tried to match the pain and physical sufferings with substance
Theme4: Compulsion for substance use from peers/coworkers and Unable to say no to it **Theme**
Theme5: Poor risk perception **Table 4:** Emerged themes and related codes

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S. No	Codes	Themes emerged
1.	My father married another woman, myself, my mom and, my sister were left alone. Mom is working as a sweeper in the corporation. It was burdensome to pull the family with a	Unhealthy family dynamics paved the

	<p>meager income. (Participant no 9)</p> <p>My father is working as the grave digger (vettayan) in the graveyard I have no mother long sigh of respiration: mom expired due to breast cancer) and no one is there to take care of me (face become dull and sad). (Participant no 2)</p> <p>My mom is working as a servant in homes. I and my brother is studying here. one day morning my mom screamed at seeing at the roof when I went and see there my father committed a suicide- Participant no 65)</p>	financial struggles and role conflict.
2.	<p>Initially, it was very sleepy and difficult to be alert at Night. My friend (not a school friend. (long pause by the participant) introduced this cool lip to me. Now I can handle the nights and job-related stress easily through this. (Participant no 9)</p> <p>To minimize such fear other diggers and my father used to consume sarakku (alcohol). They used to take me by 2 or 3 am to the graveyard because I have no mother long sigh of respiration: mom expired due to breast cancer) and no one is there to take care of me (face become dull and sad). To relieve the fear and stress they gave to me also. (Participant no 2)</p> <p>The loading and unloading of cement slabs were very heavy my father's friend felt pity on me. He told me to use Ganesh (smokeless tobacco) and it was very strong I felt giddy then my friend suggested me use the cool lip. Apart from the sleepless nights pain and suffering were there – (Participant no 97)</p>	Poor stress management and Deficient self – regulation
3	<p>Initially, it was very sleepy and difficult to be alert at Night. My friend (not a school friend. (Long pause by the participant) introduced this cool lip to me. Now I can handle the nights and job-related stress easily through this. (Participant no 9)</p> <p>I have to clean the fish for 250 rupees. Sunday to Wednesday that smell will not go away from my hands. Even Breathe is Fishy. My hands, spine will ache terribly and fingers become 'pruney causing loose folds of skin that form wrinkles. - (Participant no 23)</p> <p>The loading and unloading of cement slabs were very heavy my father's friend felt pity on me. Apart from the sleepless nights pain and suffering were there – (Participant no 97)</p>	Risky job hence tried to match the pain and physical sufferings with substance
4	<p>I had to go along with father to burial ground during nights, the fear to see the burned dead body by late night... father's friend consumed a 'saraku' (alcohol) and forced me to consume alcohol. (Participant no 2)</p> <p>.....the other worker of that shop showed me two important substances. One is "Ganesh the smokeless tobacco and the other is "ganja". Both were relieved much of my pain and loathing. - (Participant no 23).</p> <p>My friends used to share the amount of pocket money to get the bidi kattu (each pack contains 10 bidies). We used to challenge ourselves for who can smoke more. (Participant no 83).</p> <p>That was my first use for later I wanted to venture into new- new substances. We used to challenge ourselves for who can smoke more (Participant no 97)</p> <p>He asked me that did you get the boldness. I felt the same and then I tired many times. I don't care about my health I have to take care of my family (Participant no 65)</p>	Compulsion for substance use from peers/coworkers and Unable to say no to it Poor risk perception

Theme1: Unhealthy family dynamics paved the financial struggles and role conflict

In this study many of the adolescents had the incidents of death of either parent, or the father eloped, or the father endured from sickness, all these contributed to less income and were incapable of running the family with day to day budgetary battles. This circumstance made them go for night work at a young age they had to confront the restless evenings, anxious ends of the week with physical and mental suffering, and continuation of classes during d time. They were juggled with caring for family's obligations and academic activities which made them incapable of justifying both roles. A few said that their mother endured a part to confront this monetary trouble consequently they went to work but their fathers felt blamed.

Theme2: Poor stress management and Deficient self-regulation

The proceeded work and scholarly exercises increase the threat among the adolescent. In the meantime, mothers and teachers were shouted at for utilizing these.

They have no other go to skip this. It got to be their schedule or routine. Most of the adolescents expressed that they were incapable of controlling the impulsivity to utilize these substances and they do not know how to oversee this stress. Adolescents were specified that they had to acknowledge this job and the school acted as if their identity was getting changed out of this push. They were rankled, and on edge, anxiety was not their nature and they were saying that the utilizing these substances they could control their stretch-related outrage, anxiousness, and anxiety. They were able to do their work in a quiet way.

Theme 3: Risky job hence tried to match the pain and physical sufferings with substance

The third theme raised was that the adolescent had to acknowledge this unsafe work to fathom the monetary troubles of the family but they said that the torment and physical sufferings were excruciating. My schedule was after having supper I utilized to go to bed but presently days ought to go to work by evening or weekend. This torment was not soothed by rest and there's no time for rest as well since got to get prepared for school. Numerous of the adolescent said that the torment and sufferings would be soothed as it were with those substances like "cool lip, Ganesh (the smokeless tobacco), bidi, cigarettes, lager some of the time alcohol".

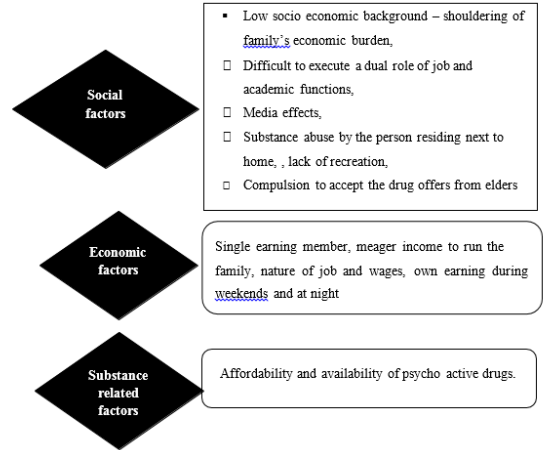
Theme 4: Compulsion for substance use from peers/coworkers and Unable to say no to it

Most of the adolescents were get included with this propensity of utilizing these substances in their work put by their co-workers. They were working calmly as since of these. At whatever point they utilized they were compelled to utilize. Most of the adolescents expressed that they were incapable to say no to them since they did not know how these individuals would take this and they wouldn't be communicative. They might not offer assistance to them in the event that they have more work. The warmth they might not get in case they say no to utilize these. The young people thought that their companions might dismiss in the event that they fizzled to do this.

Theme 5: Poor risk perception

The majority of the adolescents stated that although they had witnessed the negative impacts of drugs, they had not been concerned. They had very little awareness of negative consequences. The teenagers said that youngsters wouldn't be impacted by this and that it might take years for the symptoms to manifest.

Factors Influencing Adolescent Substance Abuse



DISCUSSION

Buvik et al. (2021) conducted a study in Jimma town among youth who were engaged in substance use. A descriptive qualitative study design was employed and the study participants were acquired using purposive/judgmental sampling techniques. In total, 20 interviews were conducted with young people using in-depth and key informant interview methods. The data were analyzed by using ATLAS.ti version 7. Thematic analyses were performed in order to extract the main themes and categories. Different factors that drive the youth to engage in substance use were identified; individual factors, social and economic factors, substance. The present study also identified the personal factors, psychological factors, social factors, economic factors and substance related factors.

Nawi et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review on risk and protective factor of drug abuse among adolescents. Both the risk and protective factors obtained were categorized into three main domains: individual, family, and community factors. The individual risk factors identified were traits of high impulsivity; rebelliousness; emotional regulation impairment, low religious, pain catastrophic, homework completeness, total screen time and alexithymia; the experience of maltreatment or a negative upbringing; having psychiatric disorders such as conduct problems and major depressive disorder; previous e-cigarette exposure; behavioral addiction; low-perceived risk; high-perceived drug accessibility; and high-attitude to use synthetic drugs. The present study findings also spotlight the same findings with the factors influencing adolescent substance abuse. The themes that emerged were precisely matched with these domain-wise risk and protective factors of drug abuse among adolescents. They may require adequate knowledge regarding effects substance use on health, skill training to say no, self-control and self-management skill training to overcome these.

CONCLUSION

The current study finding leaves many of the needs of this adolescents unmet, calling for a more coordinated youth-centred approach to address the diverse concerns connected to young adolescent substance use and service outcomes and experiences.

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