

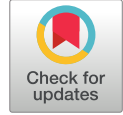
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Analysing the Relationship Between Masculinity and Addiction in terms of Sociological Perspective

Sosyolojik Perspektiften Erkeklik ve Bağımlılık Arasındaki İlişkinin Analizi



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Abstract

This study indicates a relationship between masculinity and substance addiction in relation to gender and that a reason men become addicted to substances is their masculinity crisis. This study aims to highlight this overlooked relationship. The research is significant in terms of providing the opportunity to consider masculinity from a different perspective without emphasising existing masculinity stereotypes, and this subject has not been studied in the literature. To collect the research data, men who had previously or were still diagnosed with substance addiction were interviewed using the in-depth interview technique. After interviews conducted with 10 participants from different age groups, education levels, lifestyles and who underwent substance abuse treatment, a relationship was found between masculinity and substance addiction in relation to gender. The unemployment they experienced, their inability to fulfil their responsibilities, their experience of an event that damaged their masculinity, or the fact that they did not feel sufficiently male were effective in the initiation of substance use by the interviewees. In addition, the interviewees appeared to continue to use substances because the substance made them feel physically and emotionally strong, offered the opportunity to escape from problems, or made them sexually active.

Öz

Bu çalışmada, toplumsal cinsiyet bağlamında erkeklik ve madde bağımlılığı arasındaki ilişki sosyolojik açıdan ele alınmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı bu fenomenler arasındaki ilişkinin farklı sosyo-demografik özellikler dikkate alınarak incelenmesidir. Araştırmanın önemi ise var olan erkeklik kalıp yargılarını vurgulamadan erkekliğe farklı bir bakış açısıyla bakabilme fırsatı sunması ve bu konunun literatürümüzde daha önce çalışılmamış olmasıdır. Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın verilerini toplamak için daha önce madde bağımlılığı yaşamış veya hala yaşamakta olan erkeklerle derinlemesine mülakat tekniği kullanılarak görüşülmüştür. Transkriptler, Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz yöntemi kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Farklı yaş grupları, eğitim seviyeleri, yaşam şekillerine sahip ve madde bağımlılığı tedavisi görmekte olan 10 kişiyle yapılan görüşmelerin sonucunda toplumsal cinsiyet bağlamında erkeklik ve madde bağımlılığı arasında bir ilişki olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Yaşadıkları işsizlik, sorumluluklarını yerine getirememeleri, erkekliklerini zedeleyen bir olay yaşamaları veya yeterince erkek olduklarını hissetmemeleri görüşülen kişilerin madde kullanmaya başlamalarında etkili olmuştur. Bunun yanında, kullanılan maddenin fiziksel ve duygusal olarak güçlü hissettirmesi, problemlerden kaçma imkânı sunması ya da cinsel olarak aktif olmayı sağlaması nedeniyle görüşmecilerin madde kullanmaya devam ettiği görülmüştür.

Keywords

Masculinity • Masculinity Crisis • Addiction • Substance Abuse

Anahtar Kelimeler

Erkeklik • Erkeklik Krizi • Bağımlılık • Madde Bağımlılığı

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Yazar Notu

Bu makale Şeyma Yıldırım Yılmaz'ın "Toplumsal Cinsiyet Bağlamında Erkeklik ve Madde Bağımlılığı İlişkisi" isimli yüksek lisans tezinden üretilmiştir.

Introduction

It is a well-known fact that masculinity or femininity is not natural and is culturally constructed. Biologically, humans are born with a female or a male, but we are taught how to be a man or a woman through gender roles. The thoughts that determine the expectations, values, behaviours, and roles of men and women are defined as gender. Therefore, the roles of femininity and masculinity in society consist of structures caused by cultures, and people have to behave according to these roles given to them by society. While the roles expected from women condemn women to stay in the private sphere, the roles expected from men ensure that men are visible in the public sphere. Men are attributed qualities such as strength, aggression, courage, adventurousness, independence, decisive attitude, dominance, competitiveness, and characteristics such as work-based life and tendency to violence and are expected to behave accordingly. Behind these gender roles, there are traditional schemes and scenarios that show how individuals should be educated according to the attributed gender roles (Onur and Koyuncu, 2004). However, the patriarchal system, which enables male dominance to be strengthened and at the forefront, also causes destructive effects on men by imposing impossible characteristics on men (Çelik, 2016).

As indicated by Sancar (2009:15), it is important to understand how men maintain their masculine power positions and construct domination, as well as how women experience oppression. According to Connell (1995:102), what is referred to as innate masculinity is fiction. Because great differences are foreseen in the personality traits and behaviours of women and men. However, studies to date have not found measurable differences between men's and women's intelligence, temperaments, and other personal characteristics. At the points where the differences arise, these differences are extremely small when struck with the distributions between the sexes. On the other hand, the inability of unemployed and poor men caused by capitalism to fulfil the duties required by masculinity and their orientation to other positive/negative masculinities, and the transformation of new possession and poverty into masculinity and femininity in addition to this, caused masculinity to become a crisis (Ok, 2011). In other words, it is seen that men who have power problems with the increase in the visibility of women experience a crisis of masculinity. The crisis of masculinity is a state of vacillation experienced when the concept of masculinity falls into a dead end and is also shown to be one of the reasons for the increase in violence. Men who lose their control over women or those who are not men enough resort to violence, and male aggression is seen as normal in Turkish culture.

According to Hansen (2012), gendered patterns of substance use and gender-based definitions of addiction reflect that addiction is filled with power inequalities. To explain these inequalities, the relationship between masculine norms or norms of male behaviour and drug use and its consequences is examined. In addition, it is argued that drug use is an effort to solve the crisis of masculinity among men who lack the ability to enter the legal workforce, their social networks, and a respectable role and power within their families (Singer, 1992). These approaches raise important questions about how gender, a culturally unbalanced category, interacts with addiction, which is also defined as a socially, morally, or biologically variable. It can be seen in many studies that male social role socialisation causes emotional, behavioural and health problems. Studies show that structures such as gender roles and gender role stress are related to negative and risky behaviours such as alcohol and drug use, depression, heart disease, and low help-seeking behaviour (cited by Bayar et al., 2018). In this regard, it can be said that male alcohol addicts have unhealthy functions while fulfilling their roles and their perception of roles differs from their spouses (Demirbaş et al., 2009). In addition, it is known that gender differences have a significant effect on the initiation and

continuation of substance use. In all studies conducted so far, it can be seen that men use drugs more than women. In other words, it is understood that men choose harmful but numbing methods such as alcohol and substance addiction instead of getting help to hide or overcome the masculinity crisis they are experiencing.

Conceptual and Theoretical Background

Patriarchy or Gender?

The concept of patriarchy is used in feminist literature to refer to a male-dominated society and indicates unequal gender relations in which men dominate women's labour or bodies. Hartmann (2012:179), on the other hand, defines patriarchy as a set of social relations that have a material basis and include hierarchical relations between men and male-to-male solidarity that enable men to dominate women (cited by Güneş, 2017). Patriarchy causes men to be able to oppress women and keep them in a subordinate position. The origin of this concept dates back to the pre-capitalist era, but the concept of patriarchy has been discussed from different perspectives in the capitalist period. The concept of capitalist patriarchy has started to be discussed, as the capitalist mode of production reinforces the patriarchal structure and contributes to the exploitation of the labour power of women by men. However, studies based on gender replaced the concepts of patriarchy or capitalist patriarchy in the following periods. However, this concept carries the danger of making an unbiased definition instead of a structural and historical analysis of inequalities between men and women. In addition, inequality between the sexes, women's domestic labour, and their low position in working life have been processed without associating them with patriarchy and capital (Öztürk, 2012). Considering these details, the concept of patriarchy has a broader scope.

Ann Oakley (1972), who included the concept of gender in sociology, stated that gender describes the biological men/women distinction, but gender indicates the socially unequal division between masculinity and femininity (cited by Vatandaş, 2011: 29-56). As indicated by Scott (2007), "gender is a dress that is forced on a body with a gender by society" (cited by Bayar et al., 2018). In addition, the elements that build, nurture, and maintain gender are generally related to mindsets in two different dimensions. The first of these is gender biases, which encompasses gendered behaviours, attitudes, reactions, and beliefs about the difference between the sexes. The second has to do with the differences that are believed to exist between the ideal man and the woman. The dimension of these differences reflected in life is the roles (Vatandaş, 2011). In Türkiye, the roles of femininity and masculinity are clearly experienced. Women are expected to be calm, soft, sensitive, and domestic; males, on the other hand, are expected to be dominant, aggressive, strong, and independent. Although the roles expected from women condemn women to stay in the private sphere, the roles expected from men ensure that men are visible in the public sphere. As a matter of fact, while gender roles ensure that male dominance is strengthened and at the forefront, the unattainable features required by the hegemonic ideal of masculinity also complicate men's lives.

Masculinity

In the 1970s, with the emphasis on masculinity in the second wave of feminism, masculinity studies were brought to the agenda, and the concept of masculinity began to be discussed in the context of gender. However, it is seen that the masculinity studies at that time generally focused on uniform masculinity, and a determined masculinity was brought to the fore. In the 1980s, the idea of masculinity studies changed, and the view that masculinity is uniform was abandoned. In the 1990s, there was an increase in the views that masculinity is shaped in certain contexts and that it should be examined as a social practice (Türk,

2008). In this process, feminist and profeminist men¹, who first confronted and reacted to the oppression or subordination of women they were the subject of thanks to their wives or men who participated in the feminist movement, tended to confront their own male identities and masculinity, constituted one of the main features of the studies on masculinity and men in the later period (Bozok, 2009).

A man whose hegemony is accepted should be seen as strong, tough and successful, as well as honest and dignified. Man must use violence, when necessary, but he must love and protect those who are subject to him. In other words, he should know both how to “beat” and “love” (Selek, 2008:125). As indicated by Demren (2001), Turkish men are expected to show hegemonic male characteristics such as being fond of their horses/women/guns, protecting their honour, being macho, and youthful, but in addition to the changes experienced by women after modernisation, men have also experienced significant transformations, and different masculinities have emerged. In particular, Connell, with his “Theory of Masculinities”, argued that the masculinity that exists in society is not uniform and mentioned four types of masculinity: Hegemonic Masculinity, Material Masculinity, Collaborative Masculinity, and Marginal Masculinity.

Apart from all this, masculinity has a fragile structure. It needs to be constantly proven and defended (Gedik et al., 2020). Because masculinity is what men are meant to be (Connell, 1995:139). However, due to the weight of the myth of masculinity, it is seen that men become silent, cannot tell anything about their experiences, cannot express their feelings openly, and cannot talk about their private lives as easily as women (Selek, 2008:13). According to Goldberg (2009), men pay a significant price for their masculinity privileges and power. This cost can be realised in the form of ignoring their own selves while acting according to the definitions of male-appropriate behaviour in order for men to reach gender norms (cited by Bayar et al., 2018). The state of indecision that men experience between the person they want to be and the person they are expected to be, and the fact that they finally find the solution in resemblance to their father to be “respected and valued”, shows that they have to conform to masculinity roles even though they do not want to. Therefore, gender roles make men’s lives more difficult.

Masculinity Crisis

In Türkiye, men have some expectations for their role expectations from women in a patriarchal context. After the 2000s, at least on legal grounds, women began to be accepted as an individual, not a symbol of family or honour (Selek, 2008). In addition, the existence of women as competitors in working life has led to different expectations from men both in social life and in working relations. In these new conditions, while men have more duties in the division of labour in marriage, values such as entrepreneurship, independence, and ambition, which are traditionally attributed to men in working life, have become features that can also be seen in women (Oktan, 2013). In fact, in recent years, it is seen that men tend to crisis due to the increase in the visibility of women in the social field, business life, and social life.

The crisis of masculinity is a state of vacillation experienced when the concept of masculinity falls into a dead end, and it is shown as one of the reasons for the increase in male violence. It is seen that men who lose their dominance over women or those who are not men enough resort to violence. It is seen that the people who inflict violence on women are mostly people who have close relations with them, their husbands, or the men they used to be with (Polat, 2016). Attacks targeting women range from ranting on the street to harassing them at work, from rape and domestic violence to being killed by someone who is considered their “owner” according to the patriarchy, such as their divorced spouse (Connell, 1995:160). In fact, men see violence as a means of establishing power over others and as a way to correct their lost power. However,

¹This concept, which can be used as a supporter of feminism in Turkish, is used to emphasise the theoretical stance that points to supporting feminism instead of being directly feminist (Bozok, 2009).

violence is as much a measure of the imperfection of a system of domination as it is a part of that system. Indeed, a hierarchy that is legitimate in all aspects will have less need to resort to threats. The dimensions of today's violence point to the crisis tendencies of the modern gender order (Connell, 1995:161). As a matter of fact, to understand the weight of the myth of masculinity, it is enough to look at the practices of daily life in different fields. When faced with the masculinity crisis experienced by men, it is understood how unattainable the hegemonic ideal of masculinity is.

Can a Relationship Between Masculinity and Addiction Be Established?

Gender is an important factor that determines our experiences and relationships. According to Durat and Tarsuslu (2018), the difference between men and women in asking for help begins to be seen at an early age, and cultural gender role conflicts are negatively associated with help-seeking attitudes and depression. For this reason, men's behaviour and attitudes are influenced by certain masculine norms, and many of these norms interfere with help-seeking behaviour. It can be seen in many studies that male social role socialisation causes emotional, behavioural and health problems. Studies conducted so far have shown that structure such as gender role is related to negative and risky behaviours such as alcohol and drug use, depression, heart disease, and low help-seeking behaviour (cited by Bayar et al., 2018).

In addition, gender differences have a significant effect on the initiation and continuation of substance use. In the studies conducted so far, it can be seen that men use drugs more than women. According to the World Drug Report (2021), men use more drugs than women in Nigeria, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Colombia. In addition, it is seen that men receive more counselling and treatment services related to substance abuse. According to the Türkiye Drug Report (2019), 95.5% of the people who received inpatient treatment for substance addiction in 2018 were men and 4.5% were women, and similar results were obtained in previous years. In addition, 96.6% of those who died from substance addiction were male and 3.4% were women in 2017, and 96.8% were male and 3.2% were women in 2018. In the results of the same report, it was seen that although 52% of the people participating in the study were women and 48% were men, 94% of the people who used substances at least once in their lives were men and 6% were women. All these results show that the difference between the sexes in substance orientation is too significant to ignore.

The number of men diagnosed with depression is lower than that of women. The reason for this is that men hide their depression with tendencies such as alcohol use, substance abuse, suicide, anger, violence, and sexual deviance (Durat and Tarsuslu, 2018). Indeed, the condition defined as male depression is primarily linked to the crisis of masculinity. The reason why men do not want to talk about their illnesses, hide their emotional problems, and do not get help is because they are afraid of looking weak or not being man enough. Men tend to choose harmful but numbing methods such as alcohol and substance addiction instead of seeking help to hide or overcome the masculinity crisis they are experiencing. In addition, studies show that 78% of those who die due to suicide are men (Durat and Tarsuslu, 2018). For example, as a result of the interviews conducted with men in the province of Yozgat, it was concluded that men were most concerned about their future about their home support, and that this was related to the proof of masculinity. Most importantly, the concern for making a living has been shown to be the reason for father suicides and men killing their families in Türkiye (Gedik et al., 2020).

Definition and Causes of Addiction

Addiction is the continued consumption of addictive substances to achieve a noticeable effect, despite the mental, physical, or social problems that arise during the process. Additionally, it is characterised by the inability to stop the desire to use the substance, experiencing withdrawal symptoms when attempting

to quit, continuing to use the substance despite knowing its harms, and constantly feeling the need to increase the dose of the substance (Sertpolat, 2020). Drug addiction is considered one of the most dangerous health problems in the world. This global issue significantly threatens our country. Due to Türkiye's location between two continents, it serves as a key route in the drug trade, and there is a significant population of drug users and addicts in our country.

According to Demirhan (1999), the first detailed research on substance addiction in our country was conducted between 1962 and 1971. Between these dates, it was observed that 2878 people were treated at Bakırköy Mental and Neurological Diseases Hospital, and 35% of these people started to use substances at the age of 15-20 (cited by Gökler & Koçak, 2008). According to the results of a recent field study on drug addiction in Türkiye, 71.2% of the participants started using drugs between the ages of 15-24, approximately 6-7 million people use drugs once or sometimes in their lives, approximately 1 million 700,000 people are addicted to drugs, and 55.6% have social difficulties due to drug use (İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı, 2020).

Studies show that addiction can be caused by many factors, and it is not possible to show a single cause. Additionally, the importance of family and family characteristics in substance use cannot be underestimated. According to Oetting (1988), age, gender, cultural-social factors, family status, school success, social adjustment, emotional problems, and underdeveloped self-structure are the main causes of substance use (cited by Özdemir, 2001). As a result, addiction is a multifactorial problem that needs to be solved both from a psychiatric approach and from a social and cultural perspective. When the individual cannot find the power to change the environment and conditions as he wishes and cannot cope with the negative situations he experiences, he prefers to use substances to escape from the truth or to escape (Savcı, 2015).

Addictive Substances and their Definitions

Substances that cause addiction are classified as volatile, hallucinogenic, narcotic, and stimulants. Opium, heroin, cocaine, stone, marijuana, marijuana, skunk, bonsai, methamphetamine, ecstasy, and LSD are among the addictive substances. In addition, amphetamines, sedatives, hypnotics, adhesives, and solvents are known to be addictive. Apart from these, drugs such as barbiturates and benzodiazepines, which emerged with the development of the pharmaceutical industry, are also used for malicious purposes (Savcı, 2015).

According to the Türkiye Drug Report (2024), the global rate of substance use has increased to the highest levels ever recorded. Additionally, the report highlights that due to Türkiye's geographic location, it is positioned on the route for drug trafficking. Therefore, it emphasises that the fight against drugs is not only a national issue but also requires international cooperation and coordination.

In the report published in 2023 by the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA), a study was conducted involving 27 EU countries, Norway, and Türkiye. According to this report, Türkiye was identified as the country where three of the six most commonly used substances were seized. Alexis Goosdeel, the EUDA director, mentioned that in the past, Central America stood out for drug-related violence, but now Europe and its member countries are drawing attention: "Drugs are everywhere. Established drugs have never been very accessible or available in such large quantities, and potent new substances continue to emerge. Today, almost everything can be a drug, as the lines blur between licit and illicit substances and between synthetic and plant-based drugs. Everyone can be affected, whether directly or indirectly."

Drugs with narcotic and psychoactive substances are taken with a red or green prescription in our country. However, many drug addicts use these synthetic drugs, which they obtain in various ways, to have problems in accessing the substance they use or to quit the substance they use. Synthetic drugs used in high doses are addictive and their use is prohibited in Türkiye. On the other hand, products such as glue, lighter gas,

thinner, varnish, gasoline, and acetone, which are defined as volatile, solvent or gas products, also cause substance addiction. Studies show that these substances are generally used by men (Türkiye Drug Report 2019; Cevik & Kizmaz, 2021).

Methods

For this research, an ethical report was received from the Üsküdar University Ethics Committee dated December 30, 2021, and numbered 61351342. In this study, the qualitative research method was used. To collect the data of the study, 10 people who were being treated for substance addiction at Üsküdar University NP Istanbul Brain Hospital AMATEM Service were interviewed using an in-depth interview technique. Participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique, and attention was paid to the fact that these people were Turkish, male, and had used at least one substance. Before starting the interviews, permission was obtained from the hospital, and the interviews were started with the people deemed appropriate by the psychiatrists after the informed consent was obtained. Participants were interviewed between February 21, 2022, and April 2, 2022, and a semi-structured questionnaire was used in the interviews. Voice recordings were taken with the approval of the interviewees, and after the audio recordings ranging from 30 minutes to 50 minutes were deciphered, the relevant parts were used in the study. The transcripts were analysed using the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method, which aims to deeply explore how participants experience the world and the impact of these experiences on their processes of meaning-making. The data is interpreted in a way that best reveals the participants' personal experiences and meanings. Therefore, after the transcripts were read multiple times, two themes and seven codes were created based on the common points indicated by the interviewees, and relevant sections were quoted and explained in detail in the findings section.

Table 1

Demographics of the Participants

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Educational Background	Substances Used	Abuse Period
S	27	Single	Postgraduate	Marijuana, Bonsai, Ecstasy, Cocaine, Methamphetamine	12 Years
Y	21	Single	High School	Marijuana, Cocaine	3 Years
Ş	41	Married	Bachelor's Degree	Marijuana, Ecstasy, Cocaine	20 Years
M	31	Single	Bachelor's Degree	Marijuana, Ecstasy, Methamphetamine	10 Years
Ö	60	Married	Primary School	Marijuana	30 Years
F	30	Single	Postgraduate	Marijuana	10 Years
K	40	Married	High School	Marijuana	21 Years
U	50	Divorced	High School	Marijuana, Bonsai, Ecstasy, Cocaine, Methamphetamine	31 Years
A	25	Single	Bachelor's Degree	Marijuana, Pharmaceuticals	2 Years
G	36	Divorced	Bachelor's Degree	Marijuana, Cocaine	19 Years

Results

From the statements of the people participating in the research, it is understood that they were raised in a patriarchal structure and with masculinity stereotypes. Odabaş (2013) states that the patriarchal structure in a society shape not only the female body and sexuality but also the male body and sexuality (cited by Gedik et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, it was understood from the discourses of the participants that gender

roles were embedded in their identities since their childhood and that they were expected to act according to these roles. In particular, it has been observed that the man's duty is expressed in terms of material responsibilities, and his role in providing for the household is placed above others. At the same time, holding a job allowed men to have power over their wives and children.

"I grew up in a patriarchal family. The man's responsibility begins with bringing money home. That was also what happened in our house." (S, 27, Unemployed)

"Also, the feeling that you are a man starts to be given to men when they are younger. It is said that you will take care of your family, and you will have to stand on your own two feet. A man is always expected to have a financial income." (G, 36, Business Owner)

The interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) method was used in the analysis of the study. Because of the IPA, two themes were created as "Starting to Use Substances" and "Continuing to Use Substances," and seven codes were created under these headings.

Starting to Use Substances

Unemployment

Sezer Şanlı (2019) emphasises that in modern society, masculinity is redefined through labour and the role of providing for the household is enshrined in terms of providing for it. In other words, a man who does not have financial strength will not be considered a man. Some interviewees stated that they experienced unemployment, could not support their families, and had to seek help from others in this process. Most importantly, they cited unemployment as the reason for starting to use drugs.

"When I was in my 30s, I came here to be a mercenary. I was unemployed for a while, which caused me to be unemployed. I did not have any problems other than unemployment." (Ö, 60, Worker)

"My work was disorganised. I was out of work for a very long time. Substance abuse exacerbated this situation. I was unemployed because of the substance, and being unemployed increased my substance use." (U, 50, Self-Employed)

Studies and the discourses of the participants have shown that social and economic factors are very effective in substance addiction. Hansen (2012) also emphasises that unemployment and drug trafficking experienced by Latin American men lead them to become drug addicts. This statement is exemplified by the fact that 21% of the patients treated for substance addiction in Türkiye in 2018 were unemployed, 41.3% had irregular jobs, 34.2% had regular jobs, 2.3% were students and 1.2% were economically inactive people (Türkiye Drug Report, 2019).

Inability to Fulfil his Responsibilities

Marriage is an important stage of masculinity. It was observed that interviewees who were married had more responsibilities than those who were single and felt the weight of masculinity more after marriage. In addition, one of the interviewees stated that he was not married, but that people who were married turned to substance use when they could not fulfil their responsibilities.

"According to society, a man is the breadwinner. Furthermore, this weighs heavily on men. There are also people here who turn to substances because they cannot fulfil their responsibilities to their families."

They were worried about what I was going to say to my wife, how I was going to support my house, and they tried to relieve themselves by using substances.” (M, 31, Insurer)

Davis (1994), in one of the few cultural studies on masculinity and dependence, observes that for a Latin American man, the label of dependent is due to his inability to fulfil his role as a family provider and his low status in his community. In other words, addiction is seen as a label attributed to a problem in fulfilling responsibilities or being functional. As a matter of fact, it is understood from the statements of the interviewees that they turned to the substance when they could not fulfil their responsibilities.

Having Experienced an Event that Harms his Masculinity

Some interviewees stated that the disappointments, problems in the work or friend environment, and the humiliation they experienced in the family were effective in starting to use substances. In addition, men avoid talking about their problems and are afraid to express their feelings due to the weight of masculinity. When they experience disappointment or love pain, they hide the emotions they feel in order not to compromise their masculinity. It was observed that the interviewees turned to substances to cope with the negative emotions they internalised or because they understood that they could not cope.

“My father was a dictatorial man. He was always trying to put me under pressure. He was beating me.” (Ö, 60, Worker)

Not to Feel Like a Man Enough

Homosexuality is the most oppressed, humiliated and excluded type of masculinity among all other masculinity. One of the interviewees stated that he understood that he was gay at a very early age, but he could not accept this situation for a long time and therefore hated himself. The participant also stated that he was not male enough and chose substance use as a method of punishing himself as the reason for his hatred.

“I hated myself for being gay, but I could not tell anyone. I was finding ways to hurt myself. Like cutting myself into small pieces or going into dangerous environments... I had to die; I hated myself for why I was alive. Then I said, “Why should I die like this?” Let me do drugs and die having fun. I overdid my drug use and here I am.” (S, 27, Unemployed)

Continuing to Use Substances

To Feel Powerful

It is known that stimulants and drugs provide high euphoria in the first period of use and that people who use them feel stronger physically, emotionally, and sexually. However, after a while, the substance used does not have the same effect and the substance is addicted. Therefore, drug addicts use different substances to experience the same effect, and it is seen that most patients have multiple substance use during the treatment period. Most of the interviewees said that they felt empowered and not afraid of anything after they started using the substances. They also added that they continued to use substances with the satisfaction provided by this feeling.

“It took the fear out of me.” (U, 50, Self-Employed)

To Put his Head at Ease

Men fall prey to the false happiness provided by drugs to eliminate the problems, emotional delusions, and internalised troubles they have internalised. Accordingly, the interviewees continued to use substances due to the feeling of relaxation caused by drugs and stimulants, which made them forget their problems.

"It was comforting." It erased everything. It was clearing my head." (F, 30, Engineer)

"I have never been able to express my feelings." I did not commiserate with anyone. When I had a problem, I held it inside. I think my escape route was to use substances. I thought I'd drink a little, relax, and forget about it. I found such a way of escaping so that I could feel less of the emotions that gnawed at me." (G, 36, Business Owner)

To Make Himself Sexually Strong

Especially thanks to the high euphoria shown by stimulants, most men can have the sexual power they dream of. One of the interviewees stated that not only he but also his partner liked the sexual power created by the substance and that he continued to use it because of this power. However, this sexual power gained thanks to the substance is replaced by sexual problems and sexually transmitted diseases over time.

"It felt solid (sexually) as a man. I have seen women like it too. After 2-3 years, demolitions begin. Then you realise that it was a lie. It bursts like a bubble bursts." (U, 50, Self-Employed)

Discussion

In this study, the relationship between masculinity and substance addiction in the context of gender was examined. Because of interviews with 10 people who were receiving substance abuse treatment, it was understood that there is a relationship between masculinity and substance addiction in the context of gender. More specifically, interviewees cited unemployment, inability to fulfil their responsibilities, experiencing an event that undermined their masculinity, or not feeling that they were man enough as reasons for starting to use substances. In addition, it was observed that the interviewees continued to use substances because the substance made them feel physically and emotionally strong, offered the opportunity to escape from problems, or enabled them to be sexually active.

On the other hand, it was observed that although the financial means, education levels and lifestyles of the people participating in the study were different, they had similar patriarchal codes. In particular, it has been observed that the man's duty is expressed in terms of material responsibilities, and his role in providing for the household is placed above other expectations. The participants also argued that a man is obliged to take care of his family, that not being able to produce anything renders him useless, and that such a man would not benefit himself either. This situation shows that social and economic factors are very effective in substance addiction. In addition, the fact that the study was limited to a hospital providing private services in Istanbul shows that the interviewees had a certain financial situation. Therefore, it is concluded that to look at substance addiction from a socioeconomic perspective from a holistic perspective, it is necessary to reach people from different economic statuses and social classes.

Although the results are similar around the world, men in Türkiye experience substance addiction at a much higher rate than women. In the literature, it is seen that the subject of substance addiction is handled on the basis of psychology, psychiatry, and addiction studies. This study underlines that the causes of substance addiction experienced by men cannot be considered separately from the sociological and economic foundations of the society in which they live. As a result of the analysis, it has been observed

that the influence of the family, which is the core institution of the society in which the man is raised, and the social environment with which he interacts afterwards on his preferences should be taken into account. Social expectations and identity, economic difficulties, being outside the social roles required by being a man push men out of the safe circle. For this reason, the detailed handling of the sociological dimension of the issue of substance addiction by institutions has the chance to offer a preventive way to prevent the path to addiction from the very beginning.



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