

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE: INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF
SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMPONENTS.

Pan Chunqiu¹, Amiya Bhaumik¹

¹ Lincoln University College, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

*Corresponding author: Pan Chunqiu, Lincoln University College, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

In China, substance abuse has grown to be a significant public health and social problem that calls for a rapid and decisive response. By examining the relationship between psychosocial variables, social components, and the triggering of such effects, this research sought to understand the influence of emotional and environmental factors on drug misuse. 473 respondents from throughout China were surveyed using the quantitative research method. For statistical analysis, the researcher used SPSS version 25 to determine the strength and direction of the associations. The findings showed a strong relationship between greater rates of drug abuse and emotional discomfort, low self-esteem and inadequate coping mechanisms. Vulnerability was heightened by peer pressure, domestic violence and inadequate parental support. Substance addiction was highly influenced by social factors such as unemployment, poverty and a lack of community support. Those who had supportive relationships at home and among their friends were less likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol. The combined influence of these on individual conduct is supported by the statistically significant relationship between drug abuse and both social and psychological factors. The findings emphasise the need for preventive initiatives that emphasise stable families, positive social contact and mental health. When cultural values and community engagement are included in substance abuse treatments, they may have a bigger effect. The study provides helpful guidelines for developing all-encompassing, community-based, culturally sensitive therapies that promote mental health, guard against addiction and enhance social cohesion in Chinese culture.

Keywords: Substance abuse; Psychosocial factors; Social components; Drug use; Family relationships.

INTRODUCTION

In terms of social welfare and public health, substance abuse is still a significant problem across the world. It destroys families and communities and results in serious psychological, social, and economic problems. A person's everyday life and conduct are influenced by a variety of social and

environmental influences. One's daily surroundings and social connections have a major role in the genesis and development of substance use. For those who endure emotional or behavioural neglect, separation from family insufficient parental guidance and substance abuse is a typical coping strategy. Teenagers who are always seeking their classmates' acceptance are more susceptible to the negative consequences of peer pressure. If people see their peers or classmates experimenting with drugs, they are more inclined to do the same themselves. Moreover, Environmental factors might make the problem worse. Substance abuse is rising in areas with high unemployment, poverty, or criminal activity rates (Chisom et al., 2022). The danger is heightened when individuals are unable to easily access parks, schools, and medical facilities. Numerous factors, including stress, competitiveness, and social isolation make people more likely to try things with drugs in urban environments. Strong connections to the community and support networks are often protective traits. The massive economic expansion and urbanisation that have occurred in the United States have created new problems in China (Guo et al., 2021). Teenagers and young adults are more likely to suffer from the negative effects of social change, changed family dynamics, and excessive academic and professional responsibilities. Due to variables including greater exposure, heightened social competitiveness, and changes in lifestyle, drug use is more common in urban areas. The government has launched campaigns and enacted strong legislation to curb drug usage, but the use of alcohol and synthetic narcotics is still becoming a bigger issue. This is true even if the government has implemented policies to limit drug usage.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

China has a much lower drug usage percentage than the rest of the globe. Only 1.12 million people, or 0.08% of the total population, were using drugs in the nation as of December 2022. Substance abuse is more common among men under the age of 35. The Chinese government's drug control authorities responded quickly to the new situation after COVID-19 altered the illicit substance landscape in 2023. They adopted the strategy of "addressing the root causes of drug demand and supply," adopted a tough stance against the most obvious drug problems, and successfully prevented a recurrence of the problem. The number of substance-related criminal cases that were resolved increased by 12.6%, the number of suspects who were arrested increased by 21% and the quantity of drugs collected increased by 18%, reaching 42,000 tonnes throughout the nation (Yang & Giummara, 2021). Substance abuse undeniably encompasses a broad variety of scholarly interests, and policymakers and academics from several fields must collaborate to develop more effective strategies for limiting its spread and lessening the harm it causes, both directly and indirectly. There is a considerable association between this developing problem and social and environmental elements. Numerous residents in low-income neighbourhoods face challenges like unemployment, inadequate education and a shortage of social assistance. In these people, substance abuse is inclined to happen. Furthermore, things like divorce, job migration, and family dissolution have undermined traditional sources of support. The Chinese government has

implemented strict laws and started national efforts to try to reduce drug use (Shao et al., 2021). The situation is becoming worse despite these efforts, especially in urban areas. Because of the quick modernisation, the whole country is dealing with new issues. Given the growing connection between societal changes and drug abuse in China, a deeper comprehension of the underlying environmental and social elements is required. These characteristics continue to shape addiction and treatment patterns throughout the country.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the research was to explore the connection between psychosocial factors and drug dependence. It would be important to study how environmental and social factors influence the need for drugs and alcohol. This research wanted to look at how peer influence, family life, and neighbourhood environments influence drug consumption and addiction. The study also wanted to see how the presence of caring friends, strong family connections, and a secure living situation assisted individuals in managing better and decreasing the risk of using drugs. The research showed that social circumstances and environments proved to be a higher priority than medical interventions or individual therapeutic techniques that were the primary area of previous research. The findings were to inform policymakers, healthcare professionals, and community leaders to develop prevention measures, intervention policies, and assistance schemes that address the environmental and social issues around substance misuse. This will enable the development of healthier societies and improve the quality of life for the population.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The most notable aspect of China's current drug supply chain is that domestic drug production channels make up a very small portion of the nation's overall drug supply. In 2023, an astounding 20.5 tonnes of drugs were seized, which accounted for 79.2% of all drug seizures annually and an increase of 84.7% year over year. Since the pandemic, the cost of common drugs like heroin and methamphetamine has remained high, which has led users to look for less costly but equally effective substitutes such as drugs and prescription medications for mental health issues. The most notable of them is the misuse of substances. On October 1, 2023, the Chinese government officially placed the drug under control after 29,000 documented incidents of its use and the discovery of 21,000 new users during the fourth quarter (Sun et al., 2020). A crucial component of psychosocial factors in drug abuse is the complex interaction between an individual's personality traits and broader social circumstances that has lately become known. Research from China indicates that factors including impulsivity, depression, anxiety, and sleep quality affect people's desire to disassociate from drugs. These internal factors, as well as external factors like one's sense of social support affect both the potential for drug use and the effectiveness of recovery programs. Several significant psychosocial traits, such as prior experiences, aggressive

inclinations, mental wellness, relational confidence and psychological security have been linked to substance seeking, according to research. The correlation between substance cravings and higher levels of parental conflict and lower levels of family closeness suggests that these variables are also significant (Cengel et al., 2020). Additionally, researchers examined drug use and online browsing patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic in China and found a clear link between rising substance use and depressive and anxious symptoms. This demonstrates how psychological distress may result in substance abuse during periods of social isolation and doubt (Huang et al., 2021). Taken together, these studies demonstrate the complexity of drug abuse, which encompasses not just personal psychological factors but also environmental and social factors. With a deep knowledge of these processes, effective prevention and intervention strategies tailored to the unique needs of individuals and communities may be developed.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the influence of psychosocial factors on substance abuse?

What is the role of social components on substance abuse?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: A quantitative research approach was used in the study. The researcher utilised SPSS version 25 to evaluate the quantitative data. The 95% confidence interval and odds ratio were used to quantify the direction and degree of the statistical link. When the p-value is less than 0.05, the result is statistically significant. To better comprehend the data's fundamental character, descriptive analysis was useful.

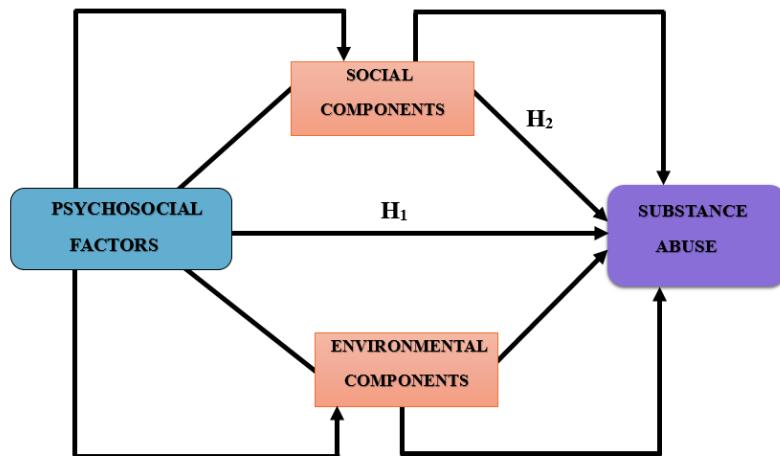
Sampling: A stratified sampling technique was used by the researcher. The researcher confirmed that 418 individuals were part of the sample using the Rao-soft tool. In order to collect data for the study, the researcher handed out 520 surveys. Among 497 questionnaire sets, 24 were considered incomplete and so not included in the result. Hence, 473 was decided upon as the final sample size.

Data and Measurement: Analysis of quantitative data was the primary source of information for the research. The questionnaires served to collect quantitative data by asking respondents to rate their thoughts on a Likert scale that ranged from one to of five points. During the process of collecting secondary data, the researcher focused mostly on the resources available on the internet.

Statistical Software: The researcher used SPSS 25 and Microsoft Excel to do statistical analysis for the study.

Statistical Tools: In descriptive research, many demographic and level-specific features of various programs were highlighted. In inductive statistical studies, several statistical procedures are used such as analysis of variance (ANOVA), 95% confidence intervals for odds ratios, factor analysis for assessing validity and theoretical reliability, and others.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



RESULT

Factor Analysis: To uncover hidden factors, one may apply Factor Analysis (FA) on publicly available data. When there are no obvious physical or mental symptoms, evaluations may rely on regression results. The usage of simulations allows for the discovery of possible vulnerabilities, obvious connections and gaps. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) tests are used to assess the outcomes of multiple regression studies. The dependent variables in the statistical model provide very accurate estimations of the dependent variable. It is possible to find data that is identical to another. Data is made simpler to read by reducing proportions. Investigators may depend on KMO to offer them an integer from 0 to 1. A sufficiently large sample is defined as one with a KMO score between 0.8 and 1. The following requirements must be satisfied in order for it to be approved by Kaiser: This one is very low, ranging from 0.050 to 0.059, in contrast to the usual range of 0.60 to 0.69. In middle school, a score between 0.70 and 0.79 is seen as average. Between 0.90 and 1.00 lies its remarkable range.

Table1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Testing for KMO and Bartlett's

Sampling Adequacy Measured by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin .934

The results of Bartlett's test of Sphericity are as follows:

Approx. chi-square = 3252.968

df = 190

sig =.000

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.934
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

This allows claims to be made about sampling. The researcher used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to enquire about the statistical significance of the correlation matrices. An adequate sample size was suggested by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic, which had a value of 0.934. A p-value of 0.00 was obtained via Bartlett's Sphericity test. The correlation matrix is not an identity matrix if it achieves a positive result in Bartlett's Sphericity test.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Psychosocial Factors: Psychosocial factors are the mix of social and mental elements that affect how people see things, feel emotions, and act. They connect the public social life with private thoughts and feelings. These elements help shape personality, how people make decisions, and how they cope with everyday challenges. Psychosocial factors in a person's daily life can affect their motivation, friendships, and mental health. For example, someone who feels alone or is struggling with money may feel anxious or sad, while a happy and strong person may have good relationships with others and a caring family. These factors can also affect people's choices about their lifestyle, how they make decisions, and how they solve problems. Substance misuse is often linked to mental health issues like low self-esteem, depression, or stress, either as a way to cope

or because of shared weaknesses. Peer pressure, family relationships, and the local environment are all important social factors (Trucco, 2020).

MEDIATING VARIABLE

Social Components: The basic aspects of a society, social factors, determine the manner in which individuals interact and cooperate as a collectively. Because they help in guiding and organising society, the family, government institutions, schools, and religion are all part of this system. They also encompass ties between persons and institutions such as friendship ties, neighbourhood ties, and employment. Within society as a whole, norms and values are significant because they stipulate expectations regarding members' behaviour and affect behaviour. Cultural norms, customs, and collective values significantly affect the social life and belonging of a person. Within society as a whole, norms and values are significant because they stipulate expectations regarding members' behaviour and affect behaviour. Cultural norms, customs, and collective values significantly affect the social life and belonging of a person. With these social factors together forming the infrastructure of society, its constituent members can cooperate and coordinate. They help maintain social order and affect the distribution of entitlements towards its members such as opportunities and responsibilities (Padilla-Rivera et al., 2020).

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Substance Abuse: Abuse of drugs or alcohol is referred to as substance abuse. It happens when someone regularly or excessively consumes substances. This behaviour can affect a person's relationships with others, mental health, and physical health. Some people use drugs to reduce pain, boost happiness, or alter their mood. After a while, addiction or dependence may develop. Substance abuse has several detrimental health impacts. There may be harm to the liver, heart, or brain. Anxiety, depression, and mood swings are among the symptoms. Despite their best efforts, many people struggle to regulate their use and are unable to stop. Therefore, performance at work or school may deteriorate. Maintaining a positive relationship with loved ones may be difficult. Irrespective of age, gender, financial class or cultural background, substance abuse leads to increasing sociological, physiological, social, psychological, administrative, and economic issues (Liang et al., 2020).

Relationship between psychosocial factors and substance abuse: The relationship between drug abuse and psychological factors is defined by its complexity and strength. Human activity that occurs independently does not exist. People let their thoughts, emotions, and social surroundings shape it. Psychosocial factors have a significant effect on substance abuse. They consist of the psychological and social elements that affect a person's feelings, ideas, and behaviour. Substance

misuse is more likely to occur in periods of mental difficulty, trauma, anxiety or low self-esteem. A lack of communication at home or problems within the family may also increase this risk. The drive to fit in and social pressure have a big impact on young people's substance experimentation. It gets more difficult to get healthy when there is no one to turn to for help (Gong et al., 2021). Additionally, family relationships play an important role. Neglect, communication breakdowns or domestic abuse all increase emotional suffering. People may turn to drug addiction as a kind of comfort when they feel less valued or supported. However, in a secure and affectionate family environment, this kind of conduct may be avoided.

After examining the above discussion, the researcher arrived at the following hypothesis to examine the impact of psychosocial factors on substance abuse.

“H01: There is no significant relationship between psychosocial factors and substance abuse.”

“H1: There is a significant relationship between psychosocial factors and substance abuse.”

Table 2: H₁ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	36589.214	189	3254.861	865.194	.000
Within Groups	854.367	283	3.762		
Total	37443.581	472			

There are several significant results from the research. An F-value of 865.194 qualifies as statistically significant when the p-value is less than 0.05. This denotes that the “H1: There is a significant relationship between psychosocial factors and substance abuse” is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Relationship between social components and substance abuse

There is a strong and direct correlation between social variables and substance abuse. Social components include things like neighbourhood, friends, customs and social support. They affect conduct, choices and coping mechanisms. Substance abuse is more likely when these elements are absent or unfavourable. Family is a crucial social component. Children whose families often argue, leave them or lack good role models are more inclined to endure emotional stress. They could try with drugs or alcohol to dull the ache of their feelings. When parents misuse drugs or are not good role models, anxiety levels rise. Families with high levels of love and support are less likely to have substance abusers (Ruan et al., 2024). Attitudes towards drug misuse are influenced by

cultural norms. While smoking and drinking are considered taboo in certain cultures, they are highly discouraged in others. A person may be less likely to use or seek treatment if they are socially stigmatised.

After examining the above discussion, the researcher arrived at the following hypothesis to evaluate the influence of social components on substance abuse.

“H02: There is no significant relationship between social components and substance abuse.”

“H2: There is a significant relationship between social components and substance abuse.”

Table 3: H₂ ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	38475.631	177	3054.872	957.940	.000
Within Groups	894.356	295	3.189		
Total	39369.987	472			

The study has produced a number of noteworthy findings. Statistical significance is achieved with an F-value of 957.940 and a p-value lower than 0.05. This denotes that the “H2: There is a significant relationship between social components and substance abuse” is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study discovered that drug abuse and psychological variables had a clear relationship. Those who were frequent alcoholics and drug users also had high levels of tension, anxiety, and sadness. A lack of emotional resilience and poor self-esteem made exposure considerably more severe. Participants acknowledged using drugs as a coping mechanism or to ease emotional pain. The research also underlined the importance of the social component of drug abuse. Peer pressure has a significant impact on behaviour, especially throughout adolescence and the early stages of adulthood. Participants who belonged to social groups or had acquaintances who also took drugs were more likely to engage in similar activity. However, it is very beneficial to have supportive social networks that can provide guidance and reduce the likelihood of drug use. According to the findings, psychological factors as well as internal and external social components all contribute to substance abuse. An integrated strategy that emphasises community support and personal development may help prevent and treat substance abuse.

CONCLUSION

According to the research, social and psychological factors have a significant impact on individual substance abuse. Ineffective coping mechanisms, low self-esteem and mental discomfort were linked to an increased risk of drug misuse. Family relationships, social pressures and community situations further shaped conduct, demonstrating the interaction between social and personal environments. Programs that provide community involvement, mental health treatment, and social support may help reduce drug use. The effect of culturally relevant activities and awareness campaigns seemed to be higher when they aligned with local norms and values. Enhancing family relationships, encouraging healthy peer networks, and bolstering community resources all seemed to reduce substance abuse rates. Future research should focus on studies that look at how social and psychological interventions affect drug usage patterns over time. Comparative research across regions, age groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds may help identify gaps in outcomes and guide focused actions. Policies and initiatives that include both individual and community factors are necessary to prevent drug addiction and encourage healthy behaviours among at-risk populations.

REFERENCES

1. Cengel, H., Uzun, U., Bozkurt, M., & Evren, C. (2020). Factors affecting treatment compliance in patients with substance use disorder under probation. Anatolian Journal of Psychiatry, 373-379.
2. Chisom, H. I., Beatrice, O., Iyanuoluwa, O. O., & Oluwatoyin, B. (2022). Risk factors associated with substance abuse among adolescents. International Neuropsychiatric Disease Journal, 11-24.
3. Gong, H., Xie, C., Yu, C., Sun, N., Lu, H., & Xie, Y. (2021). "Psychosocial factors predict the level of substance craving of people with drug addiction: A machine learning approach. International journal of environmental research and public health, 12175.
4. Guo, H., Wang, J., Wang, S., Zhou, J., & Wang, X. (2021). Analysis of factors influencing substance use craving among Chinese substance users. Frontiers in Psychiatry, 1070215.
5. Huang, Q., Chen, X., Huang, S., Shao, T., Liao, Z., Lin, S., . . . Shen, H. (2021). Substance and Internet use during the COVID-19 pandemic in China. Translational Psychiatry.
6. Liang, J., Kõlves, K., Lew, B., De Leo, D., Yuan, L., Talib, M., & Jia, C.-x. (2020). Coping strategies and suicidality: A cross-sectional study from China. Frontiers in psychiatry, 129.
7. Padilla-Rivera, A., Russo-Garrido, S., & Merveille, N. (2020). Addressing the social aspects of a circular economy: A systematic literature review. Sustainability, 7912.
8. Ruan, S., Wang, X., Zhao, C., Li, Q., Li, W., Zhang, G., . . . Yang, X. (2024). Psychosocial Correlates of Motivation for Abstinence Among People Who Used Drugs After Community

Rehabilitation Treatment in China: A Structural Equation Modelling. Psychology Research and Behavior Management.

- 9. Shao, Y., Yiping, W., Yuan, Y., & Xie, Y. (2021). A systematic review on antibiotics misuse in livestock and aquaculture and regulation implications in China. *Science of the Total Environment*, 149205.
- 10. Sun, Y., Li, Y., Bao, Y., Meng, S., Sun, Y., Schumann, G., . . . Shi, J. (2020). Brief report: increased addictive internet and substance use behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic in China. *The American journal on addictions*, 268-270.
- 11. Trucco, E. M. (2020). A review of psychosocial factors linked to adolescent substance use. *Pharmacology biochemistry and behavior*.
- 12. Yang, J., & Giummarrra, M. J. (2021). Compulsory and voluntary drug treatment models in China: a need for improved evidence-based policy and practice to reduce the loaded burden of substance use disorders. *International journal of drug policy*, 103063.