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Internalising and Externalising Behaviour Problems and Academic Achievement in Children of Drug Abusers



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Internalising and Externalising Behaviour Problems and Academic Achievement in Children of Drug Abusers

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to investigate the impact of parental substance addiction on children's academic achievement and emotional and social well-being.

Methodology: A correlational study was conducted. The sampling technique was purposive sampling. Sample size was 100 participants including sons and daughters of drug abusers aged 13 to 18 years. The Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) assessed internalizing and externalizing behavioural problems, while the Academic Performance Questionnaire evaluated students' perceptions of their academic abilities and achievements.

Findings: Study indicated that internalizing behaviour problems negatively predict academic achievement, whereas externalizing behaviour problems positively predict it. Additionally, both internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems were negatively correlated with academic achievement, revealing an inverse relationship. The study found that boys exhibited more externalizing behaviour problems and academic achievement compared to girls.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This study advances theory by highlighting potential for early detection of emotional issues in children, enabling the development of effective interventions and strategies to promote their wellbeing. It informs policy by emphasizing the need for context-specific support programs. Practically, it guides mental health professionals and educators in developing educational services that can be provided to address the challenges faced by these children.

Keywords: *Internalising Behaviour, Externalising Behaviour, Academic Achievement*

Introduction

The influence of parental drug abuse on children can be multi-layered, worrying about many characteristics of their development, which can be their emotional and behavioural well-being, and academic success. This is an important area of research because it demands attention due to its far-reaching significance on the well-being and development of the younger generation. Children of drug abusers are often exposed to an exciting environment which is characterized by instability, neglect, and emotional disorder, that has significant effects on their emotional, behavioural, and academic results.

The children whose parents are substance abusers have the most detrimental effects of drinking and drug addiction that is the psychosocial effects. Children who live with an alcohol-dependent parent, often referred to as children of alcoholics (COAs), show innovative symptom stages for internalizing (such as sadness and worrying) and externalizing (such as aggression) disorders, as compared to the children who are raised by non-alcoholic parents (Johnson & Leff, 1999). According to Sawyer et al. (2000), the most frequently reported issues among Australian children were difficulties with criminal and violent behaviour, as well as attention and self-regulation issues, according to the child and adolescent category of the National Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being. Across childhood and adolescence Internalizing and externalizing behaviour difficulties (BP), from depressed mark and aggression to inhibited behaviour and crime. (Sterba et al. 2007). Study on the behavioural problems development offers, increase in affecting problems, and decrease in expressing problems with age on average (Bongers et al. 2003). Though, individual inconsistency in early stages were there and degree of modification in these complicated behaviours, such as many children and adolescents display change so that other show constancy with time. Besides this, chronically great levels of problem behaviour can have significance in precise clinical results for example thrilling antisocial behaviour, self-destruction, or treatment confrontation (Broody et al. 2003).

However, some researchers have not revealed a link between maternal age and mood disorders in children (Bruiser-Voskamp et al., 2011). Additionally, some researchers have discovered that children born to younger mothers experienced statistically lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression in their early adult lives than did children born to older mothers (Terance et al., 2016). Upon investigating extra factors that influencing children's behaviours, some researchers revealed a strong correlation between mothers' educational attainment and the development of mental health challenges in their offspring (Stormark et al., 2012), including influencing indications (Burlaka et al., 2015). Observing behaviours related with parental reliance can cause feelings of misunderstanding, shame, and insecurity, which can worsen emotional discomfort and impair one's ability to successfully control emotions (Buchanan, 2015). Internalizing behaviours like sadness and anxiety is an important public health concern (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Internalizing problems in children are frequently caused by environmental difficulties (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998). This could result in major functional impairments in the future (Bittner et al., 2007).

Children whose parents have lower educational attainment were more likely to experience internalizing symptoms, stress, decreased activity and energy, and fewer positive emotions and life insights than children of parents with higher education levels according to a study conducted on young people in Europe (Rueden 2006). In addition to low parent education, lack of family support has also been linked to children's expressive and behavioural issues, (Lundervold et al., 2012).

The achievement of higher education goals is significantly hampered by the academic performance of college students. Zhu (2016) "Academic effort, schoolwork" is defined as "academic" (Pandey et al., 1996). "Schoolwork" refers to the knowledge assignments assigned by the school and is evaluated in phases, whereas "academic work" refers to the outcomes attained by pupils because of the education process. Children of drug addicts frequently argue academically because of a variety of factors. Erratic attendance might be resulted by an unstable home environment, trouble focusing, and inadequate administrative abilities (Minkowski 2015). Expressive and behavioural issues might cause delay in learning and sociability in the classroom. Moreover, kids from these households might not have access to the resources and support systems needed for success in school, like parental guidance or educational resources.

The family system theory is providing a theoretical foundation for emotional disturbances, externalizing behaviour problems, and academic success in children of drug addicts. A family is a single, emotionally interdependent entity (Bowen, 1966). Every family member will be impacted by the needs and abilities of one family member according to family systems theory.

The main emphasis of the family system model is the interface between family members and the environment they live in. The family systems theory can offer understanding of how drug abusers behave, how their children exhibit their behavioural issues, and how their academic performance may be affected by it. According to family systems theory, people are closely connected with each other in the family and an unbalanced element within the system can affect how well the system functions.

Externalizing behavioural issues and poor academic performance in kids and teenagers. The challenges that people have with externalizing behavioural problems and low academic achievement has been examined by the author of this paper. They also study the strength and accuracy of the correlation among these domains as well as the validity of descriptive replicas that collect the components under study. Hyperactivity and distraction are more closely associated with academic difficulties than aggressive behaviour during childhood; but disruptive behaviour and neglect are associated with academic low achievement by adolescence. The results showed that the following factors should be examined as possible basic effects: family difficulties, sub average intellect, and low socioeconomic level, linguistic self-consciousness on ability of children to affect and express problems. A pattern of limit social limit, risk of causing behaviour problems, and potential safety besides displaying behaviour problems characterize behavioural inhibition (BI).

The internalizing difficulties are more likely to be higher at the age of four among children with behavioural constraints who also had lax parenting. Furthermore, higher authoritarian parenting was related to a plausible lowering of externalizing issues and lower rise in impacting behaviour problems over time in children raised by authoritative parents. The finding highlighted the implication of including child and ecological issues in longitudinal behavioural problems samples spanning infantile and adolescence (Williams et.al, 2009) Direction of parents to Emotion, Children's Emotion Alteration, and Affecting Behaviour. We have a restricted understanding of how parents direct to the emotion of children (i.e., parents' alertness/understanding of their children's emotions) influences the child development affecting behaviour via regulation of children's emotion and lability-negativity. Stratified convenience sampling was used to collect data. Outcomes of our study focus on the importance of orientation of parents to children's emotion in child emotional and behavioural outcomes. Satisfying interventions for parents should be detached to improve awareness of parents and understanding of children's emotions. (Sisi Tao, 2022).

Youth Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviours and School Harassment. The purpose of this study is to determine whether lower school fitting and achievement in young people attending primary schools is caused by school bullying, hence increasing affecting and externalizing behaviour. The study's findings demonstrated that school victimization had a significant and negative predictive effect on internalizing and externalizing behaviours of young people and on their academic performance. According to mediation analyses, the negative impact that bullying has on young people's success and mental health has lessened by being a part of the school community. The findings show that, in the case of bullying at school, a sense of belonging to the school is vital for promoting academic performance and reducing internalizing and externalizing symptoms. (Arslan Gökmen, 2021)

Hypotheses

H_{a1}: There is likely to be a negative relationship between internalising and externalizing behaviour problems and academic achievement.

H_{a2}: Internalizing and Externalizing behaviour problem are likely to predict academic achievement.

H_{a3}: There are likely to be gender differences among internalising and externalizing behavioural problem and academic achievement.

Method

The study design was Correlation. Correlation method was used to determine the relationship between internalising and externalizing behavioural problems and academic achievement among children of drug addicts. The sample was raised using non-probability, purposive sampling technique from different private and public clinics based in Lahore after agreement from their

respective administrations. Sample size was 100. Sample included son and daughter of drug addicts with age range from 13 to 18 years.

The Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) was used to assess internalizing and externalizing behavioural problems, which is a component of the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA). The ASEBA is a tool that is used to assess behavioural and emotional issues in children and adolescents. The age limit for this test is 6-18 years. This test is divided into two higher order features—internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems. The CBCL has 113 questions, scored on a Likert scale (0=absent, 1= occurs sometimes, 2=occurs often). (Achenbach, 2001) while the Academic Performance Questionnaire evaluated students' perceptions of their academic abilities and achievements. An Academic Performance Questionnaire (Christopher McGregor, 2015) was used to assess the student's perception about their academic achievements and skills. The questionnaire has an 8-item rating scale. To score the scale, "Strongly Agree" is scored (5); "Agree" is scored (4); "Neutral" is scored (3); "Disagree" is scored (2); and "Strongly Disagree" is scored (1).

Demographic table

Table 1

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Sample characteristics	N	Percentage %
Age		
13	5	5%
14	9	9%
15	11	11%
16	24	24%
17	19	19%
18	32	32%
Gender		
Male	55	55%
Female	45	45%
Parent marital status		
Married	81	81%
Separated	13	13%
Divorced	6	6%
Socioeconomic status		
Middle class	60	60%
Upper middle class	35	35%
Upper class	5	5%
Family type		
Nuclear	68	68%
Joint	31	31%
Family income		
Below 50,000	36	36 %
50,000-100,000	41	41%
100,000-200,000	18	18%
Above 200.000	5	5%
School going status		
Attending school	99	99
Not attending	1	1%
Grades in school		
0	1	1%
A	21	21%
B	47	47%
C	24	24%
D	7	7%
No. of siblings		
2	22	22%
3	27	27%
4	23	23%
5	28	28%

Procedure

Permission was obtained from the concerned authorities and department for data collection before approaching the sample and conducting research. Then permission was obtained from the authors of the scale to use their scale for research purposes. Informed consent was taken from the participants, and the purpose of the research was debriefed. After the collection of data, it was entered in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to run the analysis. Data was expressed as mean \pm standard deviation, as appropriate. Hierarchical regression, correlation matrix and Independent Sample T-test were used, as appropriate. $P < 0.05$ was considered significant. At the end results according to APA-7 were reported and discussion, conclusion, and limitations were mentioned.

Results

Inferential statistics computed the different statistical analysis for testing study hypotheses in which collected data was analysed by using SPSS version 26. Suitable statistical analyses were Pearson product moment correlation, independent sample t-test and hierarchical regression analysis with the aim of testing hypotheses

Table 2

Reliability Analysis of Internalising and Externalising Behaviour and Academic Performance

Variables	M	SD	Ranges Min-Max	Cronbach α
AA	24.04	4.86	2.4 – 3.6	.76
EBP	37.73	16.24	0.3 – 1.4	.92
IBP	57.71	17.68	0.2 – 1.3	.90

Note: M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, α =Reliability Co-efficient, AA=academic achievement, EBP=externalising behavioural problem, IBP= internalising behavioural problem

Results in table 2 shows that Cronbach's α was calculated to measure reliability for academic performance questionnaire ($\alpha = .76$) which means the test internal consistency is satisfactory. The Cronbach's α for externalising behaviour problems was ($\alpha = .92$) which indicates high internal consistency and for internalising behaviour problems ($\alpha = .90$) which indicated high internal consistency.

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics and correlation for Study Variables (N=100)*

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1	100	1.45	.50	—	-.18	-.22*	-.01
2	99	59.51	18.65	—	—	.83**	-.31**
3	98	37.73	16.24	—	—	—	-.26**
4	100	24.04	4.86	—	—	—	—

Note. M= Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, N= sample size 1= Gender, 2= Internalising Behaviour, 3= Externalising Behaviour, 4=Academic Performance,

**p<.01

Table 3 revealed the significant association between gender, internalising behaviour, externalising behaviour and academic performance. The results highlighted that the gender has negative relationship with internalising, externalising behaviour problems and academic achievement. The internalising behaviour has a significant negative relationship with academic performance ($r = -.31$, $p < .05$) which states that with increase in internalising behaviour problem the academic performance decreases. Results of Pearson product moment correlation also revealed significant negative relationship between externalising behaviour problem and academic performance ($r = -.26$, $p < .05$) which indicates the inverse nature of the relationship between externalising behaviour and academic performance which means increase in externalising behaviour the academic performance decreased.

Table 4*Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Academic Performance (N=100)*

Variables	B	95%CI for B		SE B	B	R ²	ΔR ²
		LL	UL				
Step 1						.001	.001
Constant	24.58	21.64	27.53	1.48			
Gender	-.31	-2.21	1.60	.96	-.032		
Step 2						.077	.75**
Constant	28.55	24.54	32.57	2.02	-.09		
Gender	-.91	-2.80	.99	.96			
Externalising	-.082	-.14	-.02	.03	-.282**		
Step 3						.11	.028*
Constant	31	25.94	35.06	2.29			
Gender	-.96	-2.82	.926	.95	-.10		
Externalising	-.009	-.11	.092	.045	-.302*		
Internalising	-.077	-.16	.01	.051	-.032*		

Note. CI = confidence interval, LL= lower limit, UL = upper limit, B=Unstandardized Coefficient, β =Standardized Coefficient, SE=Standard error, R^2 = R square, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hierarchical regression analysis was carried out to check the predictive nature of the internalising behaviour, externalising behaviour and academic achievement. Assumption of normality, outlier, multicollinearity and sample size was checked beforehand, and no violation of assumptions were observed in data. Results of table 4.3 shows the impact of gender, externalising and internalising behaviour on academic achievement. In step 1 the demographic variable gender with R^2 value .001 explained 1% variance in the academic achievement ($F(1, 96) = .101, p < .001$). The finding revealed that gender ($\beta = -.032, p < .001$) negatively predicted academic performance. In step 2 R^2 value of .077 revealed that the gender and externalising behaviour explained 7% variance in academic performance- with ($F(2, 95) = 3.94, p < .001$)

The findings revealed that the gender externalising behaviours negatively predicted academic achievement. The ΔR^2 value of .75 revealed 75% chance in variance of model 1 and model 2 with ($\Delta F(1, 95) = 7.76, p < .001$).

In step 3 internalising behaviour were added into regression model, with R^2 value .11 revealed that gender, internalising and externalising behaviour explained 11% variance in academic performance- with ($F(3, 94) = 3.67, p < .001$) the finding revealed that the internalising behaviour problem negatively predicted the academic performance.

Table 5

Independent Sample T-test of Internalising and Externalising Behaviour and Academic Performance among Male and Female (N=100)

Variables	Male		female		<i>t</i> (98)	<i>P</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
AP	24.90	5.98	23.98	3.06	.11	.90	0.02
IN	62.61	19.3	55.78	17.24	1.83	.06	0.4
EX	41.09	16.82	33.78	14.75	2.26	.02	0.46

Note M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation, p= level of significance, AP=Academic Performance, IN= Internalising Behaviour, EX= Externalising Behaviour

Table 5 revealed the significant mean difference on externalising behaviour problem with $t(98) = 2.26, p < .05$. Finding showed that the male exhibited higher score on externalising behaviour problems with ($M = 41.09, SD = 16.82$) as compared to female with ($M = 33.78, SD = 14.75$). The value of Cohen's d was 0.46 (< 0.50) which indicated small size effect.

Findings revealed non-significant mean difference on internalising behaviour problem with $t(98) = 1.83, p < .05$ and the academic performance with $t(98) = .115, p < .05$. the value of Cohen's d for internalising behaviour was 0.4 and for academic performance it was 0.02 which indicates small size effect.

Discussion

It was hypothesised that there is likely to be a negative relationship between internalising and externalizing behaviour problems and academic achievement. The finding of research states that with increase in internalising behaviour problems the academic performance decreases because they are negatively correlated (table 3). Externalising behaviour problems negatively predicts academic achievement (table 3) this is proved by the research which showed that the externalising behaviour problems leads to the academic underachievement (Pol Lier, 2012).

As the results showed that the children with externalising behaviour problems i.e. social problems, aggressive behaviour, disruptive behaviour have low academic achievement or had low grades in schools. In the previous research the findings indicate that early academic achievement of a student does not cause them more or less likely to be assessed as having externalising behaviours (Kulkarni, 2022).

The results of reliability revealed that the scales of internalising and externalising behaviour have higher internal consistency (table 2) this is proved through the literature that the scales of Internalizing and Externalizing behaviour of the CBCL were significantly and positively correlated the internalizing and externalizing categories were negatively correlated (Stephen Hinshaw, 2010). There was no false item overlap that affected the CBCL Internalizing and Externalizing scales' cooccurrence. Significant relationships between the DSM-III diagnoses of anxiety, depression, conduct disorder, oppositional disorder, and attention deficit disorder (ADD) and the CBCL Internalizing and Externalizing scales (Gould et al. 1993).

It was hypothesized that Internalizing and Externalizing behaviour problems are likely to predict academic achievement. The finding of this study revealed that the gender grades, internalising behaviours negatively predicted academic achievement whereas the externalising behaviour positively predicted the academic achievement. The academic achievement of a child is affected by the internalising and externalising behaviour problems whether the effect can be positive or negative. (table 4) the previous research finding stated that the internalising behaviours negatively predicted the academic performance which means increase in internalising behaviour problem cause decrease in academic achievement (Meghan Walker, 2019)

Previous research has shown that the internalising behaviour problem negatively predicts academic achievement whereas the externalising behaviour positively predicts the academic achievement (Eisenberg 2001). Another research's findings show that Grades statistically significantly predicted externalizing problem behaviour. (Locatelli, 2004)

It was hypothesized that there are likely to be gender differences among internalising and externalizing behaviour problems and academic achievement. The results of this study revealed that the male have higher scores on externalising behaviour problems as compared to females. Findings revealed non-significant mean differences on internalising behaviour problems and academic performance.

Previous research findings have revealed that, the girls were overrepresented (71.4%) in the internalizing group and boys were overrepresented (75.0%) in the externalizing group (Eisenberg 2001). Internalizing issues with behaviour for example, females factor loadings for physical conditions and feelings of anxiety and sadness were comparatively higher than boys. (Reitz,2005) which means that the girls should have significant mean differences in internalising behaviour. Girls exhibit more emotional responses as compared to boys.

The boys exhibited higher rates of externalising behaviours as compared to girls. According to gender role theory, due to the role of gendered socialization experiences, when dealing with stress, boys usually externalize negative feelings, while girls tend to turn their anger inward in the form of internalizing problems (Hoffmann et al., 2004)

The current study has limitations which are important to be assessed before applying the consequences of the findings. The population selected was only from 13-18 years. The adult population was ignored. The adult population should be added so we can also address their behaviour problems as well. Children whose mothers were drug addicts were not part of research. They should be included because mothers' drug addicts have worse effects on the child's mental health. Limited resources were available for conducting research. Sample size was small.

Conclusion

Children of drug abusers have internalising and externalising behaviour problems which also effected their academic performance. Significant gender differences exist in both behaviour profiles and academic outcomes.

Limitations

There were limitations to this study which are important to be assessed before applying the consequences of the findings. The population selected was only from 13-18 years. The adult population was ignored. The adult population should be added so we can also address their behaviour problems as well. Children whose mothers were drug addicts were not part of research. They should be included because mothers' drug addicts have worse effects on the child's mental health. Limited resources were available for conducting research. The sample size was small. Discussing these limitations into consideration, future research should target these constraints. First, it is important to involve multiple informants concerning each variable of interest. And future research should count the limitations of correlation research designs. As an alternative, utilizing longitudinal data offers further knowledge relating to changes in the relationships over time.

Implications

This finding underscores the potential for early detection of emotional issues in children, enabling the development of effective interventions and strategies to promote their wellbeing. Additionally, it opens avenues for the creation of diverse community programs tailored to their needs. Enhanced

educational services can be provided to address the challenges faced by these children, including specialized education initiatives, prompting a re-evaluation of existing policies.

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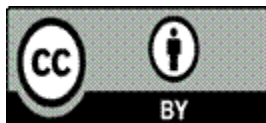
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