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The Triple Nexus: Personality Traits, Cognitive Function, and Quality of Life in Alcohol-Dependent Youth

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ABSTRACT

Alcohol dependence in youth is an essential area of public health concern with an enormous impact on mental health and development, as well as on quality of life (QoL). This research offers an integrative analysis of personality traits, cognitive abilities, and QoL in alcohol-dependent youth based on demographic characteristics of family status, marital status, education, and occupation. In the present study, data were collected from fifty participants across de-addiction clinics in semi-urban Punjab in a cross-sectional manner with purposive sampling. Descriptive analysis and inferential methods, including analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-tests, were used for data analysis. Youth from nuclear families had better QoL and cognitive abilities, while youth from joint families had more vital personality traits. Marital status revealed contrasting patterns: married participants had higher scores on personality tests than unmarried participants who performed better on cognitive tests. The level of education was also significant, and the participants with middle school education had the highest QoL and cognitive scores, while those with high education had better personalities. There was considerable variation by occupational status; youth in private employment had the best QoL and cognitive performance, while drivers had the worst outcomes but higher levels of personality resilience. The findings from the sequence reinforce the need for assessment of the various aspects of alcohol dependence, especially in the context of the demographic environment of youths who are affected. The interplay between personality traits, cognitive impairments, and QoL highlights the complexity of addressing alcohol-related issues. By addressing existing gaps, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of alcohol dependence and its far-reaching impact on youth development.

INTRODUCTION

Alcohol dependence among youth has emerged as a critical public health concern with profound social, psychological, and neurological implications (NCCMH, 2021; NIAAA, 2024a). Adolescence and early adulthood are pivotal stages of development marked by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes (Backes & Bonnie, 2019). However, these developmental stages in human beings occur at the same time when people engage in trials and other risky activities such as substance use (Hamidullah et al., 2020). Alcohol, as one of the most widely used substances in the world, has unique risks for youth because alcohol is easily accessible, permitted, and neurotoxic to the developing brain (NIAAA, 2024b). Especially, personality changes in the condition of alcohol dependence, as well as its effects on cognition and QoL, have to be comprehended to treat this increasingly significant problem among youths (Chaudhury et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2020; Carlon et al., 2022; Redwood et al., 2023).

Personality traits have been linked to AUD (alcohol use disorders) and the development of the disorder for years (Yadav et al., 2021). Those personality traits that are associated with a propensity for substance use include impulsivity, sensation-seeking, and neuroticism. Conversely, there is evidence that conscientiousness and agreeableness may act as buffers against substance use (Turiano et al., 2012). Specifically, various studies have mentioned impulsiveness as a valuable predictor since it influences inadequate choice-making and a tendency toward risky actions (Fodstad et al., 2024). Sensation-seeking activities make youth engage in substance use, including alcohol, in a search for the thrill, and this escalates to substance dependence later in life (Cappelli et al., 2019).

Alcohol dependence has been shown to produce significant neuropsychological deficits, especially in aspects of executive control, memory, attention and decision-making (Bernardin et al., 2014; Le Berre et al., 2017). These deficits are said to arise from alcohol's toxicity on the brain structure and function of areas of the brain such as the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus. These impairments are most devastating in young people because the human brain still develops during youth (Nutt et al., 2021; Lorkiewicz et al., 2024). QoL is a broad construct that includes physical, mental, and social domains and primary social support. Alcohol dependence reducing QoL typically results in a decline in physical health

status, deterioration of interpersonal relationships and emotional health (Huang et al., 2021; Luk et al., 2022).

There is a lack of literature on personality traits and substance use, which is particularly scarce in the young adult population, with most studies examining only the adult population (George et al., 2010; Shin et al., 2012; Crews et al., 2016; Boateng et al., 2021; Seemiller et al., 2024). Chronic alcohol users often exhibit cognitive dysfunctions, but research on young adults is limited. These individuals may exhibit unique patterns due to the interplay between alcohol use and neural pathway maturation. The reversibility of these deficits post-use is unclear (Hamidullah et al., 2020; de Goede et al., 2021; Seemiller et al., 2024). Research on the impact of alcohol dependence on quality of life (QoL) is limited, mainly focusing on adult populations. Understanding the effects of alcohol dependence on youth, particularly in cultural contexts influenced by social norms and peer pressure, is also lacking. Despite studies exploring the overall impact, there is a lack of research on specific QoL dimensions in young adults (Lahmek et al., 2009; Ugochukwu et al., 2013; Sudhinaraset et al., 2016; Bratu et al., 2023).

This article includes several sections: Section 1st introduction discussed the brief of personality traits, cognitive function, and quality of life in text with alcohol-dependent youth. Also, the literature gaps were mentioned there. Section 2 illustrates the objectives and the hypothesis for the study. Section 3 describes the methodology, including the study design, sample characteristics, study area, data collection and analysis methods. Section 4 presents the results, highlighting the relationships between these domains in the study sample. Section 5 discusses the findings, emphasizing their significance. Section 6 concludes the article, and recommendations for future research are provided.

2. Objectives of the Study

2.1 Objectives

To address these gaps, this study aims to provide an integrative analysis of personality traits, cognitive functioning, and QoL in alcohol-dependent youth. Specifically, the primary objective is:

- To assess the personality, QoL and cognitive functions among alcohol-dependent youths with different demographic profiles.

The sub-objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To compare the QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores between alcohol users residing in different family types.
2. To compare the QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores between alcohol users having different marital statuses.
3. To examine differences in QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores among alcohol users with different educational qualifications.
4. To examine the differences in QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores among alcohol users with different occupations.

2.2 Hypothesis

- H_{01}: There is no significant difference in the QoL, personality (P), and cognitive function (C) scores among alcohol users residing in different family types.
- H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the QoL, personality, and cognitive function among alcohol users with different marital statuses.
- H_{03}: There is no significant difference in the QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores among alcohol users with different educational qualifications.
- H_{04}: There is no significant difference in the QoL, personality, and cognitive function among alcohol users with different occupations.

3. Methodology

The present study follows the "cross-sectional" research design. The "Purposive sampling" technique was employed to collect data from the respondents with the help of the structured questionnaire. The proposed sample size was 50, consisting of alcohol dependents. The sample size will be collected purposely from the de-addiction clinics in semi-urban areas of Punjab (SAS Nagar, Rupnagar, Fatehgarh Sahib, and Powadh). SPSS was used for the data analysis. Descriptive statistics, "Levene's test for equality of variances," and ANOVA were used to verify the proposed hypothesis.

4. Analysis and Results

4.1 QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Function Scores Between Alcohol Users Residing in Different Family Types

Table 1 provides comparative statistics for QoL, Personality, and cognitive functions between alcohol-dependent youth from joint and nuclear families. The data compares QoL, personality, and cognitive functions among alcohol-dependent youth from joint and nuclear families.

Youth from nuclear families report a slightly higher mean QoL score (4.03) than those from joint families (3.90), suggesting a marginally better perceived QoL.

Table 1. Comparative statistics for QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Functions (family types)

Group Statistics					
	Family type	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
QoL_Mean	Joint	40	3.9000	.32423	.05127
	Nuclear	10	4.0250	.39878	.12611
Personality_Mean	Joint	40	3.315	.3134	.0496
	Nuclear	10	2.660	1.0200	.3226
Cognitive functions_Mean	Joint	40	1.950	.2552	.0404
	Nuclear	10	2.080	.2860	.0904

Regarding personality, youth from joint families show higher mean scores (3.315) than nuclear families (2.66), indicating more substantial personality-related outcomes. However, cognitive functions are slightly better among youth from nuclear families, with a mean score of 2.08 compared to 1.95 for joint families.

Additionally, variability in scores is generally higher among nuclear families, particularly in personality, indicating more diverse outcomes in this group. Overall, nuclear family youth show advantages in QoL and cognitive functions, while joint family youth exhibit more vital personality traits.

The independent samples t-test compares the two groups' QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores, illustrated in Table 2. The independent samples t-test shows no statistically significant differences between the two groups' Quality of Life (QoL), personality, or Cognitive Function scores. Although the Personality test showed significance in Levene's Test for variances, the adjusted t-test indicates no meaningful difference.

Table 2. Independent samples t-test

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
QOL_Mean	Equal variances assumed	.993	.324	-1.042	48	.303	-.12500	.12002	-.36631	.11631
	Equal variances are not assumed.			-.918	12.144	.376	-.12500	.13613	-.42121	.17121
P_Mean	Equal variances assumed	48.776	.000	3.533	48	.001	.6550	.1854	.2823	1.0277
	Equal variances are not assumed.			2.007	9.429	.074	.6550	.3263	-.0782	1.3882
C_Mean	Equal variances assumed	.007	.932	-1.407	48	.166	-.1300	.0924	-.3157	.0557
	Equal variances are not assumed.			-1.313	12.823	.212	-.1300	.0990	-.3442	.0842

4.2 QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Function Scores between Alcohol Users having different Marital Status

The comparison of QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores between married and unmarried alcohol users reveals exciting insights. According to Table 3, the QoL mean scores for both groups are very close, with married individuals scoring slightly higher (3.9400) than unmarried individuals (3.9100). The standard deviations for these scores are relatively small, indicating minimal variation within each group.

On the other hand, the personality scores show a more pronounced difference, with married individuals having a significantly higher mean score (3.416) compared to unmarried individuals (2.952). The standard deviation for unmarried individuals is more significant, suggesting greater variability in this group. In contrast, the cognitive scores are higher among unmarried individuals (2.136) than married individuals (1.816), though the standard deviation for this metric is lower, indicating more consistency within the unmarried group.

Table 3. Comparative statistics for QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Functions (marital status)

Group Statistics					
	Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
QOL_Mean	Married	25	3.9400	.30856	.06171
	Unmarried	25	3.9100	.37417	.07483
P_Mean	Married	25	3.416	.3051	.0610
	Unmarried	25	2.952	.6983	.1397
C_Mean	Married	25	1.816	.2511	.0502
	Unmarried	25	2.136	.1604	.0321

The results of the independent samples t-test in Table 4 confirm these observations. The QoL scores do not differ significantly between the two groups (p = 0.758), suggesting that marital status does not significantly impact the perceived QoL among alcohol users. However, the personality scores show a statistically significant difference (p = 0.004), with married individuals displaying higher personality mean scores.

This may reflect differences in personality traits or coping mechanisms influenced by marital status. Similarly, the cognitive scores exhibit a significant difference (p = 0.000), with unmarried individuals scoring higher. This suggests that marital status might play a role in cognitive function among alcohol users, potentially due to varying life circumstances or stress factors.

In summary, while marital status does not appear to affect the QoL of alcohol users, it does have a significant impact on their personality and cognitive function. Married individuals tend to have better personality scores, while unmarried individuals perform better in cognitive assessments.

Table 4. Independent samples t-test

Independent Samples Test		
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
QOL_Mean	Equal variances assumed	.796	.377	.309	48	.758	.03000	.09700	-.16502	.22502
	Equal variances are not assumed.			.309	46.320	.758	.03000	.09700	-.16521	.22521
P_Mean	Equal variances assumed	4.686	.035	3.045	48	.004	.4640	.1524	.1576	.7704
	Equal variances are not assumed.			3.045	32.840	.005	.4640	.1524	.1539	.7741
C_Mean	Equal variances assumed	7.208	.010	-5.369	48	.000	-.3200	.0596	-.4398	-.2002
	Equal variances are not assumed.			-5.369	40.790	.000	-.3200	.0596	-.4404	-.1996

4.3 QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Function scores among the alcohol users with different educational qualifications

Table 5 compares QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores across four educational levels (Diploma, Middle, 10th, and 12th) among 50 participants. Participants with Middle school education tend to report the highest scores for QoL and cognitive function, though their personality scores are significantly lower than those of other groups. Conversely, participants with higher education levels (12th grade and diploma) report better personality outcomes but slightly lower QoL and cognitive function scores. This suggests that education level may influence well-being and cognitive development.

Table 5. QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Function Scores Across Four Educational Levels

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
QOL_Mean	Diploma	10	3.8000	.43780	.13844
	Middle	3	4.5000	.00000	.00000
	10th	7	4.0000	.47871	.18094
	12th	30	3.8917	.21459	.03918
	Total	50	3.9250	.33976	.04805
P_Mean	Diploma	10	3.220	.3190	.1009
	Middle	3	1.200	.0000	.0000
	10th	7	3.143	.2507	.0948
	12th	30	3.380	.2845	.0520
	Total	50	3.184	.5825	.0824
C_Mean	Diploma	10	2.000	.1633	.0516
	Middle	3	2.200	.0000	.0000
	10th	7	1.800	.1633	.0617
	12th	30	1.987	.3014	.0550
	Total	50	1.976	.2638	.0373

The ANOVA results illustrated in Figure 6 indicate differences across four groups in QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores. For QoL, the F-value is 4.220 with a p-value of 0.010, indicating a statistically significant difference in QoL scores among the groups. This suggests that group membership influences QoL, and further post hoc analysis can identify which specific groups differ. Regarding personality, the F-value is 54.686 with a p-value of 0.000, showing a highly significant difference in personality scores across the groups. This highlights that personality outcomes vary greatly depending on group classification, warranting deeper analysis to pinpoint specific contrasts.

Table 6. ANOVA for QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Function Related to Educational Qualifications

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
QoL_Mean	Between Groups	1.221	3	.407	4.220	.010
	Within Groups	4.435	46	.096		
	Total	5.656	49			
Personality_ Mean	Between Groups	12.986	3	4.329	54.686	.000
	Within Groups	3.641	46	.079		

	Total	16.627	49			
Cognitive function_Mean	Between Groups	.377	3	.126	1.903	.142
	Within Groups	3.035	46	.066		
	Total	3.411	49			

In contrast, for cognitive function, the F-value is 1.903 with a p-value of 0.142, which is not statistically significant. This indicates that cognitive function scores do not differ significantly among the groups. The analysis identifies meaningful differences in QoL and personality, while cognitive function remains consistent across groups.

4.4 QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Function scores among the alcohol users with different occupations

The analysis compares alcohol-dependent youth's QoL, personality, and cognitive function scores across three occupational groups: "agriculture, private jobs, and driving," illustrated in Tables 7 and 8. Youths engaged in private employment report the highest mean QoL score (4.05), indicating better life satisfaction, while drivers have the lowest QoL score (3.84). Those in agriculture fall in between, with a mean QoL score of 3.89. In terms of personality, drivers have the highest mean score (3.257), followed closely by those in agriculture (3.229), while youth in private jobs report the lowest mean personality score (3.053), with significant variability.

Table 7. QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Function Scores Across Occupation

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
QoL_Mean	Agriculture	21	3.8929	.31196	.06808
	Private Job	15	4.0500	.34330	.08864
	Driver	14	3.8393	.36172	.09667
	Total	50	3.9250	.33976	.04805
Personality_Mean	Agriculture	21	3.229	.1927	.0421
	Private Job	15	3.053	1.0013	.2585
	Driver	14	3.257	.3368	.0900
	Total	50	3.184	.5825	.0824
Cognitive function_Mean	Agriculture	21	2.000	.2608	.0569
	Private Job	15	2.133	.1447	.0374
	Driver	14	1.771	.2463	.0658
	Total	50	1.976	.2638	.0373

For cognitive functions, youth in private jobs again score the highest (2.133), followed by those in agriculture (2.00), while drivers score the lowest (1.771). Overall, youth in private jobs show better outcomes in QoL and cognitive functions but exhibit variability in personality. Youth in agriculture display moderate scores across all measures, while drivers report the lowest outcomes for QoL and cognitive functions but slightly better personality scores.

Table 8. ANOVA for QoL, Personality, and Cognitive Function Scores Across Occupation

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
QoL_Mean	Between Groups	.359	2	.179	1.592	.214
	Within Groups	5.297	47	.113		
	Total	5.656	49			
Personality_Mean	Between Groups	.373	2	.186	.539	.587
	Within Groups	16.254	47	.346		
	Total	16.627	49			
Cognitive function_Mean	Between Groups	.969	2	.485	9.328	.000
	Within Groups	2.442	47	.052		
	Total	3.411	49			

The ANOVA results reveal no significant differences in QoL and Personality scores across the three occupational groups. However, a considerable difference is observed in cognitive function scores, suggesting that occupation plays a role in influencing cognitive function among alcohol-dependent youth.

DISCUSSION

The study explored the relationship between personality traits, cognitive function, and QoL in alcohol-dependent youth, focusing on how demographic factors such as "family type, marital status, educational level, and occupation" influence these variables. The results reported in this study present a more nuanced picture of these factors and how they matter for understanding alcohol dependence processes amongst young people. Comparing the family type, the youth from nuclear families had slightly better QoL and cognitive function scores than those from joint families. However, the youth from the joined families demonstrated more essential personality characteristics, which indicates that family structures may affect different facets of human existence. Whereas better cognitive and life satisfaction results in nuclear families, virtues associated with joint families may include characteristics associated with resilience and flexibility.

It was revealed that marital status affects personality and cognitive function but not the QoL. Married people produced higher values on personality tests, perhaps because of stability and better coping strategies that come with marriage. On the other hand, unmarried youth had better scores on the cognitive tests, probably because they are less stressed or burdened by responsibilities. These findings raise awareness of how life situations connected to marital status can distinctly influence psychological and cognitive factors.

Education level also came out to be a predictor of QoL and personality but not cognition. The young people with middle school education had better QoL and cognitive function than those with a lower level of education, but those with higher

education had better personality scores than those with lower levels of education. This implies that educational experiences, as well as educational level, determine well-being and resilience differently, providing critical insights on the personalization of educational interventions in alcohol dependence treatment. The occupational status was significant; the youths in private jobs had the highest QoL and cognitive function scores, while the drivers had the lowest scores in these aspects. Notably, drivers had slightly better personalities, meaning they had learned to cope with stress in their working environment. The results of the current study point to the relevance of occupational settings in influencing one's mental and emotional status in alcohol-dependent youths.

Conclusion and Future Scope

This paper examined the relationship of personality, cognition and QoL in alcohol-dependent youths with particular reference to demographic variables. The results revealed that there were substantial differences in these domains and that the family structure, marital status, educational level, and occupational environment of alcohol-dependent youth were the factors that influenced these domains. In the present study, nuclear families and private jobs were found to have better QoL and cognitive function than joint families and low educational groups. Another vital predictor factor was marital status, concerned with personality and cognition function outcomes. These results, therefore, suggest that alcohol dependence is not a homogenous disorder, and consequently, it cannot be treated as such. It is, thus, essential to develop a more specific intervention that takes into account such demographic characteristics to enhance the psychological and social treatment of alcohol-dependent youths.

Future research should include more critical, diverse samples to increase the study's external validity. Another type of research that could give more understanding of the temporal chronology of the associations between alcohol dependence, personality features, cognition and QoL. Also, research in the biological and neurological aspects of such interactions may help to improve knowledge about alcohol's effects on youth. Further, it has also been necessary to establish the extent to which culturally tailored prevention programs, which focus on the demographics of youths, work. Last, encouraging the usage of up-to-date facilitative technologies like neuroimaging and psychological tests could offer a better assessment of the essential energy and personality alterations in alcohol-dependent youth and open the door to developing new rehabilitation procedures.

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