

Role of social factors in developing addictive behavior among youth in Rwanda: Reality from the Isange Rehabilitation Center

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Abstract

An addiction refers to a drug or substance that an individual partakes in and derives from its short-term pleasure, and long-term negative consequences. This paper aims to assess the role of social factors in developing addictive behaviors among youth in Huye district-Rwanda. The theory of attunement, psychoanalysis, and the social learning theory were used in this assessment. The specific objectives were (1) to identify the role of social factors in developing addictive behaviors among the youths, (2) to identify the addictive behaviors that are prevalent among the youth, and (3) to analyze the effects of addictive behavior on the individual lives of addicts. Qualitative and quantitative designs were used to attain these objectives, and interviews, observations, and questionnaires were used to collect data. Tabulation was used to analyze quantitative data to identify the frequency within which an idea was held in common regard. Narrative analysis was used to derive meanings from the participants' stories. The findings revealed that our social environments could lead to the development of addictive behaviors. The government, social workers, and parents should be mindful of the physical, emotional, and mental state of youth from a young age

NG Journal of Social Development

Vol. 15 Issue 1 (2024)

ISSN(p) 0189-5958

ISSN (e) 2814-1105

Home page

<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ngjsd>

ARTICLE INFO:

Keyword

Social factors, addictive behaviors, youth, Rwanda, rehabilitation center

Article History

Received: 18th September 2024

Accepted: 24th November 2024

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ngjsd.v15i1.10>

1. Introduction

An addiction refers to a drug or substance that an individual partakes in and derives from short-term pleasure, and long-term negative consequences. Addictive behaviors can be anything ranging from drug addiction and alcohol to social media, eating, exercising, dangerous situations, and power among many others. Addictive behaviors are not just socially frowned upon by society. This shows that an addiction is not a choice because no one can put their hand in a fire and keep it there knowing that he or she is getting burned. Nor is it a mental disorder because any one of us can become addicted when we become frustrated. We often turn to addictive behaviors or substances for stress relief and pleasure. Twomey defines drug addiction as “a chronic, relapsing disorder in which compulsive drug-seeking and drug-taking behavior persist despite serious negative consequences” (Twomey, 1967, p. 975).

Nadine also agrees with this definition saying that when an individual continues to engage in the consumption of alcohol and drugs it leads to substance dependence (Nadine, 2013). Ngamije & Yadufashije assert that the Rwanda media platforms and scientific papers put forward that the most common drugs abused by the youth are alcohol and illicit drugs. (Ngamije & Yadufashije, 2016). Social factors refer to the events, scenarios, circumstances, or situations that affect people’s lifestyles and well-being. These factors include but are not limited to socioeconomic status, educational level, environmental circumstances, health, cultural customs, norms, and ethnicity. Nadine also agrees that substance abuse among teenagers is due to the amalgamation of various personal and family factors (Nadine, 2013, p. 10). Nadine continues to say that “Drug use in adolescents can occur as a result of dysfunctional dynamics within the home and most often in homes characterized by poverty, disruption and conflict” (Nadine, 2013, p. 11). This included poor parenting styles, economic instability, child abuse, divorce of parents, and peer pressure.

The youth are individuals whose ages range between 16 to 30 years (Bimenyimana et al., 2024). Nadine also posits that “Drug addiction is the result of interaction among the individuals, peer influence, parental influence, and the environment, health conditions, knowledge and attitude of the individual toward the drug and the drug effect is effective in its abuse” hence showing the necessity of studying the role of social factors in determining addictive behaviors (Nadine, 2013, p. 4). This paper aims to acknowledge the hand of the social environment in shaping an individual sense of self. We are the amalgamation of our experiences, and those experiences shape us to the degree that we often fail to comprehend. Especially those in our childhood because according to Murray and Maté, it is a time for physiological and emotional development (Murray, 2020; Maté, 2012) . It is during childhood that our dopamine and endorphin receptors among other chemicals essential for connection, love, and growth are forming.

For many years, it has been believed that addictive behavior is mainly biological. Twomey, also highlighted that addictive behaviors are mainly neurological, bringing together behavioral theories and the role of memory (Twomey, 1967, p. 975). However, this paper highlighted another aspect that is disregarded, which is the social aspect. The social aspect is very important from the perspective of the social learning theory, and from the work of Albert Bandura renowned for his expertise in the field of psychology (Memoriam, 2022; Nadine, 2013, p.20). Bandura’s work has contributed to the transformation of this field of psychology and has aided in “revolutionizing theories of behavior change and shaping education, public health, parenting, clinical health

practice, and public policy” (Memoriam, 2022). His best-known works are the Bobo Doll experiment, the concept of self, and the social learning theory.

Nadine claimed that individuals learn the norms, values, and beliefs of the society from which they are born (Nadine, 2013). This holds for addictive behaviors as well. This theory puts forward that we as individuals learn through socialization. Clement defines socialization, as “the process of social interaction by which people acquire those behaviors essential for effective participation in society, the process of becoming a social being” (Clement, 2010). We are the producers and the products of the society that we live in. This is held in every social context for all cultures. Contagion theory assumes that people act differently in a group compared to when they are alone as Grusec also addresses the significance of socialization in the social learning theory because this is where individuals learn from society how they are expected to behave and how they should assimilate (Grusec, 1992, p. 777). The same author delves into the concepts of aggression, dependency, and identification and how they come to take form in child development. Sigmund Freud, a scholar who proposed the psychoanalytic theory, put forward that aggression occurred due to frustration. Merriam-Webster defines frustration as a deep chronic sense or state of insecurity and dissatisfaction arising from unresolved problems or unfulfilled needs. Grusec, 1992 asserts that aggression is the natural response to frustration and that there is a high likelihood that it can be cultivated during the socialization process (Grusec, 1992). Bandura defines aggression as “behavior that results in personal injury and physical destruction” (Bandura, 1977)

Aggression comes to solve the frustration incurred. When this aggression response is triumphant in eliminating the source of frustration, according to Grusec, it can lead to reinforcement of the aggressive act. Catharsis hence leads to the escalation of aggressive behavior instead of de-escalation (Grusec, 1992). Anderson & Kras emphasize that children who grew up in aggressive families are more likely to resort to aggression in their future intimate relationships . Future aggression comes because of past abuse. “Social learning theorists would expect that this child has learned violent responses to stressful stimuli through exposure to violent models” (Anderson & Kras, 2005).

After the dependency drive has been formulated, the individual in question begins to identify himself as an aggressive person or as the action that was used to best solve the frustration. Grusec, 1(992) demonstrates that an infant becomes dependent on his or her mother because the mother provides relief to many of the infant’s needs such as the need for love, security, and nourishment. Without satisfaction with these needs, the child would become frustrated and develop bad coping mechanisms that can lead to addiction among other forms of neurosis. The child later identifies himself or herself with the primary caregiver. From this, we understand that children begin learning about the world from infancy through observational learning. Bandura puts forward an experiment that was conducted to assess just how effective the behavior model of learning can be when children imitate by observation (Bandura et al., 1961). This experiment was dubbed the Bobo Doll experiment. The purpose of this experiment was to observe whether aggressive behavior was something that could be learned and the experiment was a success due to the fact there were high levels of aggression among the children who were exposed to the aggressive models (Bandura et al., 1961). Graham & Arshad-Ayaz added that after observing the aggressive model, “The child would often repeat much of the full repertoire of aggression, including hitting, kicking, punching and hammering the Bobo doll” (Graham & Arshad-Ayaz, 2018).

Psychoanalysts postulate that trauma is rooted in childhood, and therefore, due to this trauma, addictive behaviors are manifested. Trauma refers to unhealed pain caused by an individual's traumatic experiences. Sigmund Freud was originally a neurologist before pioneering the discipline of psychoanalysis. He asserted that unconscious desires stemming from repressed memories influence how people behave. Murray agrees with this assertion that our childhood experiences manifest in later stages of development when we encounter similar experiences or situations (Murray, 2020, p. 7). If those events were traumatic and we fail to effectively resolve them, then, the effects manifest later in adulthood in some form of addictive or detrimental behavior.

Zhang credits the discipline of psychoanalysis and the psychoanalysis personality theory by discussing the three realms of consciousness, namely: the Id, Ego, and Superego (Zhang, 2020). The mind stores memories of early childhood and other experiences without us even realizing it. These experiences subconsciously influence our behavior later in life. The same author puts forward that the Id is in the unconscious part of the brain and is dubbed the pleasure principle because it seeks immediate gratification (Zhang, 2020). Fitriani corroborated the above assertion saying that "It is an unconscious thinking which focused on the immediate gratification of instinctual demands (Fitriani, 2019). As a result, it is illogical and irrational". The preconscious level stores all perceptions and memories in the brain and retrieval of these memories is possible. In the preconscious dwells, the Superego is driven by the morality principle. The reality principle deals with what is socially acceptable and is the opposite of the Id. To balance these two forces, we have the Ego which dwells in the conscious part of the brain asserting the reality principle.

In short, the Ego processes what we see in that very moment and opts for the decision that satisfies both the Id and the Superego without jeopardizing the individual. The Ego works to gratify the needs of the Id reasonably (Fitriani, 2019). A person who has experienced a childhood without much trauma can develop a strong Ego, which enables the individual to control his or her unconscious and preconscious levels of influence. Having a stronger Id or Superego leads to addictive personalities and pervasive personalities.

One of Freud's works on trauma and a good example of how our childhood experiences affect us in future times is his work on hysteria (Murray, 2020). Hysteria is used to describe emotionally charged behaviors that seem too excessive or unmanageable. Murray puts forward the case of Emma, a 27-year-old Viennese woman who Freud treated in his practice (Murray, 2020). She tended to refrain from entering shops alone because when she was 12, she entered a shop to buy sweets, and the shopkeeper laughed at her. This triggered a fear response, and she ran away. She recalled one of the shopkeepers making sexual comments on the outfit she was wearing. This alone was not enough to explain why she ran away Sigmund mused. During the progression of the treatment, however, it was later discovered that when Emma was eight, there were two other instances preceding the one mentioned above. There were two separate cases where Emma went to buy sweets, and the shopkeeper touched her private parts through her clothes with a grin on his face. "Freud concluded that the laughing shopkeepers when Emma was 12 had unconsciously activated the older scene through the evocation of the grin with which the shopkeeper had accompanied his assault. This reviving of the older scene aroused what was certainly not able at the time, a sexual release, which was transformed into anxiety" (Murray, 2020).

From this, we understand that a singular event does not bring about trauma. It is manifested because of an interplay of numerous events that cause anxiety hence negatively affecting an

individual's present circumstance. Murray puts forward that there is no set time for manifesting post-traumatic stress disorder (Murray, 2020). Some may become immediately diagnosed or after many years. Individuals suffering from PTSD are often prone to engaging in drug-abusive behavior.

The attune theory also clearly elucidates how our social environment can lead to addiction. Rocco defines attunement as "the caregiver's ability to read the infant's mental state or inner experience from the infant's overt behavior as the infant reads the overt parental response as having to do with (reflecting) the infant's original experience" (Rocco et al., 2016). When the process of attune is effectively transitioned through, an individual becomes emotionally and physically stable hence having an effective secure attachment style. Attunement is a form of service and return connection between a child and the primary caregiver (mother or guardian). In the process of attune, even simple exchange of eye contact has profound effects. When this happens between a child and a primary caregiver, a thousand neuro-connections per second form continuously in the infant's brain (Arredondo, 2009, 0:24). As these neurons form, they connect and form circuits. These circuits are the core foundation that enables the formation of more complex neuropathways meant to handle more complex tasks and emotions as the infant develops. These circuits strengthen through repeated use. In this child's mind, he or she is learning about the world through her mother's eyes among other infancy experiences. These experiences have a lasting effect on the development of the brain. Maté puts forward that positive emotionally attuned relationships enable an infant to develop opioids in his or her brain (Maté, 2012). "This endorphin surge promotes the attachment relationship and the further development of the child's opioid and dopamine circuitry" (Maté, 2012, p.). Adversary, when a child experiences stress, this leads to a reduction in the child's opioid and dopamine neurotransmitters (Maté, 2012).

We can hence understand that the efficient and effective development of these circuitry systems is dependent on how satisfactory the attachment is. Murray argues that "Premature babies in incubators have faster brain growth if they are stroked for just 10 minutes per day (Murray, 2020). Parental nurturing determines the levels of key brain chemicals including serotonin, oxytocin, and neurotransmitters such as norepinephrine. Even slight imbalances of these chemicals increase an individual's sensitivity to stressors for a lifetime". It is through the process of attunement that a child develops efficient visual, emotional, behavioral, logical, and memory circuits in the brain during the early critical years of development. When we experience misattune in childhood, this leads to frustration that persists throughout our adult life making us develop addictive behaviors as coping mechanisms to deal with that frustration.

The Child Development Institute encourages us to be mindful of the words we use with our children because they can induce either harm or growth in them. This feedback should come from an objective standpoint rather than an emotional one. It is argued that drug addicts have been subjected to severe childhood trauma in various forms including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse (Maté, 2012). However, the same author points out that "Not all addicts were subjected to childhood trauma, just as not all severely abused children grow up to be addicts" Those who have experienced childhood trauma are more likely to become addicts (Maté, 2012).

The previous studies found that everything stems from childhood (Murray, 2020; Grusec, 1992; Bandura et al., 1961; Maté, 2012; Fitriani, 2019; Zhang, 2020; Rocco et al., 2016; and Arredondo, 2009, 0:24) . This does not mean that traumatic events occur only in childhood, but when an

individual has experienced a childhood without much or devoid of trauma plus has received sufficient love and affection, that individual is then able to handle frustrating situations more sufficiently when compared to an individual who has had a contrary experience. It is encouraged to change perspective and look at the role the addiction plays in serving the individual (TEDx, 2012). What is the individual getting that was in short supply before? Maté points out that the addicts get “pain relief, a sense of peace, a sense of control, and temporary calmness” Maté then ponders a thought wondering what happened to the qualities mentioned that are only attained with the help of an addiction. Maté quotes some of the commonly used drugs like cocaine, and heroin and puts forward that they are all pain killers hence the question should not be why the addiction, but why the pain (TEDx, 2012). People experience trauma but often lack the means to work through their trauma. They encounter stressful situations but lack the means to resolve their stress; hence, they turn to addictive behaviors. Despite how hard it may be according to Maté, the key to healing from an addiction is coming to a resolution with the pain. Facing it and finding the reason for the pain.

The existing literature clearly explains to us how the environment we live in affects us. It illuminates how childhood experiences affect our psychological and physiological development as infants, continuing to the rest of our adult lives. However, they did not shed much light on the remedies to these problems of misalignment and bad parenting that generally led to trauma. Sigmund Freud did provide us with an answer (Murray, 2020, p. 19). He put forward that looking within yourself and resolving your frustration is the cure for addiction. Maté also agrees highlighting that not all people with traumatic childhoods become addicts. This was the solution provided but it is not enough to enable an individual to break free from an addiction (Maté, 2012). Literature also did not make recommendations to help the current and future generations resolve trauma, and this is the focus of the present. This study has elucidated how an individual can identify trauma by adding to Freud’s proposed solution and that is the first step in facing addiction.

This paper has the following queries: (1) How do people get addicted to some actions, behaviors, or substances? (2) How do social factors play a role in developing addictive behaviors? (3) What are the effects of addictive behaviors on the lives of addicts? (4) What are the possible recommendations to help reduce the tendencies of individuals to become addicts? Throughout this study, these questions were answered.

2. Materials and Methods

Study design

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted, enabling the study to assess the beliefs and attitudes of the target population on the concept of addiction and its relationship with an individual’s social experiences. which is what this study aims to achieve. Both primary and secondary data were used to shed light on the importance of social environments in inducing addictive tendencies among the youth.

Sampling

This study used purposive and convenient sampling because all the participants needed were in a single location. This hence spared time and resources to find participants. In addition, these sampling techniques granted a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena. The study is composed of 32 participants all located at Isange Rehabilitation Center in Huye district.

Data collection

Data was collected from the beneficiaries at Isange Rehabilitation Center in Huye district. The questionnaire method, observation method, and interview method were chosen because they are most fitting when it comes to enabling to answer study questions and hence enabling to reach the objectives. Participants filled out the questionnaire and after, face-to-face interviews were conducted.

Data analysis and interpretation

The information acquired after the data collection was analyzed to assess if there is a connection between an individual's addictive tendencies and their upbringing. Experiences after childhood were also evaluated. Tabulation was used to analyze quantitative data and enabled to identify the frequency within which an idea was held in common regard. Narrative analysis was used to derive meanings from the participant's stories and to make sense of participants' reality and life experiences. How the participants told their stories provided great insight into how they gave meaning to their experiences. The questionnaire sheets and interview recordings were numbered with a code to help with the analysis process. The codes were numbered

Ethical consideration

Before starting data collection, permission was sought from the University of Rwanda Huye Campus and Isange Rehabilitation Centre located in the Huye district where participants are located. The participants were also informed of the goals of the study in detail and no coercion was imposed. When interviews were conducted, it was made clear that the information was strictly for academic purposes and informed consent was granted. To guarantee anonymity, secrecy, respect, and protection from potential harm, all information provided was handled with the utmost confidentiality.

3. Results

Demographic data of research participants

The table below (table 1) presents the demographic data of research participants who attended to the study questionnaire.

Table 1: Demographic information of participants

Family information of participants	Frequency	Percentage
1. Gender		
Male	29	90.6
Female	3	9.4
Total	32	100.0
2. Do you have a parent?		
Both parents	22	68.8
One parent	5	15.6

Guardian	5	15.6
Total	32	100.0
3. Did you grow up with both parents (biological mother and father)?		
Yes	19	59.4
No	8	25.0
Guardian	5	15.6
Total	32	100.0
4. Are there cases of violence in your family		
No cases	17	53.1
Moderate cases	11	34.4
Extreme cases	4	12.5
Total	32	100.0

Source: Field data, 2024

The table above shows that the number of females in the Isange rehabilitation was substantially low which indicates that males are more likely to engage in addictive behaviors when compared to females. Secondly, most of the participants have both parents, and the majority grew up with their parents, yet most claimed that they did not receive love and affection to the degree they wanted. Most of the participants put forward that their parents were busy working and building wealth. Many of my participants had issues they were dealing with, but their parents did not know, nor did they ask. This further proves the relation of primary caregivers attuning to the emotional needs of their children. Financial security is important; however, it should not come at the expense of the child. Finally, the level of violence seems to be generally prevalent in the families of my participants. That can lead to addiction that pushes these participants to seek consolation in addictive behavior.

Addictive behavior: cause and consequences

Table 2 presented below gives a summary of responses concerning the addictive behaviors raised by the research participants. They discussed the causes of addictive behavior, the most common addictive behavior in the area as well as the consequences of those behaviors.

Table 2: Table showing the frequency of answers regarding addictive behaviors

Questions regarding addictive behaviors	Frequency	Percentage
1. Which social factor is most likely to cause addiction behaviors?		
Family factors	8	25.0
Peer pressure	6	18.8
Society	16	50.0
The school	2	6.3
Total	32	100.0
2. What are the most common addictive behaviors among youth?		
Drug addiction	21	65.6

Sex addiction xx	2	6.3
Internet addiction	0	0.0
Gambling or betting	0	0.0
Alcohol addiction	9	28.1
Total	32	100.0
3. Do addiction behaviors have positive or negative consequences?		
Positive consequences	0	0
Negative consequences	32	100
Total	32	100

Source: Field data, 2024

When it comes to the social situation that is causing the youth to become addicted, it is society. This is because society sets the stage for all other social factors. One of my participants postulated that he engaged in addictive behaviors because it was synonymous with being popular. To be accepted by his peers, he engaged in them and as a result, he became addicted to drugs. Secondly, based on the findings, twenty-one of my participants believe that the most heavily engaged drug among the youth is drug addiction. Finally, all participants stated that in the long run, addiction has never benefited them in any way. When the addiction is new, it feels good because it gives the soon-to-be addict something that was previously missing in his or her life. Addiction provides joy, relief from stress, security, and control among many other good feelings. When an individual becomes addicted, his or her purpose in life then becomes the addiction. The addict no longer cares about his relationships, his health, his hygiene and sanitation, or his future. This further highlights a need for intervention because no one would put his hand in a fire knowing that his or her hand would burn. This becomes even more concerning when the hand is in the fire and the pain is being felt, and yet the individual cannot remove his or her hand from the fire.

The role of social factors in developing addictive behaviors among youths

The narrative analysis showed that all my participants agree that an individual's social environment can induce addictive behaviors in youths. Content analysis showed that society was ranked as the primary social factor that induces addictive behaviors. Sixteen of my thirty-two participants claim that this is the case, eight participants chose family factors, six participants chose peer pressure, and two participants chose the school. During the interviews, the participants mention how their peers pushed them to become addicts, hence showing that all the social factors work together to bring about this outcome of addiction. Everything is rooted in society.

Humans are social animals be it physiologically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. We need human contact and hence the environment we live in has a large impact on all the aspects mentioned above. The environment we were conceived and raised in has a great impact on how we feel about ourselves and this affects our physiology. From the moment of conception, we are affected by the emotional state of our mothers. Social factors like social class, relationships with others, childhood experiences, and occupation among other social factors can affect the emotional state of our mother during conception. Children whose mothers experienced stress are born with

such stressors, and they act on us throughout our childhood and adulthood. As humans, we are bio-psycho-social creatures.

Emile Durkheim said that society is much like the human body made of different organs that work together to ensure the continuous existence of the whole organism (Durkheim, 2023). The same is true for society and its institutions such as religion, education, health, the criminal justice system, the family, and many more. Society is governed by an ideology, and it is this ideology that comes back to govern society. This once again shows us that we are the makers and the product of the society we live in. In society, addiction is considered to be a choice or a disorder, but it is not. None of us would want to be a slave to addictive behavior that destroys our social relationships and future. An addiction is anything that gives short-term gratification, but in the end, it leads to negative consequences, and the addict cannot stop craving addictive behavior despite its negative consequences. In reality, these addicts are suffering, and they need help.

In a society where meritocracy is the norm, then anyone who is not getting ahead in life must be doing something wrong. This hence induces feelings of depression and worthlessness because they are to blame for their predicament. Meritocracy is not bad; however, it has a negative side to it that is affecting the youth and older generations. Globalization has also had its consequences on the world where the youth from Rwanda can now catch a glimpse of the lifestyle of the youth in developed countries. The natural response to that is comparison. This makes the youth wonder why they do not have cars by the age of twenty or make five thousand dollars a month or why they do not go to parties, smoke weed, and have sex with as many girls as they can find. The youth are naturally going to be tempted to try these things because they feel it will give them a sense of satisfaction that is so widely popularized, but it instead increases their chances of becoming addicted. Addiction is a response to the current material and immaterial culture.

Prevalence of addictive behaviors among the youth

Content analysis shows that the addictive behavior that is prevalent among the youth is drug addiction. Commonly used drugs are cannabis (marijuana), heroin, weed, and cigarettes. Twenty-one of my thirty-two participants have attested to this. Alcohol addiction and sex addiction were ranked second and third. Even though drug addiction is the most common according to me, it is a gateway for other addictive behaviors such as alcohol addiction, and sex addiction. In this modern age, the internet has also become heavily addictive together with gambling. My participants posited that the internet is also becoming a gateway for sexual addiction with sexual content redefining the sexual roles of men and women. Pornographic imagery portrays the man in a dominant and aggressive position while the woman is submissive to the man. Thanks to the internet, social media apps have also glued people to their phones. This is producing a generation that has more online friends than real ones and weakening people's ability to engage socially. This also leads to the act of comparison between youths of different cultures. This leads to social media-induced depression because they are not happy with their lives, and even their physical appearances. Even the good side of social media keeps us from dealing with the pressure of forming physical and intimate connections with real people.

Effects of addictive behavior on the individual lives of addicts

Participants also shed light on these effects. From the perspective of each participant, addiction yields bad effects in the long term, and they would not wish it on anyone. When the individual is engaging in addictive behavior, he or she feels good temporarily because he or she is getting something that was missing before. The addict feels a dopamine rush which brings happiness, joy, comfort, security, and freedom from stress, and anxiety among other pleasurable feelings. However, the individual becomes hooked and is unable to find solace without addictive behavior. At that point, the addict no longer cares about his or her well-being. All that matters is addictive behavior. A drug addict is willing to steal or sell everything he or she owns to get his preferred drug. The addict loses his or her social bonds, their health declines, and he loses many opportunities such as education and employment among other opportunities, and the chance for a brighter future.

4. Discussion

This study has shown that the social environments in which we, as individuals live, can lead to the development of addictive behaviors. It is from society that we as individuals derive our sense of self. Peer pressure is a prime inducer of these addictive behaviors due to the popular culture that portrays success synonymously with engaging in these behaviors (Gorelik, 2016). The youth are people who want to belong hence they are more susceptible to following the popular culture. The study has also shown that the addictive behaviors that the youth engage in frequently are drug addiction, alcohol addiction, and sex addiction; however, due to the rapid advancement of technology, internet addiction is also negatively affecting the youths and becoming a gateway for other addict behaviors.

The study has also shown that addictive behaviors only lead to bad consequences in the end. Although these addictive behaviors provide temporary gratification in the short term, the negative consequences far outweigh the good (Tian et al., 2023). All the participants put forward that they would not recommend addictive behaviors to any individual because it is a poor attempt at solving the problem of frustration. Addiction begets even more problems; it further destroys the good things that the addict had, and it destroys any hope for a bright future (West-Israel, 2020).

The study found that social factors play the biggest role in causing the youth to develop addictive behaviors, this is because we are the producers and products of our society (Deguchi et al., 2020). The social structure within which we belong dictates the quality of education, social circle, and employment, among many other aspects of life (DiMaggio, 2019). One of the participants postulated that when an individual engages with a religious peer group, he is more likely to become religious himself and the contrary is also true. The most prevalent were found to be behaviors were found to be firstly drug addiction, alcohol addiction, and sex addiction. Even though these addictive behaviors are separate, they often lead to one another (Baumeister & Vonasch, 2015).

An individual who engages in drug consumption eventually drinks alcohol as well. Because the individual can no longer make rational decisions, he will end up becoming lustful towards women and he will engage in sexual behaviors (Leasure et al. 2015). This study has shown that addictive behaviors have no good outcome in the long run and the good feelings that come from addiction only last a short while. Participants put forward that their addictive behaviors have damaged their

emotional, psychological, and physiological well-being. The participants would not recommend trying these addictive behaviors on anyone. Not even an enemy.

A study on the social influence and drug addiction among adolescents in Rwanda found a strong and positive correlation between the level of social and the level of drug addiction among adolescents (Gishoma et al., 2023). Another study that was conducted by “Joel Swendsen, of the University of Bordeaux in France, and colleagues analyzed data from a U.S. survey of more than 10,000 teens between the ages of 13 and 18. They found that more than 78 percent of the oldest teens had consumed alcohol, about 47 percent consumed at least 12 drinks a year, and about 15 percent met the criteria for alcohol abuse (Jean et al., 2020). The study also found that 81.4 percent of the oldest teens reported the opportunity to use illicit drugs, 42.5 percent used drugs, and 16.4 percent were drug abusers”. However, the study was not able to highlight why these youths become addicted in the first place, which is what this study has shown.

During the collection phase, some participants were hesitant to approach the data collector and when he approached them, they refused to have an interview with him. Through the observation method, and interviews with other participants, he deduced that these individuals harbor great pain and resentment towards themselves, and the way they conducted themselves because of the addictive behaviors that they engaged in. They feel like they are misunderstood by the society they live in. All these feelings can be hard to express using words especially because it reminds them of the lives they have led. This problem was solved by employing strategies meant to build rapport. Some of them were by reassuring the participants that their information would be helped with great care and confidentiality and that no one else would have access to the information. They were also reminded of the purpose of the study and their role in it.

There was also the problem of the language barrier with some of the respondents. The Isange Rehabilitation Center treats beneficiaries who come from different nationalities. There was a participant from Somalia who there had trouble communicating with. This problem of the language barrier was solved by interpreting the questionnaire in a language that both the researchers and the participants could understand (Mackey & Gass, 2015; Bimenyimana et al., 2024). Despite all the impediments, it was observed that the participants who consented to an interview were open and honest about their experiences and the data collection was a success.

5. Conclusion

This study has shown that the tendency for an addict to become addicted is because the addict is trying to find the connection, and gratification that the addict feels he or she was deprived of during their development from children to adults. The findings show us that most of the participants have parents and to the best of their ability according to the participants, they tried to provide for their material and immaterial needs. This points out the statement about how having a supportive childhood full of love and affection does not protect you from addiction, but it gives you a higher chance of not getting addicted. Trauma is triggered when an individual encounters an event that reminds him or her about an event in the past that was painful or traumatic. If there is no trauma to compare against, that protects you from having to seek consolation in a drug or substance. We have also seen how proper attunement and attachment styles with an infant lead to emotional, physiological, and psychological development. When an infant is properly attuned, the brain’s neurochemical network is well structured, and the infant has sufficient dopamine, endorphin,

cortisol, and norepinephrine levels which an individual to process stressful situations better. The key to recovery is reconnecting with the self that experienced the trauma and seeking consolation for addictive behavior.

The literature in the study also proposes a solution to the problem of addiction. The solution is to reconnect with your child self and resolve your childhood trauma. The addictive behaviors provide relief from the traumatic experiences that were experienced by the individual. That is why addiction is so addictive. The solution hence is to face that frustration, find a cause, and a solution becomes evident. That is why an addict recovers from an addiction. The addict reconnects with himself or herself. From the findings of the study, the recommendations are as follows:

Society should understand that addicts are suffering from unhealed pain. Society should hence not abandon them because that makes them even less likely to stop the addiction. This is because the stress from abandonment leads to seeking consolation in addictive behavior that grants them a brief sense of stress release, control, and peace. We as friends, parents, and societal members should give them love and affection because that is what they need so that they do not lose hope.

There is a misunderstanding between the generation of our parents and that of the current generation. Parents believe that the way they live is the same way that their child should live. The environment in which parents or older generations of the twentieth and early twenty-first century lived is far different from that of the youth today. Parents are often unaware that this newborn baby is a separate individual from them who needs help and guidance in the process of developing an identity. This can and often is a problem because when the child starts needing help to develop this psychological identity, he is not helped because the parents do not understand that the child is a unique individual with his own unique needs and passions. Parents believe that when a child is fed, clothed, has shelter, goes to a good school, and has access to good medical treatment then he or she is fine and has done their true job, but a child needs more than that.

Meeting the child's material needs is good but that is not what will make him or her an emotionally, psychologically, and physiologically stable individual who can create and maintain good social connections with others. Children also need to feel love and affection from their caregivers because when this happens, the child develops a sense of security in the relationship, which manifests secure attachments between the child and his or her parents as well as all future connections that will be created in adolescence and adulthood. For example, when a child is encouraged in childhood that he can do anything if he tries and praise is given to his efforts, this child will grow up with a good work ethic and will be less likely to become a procrastinator. His dopamine circuitry will be wired in such a way that he or she will be able to derive pleasure from the most mundane of tasks. Many families do not do this practice. This hence becomes the source of frustration and a platform for modeling addictive behaviors thanks to our modern technology and addiction. When the parents find out that their child has become an addict, they fail to locate the cause of the phenomenon because, in their perception, they did all they could for their child. Parents need to be more understanding of the times we are living in and that the children and youth have more than just physiological needs. Children must feel loved and supported by caregivers.

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