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**ANALYSING THE 2020-21 NORTHERN CYPRUS DRUG AND
ADDICTION REPORT: IS EDUCATIONAL STATUS A
DETERMINANT VARIABLE?**

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Abstract

In the 2020-21 Northern Cyprus Drug and Addiction Report, the data obtained in order to describe the characteristics of addicts are discussed in terms of many variables. In this study, it is aimed to focus on a single variable in order to evaluate the problem in more detail. Thus, the effect of the educational status variable on substance addiction will be discussed and a contribution to the literature will be made. In this study, it is aimed to reveal whether the educational status of addicts affects their willingness to receive treatment. In addition, it will also be investigated whether the variable of educational status is a determining variable in the criminal behaviour of people with substance addiction. This study was based on the quantitative approach. The descriptive model was used in the research. The sample of the research consists of 226 addicts living in Northern Cyprus and applying to the Prime Ministry Drug Enforcement Commission in the 2020-21 period, depending on the convenience sample. The data were obtained through a questionnaire and the analysis was carried out by frequency-percentage. When the findings of this study are evaluated, it is seen that the education level of substance addicts is mostly at high school level. As the level of education increases, the number of those benefiting from probation increases.

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1. Introduction

Understanding how intellect and education affect physical health would be a significant epidemiological development and could inspire new methods for assisting people in better managing their own health, which would result in more successful drug abuse prevention. One facet of young adult lifestyle choice is substance use. Due to confounding genetic and shared family variables, the effects of intellect and/or education on substance use may be indirect rather than direct and environmental. It is commonly established that familial factors, especially genetic ones, as well as health-related behaviours like substance use can affect IQ (Prescott et al., 2006)

Few studies have looked at the effects of intelligence or education on certain lifestyle choices made by younger persons, such as drinking and smoking, which may affect their physical health in later life. One study that did, however, discovered a link—attenuated by education—between greater IQ and lower smoking behavior in young people (Batty et al., 2007).

In a study that looked at the relationship between education and overall mortality for men and women aged 25 to 44, those with the highest levels of education had the lowest age-adjusted mortality rates, while those with the lowest levels of education had the highest rates. Particularly, the age-adjusted death rate for men and women without education was 6.43 and 4.45 times higher than for men and women with third level, second phase schooling. According to research by Regidor et al. (2003), the age-adjusted mortality rate ratios' size increased with educational level. The lower the educational level, the greater the ratio's magnitude.

Academic performance, absenteeism, and incompleteness at school have all been taken into account when measuring risk and protective factors, and it has repeatedly been demonstrated that these factors are associated to substance use in pre-college student populations. A school-related behaviour associated to substance use is grade point average (GPA), which was once regarded as a gauge of academic performance, academic success, or academic achievement. Studies have revealed a negative correlation between a student's GPA and their substance usage; the lower their GPA, the more likely they were to use alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, and other hard drugs. Frequencies, percentages, and correlations from the following studies were used to demonstrate this concurrent inverse relationship: Bachman et al. (1988); Barnes and Welte (1986); Donovan and Jessor (1978, 1983); Galli (1974); Gossett et al. (1972); Jessor et al. (1973); Mills and Noyes (1984); Newcomb and Bentler (1988); Newcomb and Felix-Ortiz (1992).

Absenteeism: According to frequencies, percentages, and correlations from the following studies that evaluated missed classes and school days as correlates or precursors to substance use: Bachman et al. (1988), Brook et al. (1977), Galli (1974), Margulies et al. (1977), and Newcomb et al. (1987), high rates of absenteeism and truancy were characteristic of substance use among elementary, middle, and high school students. All partnerships that were mentioned were healthy.

Year of education: It seems that simply moving through the educational system can increase one's chance of using drugs. Four studies that were examined showed that as students moved through junior and senior high, the rates of alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use rose, as shown by frequencies and percentages (Jessor et al., 1973; Kandel et al., 1976; Margulies et al., 1977). F-tests were used by Newcomb

et al. (1987) to confirm group differences. Given that a subject has more opportunities to drink or use other drugs as they age, the consistency of this conclusion is not surprising.

Leaving school early: Dropping out of school is a big problem academically and affects many other socioeconomic and health effects. School dropouts could experience more economic hardships and job insecurity than high school graduates. Numerous experts contend that children who drop out of high school may be more susceptible to issues with alcohol, cannabis, nicotine usage, and other illegal drugs (Valkov, 2018). Additionally, research has looked at the parallel and antecedent links between substance abuse and high school dropout. The studies discovered that actual and potential school dropouts used alcohol, marijuana, and hard drugs more frequently than high school graduates did, with the differences confirmed by chi-square analyses. This finding suggests a link between substance use and high school non-completion (Friedman et al., 1985; Holmberg, 1985; Mensch & Kandel, 1988; Newcomb & Bentler, 1988; Yamaguchi & Kandel, 1984).

Capacity for thought: A learning difficulty, cognitive test score, or intelligence test score were used in certain research as a proxy for intelligence. According to Block et al. (1988), marijuana usage was positively connected with a reduction in IQ test results in males but not in females. According to Holmberg (1985), there is a correlation between those who attended special classes in ninth grade and those who reported substance addiction one year after graduating from high school. The findings of Johnson et al. (2009) further imply that hereditary and family-culture factors confuse the relationships between intelligence, education, and substance use in young people, making them indirect.

2. Purpose of the Study

In this study, it is aimed to reveal whether the educational status of addicts affects their willingness to receive treatment. In addition, it will also be investigated whether the variable of educational status is a determining variable in the criminal behaviour of people with substance addiction.

3. Research Questions

- i. What is the distribution of education levels of addicts who benefit from the psycho support education program?
- ii. What is the distribution of education levels of addicts who have been convicted of drug addiction in 2020-21?
- iii. What is the distribution of education levels of addicts who have been found guilty in fatal traffic accidents in 2020-21?

4. Method

4.1. Research Design

This study was based on the quantitative approach. The descriptive model was used in the research. Researchers tried to describe the current situation as it is and did not make any external intervention. The variable based on the study was determined as the level of education.

4.2. Participants

The sample of the research consists of 226 addicts living in Northern Cyprus and applying to the Prime Ministry Drug Enforcement Commission in the 2020-21 period, depending on the convenience sample.

4.3. Instrument

The data were obtained through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared by the researchers. The questions in the questionnaire are closed-ended and require a definite answer. The questionnaire includes both socio-demographic questions and questions to make sense of substance addiction. Expert opinions were obtained from academics, psychologists, sociologists and lawyers regarding the survey.

4.4. Procedure

The names of the participants were not used in the research. Volunteering of the participants was given importance and they were included in the research as such. Participants were informed that the data would be kept confidential and used only for scientific research purposes. The questionnaires were filled in individually, and the participants who came to the Anti Drug Commission filled in the questionnaires under the guidance of psychologists. While the participants were answering the questionnaire, the psychologist avoided directing them.

4.5. Analysis

Data analysis was carried out by frequency. Quantitative data are presented in the findings in tables.

5. Results

In the findings section, the results of the analysis were included in order to answer the research questions and 6 tables were presented.

Table 1. Educational status distribution of people included in the Psychosocial Support Program of the Anti-Drug Commission in 2020

Educational Status	N
Uneducated	7
Primary school	54
Secondary school	56
High school	95
University	54

In Table 1, the distribution of educational status of the people admitted to the Anti-Drug Commission's Psychosocial Support Program is given. When the frequencies are examined, it is seen that there are 95 people who have completed high school, 56 people who have completed secondary school, 54 people who have completed primary school and university, and 7 people who have not completed any

school. Although people who apply to the Anti-Drug Commission’s psychosocial support program due to addiction problem are mostly high school graduates, it is noteworthy that secondary and primary school graduates are also not to be underestimated. It can be seen that there is an addiction problem among university graduates.

Table 2. Distribution of people by education level convicted of addiction between 1st January – 31st December 2020

Educational Status	N
Uneducated	8
Primary school	47
Secondary school	63
High school	165
Vocational high school	2
Two-year degree	10
University	31
Unknown	50

When the educational status of individuals who were accused in 2020 is evaluated, it is seen that the highest rate is high school graduates with 165 people. 63 of the defendants were secondary school graduates, 47 primary school graduates, 31 four-year university graduates, 10 two-year university graduates, 8 uneducated and 2 technical high school graduates. There is no data on the educational status of 50 people.

Table 3. Distribution of individuals by educational status deported for drug offenses between 1st January 2020 and 31st 2020

Educational Status	N
Uneducated	2
Primary school	9
Secondary school	8
High school	59
University	10

When the distribution of individuals deported due to drug offenses between January 1 and December 31 is analyzed according to their educational status, 59 of the deported persons are high school graduates, and the rest of the groups education level is 10 university graduates, 9 primary school graduates, 8 secondary school graduates respectively. It is seen that there are 2 people who are not educated. It was determined that the rate of high school graduates deported for drug offenses has the highest rate.

Table 4. Distribution of people who benefited from the Probation Law between 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020 according to their educational status

Educational Status	N
Uneducated	3
Primary school	9
Secondary school	17
High school	25

University	25
Unknown	6

When the educational status of the people benefiting from the Probation Law of 2020 is examined, 23 of the individuals are university students, 17 of them are secondary school graduates, 25 of them are high school graduates, 9 of them are primary school graduates, 3 of them are uneducated. It has been determined that the education level with the highest rate is among high school graduates and the rates of university graduates.

Table 5. Distribution of the defendants according to their educational status in fatal accidents that occurred under the influence of alcohol between 1st January of 2017 and 31st December 2020

Educational Status	N
Primary school	1
Secondary school	6
High school	10
University	5

According to Table 5, it is seen that 1 primary school graduate, 6 secondary school graduate, 5 university graduate and 10 high school graduate had an accident resulting in death under the influence of alcohol. When these data were examined, it was determined that more than half of the individuals who graduated from high school had fatal accidents under the influence of alcohol.

Table 6. Distribution of defendants according to their educational status in injury accidents under the influence of alcohol between 1st January of 2017 and 31st December 2020

Educational Status	N
Primary school	16
Secondary school	28
High school	143
University	78

According to Table 6, the number of primary school graduates is 16, secondary school graduates are 28, university graduates are 78, and high school graduates are 143 that result injury accidents under the influence of alcohol. It is seen that more than 60 percent of those who have an injury accident under the influence of alcohol are high school graduates. University graduates are in the second place.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

When the findings of this study are evaluated, it is seen that the education level of substance addicts is mostly at high school level. However, when we look at the studies in the literature in general, it is underlined that there is a negative relationship between the increase in the level of education and alcohol and substance addiction (Öztürk et al., 2015). For example, in a study conducted with patients diagnosed with substance addiction, it is seen that 75% of substance users are primary and secondary school graduates (Nebioğlu et al., 2013). In a study conducted with drug addicts who applied to Gaziantep University, it was seen that 40.5% of the patients were uneducated or primary school graduates, 27% were secondary school

graduates, 22.2% were high school graduates and 10.3% were high school graduates (Bulut et al., 2006). In the study of Aksoy and Ögel (2005), conducted with adolescents under the age of 21 staying in prevention and treatment centres, it was seen that 93% of the participants were at primary school or lower education level. Again, in a study at Ege University, it was stated that 89% of substance addicts were primary school graduates (Altıntoprak et al., 2014). In some studies (Onal et al., 2011; Taşçı et al., 2005; Yalçın et al., 2009; Yaşan & Gürgen, 2004; Yüncü et al., 2008), it is emphasized that the school dropout rate of substance addicts is high and their academic achievement is low. This situation is shown as an obstacle for addicts to continue their education process. In this study, it is seen that substance addicts can continue their education up to high school level. This may be due to a late meeting with the substance. Apart from that, substance abuse may not have caused school dropout or academic failure. In Northern Cyprus, the proportion of high school and university graduates is the majority. It is thought that parents consciously direct their children with substance addiction. In studies conducted in Turkey, there are studies that reveal that the education level of the parents affects the substance use status of their child. However, research findings contradict the situation we have mentioned above. In a study conducted with 902 students at Kırklareli University, it was determined that the risk of alcohol use among students whose mothers were university graduates was 3 times higher than the group whose mothers were illiterate or primary school graduates (Ulukoca et al., 2013). As it is seen, the variable of education level is an important variable in substance addiction and it is clear that it is necessary to conduct in-depth and comprehensive studies based on this variable.

In this research, it is seen that those who benefit from probation service are mostly university and high school graduates. As the level of education increases, the number of those benefiting from probation increases. The study of Zorlu et al. (2011) contradicts this result. The percentage of benefiting from probation was found to be 75 for those who were primary school graduates or did not receive any education. This situation can be interpreted in two ways. The education level of substance addicts in the place where the research was carried out may be people who have not received primary education or education. The other possibility is that high school and university graduates (compared to primary and uneducated dependents) prefer to benefit from probation less.

In this study, when the education level of the people involved in the accident resulting in injury or death under the influence of alcohol is examined, it is seen that they are mostly high school graduates or university graduates. When the research findings are examined independently of traffic accidents, it is seen that the situation is exactly the opposite in the studies in Turkey. It is seen in many studies that the education level of alcohol addicts is primary school. In the study of Evren and Ögel (2003) 53.3% of the patients diagnosed with alcohol dependence had a primary education level. In a study conducted with patients who applied for addiction treatment due to alcohol and substance use in Bakırköy Psychiatric Hospital, it was stated that 50% of the patients were primary school graduates (Coşkun & Çakmak, 2005). In a study conducted by examining the AMATEM data between 1983 and 1995, it was found that the majority of them were primary school graduates (40-60%) (Türkcan, 1998).

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