

THE ASSESSMENT OF SMOKING DEPENDENCE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS LIVING IN MULTAN

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between smoking addiction and academic performance among students in Multan, highlighting the detrimental effects of smoking on cognitive function, mental health, and physical well-being. Smoking negatively impacts concentration, memory, and learning capacity, leading to declining academic achievement, increased absenteeism, truancy, and higher dropout rates. The findings reveal that smoking addiction poses a significant threat to students' academic success and overall well-being worldwide. In Pakistan, particularly in Multan, the prevalence of smoking among students raises concerns regarding its impact on educational outcomes. The study seeks to examine the correlation between smoking addiction and academic performance in Multan, pinpointing key areas of concern and potential intervention strategies. Results indicate a significant negative effect on GPAs and academic motivation. To combat this issue, collaborative efforts among educational institutions, policymakers, and healthcare professionals are essential. Key actions include implementing comprehensive anti-smoking programs, providing accessible counseling, promoting healthy lifestyle alternatives, enforcing smoke-free campus policies, and educating students about the risks of smoking. By addressing the smoking epidemic, we can improve students' academic outcomes, enhance their overall well-being, and empower them to reach their full potential, ultimately fostering a healthier and more productive educational environment.

Keywords: Addiction problem, Smoking habits, Academic performance, Students, Multan.

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INTRODUCTION

Smoking addiction has emerged as a major global issue, posing serious threats to students' health, well-being, and academic success. Research indicates that smoking addiction can adversely affect cognitive function, mental health, and physical well-

being, ultimately hindering academic performance [1]. Contributing factors such as easy access to tobacco products, peer influence, and a lack of awareness about smoking risks intensify this problem. Consequently, smoking addiction has

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become a significant barrier to academic excellence, undermining students' potential and jeopardizing their futures [2]. It was highlighted how peer pressure and social networks significantly influence smoking initiation and addiction among young people. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to their friends' influence, which can lead to increased smoking behavior. Understanding the role of peer pressure and social networks in smoking behavior is essential for developing effective interventions to prevent smoking initiation and reduce rates among youth. It was defined peer pressure as the influence exerted by peers on an individual's actions, attitudes, and decisions. In the context of smoking, peer pressure may manifest in various ways, such as peers directly encouraging an adolescent to smoke or smoking in their presence [3]. It was found that coping mechanisms for youth differ by socioeconomic status, with those from higher SES accessing healthier strategies such as sports, hobbies, and supportive social networks. It was emphasized the significant role of social networks in adolescent smoking behavior, noting that young people are embedded within networks of friends, classmates, and peers, which can greatly affect their smoking habits [4].

It was identified peer pressure and social networks as significant predictors of smoking initiation among youth. Adolescents with smoking friends are more likely to start smoking themselves than those without such influences. It was underscored the importance of family dynamics, particularly parental smoking behavior and family attitudes toward smoking, in shaping adolescents' smoking dependency. Children often mimic the behaviors they observe in their parents; thus, if parents smoke, their children are more likely to take up smoking as well. Parental smoking serves as a powerful model for children, and the prevalence of smoking in the home plays a

crucial role in adopting smoking behavior [5-9].

It was also emphasized the role of peer pressure and social networks in smoking addiction among young people. Once children begin smoking, their social circles can reinforce and perpetuate this behavior. Additionally, it was found that family support and cohesion can offer a protective factor against youth smoking. Supportive and cohesive families are more likely to provide the emotional backing and guidance that young people need to resist smoking. Conversely, families lacking in support may contribute to feelings of isolation or low self-esteem, increasing the likelihood that young people will turn to smoking as a coping mechanism. Thus, family dynamics significantly influence the trend of smoking addiction among youth [10-12].

METHODOLOGY

In Pakistan, particularly in Multan, the smoking rate among students has reached alarming levels. A survey conducted for this study revealed that the highly competitive academic environment in Multan increases students' susceptibility to smoking addiction. This research aims to investigate the relationship between smoking addiction and academic performance among students in Multan, focusing on the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors that contribute to declining academic achievements [13-16]. By exploring the intricate connections between smoking, academic outcomes, and overall well-being, this study seeks to inform evidence-based interventions and policy recommendations to address the detrimental effects of smoking addiction in educational institutions in Multan. The study specifically examines the impact of smoking on the academic performance of young students at the Muhammad Nawaz Shareef University of Agriculture, Multan and Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, collecting data through questionnaires and analyzing it using SPSS to

determine means, frequencies, percentages, weighted scores, and rankings of relevant variables [17, 18].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Smoking can have significant social and emotional consequences that negatively impact academic performance. Young smokers often face increased social isolation and peer rejection, which can harm their mental health and well-being. These challenges can make it difficult for them to concentrate in school and participate in learning activities. The negative effects of smoking extend to academic performance and educational outcomes among youth. By recognizing these impacts, policymakers, educators, and healthcare providers can create targeted interventions to prevent smoking initiation and decrease its prevalence among young people, ultimately

enhancing their academic success and overall well-being [19].

Among the various impacts of smoking addiction, cognitive function impairment—specifically in memory, attention, and concentration—was reported as high by 54.7% of respondents. Furthermore, 32.9% indicated that reduced academic achievement was at a very high level, while 47.3% noted impaired decision-making at a very high level on the five-point Likert scale. Additionally, 60.2% mentioned increased absenteeism at a high level, and 39.4% reported poor attention during lectures as being at a high level. Low exam grades were described as very high by many respondents, with 35.6% indicating decreased motivation at a high level. Moreover, 51.4% reported reduced engagement in learning at a very high level on the same scale.



Figure 1: Impact of smoking addiction on academic performance.

The results indicated that 94.2% of respondents recommended minimizing smoking by providing comprehensive education about its dangers. A significant majority, 98.2%, suggested offering accessible smoking cessation programs and utilizing social norms, while 92.3% advocated for providing engaging alternative activities and establishing mentorship programs. Furthermore, 96.4% supported campaigns aimed at reducing the perceived social acceptability of smoking and promoting parental involvement in discussions about smoking risks, while 81.3% endorsed increasing the price of tobacco products through taxation.

Teenage smoking addiction is a complex issue influenced by various factors. Young people's smoking behaviors are shaped by media representations, cultural backgrounds, parental education, family dynamics, and socioeconomic status [20]. The emergence of alternative tobacco products, such as e-cigarettes, further complicates youth smoking addiction. Research indicates that the initiation of smoking among adolescents is often associated with risk factors like exposure to smoking in media and entertainment, mental health disorders, peer pressure, and family smoking habits [21, 22]. These factors can lead to the development of adolescent smoking addiction, which poses long-term health risks and social challenges. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy addressing these diverse elements is crucial for preventing and reducing youth smoking addiction. This strategy should include promoting smoke-free environments, enhancing access to smoking cessation programs, and implementing laws to limit tobacco advertising and promotion. Additionally, education and awareness initiatives directed at both youth and their parents or guardians are vital for changing attitudes and behaviors regarding smoking [23].

These outcomes align with findings from previous studies, which highlighted the significant impact of smoking on academic performance and educational outcomes among youth. Research indicates that smoking is associated with various negative effects that can hinder academic success. One primary way smoking affects academic performance is through its detrimental impact on cognitive function; it has been shown to impair memory, attention, and learning ability, making it more difficult for young smokers to concentrate, retain information, and perform well on tests and assignments.

Furthermore, these findings are consistent with previous studies suggesting that smoking negatively affects physical health, which in turn can impact academic performance. Smoking is a leading cause of numerous health issues, including respiratory infections, asthma, and cardiovascular disease. Such health problems can lead to increased absenteeism, adversely affecting academic outcomes. Additionally, smoking can contribute to behavioral issues that further impair academic success. Research shows that young people who smoke are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as drug and alcohol abuse, exacerbating academic challenges and leading to disciplinary issues in school.

Governments should implement and enforce policies that restrict tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. This includes increasing tobacco product prices through taxation and creating smoke-free environments. Accessible and affordable smoking cessation programs tailored to youth should be established, addressing their unique challenges and motivations. Regulations on the sale and marketing of alternative tobacco products, such as e-cigarettes, should be enforced to prevent their use as gateways to smoking among young people. Advocacy for stricter tobacco control policies is essential, including higher taxes on

tobacco products, comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising and promotion, and the establishment of smoke-free public spaces. Targeted campaigns in schools and communities should be launched to educate youth about the dangers of smoking and promote smoke-free lifestyles. These campaigns should also inform parents and guardians about how their smoking behaviors can impact youth. Encouraging families to model healthy behaviors and actively discourage smoking can significantly influence youth smoking habits.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed an alarming rise in smoking addiction trends among teenagers, influenced by various factors. Peer pressure plays a significant role, as many young people begin smoking to fit in with their social groups or mimic friends who smoke. Family dynamics are also critical; children of smokers are significantly more likely to take up smoking themselves. Additionally, the media often portrays smoking as glamorous or rebellious, enticing impressionable youth to start. The easy accessibility of tobacco products, coupled with targeted advertising from tobacco companies, further facilitates experimentation among young people. Stress and mental health issues can drive teens to use smoking as a coping mechanism, while a lack of awareness about the health risks and addictive nature of smoking exacerbates the problem.

Moreover, smoking has a profoundly negative impact on students' academic performance, leading to declining achievement and hindering their potential. It impairs cognitive function, exacerbates mental health issues, and compromises physical well-being, resulting in decreased concentration, memory, and learning capacity. This decline contributes to absenteeism, truancy, and higher dropout rates, which correlate with lower GPAs and diminished academic motivation. To address

this issue, collaborative efforts among educational institutions, policymakers, and healthcare professionals are essential. Implementing comprehensive anti-smoking programs, providing accessible counseling, promoting healthy lifestyle alternatives, enforcing smoke-free campus policies, and educating students about the risks of smoking are critical steps. By tackling the smoking epidemic, we can enhance students' academic outcomes, improve their overall well-being, and empower them to reach their full potential, fostering a healthier and more productive educational environment.

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