

Men's Drug Addiction as a Threat to Women's Sense of Security: A Qualitative Approach

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Abstract

Drug addiction is an important social problem which has many damaging effects on people's lives. This study investigates men's addiction as a threat to women's sense of security. A qualitative approach was used to identify and explore its influences, and the grounded theory was applied with the aim of exploring and understanding this problem in order to develop a theory based on the gathered data. Research samples consisted of two groups: women who had visited rehabilitation centers to find treatment for a family member suffering from addiction, and women who had had no problems with addiction in their family. The results showed that men who suffer from drug addictions destructively influence women's sense of security both privately and publicly. Women in their private environment experience general physical, economic, mental, moral, and social insecurity. In the broader picture of society, women experience physical, moral, economic, and social insecurity. Addiction threatens women's security on both real and subjective levels, directly and indirectly. Ultimately, men's addiction is a form of violence against women.

Keywords: Sense of security • Drug addiction • Violence against women • Qualitative method • Grounded theory

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Drug addiction is a horrible problem in the contemporary world that has captured the attention of psychologists, physicians, sociologists, experts, as well as NGOs and governmental organizations. There has been no official census on the number of people who are addicted to drugs in the world. Generally, research on drug addiction has concentrated on addicts and the factors that have led to addiction. The effects of addiction on people, families, and societies are also important. According to Iran's informal 2007 statistics, a total of 1,200,000 individuals were addicted to drugs, and 800,000 others used drugs recreationally. In 2013, this statistic increased to a total of 1,325,000 people addicted to drugs, 91% of whom were men while 9% were women.

According to the World Drug Report (2014), drug use continues to exact a significant toll, with invaluable human lives lost and many productive years of a person's life wasted. An estimated 183,000 drug-related deaths were reported in 2012. That figure corresponds to a mortality rate of 40.0 deaths per million between the ages of 15 and 64. While that estimate is lower than it was in 2011, it is estimated globally that in 2012, between 162 million and 324 million people (between 3.5 and 7.0% of the world population) between the ages of 15 and 64 had used an illicit drug, mainly from the cannabis, opiate, cocaine, or amphetamine groups, at least once in the previous year.

According to the EMCDDA (2013), the first general population study on the prevalence of drug use in Turkey was conducted in 2011 by the Turkish Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (TUBİM). The study included 25 regions of Turkey. The sample size was 8,045 people between the ages of 15 and 64. The data was gathered from face-to-face interviews. Around 2.7% indicated having used an illicit substance during their lifetime, and cannabis was the most prevalent one used at 0.7% of the respondents. Approximately 0.3% of respondents had used cannabis in the past 12 months, while 0.2% had used it in the last 30 days. The percentage of amphetamine use during a lifetime was reported at 0.3%, followed by ecstasy at 0.1%. The highest rate of illicit drug use was reported among males aged 15 through 34. Thus, 1.6% of male respondents in this age group had used cannabis.

In 2011, TUBİM conducted an attitude and behavioral survey on tobacco, alcohol, and drug use among students aged 14 through 19, using a self-administered, open-ended questionnaire. About 1.0% of 15-year-old students reported

having used a drug in their lifetime, when considering all respondents this increased to 1.5%. About 0.3% of all respondents reported having used cannabis.

Different explanations for addiction have been offered. Some experts regard addiction as a mental dependence; physicians treat it as a physical illness; sociologists count addiction as a social problem; and sometimes police consider selling, buying, or consuming drugs to be a crime. Adopting different approaches to addiction requires distinct strategies. Addiction as a crime requires police, courts, judges, and prisons. Addiction as a disease requires medical clinics and hospitals. Addiction as a social problem challenges the minds of sociologists. The important issues, however, are the effects of addiction on people's personalities as well as their social and private lives.

Since the 1960s, anthropological and sociological interest on drug issues has increased, and researchers in social sciences both in the USA and Europe have made important contributions to our knowledge of drug-use behavior (Hunt & Barker, 1999). The notion of addiction is a complex one. From its roots in Roman law, addiction denotes a kind of enslavement, a surrender or dedication of one's self to a master (Oxford English Dictionary); it has come to assume a variety of meanings across various disciplines. In medicine, for example, it denotes physiological dependence (Peele, 1985); legally, it is discussed in terms of mental illness (Rose, 1986), while popular beliefs and media representations tend to be made up of complex moral, medical, and mythical configurations, sometimes regarding addicts as helpless victims, sometimes as criminals or lunatics, or as simply distinct types of people (Reith, 2004).

Security is defined as a lack of risk, being protected, having self-determination, having trust, freedom from anxiety and fear, or freedom from doubt (Mirarab, 2000). Security is both real and subjective; real security is physical security in the world, society, or family, and subjective security refers to the feelings of peace and confidence (Keramati, 2006). According to Maslow (1943), the need for security is on the second tier of the pyramid hierarchy of needs, coming after physiological needs. The need for security comprises feelings of belonging, love, respect, health, employment, property, family, and social stability. Hagerty (1999), while testing Maslow's hierarchy of needs, suggested safety means safety from war and from murder, as well as having a long life expectancy.

In this research, addiction is regarded as a social problem, and its effect on women's sense of security is investigated. The main purpose of this study is to develop recommendations and a theory about the effects of men's addiction on women's sense of security because addiction has many personal and social consequences that need to be identified and recognized. As in this research, Hughes (2007) focused on ex-users of heroin and attempted to develop a social conceptualization of addiction; the point of departure from Hughes' research is to understand addiction at a personal level and to understand the identity of the user.

According to Clutterbuck (1998), drug addicts are not in control, and this can have dangerous and sometimes fatal results. Using drugs leads to a "deviant lifestyle." The possibility and frequency of illegal activities among addicts are due more to drug users being in situations that encourage crime. The evidence shows much aggression; many criminals have used drugs and their criminal behavior can include rape, armed robbery, suicide, or murder (Siegel, 2001). Addiction, however, can cause social and personal damage, such as personality disorders (Grant et al., 2004) and the spread of HIV infection from needle sharing (Aceijas et al., 2004). In addition, the addict's family, their husbands, wives, or children, all of them suffer hurt from this experience.

The conceptual definition of drug addiction states that addiction is a dependence on a drug (such as an opiate) characterized by its abuse (Ritzer, 2004). Addicts are people who continuously use drugs or opiates, either through ingesting, injecting, smoking, or inhaling, and when they attempt to quit they are faced with physical and mental problems. Addicts in Iran are divided into two groups: permanent drug addicts and recreational drug users (Aghabakhshi, 2000). In this research permanent drug addicts are considered.

The security of women is a very important issue in the world. With every day that we learn and hear more about violence against women in many forms, the meaning of security for women becomes more and more important. Violence against women is now a well-recognized problem. The term violence against women encompasses a multitude of abuses directed at women and girls over the span of their lives. The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines violence against women as "...any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary

deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life,” (1993) This statement defines violence as an act that causes or has the potential to cause harm and, by introducing the term “gender based,” emphasizes that it is rooted in the inequality between women and men (Krantz & Garcia-Moreno, 2005).

According to Peterman et al. (2011), 1152 women were raped daily in the Congo in 2010. Approximately 1.69 to 1.80 million women have reported being raped in their lifetime (between 407,397 and 433,785 women reported having been raped within the previous 12 months), and approximately 3.07 to 3.37 million women reported experiencing sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner. Leonard (2005) focused on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Of the multiple variables that were proposed, excessive alcohol consumption is one of the most controversial. While there is broad agreement that men who are violent with their partner are often heavy drinkers and heavy drinking often accompanies this violence, there is significant disagreement about whether alcohol consumption plays any causal role in IPV.

Bannett et al. (1994) also expressed that violence is one of the harms that women experience; their results also suggested that domestic abuse from male drug addicts is not directly related to the female experience of violence, addiction within the family of origin (the study’s external locus of control), or the severity of alcohol abuse. An early onset of drug- or alcohol-related problems, low income, a history of alcohol-free drug use (cocaine use in particular), and a history of arrest or outpatient counseling all correlated to domestic abuse.

In this study, the effect of men’s addiction on women’s sense of security is considered. Security is a basic human need that has major direct and indirect influences on human life. This paper aims to develop a proper social conceptualization of women’s sense of security by applying the grounded theory approach within a qualitative research through analysis of in-depth interviews.

Method

In this study, qualitative research methods were used to understand the influence of addiction on women’s sense of security in both public and private spheres. Qualitative research methods are best for hearing the voices of women

married to addicts and who have experienced the hurts of addiction in private and public. To understand and recognize women's subjectivity, however, the grounded theory was used.

Grounded theory was first introduced in 1967. The procedures of grounded theory were designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of the social phenomenon under study. A grounded theory should explain as well as describe. It may also implicitly give some degree of predictability, but only with regard to specific conditions. Grounded theory derives its theoretical underpinning from the theories of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism. Grounded theory has specific techniques for data collection and analysis, although there is flexibility within its limits. The rules are as follows:

1. Data collection and analysis are interrelated processes.
2. The concepts are the basic units of analysis.
3. Categories must be developed and related.

Coding is the fundamental analytic process used by the researcher. In grounded theory there are three basic types of coding: open, axial, and selective (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Charmaz (2000) expressed that the grounded theorist's analysis tells a story about people, social processes, and situations. The researcher composes the story; it does not simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer. The story reflects the viewer as well as the viewed (Glaser, 2002).

The primary purpose of grounded theory is to generate explanatory models of human social processes that are grounded in the data. A second purpose is to elaborate on and modify existing theories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Eaves, 2001). The sampling technique in grounded theory is theoretical sampling. In theoretical sampling, the researcher selects the samples that are theoretically most profitable and become the cornerstone of the theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The number of samples is determined during the research process, and the main goal is data saturation. Data saturation usually occurs when new data is no longer produced.

Population and Sample

The population of this research consisted of women who have one or more addicts in their family, maybe a husband, father, or brother. In the context of Iran, it was difficult to find these women. Our recourse was to turn to rehabilitation centers in Tabriz where some addicts come for treatment. With this sample, we could understand the effect of addiction on women's sense of security in the private sphere, especially in the family. In order to research these effects in the public sphere, we selected some women that had no addicts in their family. The women who were interviewed were selected randomly and were first subjected to the question: "Have you ever had any interactions with an addict in your family?" If the answer was negative, other questions were asked. Hence the sample of this research had two parts.

The age range in the first group was between 25 and 55 years old. Among the 20 women, five were secondary school graduates, eight were high school graduates, four had post-graduate degrees, and three had bachelor degrees. Also, 13 women were housewives and 7 were employed. Twelve women out of the 20 who had come to the rehabilitation center had interactions with a husband who was an addict, six had brothers who were addicts, and two had fathers who were addicts. The age range for the second group was between 18 and 50; five women were students, eight were housewives, and five were employed.

Data Collection

Data was gathered through in-depth interviews. The sample number included 38 women: 20 who lived with an addict and 18 who had no close interactions with an addict. Each interview lasted 45 minutes and was performed face-to-face. Interviewees with a male addict in their families were questioned at the rehabilitation center in Tabriz, and interviewees with no male addicts in their families were interviewed in one of the four regions of the city based on their choice of at home, in the street or at shopping centers.

Results

Open Coding and Identify the Concepts

In the interviews involving women with a close relationship to a male addict (brother, father or husband) in their families, some concepts were obtained that revealed the damaging effects of addiction on their sense of security.

- Zahra stated that her father was an addict and that she always felt scared that he may sell her to another man in exchange for drugs.
- Monireh reported that her brother had used ecstasy and psychotropic drugs. She and her mother were always fearful that her brother would kill them. She described an incident where her brother was under the influence of drugs and threatened them with a knife.
- Sima's husband is an addict. She said her husband had stolen their home appliances and sold them to get drugs. At another time, he had stolen their children's food money.
- Nahid said that when her husband was under the influence of drugs, he had raped her; he had also raped her when he didn't have drugs.
- Mina's husband is an addict, and her husband's addict friends gather at their home. She is always afraid that one of the addicts will steal their home appliances or rape her or her daughter.
- Somayeh said that her husband feels no responsibility toward the family and is indifferent to her and the children.

Women expressed their lack of security using such concepts as:

- Fearing the narcotized state of their male relative and his aggressive and strange behavior.
- Fearing rape by the husband.
- Fearing violence and aggression in the home or private sphere.
- Fearing that their home appliances would be stolen.
- A sense of economic insecurity and poverty.

- Family disputes and arguments between couples.
- Physical and mental disorders of addicts such as anxiety and restlessness.
- Indifference to family and wife.
- Surrender of the male addict to his desire to get drugs.
- Lack of responsibility towards family and children.
- The destructive effect on their children's future.
- Negative behaviors toward relatives and neighbors.
- Fear of the addict's death or the news of his death.
- Fear of the addict's arrest or of him committing a crime.

Some concepts were acquired from the interviews with women who had no addicts in their families. The respondents expressed strongly fearing facing addicts on the street or in a quiet alley. They felt the epidemic of addiction among young people, especially males, was worrisome, and the appearance of the drug subculture was not good news for their community. The interviewees spoke about their concerns and pointed to the following cases:

- Farnaz reported she had encountered a male addict who looked at her strangely.
- Fatima said two addicts had stolen her wallet.
- Elnaz conveyed her sense of fear when she saw an addict and imagined him getting annoyed.
- Samira found it annoying that young Iranian men are being drawn to addiction.
- Ziba expressed her fear of addicts, saying they may hurt her children.
- Sara stated the presence of addiction in the community and society is a major threat, and she believes it is the government's responsibility to solve the problem.

Women expressed their lack of a sense of security in public using such concepts as:

- Fear of an addiction epidemic.
- Fear of being harassed by a drug addict in a quiet alley.
- Fear of being a victim of crime perpetrated by addicts, such as robbery or rape.
- Fear of a family member (younger brother or sister) becoming an addict.
- Fear of marrying someone who is secretly addicted.
- Fear of the spread of diseases such as AIDS among drug addicts and in the community.

Axial Coding and Categorization

The findings of this study revealed that women generally express their lack of a sense of security in terms of fear. Fear and security are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, the first effect of male addicts on women is the destruction of their sense of security and the creation of fear. Its effects on the private sphere are different than those on the public sphere. Women who live with a drug addict experience insecurity as an objective state and are at risk of serious injury. It is not just a feeling of insecurity; the threat is real. In the public and social spheres, however, the major part of insecurity happens at the subjective, mental level, and women experience insecurity indirectly. Figure 1 shows women's sense of insecurity in the private sphere.

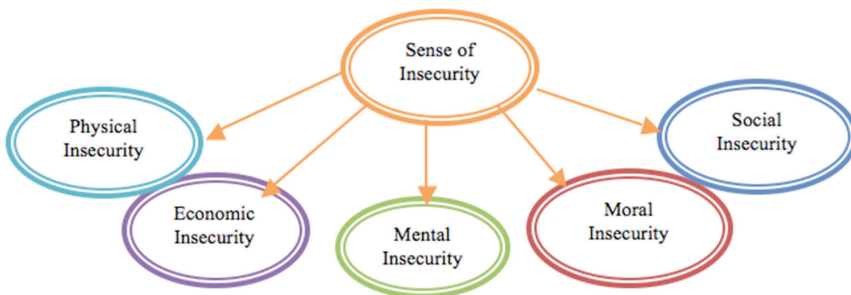


Figure 1: Women's sense of insecurity in the private sphere.

Table 1 demonstrates the effects of men's addiction on women's sense of insecurity in the private sphere.

The Dimensions of Sense of Insecurity				
Social insecurity	Moral insecurity	Mental insecurity	Economic insecurity	Physical insecurity
Demoting family dignity	Surrendering to others	Conflict	Fear of robbery of home appliances	Violence
Negative treatment of relatives	No responsibility	Fear of addict's death	Economic insecurity and poverty	Rape
	Indifference to family	Fear of violence and aggression		Physical damage
		Destructive effect on children's future		Aggressive and strange behaviors

Figure 2 shows women's fear of men's addiction at the public level.

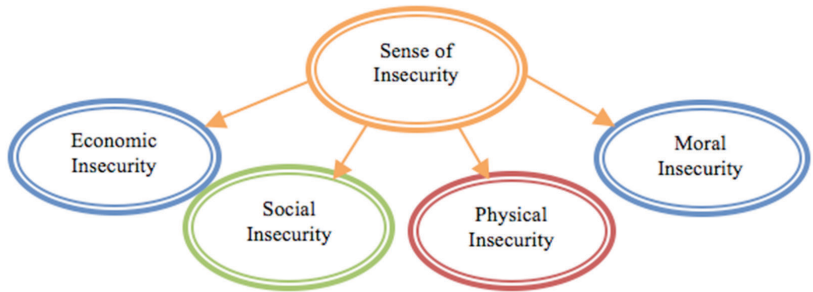


Figure 2: Fear of women in the public sphere.

Table 2 shows the effects of men's addiction on women's sense of security in the public sphere.

The Dimensions of Sense of Insecurity			
Social insecurity	Moral insecurity	Economic insecurity	Physical insecurity
Separation caused by addiction	Being the addict's victim	Being robbed by an addict	Violence
The spread of diseases such as AIDS	Marrying a secret addict		Rape
	Addiction as an abnormal problem		Physical damage

Selective Coding and Propositions

Men's addiction has both actual and subjective effects on women's sense of security and their actual security. The effects in the private sphere are more tangible, more intense, more destructive, and direct. Women are seriously hurt by their addicted relative and suffer in reality. In the public sphere, the effects are more subjective, more intangible, weak, and indirect. Women who do not have an addict in their family are just observers, listening to stories of suffering. Generally, men's addiction distorts women's sense of security on real and subjective levels. In the private sphere, women experience physical, economic, mental, moral, and social insecurity; in the public sphere, women experience physical, moral, economic, and social insecurity. Therefore, the research propositions can be expressed as follows:

- Men's addiction has destructive effects on women's sense of security.
- The effects are stronger, more concrete, and more direct in the private sphere, while in the public sphere they are more subjective and indirect.
- In the private sphere, women experience physical, economic, mental, moral, and social insecurity; in the public sphere women experience physical, moral, economic, and social insecurity.

According to the propositions and findings from the interviews, we have concluded that the core concept of the problem is violence against women, and men's addiction is a form of that violence.

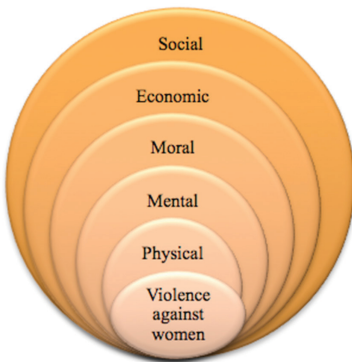


Figure 3: Conceptual graphic of the spheres of influence of men's addiction on women.

The grounded theory is an inductive approach to building a theory. In this research, concepts were determined during the first step; categories were recognized in the second step; and in the third step, propositions were finally obtained. The contexts provided by the interviews show the core concept of this research is violence against women. Women seriously emphasized the violence and continually spoke of it. Therefore the theory of this inductive approach and grounded theory is:

The addiction of men is violence against women in the private sphere and to a lesser extent in the public sphere.

It should be noted that this theory is applicable particularly to Iran and especially in the winter and spring of 2014.

Conclusion

In this research, the effects of men's addiction on the sense of security of women in the private and public spheres was focused on. In the private sphere, the effects are considerable due to the family being one of the most significant institutions with its own special functions. In Iran, family is very important and is a place that can provide women with security or insecurity. People are known by their surnames, and from this perspective Iran is a partly traditional country. In the public sphere, however, the effects are noticeable because we are all a part of society.

In the sociology of deviance, addiction is regarded as a deviant behavior and social problem that causes much damage to society, family, and individuals. Addiction is a cancer that covers the entire social system and causes its slow demise. The main aim of this research was to conceptualize the effects of addiction on women's sense of security and demonstrate the damage it causes. The research approach used was the qualitative method, and data was gathered through in-depth interviews. For data analysis, the grounded theory was used and the researchers worked to create a theory.

Violence against women takes various forms: physical, sexual, domestic, mental, moral, economic, institutional, and religious. Many women believe that they have experienced violence at least once in their lifetime. Violence is usu-

ally rooted in gender, and women suffer more than men. In this research, we observed that many women were suffering from the addiction of their father, brother, or husband, they also expressed, however, that other men in the family did not have the same experience.

The results showed that in the private sphere, the effects of men's addiction include physical, mental, moral, economic, and social insecurity; they are more actual, more tangible, more intense, more destructive, and direct. It was observed in the public sphere that the effects on insecurity are physical, moral, social, and economic; they are more subjective, more intangible, weak, and indirect. The core concept was violence against women, and the interviewees seriously emphasized the violence that they had experienced in both the public and private spheres. Based on the results of this study, men's drug addiction is concluded to be a form of violence against women.

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