



Substance Abuse and its impact on Life Satisfaction among Young Adults

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Abstract : Young adults are increasingly struggling with substance usage, which raises grave worries about the effects it may have on general wellbeing. The research investigates the connection between substance usage and life satisfaction in people between the ages of 18 and 30. It looks at how abusing alcohol, drugs, and other addictive substances can have a detrimental impact on relationships, self-esteem, mental health, and advancement in school or the workplace. Using both qualitative and quantitative data, the research demonstrates a significant association between high levels of substance use and reduced life satisfaction. The results highlight the value of early intervention, education initiatives, and support networks in fostering better lifestyle choices and raising young adults' standards of living.

Keywords: *Substance Abuse, Life Satisfaction, Young Adults*

1. Introduction

Substance Abuse A pervasive and intricate public health concern, substance abuse impacts people, families, and societies all over the world. It describes the dangerous or excessive use of drugs, alcohol, prescription drugs, and illegal substances, which frequently results in addiction and dependency. Millions of individuals from all backgrounds are impacted by this problem, which cuts across age, gender, and socioeconomic status. In addition to harming a person's physical and

mental health, substance abuse also ruins relationships, lowers productivity at work, and raises crime rates. Addressing this escalating crisis requires an understanding of the underlying causes, consequences, and available treatments.

Substance abuse has many different causes, including environmental, psychological, and biological ones. Since people who have substance use disorders are more prone to develop in those with a family tradition of addiction, genetics plays a big part. Because drugs change the incentive system in the brain, which causes cravings, compulsive behaviors, brain chemistry also plays a role in addiction. Mental health disorders like depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) increase the likelihood of substance misuse because people may use drugs or alcohol as a kind of self-treatment. People turn to substance as an escape from psychological issues like high levels of stress, unresolved trauma, and low self-esteem. Peer pressure and cultural influences are also very important, especially for teenagers and young adults who might use drugs to fit in or try new things. Addiction is also greatly influenced by environmental variables, such as familial background, financial difficulties, and easy access to drugs. While those who experience poverty, unemployment, or a lack of educational opportunity may use substances as a coping method, people are more likely to engage in such activities if they are raised in environments where substance use is accepted.

Substance abuse has serious and wide-ranging effects on The society at large, the user, and those they cherish. Many health concerns, such as liver disease, cardiac problems, respiratory problems, decreased immunological function, and cognitive impairments, are caused by substance addiction on an individual basis. Long-term use raises the chance of an overdose, which can be lethal, and can cause irreversible harm to important organs. Because substance addiction can lead to sadness, anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, and, in certain situations, psychosis, the impacts on mental health are as destructive. Relationships are frequently strained by the behavioral changes brought on by addiction, which can result in domestic violence, family disputes, and child neglect. Substance misuse at work raises the likelihood of workplace accidents, lowers productivity, and increases absenteeism. Substance abuse is associated with higher crime rates in society because addicts may turn to criminal activity like drug trafficking or stealing to fund their addiction. The lives of individuals impacted are made even more difficult by the legal repercussions of substance misuse, which include arrests, jail time, and financial obligations.

Despite the serious repercussions, substance abuse is curable, and there are a variety of preventative and intervention techniques that can assist people in getting well and taking back control of their life. Programs for education and awareness that educate people—especially young people—about the dangers of substance use are the main emphasis of prevention initiatives. In order to support at-risk individuals and encourage good coping strategies, schools, community organizations, and medical experts are essential. Age limits, taxes, and law enforcement actions are only a few of the laws and policies that governments impose to limit the distribution and availability of dangerous substances. The degree of the addiction and the demands of the individual determine the available treatment choices for substance abuse. The first phase is frequently detoxification, which manages withdrawal symptoms while enabling the body to get rid of dangerous chemicals under medical supervision. For some addictions, opioid use disorder, medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is also used to lessen urges and avoid relapse. Throughout the healing process, support organizations.

Even though substance misuse is still a major problem worldwide, those who are addicted have hope thanks to new research, improved treatment, and supportive communities. Individuals, families, medical professionals, legislators, and society at large must work together to combat substance misuse. We can assist people in overcoming addiction and leading better, more satisfying lives by raising awareness, expanding access to treatment, and creating supportive surroundings. In order to end the cycle of substance misuse and build a future in which fewer people are subjected to the devastation caused by addiction, prevention, early intervention, and compassionate care are crucial.

Life Satisfaction A key component of human well-being is life satisfaction, which includes a assessment quality based on their own experiences, goals, and accomplishments. It represents a more steady and long-term sense of fulfillment across a variety of domains, including relationships, work, health, financial stability, and personal progress, setting it apart from transient emotions or transitory happiness. Life satisfaction is a more comprehensive concept that incorporates both subjective emotions and objective circumstances, in contrast to fleeting joy or pleasure. In addition to external elements like socioeconomic situations, cultural expectations, social interactions, and availability to opportunities, it is also influenced by internal aspects like personality traits, attitudes, values, and resilience. While those with lower life satisfaction levels

may suffer from stress, discontent, or even mental health issues, those with higher life satisfaction frequently report feeling more motivated, purposeful, and psychologically well.

2. Review of Literature

This study investigated the relationships between life satisfaction, delinquency, and substance abuse among Malay youth (Mahadzirah Mohamad et al., 2017). Contrary to expectations, the researchers found no direct. However, they discovered. Using bootstrapping analysis, study demonstrated that delinquency fully mediates. These findings suggest efforts among youth focus on decreasing delinquent behavior by improving life satisfaction. The researchers employed self-administered questionnaires and utilized Structural Equation Modeling to test their hypotheses. The study's conclusions emphasize the importance of addressing life satisfaction as a means to indirectly reduce substance abuse through its impact on delinquency (Mahadzirah Mohamad et al., 2017).

This study examined the relationships between life satisfaction, optimism, and happiness among young adults aged 18-24 (Thomas & Kavya, 2022). Using standardized scales, the researchers assessed these constructs in a sample of 120 participants, equally divided between males and females. These findings suggest that individuals who experience more frequent positive emotions and have a tendency to expect positive outcomes. The study contributes to our understanding of the interconnectedness of these psychological constructs in young adulthood, highlighting the potential importance of fostering happiness and optimism to enhance overall life satisfaction (Thomas & Kavya, 2022).

This study examined the relationship between quality of life and impulsivity/compulsivity in young adults, a critical period for brain development and life goal establishment (Chamberlain & Grant, 2019). The researchers found that lower quality of life was significantly associated with older age, higher alcohol consumption, and the presence of various impulse control disorders, including gambling, compulsive buying, and binge eating (Chamberlain & Grant, 2019). Mood disorders, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use disorder were also linked to reduced quality of life. Higher impulsiveness scores on the Barratt scale and impairments in extra-dimensional set-shifting and decision-making quality were additional factors associated with worse quality of life (Chamberlain & Grant, 2019). The findings suggest that impulse disorders, particularly problematic gambling, warrant increased public health attention. Furthermore, performance on

decision-making and set-shifting tasks appears to be particularly important in understanding quality of life in young adults (Chamberlain & Grant, 2019).

This study examined the relationship between substance abuse/dependence symptoms and life satisfaction in young adults using data from a 30-year longitudinal birth cohort study (Swain, 2012). Initially, significant associations were found. However, after adjusting confounding these associations were no longer significant. The researchers concluded that the apparent link between factors rather than the substance use itself. This finding challenges the assumption that alcohol and cannabis abuse/dependence directly lead to reduced life satisfaction, suggesting that other life circumstances may play a more significant role in determining overall life satisfaction among young adults with substance abuse issues (Swain, 2012).

This study examined the relationships between life satisfaction, drinking motives, and alcohol consumption among young adults (Tartaglia et al., 2017). The researchers surveyed 536 participants and analysed the data using structural equation modelling. Gender differences were observed, with women showing a link between low life satisfaction, increased coping expectations, and higher alcohol consumption. The study highlighted that the most dangerous drinking expectation was the belief that alcohol could enhance a person. The authors emphasized the importance relations understanding complex satisfaction, alcohol consumption. They suggested that prevention campaigns should focus on deconstructing the idea that alcohol can enhance personal attributes (Tartaglia et al., 2017).

This longitudinal study examines the long-term various aspects on adult life. Newcomb and Bentler (1988) investigated the impact of substance use on family formation, criminal behavior, sexual activity, education, employment, mental health, and social integration. The research utilized a large sample and employed sophisticated analytical methods to assess the reciprocal influences between drug use and social conformity. The authors found significant effects of adolescent drug use on multiple life domains, including increased likelihood of criminal behavior, reduced educational attainment, and impaired mental health. The study also explored the differential impacts of specific drugs within an integrated model. The findings highlight the far-reaching and often detrimental consequences of adolescent substance use, emphasizing on young adults' lives and social functioning.

This study investigated the relationship between interpersonal dependency and life satisfaction among young adults aged 18-24 (Fernandez & John, 2022). Despite the perception

that modern young adults strive for independence, the research suggests they still rely on others for personal fulfilment. The study involved 91 college students, selected through random sampling. Using spearman bivariate correlation analysis, interpersonal dependency in this age group. This finding challenges the notion that independence is the primary path to contentment for young adults. Instead, it highlights the importance of social connections and interdependence in achieving life satisfaction. Interpersonal dependency, though specific details were not provided. These results contribute to our understanding of young adult psychology and the factors influencing their well-being (Fernandez & John, 2022).

This study examined substance use among 35-year-old Americans, focusing on prevalence, adulthood predictors, and the impact of adolescent substance use (Merline et al., 2004). The researchers analyzed, using various factors influencing substance use. They remained prevalent and was influenced by both current life circumstances and past behaviors. Conversely, being female, having a college degree, working as being were linked to lower substance use. The study highlights the enduring nature of substance use into adulthood and emphasizes the importance of both adolescent experiences and adult roles in shaping substance use patterns (Merline et al., 2004).

Substance use in the United States is associated with numerous health and social consequences, affecting millions of individuals annually. According to research, approximately 40 million cases of debilitating illnesses or injuries are linked to the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs each year (Yu et al., 2008). These include increased rates of crime, violence, risky sexual behaviors, and suicidal tendencies (Yu et al., 2008). By emphasizing the connection between substance use and negative outcomes, the research underscores the importance of addressing this issue, particularly among vulnerable populations such as young adults with disabilities, who may face unique challenges and risks related to substance use.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim

To employ standardized psychological evaluation instruments to look into the connection between young adults' substance use and life happiness.

3.2 Variables

Independent Variable: Level of substance abuse

Dependent Variable: Life satisfaction

3.3 Hypotheses

1. Among young adults, substance addiction and life satisfaction are significantly correlated negatively.
2. Young adults' life satisfaction and substance abuse do not significantly correlate.

3.4 Participants of the Study

The participants are selected through convenience sampling from colleges, universities, and community centers. Participants must be willing to provide informed consent and complete the survey instruments.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

S.no	Name of the test	Developed by	Year	No. of items
1	CRAFFT Screening Tool	John R. Knight, MD	1999	6
2	Satisfaction With Life Scale	Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin	1985	5

CRAFFT Screening Tool : It helps professionals recognize early signs of alcohol or drug misuse. The name “CRAFFT” is an acronym representing six key areas: Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends/Family, and Trouble—each linked to a specific question that explores a young person’s experiences and behaviors related to substance use. For instance, it asks whether the individual has ridden in a car with someone under the influence, uses substances to relax or fit in, or has experienced memory lapses or trouble due to their use. The tool is typically administered after a few brief preliminary questions about recent alcohol or drug use, and if any of those are answered positively, the full CRAFFT set is completed. A score of two or more “yes” responses usually signals the need for a deeper evaluation or intervention. The CRAFFT is praised for being simple, youth-appropriate, and evidence-based, making it an effective early detection resource for preventing long-term health or behavioral consequences linked to substance misuse. An updated version, CRAFFT 2.1+N, includes a pre-screen section that makes it even more efficient for busy clinical environments.

Reliability

The CRAFFT Screening Tool has demonstrated strong reliability in various research studies, especially among adolescents. Its internal consistency is solid, meaning that the questions

work well together to assess a consistent concept—substance use risk. Additionally, the tool shows good test-retest reliability, where individuals tend to give similar responses when the tool is used more than once under similar conditions. This consistency indicates that CRAFFT is dependable over time and across different users, making it a trustworthy choice for routine screening in clinical and educational settings.

Validity

The CRAFFT Tool has proven to be a valid measure for detecting substance use and related problems in adolescents. It has strong sensitivity, which means it correctly identifies a high percentage of individuals who are actually at risk. It also shows good specificity, helping to reduce false positives by correctly identifying those who are not at risk. The tool has been validated through comparisons with in-depth clinical interviews and diagnostic standards, showing that it accurately reflects real-life patterns of substance use and risk behavior in youth. These findings support its use as an effective early detection instrument in both healthcare and community settings.

It focuses on an individual's cognitive judgment rather than emotional responses, asking them to reflect on how well their life matches their personal ideals. It does not measure satisfaction with specific areas like work or health but allows individuals to weigh these aspects according to their own priorities. The SWLS is simple to administer, making it popular in both research and clinical settings. It provides a single score that represents general life satisfaction, useful for tracking changes over time. Higher scores indicate greater satisfaction, while lower scores suggest dissatisfaction or the need for life changes. The scale has shown strong reliability and validity across diverse populations. Overall, the SWLS offers a clear and concise way to understand how people evaluate the quality of their lives.

Reliability

Diener et al. created the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) in 1985, and numerous studies have demonstrated its high dependability. With Cronbach's alpha coefficients generally falling between 0.80 and 0.90, it has a high level of internal consistency, suggesting that the items accurately assess a single aspect of life satisfaction. Given that studies have shown consistent scores across time, indicating that life satisfaction is a somewhat constant feature, the scale also exhibits test-retest reliability. Additionally, the SWLS has demonstrated strong construct validity,

showing a negative correlation with distress indicators and a positive correlation with other measures of wellbeing. All things considered, the SWLS is a very accurate instrument for evaluating life satisfaction in a variety of demographics.

Validity

(SWLS) demonstrates strong validity, its construct validity supported by high correlations ranging from 0.50 to 0.70 with other well-being measures. It also shows predictive validity, with higher life satisfaction linked to better mental health and lower depression.

4. Result

This section examines the relationship between young adults' substance use and life satisfaction. The analysis was done using data from the CRAFFT Screening Tool and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to find any relationship between the two variables, and the correlation results indicated a moderately negative relationship between substance use and life satisfaction, with a correlation value of $r = -0.460$ and a statistically significant p-value less than 0.001 (two-tailed). This implies that as substance use increases, levels of life satisfaction tend to decrease. In other words, individuals who engage more frequently in substance use are likely to report lower satisfaction with their lives.

Table 1: *Correlation between substance abuse and life satisfaction*

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Significance (p)
Substance Use and Life Satisfaction	-0.460	0.0

5. Conclusion

This study explored the association between substance abuse and life satisfaction among young adults, revealing a clear inverse relationship between the two variables. Supporting the hypothesis that substance abuse negatively impacts psychological and emotional well-being. Young adulthood is a transitional phase often accompanied by social, academic, and personal pressures, and this study highlights how some individuals may turn to substances as a coping mechanism. However, rather than alleviating stress or dissatisfaction, substance use often compounds existing challenges and creates new obstacles related to health, relationships, and long-term life goals.

The study emphasizes the importance of early screening, such as with the CRAFFT tool, and regular monitoring of life satisfaction using validated instruments like the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS). These tools not only help identify those at risk but also provide a foundation for tailored intervention programs. In line with previous research, this study reinforces the idea that substance abuse is both a symptom and a cause of decreased life satisfaction, driven by factors such as poor mental health, lack of social support, and limited coping skills (Chamberlain & Grant, 2019; Cao & Zhou, 2019).

From a practical standpoint, the results call for comprehensive prevention and rehabilitation strategies that extend beyond abstinence. Programs designed for young adults should incorporate life skills training, mental health support, and opportunities for positive social engagement. Improving life satisfaction through resilience-building, career counselling, and emotional support may reduce the appeal . In addition, societal and institutional efforts must aim to create environments where young individuals feel supported, heard, and empowered to make healthy choices.

Future studies should consider longitudinal approaches to examine abuse on life satisfaction and assess how individual differences—such as personality, trauma history, and socioeconomic background—moderate this relationship. Understanding these nuances can enhance the design of targeted, evidence-based interventions. Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing evidence that addressing life satisfaction is not only essential for well-being but also a critical factor in preventing and reducing substance abuse among young adults.

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