



A Study to Determine the Link between Media Use and Drug Use among Students: A Case Study of Pakistan

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Abstract

In Pakistan, drug addiction is becoming more common as the country has 6.7 million drug users. A serious social issue facing modern Pakistani society is a rapid rise in drug addiction among students. Drug traffickers have stepped up the use of media to trigger demand for drugs in many countries including Pakistan, India, and Thailand. The media had a significant impact on their decision to start abusing drugs. Previous studies show media encourages teen substance use. So, this study is designed to determine the link between the use of media and drug use among students in two universities in Khairpur City. An exploratory research method was employed because society is traditional and no substantive research has been carried out on the issue in the country. A random sampling technique was adopted to collect data. The target population for this study was students of two Universities in Khairpur. An online close-ended questionnaire was adopted and distributed among students of two universities online. Python was employed to analyze the data. Results establish links between the use of media and drug use among the students. Moreover, students spending two hours on social media are exposed to information related to drugs, which puts them at increased risk of drug use.

Keywords: Drug Use; Media Use; Students; Python; Sindh; Pakistan.

1. Introduction

One of the major societal issues facing the globe today is drug usage. Parents and governments are concerned that young people are finding drug and substance addiction to be enjoyable. Substance abuse is another name for drug abuse. Drug abuse is described as the use of drugs in ways or doses that endanger the user, others around them, or both. An individual may be diagnosed with substance dependence if they continue to use drugs despite the risks involved (Ahmad, Yousaf, Saud & Ahmad,

2020). Drug abuse happens in stages, such as drug acquisition or the start of drug use, where a person obtains drugs. When the person starts consuming drugs heavily, this is usually followed by an escalation of consumption. When this continues, it causes addiction, during which the person starts to rely on drugs. Relapse as a result of abstinence is the final step (Becker & Hu, 2008). Sedative pills, alcohol, heroin, marijuana (ganja), tobacco, bhang, hashish (charas), various cough syrups, brown sugar, and cocaine are a few examples of substances that are frequently abused. Drug misuse has severe negative effects on both; the individual and society. Abusing drugs has a major detrimental impact on a person's health (ANF, 2023; Ahmad et al., 2022). It is possible to assert that drug misuse also negatively affects one's ability to earn money in this situation. Lu et al. (2008) opine that drug misuse has a detrimental effect on the rise in crime. Drug usage affects a person's ability to reason, which makes them more likely to commit crimes. Perry and Carroll (2008) believe that drug usage plays a big role in encouraging impulsive behaviors, which in turn plays a role in drug addiction. Sujana et al. (2021), in a study, discovered that drug use affects physical as well as academic and emotional health. Overall, it is implied that society also bears the costs of consumer drug addiction because society is deprived of the valuable contributions of drug users.

Yahaya (2019) asserts that drug use among youth is on the rise in general. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report 2022 noted increasing instances of drug abuse. According to this report, around 284 million people aged 15-64 used drugs worldwide in 2020 and which is a 26 percent increase over the previous decade (UNODC, 2022). According to the reports, drug addiction increased in low-income countries by +43% and it rose by +10% in middle-income countries, while it registered a decline by -1% in high-income countries (UNODC, 2022 and Ahmad, J. et al., 2022). The number of persons who have substance use disorders exceeds 36 million (Ahmad, J. et al., 2022). Apart from this, 11.2 million persons injected narcotics globally over the study period. A little more than half of these individuals had hepatitis C, 1.4 million had HIV, and 1.2 million had both (UNODC, 2022). Globally, drug addiction claims 685 lives every day, compared to 49 deaths per day from terrorism (ANF, 2023). According to Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan, approximately 225 billion US dollars are spent on drug treatment globally and above all, the world drug economy is approximately USD 435 billion (ANF, 2023). In Southeast Asia, the number of drug users per 100,000 people climbed to 76.7 in 2018 from 50.6 in 2017 and was higher than in 2016 by a 176% increase rate (Luong, T.H., 2022). In Pakistan, 6.7 million people, or about 6 percent of the population, took drugs other than alcohol and cigarettes in the preceding year and this includes 9 percent of adult males and 2.9 percent of adult females (UNODC, 2022). On the other hand, the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan reported that approximately 7 million people in Pakistan use drugs, with 4 million using cannabis and 2.7 using opioids (ANF, 2023).

According to Pakistan's Minister of State for the Interior, more than 50% of pupils in educational institutions, in the country's capital area, were using narcotics (Sabri, 2018). The claim frightened the entire country, and some organizations disputed the data as being inflated (Dawn, 2018). According to the World Bank data, the total population in Pakistan stands at 231 million in 2021 (World Bank, 2023). More than 64% of the population of the nation is under 30, and 29% is between the ages of 15 and 29. Pakistan, the fifth-most populous country in the world, has experienced a growing youth bulge since the 1990s (NDu, 2022). Substance abuse is another name for drug abuse. Drug abuse is described as the use of drugs in ways or doses that endanger the user, and others around them, or both. An individual may be diagnosed with substance dependence if they continue to use drugs despite the risks involved (Ahmad et al., 2022). Drug abuse happens in stages, such as drug acquisition or the start of drug use, where a person obtains drugs. When the person starts consuming drugs heavily, this is usually followed by an escalation of consumption. When this

continues, it causes addiction, during which the person starts to rely on drugs. Relapse as a result of abstinence is the final step (Becker & Hu, 2008).

Keeping in view the harmful effects of drug use, interventions are required to lessen young people's inclination to take drugs. Social media platforms have prospects for developing and implementing interventions to lower young people's predisposition for drug use. On the contrary, some studies proved that social media platforms have caused an increase in the usage of drugs among students. Teenagers who frequently use major social media platforms are more likely to consume alcohol, use drugs, and purchase tobacco than teenagers who either do not use social media or use it infrequently, (Hilliard, 2019). Those who use social media are more likely to use cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana than those who do not use social media and the risk is higher for those who have seen images of young people using or passing out from drugs or alcohol (Costello & Ramo, 2017). Besides, drug usage is widespread and frequently glamorized by celebrities and other people on social media (Costello & Ramo, 2017). According to a recent study, teenagers who use social media frequently, are exposed to material that could increase their chance of developing drug and alcohol problems. The study analyzed nearly 16 million postings from Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, and Weibo and discovered that the bulk of content about drug and alcohol use was depicted positively (Rutherford, 2022; Rutherford et al., 2023). According to another study, college students, who engage in disordered online social networking use, are more likely to have problematic drinking and difficulties with emotion regulation. Another study advances the line of research by illuminating a link between increased social media use and drinking. The findings of another study support the long-lasting effects of exposure to substance-related media content on descriptive norms as effects were strong across the developmental periods of both adolescence and young adulthood. Positive norms and attitudes toward alcohol and drug use have been linked to higher levels of exposure to substance-related content (Davis et al., 2019). Even, the Annual Report of the year 2021 of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) finds increasing evidence of a link between exposure to social media and drug use (INCB, 2021).

This study was designed to examine the link between social media use and drug use among young people. It would explore whether the students, spending time on social media, find or access any drug-related information or video or images (other material) on social media sites. If so, whether such information or other material put them at increased risk of drug use. Overall, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a social media-based impact in increasing drug usage among students enrolled in Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur and Mehran University Engineering Technology SZAB Khairpur in the Khairpur City, Sindh, Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

Various studies have been conducted to examine the link between social media use, exposure to digital content, and drug use. The research by Vogel et al. (2021) found that teenagers, who use social media more frequently and are exposed to more advertisements and other types of content in social media posts, are more likely to use drugs (Vogel et al., 2021). Another study established a cross-sectional relationship between e-cigarette use and frequent social media use among Canadian teenagers (Sampasa-Kanyinga, & Hamilton, 2018). Social media frequently features content about e-cigarettes, and regular exposure to this type of content could normalize e-cigarette use (Hébert et al., 2017; McCausland et al., 2019 & Vogel et al., 2021). E-cigarette use is frequently portrayed in social media posts as glamorous (McCausland et al., 2017). Adolescent social media users may view using e-cigarettes as a behavior to imitate if they notice other young people—friends, acquaintances, or influencers—doing so and seeming content and popular (Vogel et al., 2021). The use of e-cigarettes

and exposure to e-cigarette material (such as social media marketing and/or peer-generated postings) have been linked in three research (Pokhrel et al., 2018; Sawdey et al., 2017 & Camenga et al., 2018), but these were correlational, and two of the studies involved college students (Pokhrel et al., 2018; Sawdey et al., 2017). Another study provides an overview of the present state of the art in terms of how substance use is portrayed in marketing, entertainment, and digital media, including the Internet and social networking sites. The research on marketing and media suggests that depictions of marijuana, nicotine, alcohol, and e-cigarette use have a significant impact on teenagers and young adults (Jackson, Janssen & Gabrielli, 2018). Media representations are a primary source of learning about substance use. Paid industry advertising and depictions of substance-using behavior in the media have important environmental impacts on juvenile substance use, especially for kids without direct lived experience (Scott et al., 2016; Leonardi-Bee et al., 2016; Jernigan et al., 2017; Stautz et al., 2016; Gupta et al., 2016; Foxcroft, 2009).

Similar results were noted by Janssen (2018), who found that young people's exposure to substance use on social media is high and that this exposure is linked to subsequent drug usage (Janssen, 2018). The usage of social media also enables users to gain information about the habits and lives of peers outside of their immediate social circles, such as "influencers" (i.e., online users with a sizable following who are compensated to advocate a product) (De et al., 2017). However, peer-generated social media messages may have an even greater impact on adolescents' e-cigarette use than marketing/advertisements do. Overall, the use of social media is spreading rapidly over the world. Concerns about problematic or abusive use of social media, which parallels behavioral and drug addictions, have also grown (Tullett-Prado et al., 2023). Problematic social media use has been linked to increased mental health symptoms and heavy episodic drinking, according to earlier studies (Brunborg et al., 2017; Steers et al., 2014). The influence of social norms might diminish with age, college students' behavior may be less impacted by peers than that of teenagers (Eisenberg et al., 2014). However, there are no prohibitions on sustenance product placement in entertainment media like television, films, and music unless they specifically feature branded products (Jackson et al., 2018). According to research, exposure to social media content about common interests, such as substance abuse, significantly affects both individual and societal risk perceptions as well as behavioral intentions. According to a past study, the availability of substance-related content on social media that encourages participation in substance use or explicitly shows use appears to be widespread. Additionally, the widespread accessibility of this content may have negative effects on attitudes, behaviors, and risk perceptions related to substance use, particularly among adolescents and young adults, who are the most vulnerable and frequent users of social media. Health, Safety, and Harms, Promotion, Advertisement, and Informative Content are the most prevalent types of content.

According to a previous study, eight account types - 'user-generated, commercial, public health organizations, professional organizations, government entities, influencers, Bots and medical professionals - were linked to the distribution of content about substances. The study further revealed that 76% of the substance-related content was portrayed favorably overall (Rutherford et al., 2023). Moreover, personal accounts frequently shared content with an Informative or entertaining focus and expressed favorable opinions about substance use. 'Discussions of personal use experiences, product reviews, do-it-yourself (DIY) or modification tips, tricks, memes and jokes concerning substance use were among the themes covered by these posts. User-generated content, especially that intended to amuse and inform, is more likely to affect viewers' attitudes and behaviors around substance use (Dubois & Gaffney, 2014; Rutherford et al., 2023). Compared to commercial information sources, this is probably due to enhanced views of source credibility and authenticity (Steyn et al., 2011; Westerman et al., 2014). These accounts contributed material with topics of Access to Substances or

Promotion/Advertisement. Content supporting substance use may have a wider audience if it includes product freebies and merchant links (Laestadius et al., 2016) and therefore, raising the probability of substance use start. According to the existing literature, the lack of regulation on social media platforms may potentially lead to an increase in the dissemination of substance messaging (Elkin et al., 2010). Given the prevalence of young people on social media and the use of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok by this demographic, promotional content may encourage young people to experiment with or start substance use habits without properly understanding the consequences of such use. Keeping in view the above literature, it can be established that seeing content created by user-generated or other accounts that gives information on substance use behavior, may lead to an increase in the intention to use portrayed substances and a decrease in the personal risk perceptions associated with substance use. So, the majority of the informative content created by user-generated or other accounts and disseminated on social media may lead to an increase in the intention to use portrayed substances.

In the case of Pakistan, a critical social issue facing modern Pakistani society is the rapid rise in drug addiction among students of various academic institutions which represents one of the greatest percentages of youth in the entire world. Students use drugs freely and riskily in universities because academic institutions have not made serious efforts to address the problems. On university premises, narcotics are easily available due to a lack of monitoring systems and occasionally staff complicity. Additionally, addiction has an impact on students' academic and social lives since they tend to spend more time with friends who use drugs, thus, miss classes, maintain less relationships with their families, and spend the majority of their pocket money on drug purchases (Ahmed et al., 2020). Regarding drug use, the role of the media, including social media, cannot be disregarded (NIDA, 2014). For instance, drug usage is frequently depicted in movies. Students are easily persuaded by heroes who use drugs in movies and are portrayed as role models, and they try to imitate their behavior in real life. In universities, students make their own decisions and utilize drugs to impress others. After using new drugs or creating new methods of drug addiction, they believe they are more powerful or privileged than others (Ahmed et al., 2020). Findings of another study unveiled that students at universities used drugs for a variety of reasons, including personal, social, and institutional factors. While sedatives, ecstasy pills, shisha, cannabis (charas), injectable drugs, and alcohol (Murree Brewery, whisky, vodka) are more often used drugs by the university students. However, hard drugs like heroin and cocaine are only rarely used at universities. The results of this study indicate that in comparison to girls and non-hostellers, boys and hostelized students take drugs more frequently.

It is found that government and university management need to accommodate the demands of students from varied cultural backgrounds and that curricula should be created to inform students of the dangers & effects of drug addiction. Most university students believe that using drugs is wrong because of their religious beliefs (Usman et al., 2017). The study was to ascertain the prevalence and severity of Internet Addiction (IA) among medical undergraduates in Karachi who used Social Networking Sites (SNS). The results showed that a sizable percentage—85% of respondents have some degree of internet addiction. 95% of the respondents (n = 323) have a Facebook profile. Skype came in second with 60.6% (n=206) of the total users. According to 69.7% (n=237) of the participants, reading the most recent news updates was the main reason they logged onto social networking sites (Ahmer & Tanzil, 2018). Another study was carried out to look into university students' Facebook addiction. The majority of participants (86.8%, n = 619) only used one Facebook account, and a sizable portion of students (55.5%, n = 396) used Facebook for more than an hour every day. The majority of the students surveyed (M = 16.83, SD = 5.92) reported being heavy

Facebook users (Mahmood et al., (2022). According to another research from Pakistan, women utilize social media less than males do (Sathar et al., 2016). The main causes of substance misuse among young people, according to the study, are intra-personal variables such as issues with mental health and entertainment as well as extra-personal elements like peer pressure, neighborhood influences, and the effect of the media. Working with parents, schools, governments, and other social organizations to inform young people about the harmful effects of drug use is one preventive technique that might be used to lessen rates of drug addiction among young people (Ahmed et al., 2022). Social media makes it easier to discuss and display attitudes and behaviors related to drug use, showing how sharing or seeing drug-related material might have an impact on young people abusing drugs. Social media has a significant negative impact on the behavior and thought processes of young people (Irum, 2020; Ahmed et al., 2022).

A large number of individuals claimed that social media had a substantial influence on their choice to begin consuming drugs. They said that after viewing films or videos on websites like TikTok and Facebook, featuring their favorite stars or actresses were smoking, consuming alcohol, and doing drugs while having fun. They wanted to use drugs because they thought it would make them look cool and fashionable, like the characters in movies or on videos. They claimed to like some violent and drug-related Bollywood movies and that after seeing these movies; they tried to emulate their attitudes and behavior (Irum, 2020; Ahmed et al., 2022). According to research done in Pakistan, the media is a significant contributor to youth drug addiction among that country's young generation (Ahmed et al., 2020). Aside from this, other studies have been carried out to examine topics related to drugs and addiction to social media in Pakistan. As Ahmer & Tanzil, (2018) conducted research to determine the frequency and intensity of Internet Addiction (IA) among medical undergraduates, using Social Networking Sites (SNS), in Karachi' (Ahmer & Tanzil, 2018). Another study Mahmood, Jafree and Sohail, (2022) investigated the link between Pakistani youth and social media addiction. Ahmed, Wassan, Qadri & Ahmed, (2022) investigated the 'Prevalence and Determinants of Drugs Abuse Among Youth in Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan'. Abbasi, Irum & Khoso (2020) conducted a study to explore the impact of Social Media on Youth Violence in Pakistan'. Khattak (2012) carried out research on the influence of drugs on students' performance and it was a qualitative study on Pakistani university students' (Khattak, 2012). Adopting a questionnaire-based survey, another study tried to find the perceptions of Pakistani medical students about drugs and alcohol. Exploring the rising trend of substance abuse in Pakistan, Ghazal, (2019) studied the 'sociodemographic profiles of patients admitted to rehabilitation centres'. Focusing on Youth at risk, Ahmed et al., (2020) investigated the alarming issue of drug addiction in academic institutions in Pakistan'. So, extensive studies have been conducted on drugs, their impact and social media addiction but no study was carried out to examine the link between social media use and drug use. That's why, this study was designed.

To examine this relationship, three hypotheses have been developed:

H1: There is a relationship between spending time on social media Use (TSOSMU) and exposure to information, pictures and videos related to drugs (IPVRTD).

H2: There is also a relationship between spending time on social media Use (TSOSMU) and exposure to information, pictures and videos related to drugs that put respondents at increased risk of drug use (IPVRTDPRAIRDU)

H3: There is a relationship between spending time on social media Use (TSOSMU) and the use of any kind of drugs (UAKOD)

3. Material and Methods

The study was carried out to determine the link between the use of media and drug use among the students at Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur, a general university, and Mehran University of Engineering & Technology SZAB Khairpur, an engineering institution, both located in Khairpur City, Sindh, Pakistan. An exploratory research method was employed because the society is traditional and no substantive research linking social media use and drug use has been carried out in the country. The online close-ended questionnaire was adopted as a data collection tool (Geramian et al., 2014; Hormes et al., 2014; & Johnson et al., 2011) and its online link was distributed among the students of both universities via various digital media tools. A random sampling technique was used to collect the data. In this study, all students from both universities in the Khairpur city were the target population. As many as 400 questionnaires were filled out by the respondents. Of the total, 73 questionnaires were dropped because of incomplete information and ambiguous answers, while 75 did not return. Thus, out of 400 questionnaires, data of 252 questionnaires was retained. Python was employed to analyze the collected data and the Chi-Square test was operated for the analysis of data.

Age, gender, education, and family income were among the socio-demographic factors that the researchers collected. Besides, other variables included: (I) Time spent on social media use (TSOSMU), (II) Information Pictures or Videos related to drugs (IPVRTD), (III) Time spent on social media platforms puts respondents at increased risk of drug use (TSOSMPRAIRODU), (IV) Information, Pictures or Video related to drugs put respondent at increased risk of drug use (IPVRTDPRAIRDU) and (V) Using any kind of drug (UAKOD).

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Evidence

Of the total 252 respondents, 83.73% (n= 211) were males and 16.27 percent (n= 41) were females from both universities i.e. general and engineering universities. The majority (approx. 85%) of our respondents were of older adulthood with having 18-23 years of age and most of them were college graduates, but the mean age of respondents (as shown in Table 01) was 21.42 years (SD= 3.40). Therefore, our respondents are bachelor, master, and M-Phil students. The monthly income of 43.25% (n= 109) was Rs. 90,000. Whereas, a monthly income of 33.73% (n = 85) was Rs. 30,000.

All of them have smartphones supported with social media APPs and have at least one account of social media networking sites i.e. Facebook and Twitter etc. According to this study, 35.32% (n = 89) of total respondents spent two hours on social media, 23.81% (n= 60) spent four hours, 24.21% (n = 61) spent three hours, while 16.67% (n=42) spent one hour on social media. Besides, 79.37% (n= 200) of total respondents found information, pictures or videos related to drugs on social media, whereas 20.63% (n= 52) denied seeing any information on the social media platform. Of the total respondents, 66.27% (n= 167) reported that spending more time on social media put them at increased risk of drug use, while 33.73% (n= 85) denied that it did not. Apart from this, of the total respondents, 73.81% (n= 186) of respondents claimed that information related to drugs on social media put them at the increased risk of drug use. On the contrary, 26.19% (n= 66) informed that it did not. Apart from this, 19.05% of the respondents claimed to have used drugs, while 80.95% did not use any kind of drug. When asked whether their friend spent time on social media. They informed 88.10% spent time while 11.90% did not. When asked whether their friend used any kind of drug. 19.05% (n = 48) of the respondents replied that their friend used any kind of drug while the rest 80.95% (n= 204) did not.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
University	252	1.22	0.42	1	2
Age	252	21.42	3.40	17	40
Gender	252	0.84	0.37	0	1
MI	252	66190.48	29290.61	30000	120000
TSOSMU	252	2.55	1.03	1	4
IPVRTD	252	1.21	0.41	1	2
IPVRTDPRAIU	252	1.26	0.44	1	2
UAKOD	252	1.81	0.39	1	2

Obs = Observations, Std. Dv. = Standard Deviation, Min = Minimum and Max = Maximum

4.2 Chi-Square Test and Analysis

The Chi-Square test is a statistical procedure for determining the difference between the observed and the expected data. This test can also be used to determine whether it correlates to the categorical variables in our data. It helps to find out whether a difference between two categorical variables is due to chance or a relationship between them.

If the value of the chi-square statistic is greater than or equal to a critical value, then H₀ would be rejected and H₁ would be accepted, validating that there is a relationship between two variables. In addition, if the p-value is less than or equal to alpha, then similarly H₀ would be rejected and H₁ would be accepted, authenticating that there is a relationship between two variables.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a link between TSOSMU and IPVRTD because in Table 02 the value of a chi-square statistic is greater than the critical value and the p-value is less than the alpha. It authenticated that there is a relationship between these two variables. It demonstrates that the time spent on social media use (TSOSMU) and Information Pictures or Videos related to drugs (IPVRTD) have a relationship. So, the respondents, who have spent time on social media, found information, pictures or videos related to drugs on social media.

Table 02. Chi-Square Test carried out to examine between two categorical variables

Variables	chi-square statistic	alpha: 0.05	Degree of Freedom	critical value	Hypothesis Accepted/Rejected
TSOSMU and IPVRTD	131.57	0.0	1	3.84	H ₁ : Accepted
TSOSMU and IPVRTDPRAIRDU	96.01	p-value: 0.0	1	3.84	H ₂ : Accepted
TSOSMU and UAKOD	27.86	p-value: 0.0	1	3.84	H ₃ : Accepted

If $\text{chi_square_statistic} \geq \text{critical_value}$: Reject H₀, there is a relationship between 2 categorical variables. else: Retain H₀, there is no relationship between 2 categorical variables. If $\text{p_value} \leq \alpha$: Reject H₀, there is a relationship between 2 categorical variables. else: Retain H₀, there is no relationship between 2 categorical variables.

In the case of TSOSMU and IPVRTDPRAIRDU, the value of the chi-square statistic is greater than the critical value and the p-value is less than the alpha, establishing that there is a relation between them. It ascertains that the exposure to Information, Pictures or Video related to drugs put respondents at increased risk of drug use.

Moreover, there is an association between TSOSMU and UAKOD because the value of the chi-square statistic is greater than the critical value and the p-value is less than alpha. It validates that the time spent on social media use is linked to using any kind of drugs among the respondents.

5. Discussions

The results of this study revealed that participants, spending time on social media, find information or photos or videos on social media. The exposure to information or photos or videos on social media puts them at an increased risk of drug use, proving that time spent on social media use puts respondents at increased risk of drug use. Besides, it validates that spending time on social media has a strong relationship with using any kind of drugs, validating that the time spent on social media encourages the use of any kind of drugs. Previous studies support this study carried out by Irum, (2020) and Ahmed et al., (2022) that social media had a substantial influence on the respondents' choice to begin consuming drugs because they viewed films or videos on websites like Tiktok and Facebook and they found their favorite stars or actresses were smoking, consuming alcohol, and using drugs while having fun. After exposure to such videos, they started to use drugs because they thought it would make them look cool and fashionable, like the characters in the movies or videos. Besides, they like some violent and drug-related Bollywood movies and after seeing these movies, they try to emulate their attitudes and behavior (Irum, 2020; Ahmed et al., 2022). Moreover, the depictions of marijuana, nicotine, alcohol, and e-cigarette use have a significant impact on teenagers and young adults (Jackson et al., 2018). However, there are no prohibitions on sustenance product placement in entertainment media like television, films, and music unless they specifically feature branded products (Jackson et al., (2018). According to another study, media representations are a primary source of learning about substance use. Paid industry advertising and depictions of substance-using behavior in the media are important environmental impacts on juvenile substance use, especially for kids without direct lived experience (Scott et al., 2016; Leonardi-Bee et al., 2016; Jernigan et al., 2017; Stautz et al., 2016; Gupta et al., 2016; Foxcroft, 2009). Similar results were noted by Janssen (2018), who found that young people's exposure to substance use on social media is high and that this exposure is linked to subsequent drug usage (Janssen, 2018). Apart from this, the report of 2021 of INCB also revealed that there is a link between exposure to social media and drug use and it must be addressed (INCB, 2021).

6. Conclusion

The findings establish the links between the use of media and drug use among students. This study shows that there is a link between spending time on social media use, finding information, pictures and videos related to drugs, putting respondents at increased risk of drug use and using any kind of drug. It happens because most of the students have a smartphone with the facility of 4G internet at campuses. Apart from this, 77 % of smartphone users are just 21 to 30 years old in Pakistan. So, most students are spending two hours on social media. It increases their exposure to information and other material related to drugs and consequently, it puts them at the increased risk of drug use. Aside from this, drugs in Pakistan are easily available on the campus of universities because mostly, the lower staff of universities are found to be involved in drug trafficking. In addition, there is no mechanism in universities to check and punish such drug traffickers. So this also encourages students to use drugs.

7. Suggestions

The administration of universities has to review the existing system to check drug use on campuses. If a system is not developed so far, they must develop a system or mechanism to check drug users and

drug traffickers. If anyone is found involved in using drugs or tracking, the responsible should be punished strictly.

8. Limitations of the study

The results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population of students of Khairpur city, because this study includes only students from one general public university and one engineering university of Khairpur city. The possibility of volunteer or interviewer bias cannot completely be eliminated because the questionnaire was online and self-administered and probability sampling was used.

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