

Psychological Alienation and Substance Use among Adolescent Abusers at Psychiatric Teaching Hospitals in Baghdad

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Abstract

Objectives: The present study aims at assessing the level of psychological alienation as phenomenon among adolescent substance abusers; determining the relationship between psychological alienation and substance use.

Methods: A descriptive correlational design used in the present study was established for the period from October 10th, 2019 to march 20th, 2020. The study was conducted on a non- probability (convenient) sample of 60 adolescents with substance use disorder which were selected from the inpatient psychiatric teaching Hospitals. The instrument of the study is adopted and modified for the purpose of this study. Psychological alienation scale was used in this study, this scale contain 50 items taken from Denial Abbas study (2016). The data were analyzed through the application of descriptive and inferential statistical approaches which are applied by using IBM/SPSS package version 24.0.

Results: the result of the present study showed that adolescent abusers were age group ($21 \leq$ years) (55%), and with primary level of education (43.3%), and with unmarried (61.7%), and (80%) of them living in low class neighborhood. 76.7% of them are work, with sufficient monthly income (36.7%), and used drugs was (51.7%), and they were substances abuser for one to five years (70%), bad friends was cause of substance abuse (50%). The substance abusers are experiencing a moderate level of psychological alienation as presented in findings that (65%). There are no correlation between psychological alienation and substance use.

Conclusions: the study concluded that Psychological alienation does not related to substance use addiction as concluded by insignificant correlation between substance use and psychological alienation. The severity of psychological alienation is influenced by the causes of substance uses among those addicted client.

Recommendations: the study recommended conducting more studies on the phenomenon of psychological alienation and its relationship to drug use and its effects on adolescents and linking it to new changes, and the study also recommended building treatment counseling programs to deal with the problem of drug abuse and its spread among adolescents and setting the appropriate treatment for its psychological effects.

Keywords: psychological alienation, substance use, adolescent

Introduction

In the last ten years, there have been many rapid changes in the world as a result of the information and communication revolution, the distant limbs became a small village, resulting in this amazing development in all cases. The changes that accompanied this development were not all positive but also had many negative consequences for humans, especially in the developing world, which is infected by the change quickly and suddenly exceeded all expectations and may result in many psychological problems, which may have been the most important and most common manifestations of anxiety, tension,

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psychological depression, rebellion and internal and external conflicts between the individual and others, concomitant psychological insecurity of individuals. (Al- Muaiqly, 2004)

Psychological alienation is of the clearest problems and is characterized by the individuals feeling of alienation from themselves and their society. (Daugherty & Liner, 2003). Alienation is a multidimensional construct which consists of five dimensions (i.e. Powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement (Brown et al, 2003).

The problem of alienation is one of the most obvious problems, as a manifestation of alienation of human from himself and his community, which led to more mental disorder. (Naiseh, 2012)

We are in Iraqi society, for example, and as a result of the decades of darkness and authoritarianism and compelling that passed through it and the woes of this society, which has lasted for years, has created suitable climates to push the individual to fall into the nets of alienation, whether at the psychosocial level, economic, cultural, and religious. So that the generation that graduated from that dark era was a generation of war that lacks much of the educational and psychological pillars, we can say that a generation suffers from a decline in the level of mental health has so that this pushes many of them to fall into the net of an addiction in order to fall the mental vacuum, and therefore the practice behaviors, which includes the areas of alienation and dimensions , which is the insurgency, isolation, meaninglessness of life more broadly (Al Noor Foundation for Culture and Media , 2010).

Mahon et al (2005) defined the psychological alienation is a related and appropriate concept as it refers to specific processes in the transaction between the individual and the social environment.

Alienation defined by Rachel Barclay and Aaron Moncivaiz (2016) it is sociological, psychological, affects health and worsens the current state of health.

Alley Dog.com (2019) defined alienation being separated or alienated by many others or large part of the community.

Substance use disorders are disease that violates the brain and human behavior and makes it impossible to control the use of legal or illegal drugs or medications (Mayoclinic.org, 2017).

Substance use are refers to consumption of alcohol or drug (Crozier- keystone Health system, 2019).

Addiction is defined as a recurring chronic disease characterized by a forced search for drugs and prolonged use even with side effects and long term changes in the brain (The Science of Drug Use and Addiction, Media Guide, 2018).

Addiction is a mental and physical inability to stop the use of chemicals, drugs, activities or substances, even if they cause mental and physical harm (Felman, 2018).

The world health organization (WHO), defines addiction as a psychological and organic state resulting from the individual's interaction with the drug and the results of the emergence of characteristics characterized by different behavioral patterns always include the urge to use the drug on a continuous or periodic basis to feel the desired psychological and organic excitement and to avoid the threatening and painful effects that result from its unavailability (WHO, 2010).

Addiction is seen by doctors as a biological bug that can be medically treated with drugs and medical methods, while psychologists see it as a cognitive-behavioral disorder, and sociologists see it as a product of a specific social context that can be deal with, and the clergy and the law view the phenomenon as a moral and religious deviation that requires guidance, border and punishment (salam, 2009).

The problem of drug abuse is one of the most complex problems because of its negative repercussions on both the individual and the family. It attracts many individuals of different ages, especially adolescents because of its psychological characteristics make it more vulnerable to risks and deviations, adolescent addiction may be associated with isolation and emptiness as defensive means of escaping reality or satisfying repressed desires he could not achieve in reality. The secondary stage of the phases of the pervasive psychological and social problems associated with the use of drugs, to consider the stage where the teenager peaks his ability to give and make and produce, it may also be associated with attributes of academic, social and psychological failure and the attendant frustration and resentment, which led many researchers to do many studies on drug use and their relationship to some psychological and social variables (Saidi, 2016).

Abuse may lead to the teenager to many of the problems of instability, which appear in the form of tension and anxiety and internal conflicts, in which the teenager transforms external data into a state of psychological alienation coupled with this situation, which when the adolescent assertion is one of the psychological mechanisms adopted by what is expected to threaten his freedom, and its psychological and social compatibility (Qabqoub, Saidi, 2015).

Alienation is a characteristic of the human being and is sometimes described as a normal phenomenon, and at other times it is described as a pathological phenomenon.it is also described as a multidimensional phenomenon where it's philosophical, social, psychological and literary uses. If we consider alienation as a pathological phenomenon, it will be linked here to the negative mental health of the individual. Alienation is a term used to describe the non- positive

psychological conditions experienced by a person, which describes at the same time the dimensions of psychological alienation, such as anxiety and stress, the feeling of helplessness, oppression and inability to run its own things, boredom of the life in which he lives, the imposition of psychological and social isolation on the self with which the individual feels lonely and does not belong to his community, withdrawal from society and the lack of social interaction between the expatriate and the groups he lives with, the pessimism that his life has become meaningless and that what it is about does not matter to him anything important, lack of self – confidence and others, indifference, rebellion it is a state of indignation on the part of the individual for everything that surrounds him, this state of rebellion is accompanied by a desire to destroy and destroy everything that exists, rejection of social values that put pressure on human will, all these symptoms reflect what is alienation and it is possible for anyone to suffer from this psychological disturbance regardless of economic level and material and technological progress. Human suffering can evolve from alienation, living within its walls, to mental or mental illness, sexual deviation, attempted suicide, brain drain or revolutions of rejection and protest, finally to alcohol and drug addiction. As for the relationship between alienation and addiction, there are multiple causes that lead the person to addiction, including these reasons personal personality, personality not only determines whether he is affected by addiction or not, but predicts the degree of indulgence in this bad habit, the shaky character is not built up from a young age is not prepared to solve the problems faced by, and its inability to adapt leads to the creation of a climate of conflict and with the inability to resolve this conflict generate a sense of alienation and social oppression, and an attempt by the self to achieve psychological stability is inevitable is to follow a negative habit such as addiction of various types and patterns. (Feedo.net 2019).

Objectives of the study

The study aims at: Assessing the level of psychological alienation as phenomenon among adolescent substance abusers. Determining the relationship between psychological alienation and substance use.

Methodology

The design of the study is descriptive correlational design that is initiated for the period of October ^{10st} 2019 to March 20st, 2020; an assessment approach is applied in order to achieve the earlier stated objectives.

The ethical consideration of research is achieved by obtaining the agreement from the Committee of Research Ethics at College of Nursing, University of Baghdad. In addition, the agreements of clients to participate in this study before collecting the data and filling the questionnaire.

For the purpose of administrative and arrangements issues for conducting the research, the permission was asked from the Ministry of Planning / Central Statistical Organization for the acceptance of the questionnaire draft, and also from ministry of Health including Teaching Baghdad Hospital, Ibn Rushed Teaching Hospital for Psychiatry.

The setting of the study includes two hospitals of psychiatry teaching in Baghdad that are: Teaching Baghdad Hospital, Ibn Rushed Teaching Hospital for Psychiatry.

The sample of the study includes (60) adolescents with substance use disorder which were selected from the inpatient psychiatric teaching hospitals. The researcher used the convenient sampling method (non-probability sample) in which the adolescents abuser were selected purposively. For the purpose of sample representation, the researcher select from Teaching Baghdad Hospital (20) subject, and (40) subject from Ibn Rushed Teaching Hospital for Psychiatry.

The questionnaire of the study is taken from Abbas study (2016) which consists of three parts; the first part is contained the covering letter and the demographic variable of the adolescent abuser that are: age, academic achievement, social status (single- married-divorce- widower), living location/address (a low class neighborhood- high class neighborhood), occupation (working - not working), and perceived family's monthly income; The second part is contained the clinical data which include: Type of substance use, duration of substance abuse, causes of substance abuse (the unemployment- bad friends- forget about worries and problems- family problems- abuse of a family member- curiosity- psychological alienation- relief pain). The third part is concerned with psychological alienation scale.

Psychological alienation scale was adopted and used for the current study. Psychological alienation scale is consisted of (50) items that cover the psychological alienation components which represented by five dimensions in the scale that are:

self-estrangement (represented by items 1 – 10), social isolation (represented by items 11 – 20), aimless (represented by items 21 – 30), and normlessness (represented by items 31 – 40), and rebellion (represented by items 41-50). that are divided into five Likert scale and scored as follow: (strongly agree= 1, agree= 2 , neutral= 3, disagree= 4 , and strongly disagree= 5) for the positive score items; while the items with negative score were scored as follow: (strongly agree= 5 , agree= 4, neutral= 3, disagree= 2, and strongly disagree= 1). The level of psychological alienation was determined through applying the cut-off points for the total score which divided into three level: low, moderate, and high; these levels were determined as follow: The range of each dimension (low=10-23, moderate= 24-37, high= 38-50). While total level of psychological alienation with dimension scored the range (low= 50-116, moderate= 117-183, high= 184-250).

The original validity for psychological alienation scale was estimated by content and face validity method through twelve experts in the different fields which met the acceptance degree of (80%) for the scale items. The original reliability of psychological alienation scale was achieved by application of Alpha Correlation Coefficient and through method of internal consistency, the reliability results were accepted for all domains of the scale ($r= 0.89$).

The data have been collected through the utilization of the self-administrative report as a mean of data collection. The questionnaire was distributed after being willing to answer the questionnaire and participate in the study.

Statistical analyses were conducted by using statistical package for social science (IBM SPSS Statistics) version 24.0. Data analysis was employed through the application of descriptive and inferential statistical approaches to achieve the objectives of the study.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of Sample according to their Demographic Characteristics

No.	Characteristics	f	%
1	Age	15-17 years	10
		18-20 years	35
		21 < years	55
		Total	60
2	Level of Education	Doesn't read & write	13.3
		Primary	43.3
		Intermediate	26.7
		Secondary	15
		Institute	1.7
		Total	60
3	Social status	Unmarried	61.7
		Married	36.7
		Divorced/ separated	1.7
		Total	60
4	Residency	Low class neighborhood	80
		High class neighborhood	20
		Total	60
5	Occupation	Work	76.7
		Doesn't work	23.3

		Total	60	100
6	Income	Insufficient	20	33.3
		Barely sufficient	18	30
		Sufficient	22	36.7
		Total	60	100

No: Number, f: Frequency, %" Percentage

This table shows that more than half of abusers are with age group ($21 \leq$ years) as referred with high percentage (55%), regarding level of education that the highest percentage was referred to primary school education among substance abusers (43.3%), more than half of them were unmarried (61.7%), 80% of substance abuser are living in low class neighborhood, (77%) of substance abusers are having a job and workings, and regarding income result show that 33.3% of substance abusers are perceived they are associated with insufficient income.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample according to their Clinical Characteristics

No.	Characteristics	f	%	
1	Substance	Alcohol	24	40
		Drugs	31	51.7
		Both	5	8.3
		Total	60	100
2	Duration	< 1 year	8	13.3
		1 - 5 years	42	70
		6 - 10 years	7	11.7
		11 \leq years	3	5
		Total	60	100
3	Causes	Unemployment	2	3.3
		Bad friends	30	50
		Forget about worries and problems	3	5
		Family problems	10	16.7
		Abuse of a family member	9	15
		Curiosity	3	5
		Psychological Shock	2	3.3
		Relief pain	1	1.7
		Total	60	100

No: Number, f: Frequency, %" Percentage

This table show that the higher percentage is refer that abusers are addicted on drugs (51.7%), (70%) of abusers are using substances for the duration of (1 – 5 years), and the findings indicate that the high percentage among causes is refer to pressure of peer (bad friends) (50%).

Table 3: Overall Assessment of Psychological Alienation among Substance Users

Levels	F	%	Mean	SD
Low	1	1.7	2.32	0.504
Moderate	39	65		
High	20	33.3		
Total	60	100		

f= frequency, %= percentage, SD= stander deviation.
 Low= 50-116, Moderate= 117-183, High= 184-250

This table reveals that psychological alienation is moderate to high level among substance abusers (moderate= 65% and high= 33.3%), and only (1.7%) is showing low level of psychological alienation.

Table 4: Levels of Self- estrangement Dimension of Psychological Alienation among Substance Users.

Levels	F	%	Mean	SD
Low	6	10	2.27	0.634
Moderate	32	53.3		
High	22	36.7		
Total	60	100		

f= Frequency, %= percentage, SD= stander deviation.
 Low= 10-23, Moderate= 24-37, High= 38-50

This table reveals that psychological alienation is moderate to high level among substance abusers (moderate= 53.3% and high= 36.7%), and 10% is showing low level of psychological alienation.

Table 5: Level of Social Isolation Dimension of Psychological Alienation among Substance Users.

Levels	F	%	Mean	SD
Low	7	11.7	2.08	0.561
Moderate	41	68.3		
High	12	20		
Total	60	100		

F= Frequency, %= percentage, SD= stander deviation.
 Low= 10-23, Moderate= 24-37, High= 38-50

This table reveals that psychological alienation is moderate to high level among substance abusers (moderate= 68.3% and high= 20%), and 12% is showing low level of psychological alienation.

Table 6: Level of Aimless Dimension of Psychological Alienation among Substance Users.

Levels	F	%	Mean	SD
Low	3	5	2.32	0.567
Moderate	35	58.3		
High	22	36.7		
Total	60	100		

f= Frequency, %= percentage, SD= stander deviation.
 Low= 10-23, Moderate= 24-37, High= 38-50

This table reveals that psychological alienation is moderate to high level among substance abusers (moderate= 58.3% and high= 37%), and 5% is showing low level of psychological alienation.

Table 7: Level of Normlessness Dimension of Psychological Alienation among Substance Users.

Levels	f	%	Mean	SD
Low	1	1.7	2.32	0.504
Moderate	39	65		
High	20	33.3		
Total	60	100		

f= Frequency, %= percentage, SD= stander deviation.

Low= 10-23, Moderate= 24-37, High= 38-50

This table reveals that psychological alienation is moderate to high level among substance abusers (moderate= 65% and high= 33.3%), and only 1.7% is showing low level of psychological alienation.

Table 8: Level of Rebellion Dimension of Psychological Alienation among Substance Users.

Levels	F	%	Mean	SD
Low	4	6.7	2.17	0.526
Moderate	42	70		
High	14	23.3		
Total	60	100		

f= Frequency, %= percentage, SD= stander deviation.

Low= 10-23, Moderate= 24-37, High= 38-50

This table reveals that psychological alienation is moderate to high level among substance abusers (moderate= 70% and high= 23.3%), and only 6.7% is showing low level of psychological alienation.

Table 9: Correlation between Psychological Alienation and Substance Use among Sample (N=60)

Correlation		Psychological alienation	substance	Duration	Causes
Psychological alienation	Pearson correlation	1	0.041	-0.203	-0.033
	Sig.(2-taild)	--	0.757	0.121	0.804
Substance	Pearson correlation	0.041	1	0.024	-0.015
	Sig.(2-taild)	0.757	--	0.858	0.908
Duration	Pearson correlation	-0.203	0.024	1	-0.126
	Sig.(2-taild)	0.121	0.858	--	0.336
Causes	Pearson correlation	-0.033	-0.015	-0.126	1
	Sig.(2-taild)	0.804	0.908	0.336	--

Sig= significance

This table shows the correlation between psychological alienation and substance use among the sample; the finding indicates that there is no significant correlation between psychological alienation and substance use.

Discussion

The analysis of findings in table (1) presented that the highest percentage of sample (55%) is age group more 21 years, the researcher may interpret this result as the sample was specific to the age group (15-22) and they were more addicts aged 21 and over, as well as those under the age of 21 who had a fear of admission to the hospital and fear of legal sense, These result are consistent with the study of Apriyanti (2016) in Indonesia, their result indicate that (50%) was male in age (18-24 year). And according to level of education that highest percentage of (43.3%) is primary education level, the researcher infers such result as the study sample, mostly were graduated from the primary schools. The researcher attributes this to the reasons related to the individual himself who did not have the appropriate conditions to complete their studies, especially in our country, Iraq, which has been going through difficult circumstances for years, forcing most adolescents to leave their studies and bear responsibility their families, These result are similar to study of Matto et al (2001) in India, their result indicate that (32%) was primary school. Regarding social status, (61.7%) was unmarried, the researcher sees this result as natural because the sample of the research was adolescents in most adolescents who are not married because their ages are young, this result agree with study of Matto et al (2001). Concerning residency, (80%) of the substance abuser are living in low class neighborhood, the researcher explains this result because most of the regions of Iraq are popular areas, and there are many users in the popular areas, these results disagree with study of Matto et al (2001) that showed (44%) live in high class neighborhood. Regarding occupation, the (77%) of substance abuser were working, The researcher explains this result because adolescents in this stage love to work and depend on themselves and feel independent and they have the ambition and dreams that they are trying to achieve by doing their best at work, this result agree with study in Erbil show that (77%) was work. Concerning income, (37%) was sufficient income, the researcher sees this result as normal, because we already knew that many of the study sample had works and self-reliant, meaning the work is sufficient for them and fulfilling their needs, these results disagree with study of Naima (2018) was show highest percentage (57%) was barely sufficient.

It has been known out of table (2) that the highest percentage (51.7%) of adolescent abusers was use drug these results consistent with study in United States (2016) show (50%) were used drugs (Hazel den Betty ford foundation , 2016). The researcher explains this result because the abuser started looking for something with a stronger effect than alcohol, so he began to resort to substances with a strong effect, such as amphetamine and others, as well as these materials became available in abundance, which is easy to obtain. Regarding duration of substance use, that the highest percentage (70%) were uses substance in duration (1-5 years), A study presented supportive evidenced that found substance are abused for more than two years that found Mohammed (2016), the researcher explains this result that the most period was (1-5) years because it was governed by age (the research category was adolescents and the oldest age was 22 years) this meaning most adolescents show abuse from the age of about 18 years. Concerning causes of substance use, the highest percentage (50%) were bad friends, the researcher explains this result because he is a teenager in this stage that has many relationships and loves to experiment, so he can try anything that his friends do and thus deviate with them, especially since the teenager at this stage feels independent, and he has not become a child and therefore he tries to get to know everything new about him out of poll or imitation, there results agree with study of (Qabqub and Saidi, 2015) the most common causes of abuse are bad friends.

Table (3) indicated that level of psychological alienation among adolescent abuser was moderate (65%), The researcher believes that this result means there are other factors that make the teenager resort to drugs, especially the country's circumstances that we are experiencing from economic and political crises that directly affect the teenager, and this is what the researcher observed during the collection of the sample of the Iraqi youth's influence on political and economic conditions, this result was agree with study Kattlo (2007) in Palestine who found the Palestinian youth suffers from psychological alienation to a moderate degree.

Result in the table (4-5-6-7-8) showed the levels of psychological alienation with each Dimension among substance abuser were moderate in all dimensions, the research explains this result, because the adolescent at this stage begins to behave in unacceptable behaviors include rebellion against family, friends, circumstances, substance abuse, smoking, carrying a weapon. It is followed social isolation dimension by 68.3 percentage, the researcher explain this result because of his use of substances, he becomes rejected by the family and society, and in this way he prefers social isolation always to prevent problems, and no one from his family or society accepts this and this is what the researcher saw through her research. The last dimension was self-estrangement by percentage 53.3, the research explain these result because the adolescent abuser busy with friends in take substance and in work there for not feel self-estrangement, these result agree with study of Abbas (2016).

Result in the table (9) indicated that there is no significant correlation between psychological alienation and substance use, The researcher explains this result because most of the abusers were in the treatment stage, this meaning turning negative feelings into positive feelings, and they were similar to healing and responders to treatment, and they have a great desire for treatment, so the feelings of psychological alienation have few and are not related to their use of substances, these result disagree with study of Albnaa (1991) about relationship between psychological alienation and substance use among students.

Conclusions

- (1) The study concluded that Psychological alienation does not related to substance use addiction as concluded by insignificant correlation between substance use and psychological alienation.
- (2) The severity of psychological alienation is influenced by the causes of substance uses among those addicted client.

Recommendations

- (1) The study recommended conducting more studies on the phenomenon of psychological alienation and its relationship to drug use and its effects on adolescents and linking it to new changes.
- (2) The study also recommended building treatment counseling programs to deal with the problem of drug abuse and its spread among adolescents and setting the appropriate treatment for its psychological effects.

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