



ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol. 04 No. 01. July-September 2025. Page#.3517-3533

Print ISSN: 3006-2497 Online ISSN: 3006-2500

Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal Systems

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17061041>

Childhood Trauma and Maladaptive Personality of Incarcerated Individuals in Punjab Prisons; The Moderating Role of Peer Influence

Umm-e-Habiba*

Lecturer Psychology, Government College (Women) Satellite Town Gujranwala

Email Address: habibabutt762@gmail.com

Memoona Amir

BS Psychology Student, Government College (Women) Satellite Town Gujranwala

Email Address: memoonaamir2002@gmail.com

Zuhaa Hassan

Lecturer Psychology, IVY College of Management Sciences Lahore

Email Address: zuhaa54321@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Criminal activity is a persistent aspect of human civilization that cuts beyond national borders, cultural standards, and historical periods. The goal of the present investigation was to find out how peer influence can moderate the association between childhood trauma and maladaptive personality traits among incarcerated individuals. A randomly selected group of one hundred incarcerated individuals (criminal or guilt) participated in the research either in jails or prisons of Punjab. Data were collected on demographic information sheet, Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (Bernstein et al., 1998), Friends' Delinquent Behavior scale (Elliot et al., 1989), Personality Inventory for DSM-5 (PID-5) (Krueger et al., 2013). Results of Pearson product moment correlation indicated that childhood trauma along with its dimensions physical abuse, sexual abuse and physical neglect had a positive relationship with maladaptive personality. Moderation was done through SPSS Process Macro Hayes and the results indicated that significant moderating effect of peer influence for physical abuse and sexual abuse in predicting negative affect. It also highlighted that significant moderating effect of peer influence for physical neglect in predicting antagonism. The moderating effect of peer influence for physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse in predicting disinhibition is also significant. It is concluded that physical abuse and sexual abuse leads to negative affect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse increase disinhibition while physical neglect is effective in increasing antagonism with incarcerated individuals who have peer influence.

Keywords: Childhood Trauma, Peer Influence, Maladaptive Personality, Incarcerated Individuals.

Introduction

Criminal activity is a persistent aspect of human civilization that cuts beyond national borders, cultural standards, and historical periods leading to imprisonment which is conceptualized as a stressful, isolating, and stigmatizing life event (Moore et al., 2021). According to the latest World Prison Population List in 2021, there are more than 11.5 million prisoners across the world. The tendency to commit crimes can be determined by numerous factors such as psychiatric

problems, congenital factors, physical defects, and environmental conditions especially the family environment including negative parental attitudes (Saladino et al., 2021). Childhood trauma, Peer Influence and Maladaptive personality are thought to be the major causes of criminal behavior.

Traumatic childhood experiences are derived from the absence of an encouraging atmosphere and unpleasant acts or incidents that are perpetrated on a child. Many people agree that early traumatic experiences are important components of psychological adjustment that can jeopardize a child's growth (Allen & Lauterbach, 2007; Franklin et al., 2011; Rademaker et al., 2008). Adverse childhood experiences are linked to childhood trauma that can impact children's development on different levels. Youth may exhibit maladaptive, antisocial, violent, and criminal behaviors depending on the extent of their abuse, their incapacity to positively regulate their emotions, and fortify their interpersonal bonds (Hesselink, 2023). Violence based negative childhood experiences and early age chronic childhood trauma can be associated with psychopathologies emerging at all stages of individuals' development. Childhood trauma can increase the likelihood of engaging in criminal behaviors due to its disruptive effects on emotional regulation, social relationships, and the development of maladaptive coping mechanisms, often resulting in long-term psychological and behavioral challenges. Being among peers who are involved in criminal activity might encourage imitating antisocial conduct, lowering inhibitions, and embracing deviant beliefs, all of which can lead to a rise in criminal activity (Downey & Crummy, 2022). Maladaptive personality can predispose individuals to criminal behaviors by fostering difficulties in impulse control, empathy, and adherence to societal norms, often leading to conflicts with the law and challenges in rehabilitation efforts.

Accordingly, there is compelling meta-analytic evidence for a relationship between childhood traumas and internalizing disorders in adulthood (Kendler & Gardner, 2011; McKay et al., 2021), whereas possible causal mechanisms are still not adequately understood. To understand the underlying factors that led an individual to engage in deviant behaviors and make them incarcerated, we try to explore the intricate relation between one of those factors. By exploring the impact of peer influence on the relationship between childhood trauma maladaptive personality among prisoners, this study aims to unveil the underlying traumas, patterns of delinquent behaviors in which individual engage due to influence of peer pressure and the factors that contribute to develop maladaptive personality

Literature Review

A great body of existing studies has established that childhood trauma plays an important role in maladaptive personality patterns and may push people to commit criminal acts therefore leading towards incarceration. According to research by Allen and Lauterbach (2007), people who have had traumatic experiences in their lives score higher than controls on measures of neuroticism and openness to experience. In a military sample, Rademaker et al. (2008) discovered strong negative correlations between traumatic experiences and trait cooperation and self-direction. The possible negative impacts of early trauma on personality-associated traits, including identity formation, socializing, self-esteem, coping behavior, impulse management, defensive behavior styles, affect control, and the development of secure attachments, have been discussed in other studies (Cole & Putnam, 1992; Cicchetti & Toth, 2005; Toker et al., 2011; Rademaker et al., 2008). According to this data, traumatic experiences have an impact on psychological characteristics in addition to psychopathology.

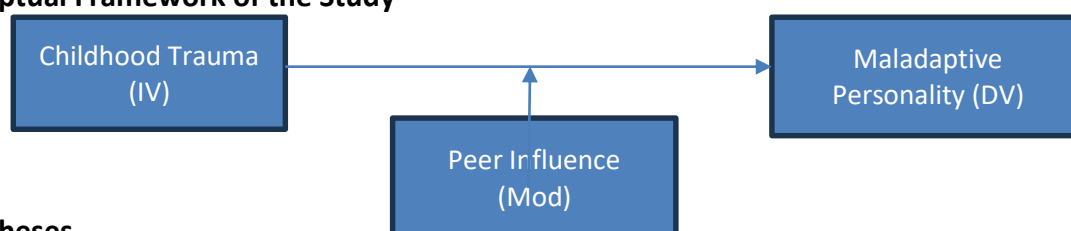
Childhood traumas and peer influences have been found to influence people's mental health by typically affecting their behaviors. One such study explored how childhood trauma and peer influence may lead to substance use disorders in psychiatric patients (Omopo et al., 2024). Typically in context of prisoners, Deng et al. (2024) revealed the relationship between childhood trauma and suicidal ideation among prisoners by taking sense of security and antisocial personality traits as mediators through serial mediation. Childhood maltreatment has been repeatedly associated with violent behavior in adulthood. For instance Zhao (2024) discussed the contribution of childhood maltreatment to adult violent behavior by analyzing the previous existing literature. They found that with the passage of time, the negative impact of childhood maltreatment will not be reduced. Psychopathy emerged as a factor leading to violent behavior. In countries like United States, incarceration has massive effects not just for the individual but also for the ones surrounding them. Matson (2024) conducted a study to understand the factors leading to incarceration from an individual's perspective particularly focusing upon the association between childhood trauma and incarceration. Findings suggest a complex interplay between childhood experiences, social influences, and available resources in shaping criminal behavior.

In a country like Pakistan, most of the studies have analyzed the impact of early years emotional abuse with delinquent tendencies in young offenders. In one study, Ishfaq and Kamal (2025) analyzed the relationship between emotional abuse and delinquent tendencies among juvenile offenders. This study demonstrates the indirect effects of emotional abuse on delinquent tendencies. Tariq and Tariq (2024) explored the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, self-blaming and criminogenic cognitions in university students by using a cross-sectional research design. This study deduced that Pakistani society and culture greatly influences how such experiences might be received and in turn affect a person. Khurshid et al. (2025) investigated how peers relationships have a significant impact on aggression of young offenders and examined the influence of peers' relationship on juvenile violence in addition to the juveniles' educational attainment.

Altogether, the current review highlights the significant impact of childhood traumas on the development of personality related problems with a significant role of peer influence in incarcerated individuals.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Hypotheses

In light of the literature, the following hypotheses were put forward:

H1. There is likely to be a positive relationship between childhood trauma and maladaptive personality traits among incarcerated individuals.

H2. There is likely to be a significant moderation of peer influence on the relationship between childhood trauma and maladaptive personality among incarcerated individuals.

H2 (a) Peer influence would moderate the relationship between domains of childhood trauma (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect and emotional neglect) and maladaptive personality traits (Negative affect, Detachment, Disinhibition, Antagonism and Psychoticism).

Method

Research Design

The quantitative research design was used in the current research is cross-sectional correlational research design.

Sample of the Study

Participants for this research comprised of incarcerated individuals either guilt or criminal. Those individuals are selected who are currently incarcerated in a correctional facility. Only male incarcerated individuals with the age range more than 18 years were included in the sample. Data from 100 incarcerated individuals were gathered from police stations and prisons using a non-probability purposive convenient sampling technique. The sample was drawn from the Central Jail Gujranwala, Sodhrah Police Station and Police Station Wazirabad after obtaining formal permission from the concerned authorities of jail and police stations.

Table 1: *Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Study' Participants (N=100)*

Variables	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age			30.76	6.29
Educational Level				
Below Primary	36	36.00		
Elementary	43	43.00		
Secondary	21	21.00		
Residential Area				
Rural	45	45.00		
Urban	55	55.00		
Family System				
Joint	52	52.00		
Nuclear	48	48.00		
Marital Status				
Single	40	40.00		
Married	60	60.00		
Monthly Income (Rupees)				
Below 10K	15	15.00		
B/w 10K - 20K	33	33.00		
Above 20K	52	52.00		

Table 1 demonstrated the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation of the demographic variables of the participants. It revealed that the greater number of participants had elementary school education 43% and belong to urban areas 55%. Most of the individuals in the sample are married 60% and almost equally belong to joint 52% and nuclear family system 48%. Half of the individuals in the sample have above than 20K income.

Assessment Measures

The present investigation made use of the three subsequent standard instruments.

Demographic Information Sheet. It was designed to evaluate a variety of parameters such as, educational status (below Primary, Elementary, Secondary), residential area (urban area, rural area), family system (joint family, nuclear family), marital status (single, married), Income level (Below 10K, Between 10K-20K, Above 20K).

Childhood Trauma Questionnaire

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire was initially established by (Bernstein et al., 1998) and translated in Urdu language by (Habiba & Amir, 2024) was employed in current study. A self-reported measurement tool, that evaluates the multifaceted elements of childhood trauma. A 5-point Likert scale, with 1 representing never true, 2 representing rarely true, 3 representing sometimes true, 4 representing often true, and 5 representing very often true, is used to ask respondents how they rate the occurrence of traumatic experiences during childhood. This scale have 5 subscales; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect and emotional neglect. Five items were possessed by each of the subscale. The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, a brief version questionnaire with 28 items, had a strong internal consistency with a Cronbach's α of 0.85. Additionally, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire's five subscales showed internal consistency range between 0.67 to 0.85. For physical abuse subscale is 0.71, for emotional abuse subscale is 0.67, for sexual abuse subscale is 0.76, for physical neglect subscale is 0.82 and for emotional neglect subscale is 0.85.

Friend's Delinquent Behavior scale- Denver Youth Survey

The Friends' Delinquent Behavior scale, which is part of the Denver Youth Survey (DYS), was originally established by (Elliot et al., 1989) and Urdu translated by (Habiba & Amir, 2024) was used in current study. One prominent self-report assessment is the Denver Youth Survey, which has been established to evaluate various aspects of youth behavior, including delinquency, substance use, family relationships, and peer influences. It consists of 8- items with a 0.89 Cronbach's α reflecting strong internal consistency. On a 5-point Likert scale, participants are requested to indicate how frequently they respond, with the range being (4 = All of them, 3= Most of them, 2= some of them, 1= Very few of them, 0= None of them). Higher scores on the scale indicates increased exposure to or related to unlawful conduct by close companions.

Personality Inventory for DSM-5 Brief form

The Personality Inventory for DSM-5 (PID-5) was developed by (Krueger et al., 2013) and Urdu translated by (Habiba & Amir, 2024) was used in the present study. It evaluates the five main aspects of personality, which are psychoticism, detachment, antagonism, negative affect, and disinhibition. Each item is given a 4-point Likert scale, with 0 indicating very false or frequently false, 1 indicating sometimes or somewhat false, 2 indicating sometimes or somewhat true, and 3 indicating very true or often true. The present study used a short version scale which consists of 25 items Venema and colleagues (2021) found coefficients ranging from 0.59 to 0.83, in line with other studies which indicates good to high internal consistency of the 5 domains of maladaptive personality traits. Each personality domain consists of 5 items. Internal consistency for negative affect is .73, for detachment is .69, for antagonism is .84, for disinhibition is 0.81, for psychoticism is 0.82. Each maladaptive personality domain has a score between 0 and 15, where greater scores signify more malfunction in the particular personality trait dimension.

Procedure

First, an email had been sent to the scales' respective authors to request consent to use the scales. The authors employed the Brislin (1970) Committee procedure to translate all of the scales used in this study into Urdu language. The institutional ethical committee gave the approval to the study's topic. After that, authorization was obtained from District Jail Gujranwala, Sodhran police station, and Wazirabad police station to gather information from incarcerated individuals. A letter was written to the Jail Superintendent District Jail Gujranwala and Station House Officers (SHO's) of the Sodhran police station and Wazirabad police station. The authorities assigned two police officers with the researcher to assist regarding security concerns.

Proper security was ensured inside the prisons. The respondents were requested to take part in the research on a voluntary basis. Subjects were briefly informed about the purpose of the study. Researcher tried to build a rapport with the subjects and communicate openly with the respondents, without any reluctance of sharing the objectives of the study. During the interaction with the prisoners, the anonymity of their responses was guaranteed in order to obtain their truthful answers. They were told that the data they provided would only be utilized for study. The officials and employees of the jail would not be given any kind of data. After obtaining written permission for their participation in the study, every individual was given a consent form to complete, followed by a personal information sheet. Under the researcher's guidance, the respondents completed the questionnaire. Each individual had the freedom to discontinue the study at any time. The place in which the information were gathered was safe and appropriate. At the end, authority's and respondents significant collaboration was appreciated.

Data Analysis

The current investigation seeks to investigate the association between childhood traumas (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect), peer influence, and maladaptive personality traits (negative affect, detachment, antagonism, Disinhibition, and psychoticism) in incarcerated individuals.

SPSS version 26 was utilized for data analysis. Descriptive analysis and reliability were completed first. Pearson The association between the study variables was then determined using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. Peer influence's moderating effect on the association between childhood traumas (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect) and maladaptive personality traits (negative affect, detachment, antagonism, Disinhibition, and psychoticism) was measured through SPSS Hayes Process Macro. The moderating effect (strengthening, buffering, opposing) using Jeremy Dawson's Simple Slope Analysis through two-way linear association was then determined for those variables where peer influence shown a significant moderation effect.

Reliability Analysis

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities of Scales used in the Study (N = 100)

Scales	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
Childhood Trauma	86.89	16.82	45-118	.80
Physical Abuse	15.76	4.97	5-25	.82
Emotional Abuse	15.11	3.57	6-24	.62

Sexual Abuse	14.85	5.38	5-25	.89
Physical Neglect	15.78	3.36	8-23	.67
Emotional Neglect	17.39	5.18	9-55	.65
Peer Influence	20.63	6.23	0-40	.78
Maladaptive Personality	71.10	13.82	37-97	.90
Negative Affect	15.01	3.34	8-20	.72
Detachment	13.50	3.64	5-20	.72
Antagonism	14.26	3.42	5-20	.71
Disinhibition	14.94	3.56	5-20	.81
Psychoticism	13.39	3.55	6-20	.73

Correlational Analysis

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between study variables (Table 3). Results showed that childhood trauma ($r = -.24$, $p < .05$) along with its two subscales (physical abuse ($r = -.22$, $p < .05$), physical neglect ($r = -.26$, $p < .05$)) had a negative relationship with peer influence. It also showed that childhood trauma ($r = .45^{**}$, $p < .01$) along with its three subscales (physical abuse ($r = .45$, $p < .01$), physical neglect ($r = .34$, $p < .01$), and sexual abuse ($r = .36$, $p < .01$)) had a positive relationship with maladaptive personality traits. Additionally, negative affect had a positive relationship with childhood trauma ($r = .34$, $p < .01$) along with its three subscales (physical abuse ($r = .32$, $p < .01$), emotional abuse ($r = .24$, $p < .05$), and sexual abuse ($r = .30$, $p < .01$)). Detachment had a positive relationship with childhood trauma ($r = .22$, $p < .05$) along with its two subscales (physical abuse ($r = .24$, $p < .05$), physical neglect ($r = .22$, $p < .05$)). Antagonism had a positive relationship with childhood trauma ($r = .35$, $p < .01$) along with its three subscales (physical abuse ($r = .27$, $p < .01$), sexual abuse ($r = .27$, $p < .01$), physical neglect ($r = .21$, $p < .05$)). Results also showed that disinhibition had a positive relationship with childhood trauma ($r = .41^{**}$, $p < .01$) along with its four subscales (physical abuse ($r = .40$, $p < .01$), emotional abuse ($r = .21$, $p < .05$), physical neglect ($r = .36$, $p < .01$), and sexual abuse ($r = .32$, $p < .01$)). Psychoticism had a positive relationship with childhood trauma ($r = .34^{**}$, $p < .01$) along with its three subscales (physical abuse ($r = .45$, $p < .01$), physical neglect ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), and sexual abuse ($r = .26$, $p < .01$)).

Table 3

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Childhood Trauma	-	.75*	.57*	.72*	.65*	.46*	-	.45*	.34*	.22*	.35*	.41*	.34*
		*	*	*	*	*	.24*	*	*		*	*	*
2 Physical Abuse		-	.44*	.60*	.55*	-.01	-	.45*	.32*	.24*	.27*	.40*	.45*
			*	*	*		.22*	*	*		*	*	*
3 Emotional Abuse			-	.53*	.29*	-.08	-	.19	.24*	.01	.13	.21*	.13
				*	*		.19						

4 Sexual Abuse			-	.27*	.06	-.08	.36*	.30*	.17	.27*	.32*	.26*
5 Physical Neglect				-	.17	-.26*	.34*	.17	.22*	.21*	.36*	.28*
6 Emotional Neglect					-	-.03	.01	-.01	-.03	.17	-.05	-.04
7 Peer Influence						-	-.04	.02	.06	-.06	-.20*	-.01
8 Maladaptive Personality							-	.78*	.68*	.73*	.72*	.79*
9 Negative Affect								-	.47*	.38*	.55*	.48*
10 Detachment									-	.35*	.34*	.35*
11 Antagonism										-	.35*	.61*
12 Disinhibition											-	.46*
13 Psychoticism												-

Table 4 Moderating Role of Peer Influence for the Effect of Childhood Trauma (Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse) in Predicting Maladaptive Personality (Negative Effect)

Predictors	Moderator Level	Negative Affect	
		<i>B</i>	(LL UL)
Age		-.07	-.15, .02
Income		.26	-.65, 1.17
Physical Abuse		.25**	.13, .38
Peer Influence		-.03	-.15, .09
Physical abuse x Peer Influence		.04**	.02, .06
Conditional Effect	Low	.05	-.14, .23
	Medium	.25**	.12, .38
	High	.45**	.32, .58

R²		.21	
ΔR^2		.07	
F		15.25**	
Age		-.04	-.14, .04
Income		.50	-.39, 1.38
Sexual Abuse		.19*	.02, .35
Peer Influence		-.07	-.20, .05
Sexual abuse x Peer Influence		.03*	.00, .06
Conditional Effect	Low	.01	-.24, .27
	Medium	.18*	.02, .34
	High	.36**	.16, .55
R²		.16	
ΔR^2		.05	
F		4.42*	

According to the findings shown in Table 4, incarcerated persons who ascribe physical or sexual abuse as an aspect of childhood trauma are more likely to have negative affect. Peer influence positively moderated the impact of childhood trauma (physical and sexual abuse) in predicting negative affect, according to the interaction terms. A total of 21% and 16% of the variation in negative affect was explained by these moderation models, respectively. The slope pattern showed a positive correlation between physical abuse and negative affect, as well as between (sexual abuse and negative affect) is weak at medium level of peer influence. With an increase in level of peer influence from medium to high the positive associations between (physical abuse and negative affect) and between (sexual abuse and negative affect) are increased. The slope indicates that association between (physical abuse and negative affect) and between (sexual abuse and negative affect) is non-significant at low level of peer influence.

Figure 2: Figure showing the moderating role of peer influence for the effect of physical abuse (A) and sexual abuse (B) in predicting negative affect.

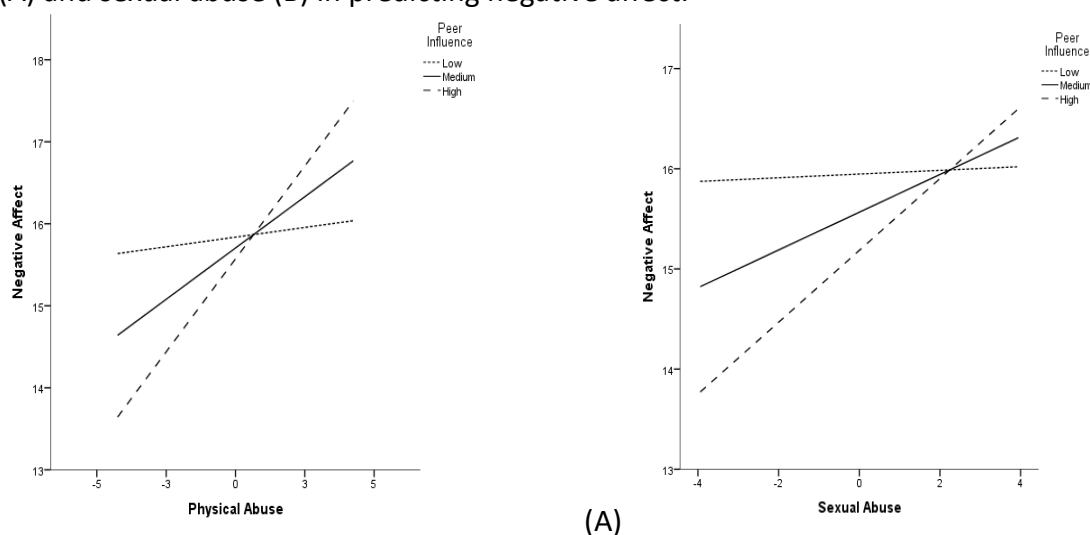


Table 5: Moderating Role of Peer Influence for the Effect of Childhood Trauma (Physical Neglect) in Predicting Maladaptive Personality (Antagonism)

Predictors	Moderator Level	Antagonism β	(LL UL)
Age		-.04	-.14, .04
Income		.40	-.47, 1.28
Physical Neglect		.12	-.05, .30
Peer Influence		-.10	-.24, .04
Physical neglect x Peer Influence		.04*	.00, .09
Conditional Effect	Low	-.12	-.39, .16
	Medium	.12	-.05, .30
	High	.36*	.06, .66
R ²		.12	
ΔR^2		.05	
F		4.59*	

The result presented in Table 5, suggested that the main effect of physical neglect ($\beta = .12$, $p > .05$) and peer influence ($\beta = -.10$, $p > .05$) non-significantly predicts the antagonism. The interaction terms showed that peer influence positively moderated the effect of Childhood trauma (physical neglect) in predicting antagonism. A total of 12% of the variation in antagonism was explained by the moderation models. It can be seen that antagonism is sharply increasing at the high level of peer influence with increase in physical neglect. The line of slopes indicates that at low level and medium level of peer influence the prediction of physical neglect for antagonism is non-significant while the prediction of physical neglect for antagonism is significantly increasing for high level of peer influence.

Figure 3

Figure showing the moderating role of peer influence or for the effect of physical neglect in predicting antagonism

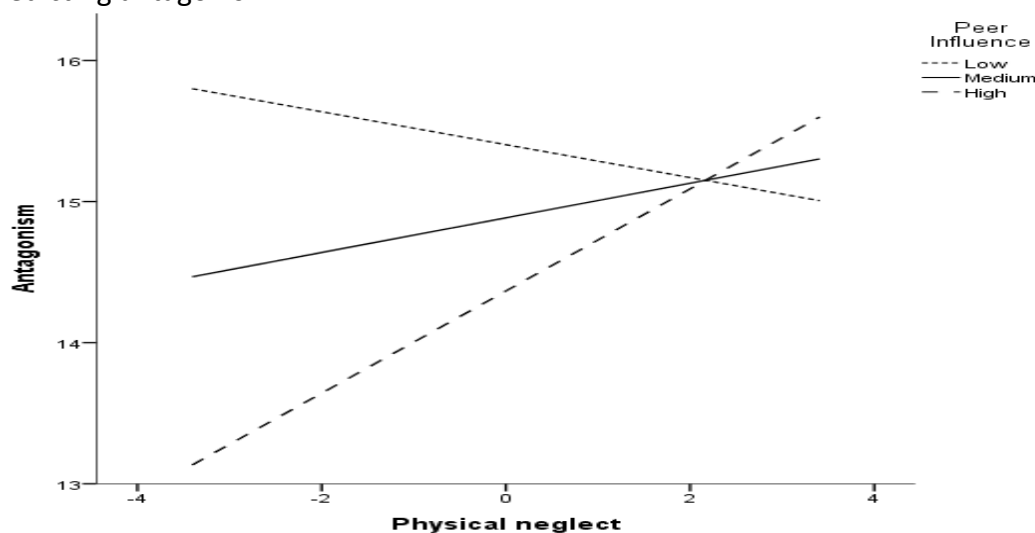


Table 6: Moderating Role of Peer Influence for the Effect of Childhood Trauma (Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse) in Predicting Maladaptive Personality (Disinhibition)

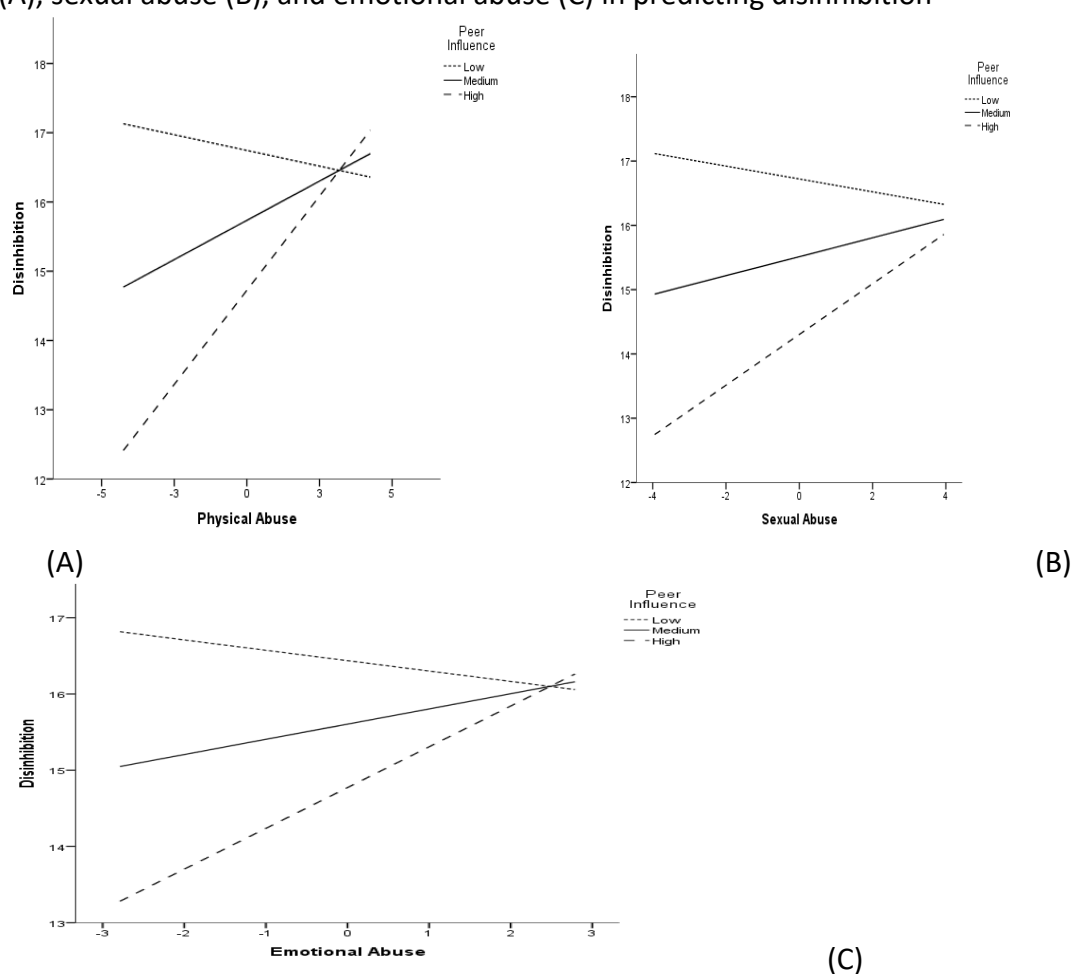
Predictors	Moderator Level	Disinhibition β	(LL UL)
------------	-----------------	--------------------------	---------

Age		-.03	-.13, .06
Income		-.03	-.74, .66
Physical Abuse		.23***	.12, .33
Peer Influence		-.19***	-.31, -.07
Physical abuse x Peer Influence		.06***	.04, .08
Conditional Effect	Low	-.09	-.28, .09
	Medium	.22***	.11, .33
	High	.54***	.42, .66
R²		.38	
ΔR^2		.19	
F		30.66***	
Age		-.04	-.14, .05
Income		.23	-.65, 1.11
Emotional Abuse		.19	-.04, .44
Peer Influence		-.16	-.35, .02
Emotional abuse x Peer Influence		.06*	.01, .12
Conditional Effect	Low	-.14	-.39, .13
	Medium	.19	-.04, .44
	High	.53*	.09, .98
R²		.16	
ΔR^2		.08	
F		5.82*	
Age		-.03	-.12, .06
Income		.27	-.58, 1.11
Sexual Abuse		.15*	.01, .27
Peer Influence		-.24**	-.37, -.10
Sexual abuse x Peer Influence		.05**	.02, .07
Conditional Effect	Low	-.10	-.29, .09
	Medium	.15*	.01, .27
	High	.40***	.20, .58
R²		.27	
ΔR^2		.13	
F		11.77**	

Moderation model, presented in Table 6 estimated physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse as predictor, moderating role of peer influence, and disinhibition as a dependent variable. Results showed that physical abuse and sexual abuse positively predicted disinhibition while emotional abuse non-significantly predicted disinhibition. This suggested that incarcerated individuals who experienced physical abuse or sexual abuse leads towards disinhibition. Furthermore, the interaction term demonstrated that the impact of sexual, emotional, and physical abuse on disinhibition was positively moderated by peer influence. In sum, these

variations accounted for 38%, 16%, and 27% of the variation in disinhibition, respectively. The slope pattern showed a positive relationship between (physical abuse and disinhibition) and between (sexual abuse and disinhibition) is weak at medium level of peer influence. By increasing the level of peer influence from medium to high the positive associations between (physical abuse and disinhibition) and between (sexual abuse and disinhibition) are increased. The slope indicates that association between (physical abuse and disinhibition) and between (sexual abuse and disinhibition) is non-significant at low level of peer influence. In Figure 3 (C), the line of slopes indicates that at low level and medium level of peer influence the prediction of emotional abuse for disinhibition is non-significant while the prediction of emotional abuse for disinhibition is significantly increasing for high level of peer influence.

Figure 4: Figure showing the role of peer influence as moderator for the effect of physical abuse (A), sexual abuse (B), and emotional abuse (C) in predicting disinhibition



Discussion

The present study was conducted to analyze the relationship between childhood trauma, and maladaptive personality traits in incarcerated individuals. The study also focused upon understanding the moderating role of peer influence in the relationship between various dimensions of childhood trauma (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect and emotional neglect) and maladaptive personality traits (Negative affect, Detachment, Disinhibition, Antagonism and Psychoticism) in incarcerated individuals. The study has provided

interesting findings concerning the relationship between various dimensions of childhood trauma and maladaptive personality with a significant moderating role of peer influence across a few of the dimensions.

Physical abuse, neglect and sexual abuse all were found to have a positive relationship with maladaptive personality traits. This implies that a higher degree of these dimensions of abuse can lead to maladaptive personality in people. This has also been established earlier in the work done by Spinhoven et al. (2016) where all the dimensions of individual childhood maltreatment types were systematically higher at higher levels of maladaptive personality functioning. Additionally, the current study revealed that physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse all had a positive relationship with negative affect. Previous studies have shown that children who are physically maltreated are more prone to show aggressive behaviors and greater negative affect compared to non-maltreated children (Shackman & Pollak, 2014). Emotional abuse has also found to be linked with problematic behaviors and depression (Zhou & Zhen, 2022). In context of sexual abuse, Peterson et al. (2018) reported bivariate relations among childhood sexual abuse and negative affect conceptualized through trait and state anxiety and depression. They reported significant relations among all.

Another finding of the current study suggested a positive relationship between physical abuse and physical neglect with detachment. In this context, Finzi et al. (2001) have established a relationship between traumatic childhood experiences and attachment styles. They reported that children with a history of physical abuse are more likely to develop avoidant attachment style and exhibit higher levels of aggression whereas the neglected children were characterized by anxious/ambivalent attachment style. A significant positive relationship was found between childhood trauma (physical abuse sexual abuse physical neglect) and antagonism. This means that physical and sexual abuse and neglect may lead to hostile tendencies among people experiencing them. These relationships can be supported by the work done by Roy (2001) who reported significant positive relationships among these constructs with the highest correlation between physical neglect and antagonism.

Results also showed that disinhibition had a positive relationship with childhood trauma along with its four dimensions (physical abuse emotional abuse physical neglect and sexual abuse) Research has shown that child abuse may lead to changes in the development of brain particularly regions like corpus collosum and the amygdala (Braquehais et al., 2010). Decreased hemispheric integration of information within the corpus collosum and hyper reactivity in the amygdala may lead to greater disinhibition (Reynolds et al., 2006). In case of psychoticism, a positive relationship with childhood trauma along with its three dimensions (physical abuse, physical neglect and sexual abuse) was observed. Previous studies show that severe physical punishment of children/adolescents makes them a victim with a higher probability of becoming future perpetrators. When intra-familial violence occurs, child/adolescent mental health may be compromised (Bordin et al., 2006). Physical neglect is also seen to be linked with high dissociations typically studied in patients of schizophrenia (Vogel et al., 2009). Previous data on Sexual abuse also showed that severe degree of abuse is related with an increased risk of psychotic experiences in adulthood specifically having the symptoms of abnormal perception (Bell et al., 2019).

Limitations and Suggestions

Self-report tools were used to gather the responses, which could lead to bias regarding non-response. Because convenience sampling was employed, the findings of this study could not be applicable to Punjab' prisoners on a large scale. The data was only collected from 1 Jail and two Police stations from Gujranwala region. Although the study was quantitative in nature, qualitative interviews could provide a deeper knowledge of the factors under investigation in context of people who are incarcerated. This study did not control for confounding factors such as the setting of prison, police officers' constant stares and the dread of being unmasked. A multifaceted approach is required to comprehend several aspects that may influence the personality traits of imprisoned individuals in order to allow for the broad generalization of the results of the research.

Implications

The results of the current study will help in correctional systems to integrate trauma assessment and trauma-informed practices into standard procedures. The research underscores the need for early intervention in at-risk populations, especially those exposed to abuse or neglect. Community and school-based programs should identify and support traumatized youth. The research highlights the need for providing screening and treatment for mental health problems related to trauma can significantly improve behavioral outcomes for incarcerated individuals. Early identification and appropriate therapy can mitigate the impact of trauma and reduce maladaptive behaviors that contribute to criminality. Correctional programs should focus on reducing negative peer dynamics and promoting positive social networks. Group therapy, mentorship, and pro-social peer modeling can help in developing healthier interpersonal skills and reducing the reinforcement of criminal behaviors.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates a strong association between the development of problematic personality traits and childhood trauma including physical and sexual abuse or physical neglect in incarcerated individuals. It also shows that peer pressure is a significant factor in exacerbating these effects, particularly when peers engage in harmful conduct. This implies that a person's early experiences and the people they spend time with might influence their feelings and behaviors, occasionally resulting in issues that could lead to criminal conduct. The results suggest that assisting prisoners with their early traumas and fostering better peer interactions may lessen adverse behaviors and increase the likelihood that they will undergo positive change.

References

- Allen, B., & Lauterbach, D. (2007). Personality characteristics of adult survivors of childhood trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress: Official Publication of The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies*, 20(4), 587-595. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jts.20195>.
- Appleyard, K., Yang, C., & Runyan, D. K. (2010). Delineating the maladaptive pathways of child maltreatment: A mediated moderation analysis of the roles of self-perception and social support. *Development and Psychopathology*, 22(2), 337-352. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1017/S095457941000009X>
- Bell, C. J., Foulds, J. A., Horwood, L. J., Mulder, R. T., & Boden, J. M. (2019). Childhood abuse and psychotic experiences in adulthood: findings from a 35-year longitudinal study. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 214(3), 153-158. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2018.264>
- Bernstein, D. P., Fink, L., Handelsman, L., & Foote, J. (1998). Childhood trauma questionnaire. *Assessment of family violence: A handbook for researchers and practitioners*.

- Bordin, I. A. S., Paula, C. S., Nascimento, R. D., & Duarte, C. S. (2006). Severe physical punishment and mental health problems in an economically disadvantaged population of children and adolescents. *Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry*, 28(4), 290-296. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1516-44462006000400008>.
- Braquehais, M. D., Oquendo, M. A., Baca-García, E., & Sher, L. (2010). Is impulsivity a link between childhood abuse and suicide?. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 51(2), 121-129. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsy.2009.05.003>
- Cicchetti, D., & Toth, S. L. (2005). Child maltreatment. *Annu. Rev. Clin. Psychol.*, 1, 409-438. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.1.102803.144029>
- Cole, P. M., & Putnam, F. W. (1992). Effect of incest on self and social functioning: A developmental psychopathology perspective. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 60(2), 174. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-006X.60.2.174>
- Deng, J., Ou, Y., Lu, L., Ye, Y., Ma, J., & Lin, Z. (2024). Childhood trauma and suicidal ideation in male prisoners: the mediating roles of security sense and antisocial personality. *Current Psychology*, 43(22), 19604-19616. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1007/s12144-024-05769-0>
- Downey, C., & Crummy, A. (2022). The impact of childhood trauma on children's wellbeing and adult behavior. *European Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 6(1), 100237.
- Elliott, D. S., & Huizinga, D. (1989). Improving self-reported measures of delinquency. In *Cross-national research in self-reported crime and delinquency* (pp. 155-186). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Finzi, R., Ram, A., Har-Even, D., Shnit, D., & Weizman, A. (2001). Attachment styles and aggression in physically abused and neglected children. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 30(6), 769-786. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1023/A:1012237813771>
- Franklin, T. B., Linder, N., Russig, H., Thöny, B., & Mansuy, I. M. (2011). Influence of early stress on social abilities and serotonergic functions across generations in mice. *PloS one*, 6(7), e21842. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0021842>
- Hesselink, A. M. E. (2023). The Nexus Between Females Who Kill and HIV/AIDS: Exploring the Contributing Factors to This Complex Phenomenon. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 58(3), 452-474. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096221080194>
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/j.ejtd.2021.100237>
- Ishfaq, N., & Kamal, A. (2025). Emotional Abuse to Delinquent Tendencies: Comparative Study on Juveniles and Students in Punjab, Pakistan. *Journal of the Korean Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 36(1), 36. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5765/jkacap.240029>
- Kendler, K.S. & Gardner, C.O. (2011). A longitudinal etiologic model for symptoms of anxiety and depression in women. *Psychological Medicine*, 41(10), 2035–2045. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0033291711000225>
- Khurshid, M., Loona, M. I., Khan, M. J., Shahid, A., & Fatima, A. (2025). The Effects of Peer Pressure on Aggressive Actions and Self-Control in Juveniles. *Journal Of Psychology, Health And Social Challenges*, 3(01). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105107>
- Krueger, R. F. (2013). Personality disorders are the vanguard of the post-DSM-5.0 era. *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, 4(4), 355.
- Matson, P. A., Calihan, J. B., Bagley, S. M., & Adger, H. (2024). Family-Focused Prevention and Early Intervention of Substance Use in Pediatric Primary Care Settings. *Focus*, 22(4), 464-473. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1176/appi.focus.20240026>

- McKay, M.T., Cannon, M., Chambers, D., Conroy, R.M., Coughlan, H., Dodd, P. *et al.* (2021). Childhood trauma and adult mental disorder: A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal cohort studies. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 143(3), 189–205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acps.13268>
- Moore, K. E., Iheanacho, T., Pittman, B. P., McKee, S. A., & Dike, C. (2021). Immigration, criminal involvement, and violence in the US: results from the national epidemiologic survey on alcohol and related conditions-III. *Deviant behavior*, 42(12), 1525-1531. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2020.1758371>
- Odewole, I. F., Ayomide, N. O., & Asiyanbi, M. (2025). The Role of Substance Abuse, Childhood Trauma, Peer Pressure, Poor Parental Monitoring and Social Media in Fueling Aggression among Delinquent Adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria. *NIU Journal of Humanities*, 10(2), 121-129. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16602359>
- Omopo, O. E., Offor, D. O., & Ogunbowale, I. A. (2024). The influence of childhood trauma and peer influence on substance abuse among psychiatric patients in Ibadan. *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, 13(2), 1980-1992. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30574/ijsra.2024.13.2.2378>
- Peterson, Z. D., Janssen, E., Goodrich, D., Fortenberry, J. D., Hensel, D. J., & Heiman, J. R. (2018). Child sexual abuse and negative affect as shared risk factors for sexual aggression and sexual HIV risk behavior in heterosexual men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 47(2), 465-480. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-017-1079-1>
- Rademaker, A. R., Vermetten, E., Geuze, E., Mulder, A., & Kleber, R. J. (2008). Self-reported early trauma as a predictor of adult personality: a study in a military sample. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 64(7), 863-875. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1002/jclp.20495>
- Reynolds, B., Penfold, R. B., & Pataki, M. (2008). Dimensions of impulsive behavior in adolescents: laboratory behavioral assessments. *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 16(2), 124. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1064-1297.16.2.124>
- Roy, A. (2001). Childhood trauma and hostility as an adult: relevance to suicidal behavior. *Psychiatry Research*, 102(1), 97-101. [https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/S0165-1781\(01\)00239-6](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/S0165-1781(01)00239-6)
- Saladino, V., Lin, H., Zamparelli, E., & Verrastro, V. (2021). Neuroscience, empathy, and violent crime in an incarcerated population: A narrative review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 694212. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.694212>
- Salzinger, S., Rosario, M., & Feldman, R. S. (2007). Physical child abuse and adolescent violent delinquency: The mediating and moderating roles of personal relationships. *Child Maltreatment*, 12(3), 208-219. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/1077559507301839>
- Shackman, J. E., & Pollak, S. D. (2014). Impact of physical maltreatment on the regulation of negative affect and aggression. *Development and Psychopathology*, 26(4), 1021-1033. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0954579414000546>
- Spinhoven, P., Elzinga, B. M., Van Hemert, A. M., de Rooij, M., & Penninx, B. W. (2016). Childhood maltreatment, maladaptive personality types and level and course of psychological distress: A six-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 191, 100-108. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2015.11.036>

- Tariq, M., & Tariq, S. (2024). Nature of University Students: The Role of Adverse Childhood Experience, Self-Blaming and Criminogenic Cognitions. *Human Nature Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(4), 101-119. <http://dx.doi.org/10.71016/hnjss/8st20s22>
- Toker, T., Tiryaki, A., Özçürümez, G., & Iskender, B. (2011). The relationship between traumatic childhood experiences and proclivities towards substance abuse, self-esteem and coping strategies. *Turkish Journal of Psychiatry*, 22(2), 83-92. PMID: 21638230
- Vogel, M., Spitzer, C., Kuwert, P., Möller, B., Freyberger, H. J., & Grabe, H. J. (2009). Association of childhood neglect with adult dissociation in schizophrenic inpatients. *Psychopathology*, 42(2), 124-130. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000204763>
- Zhao, C. (2024). The effect of childhood maltreatment on violent behavior in adulthood. *Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*, 32, 12-16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.54097/850t4504>.
- Zhou, X., & Zhen, R. (2022). How do physical and emotional abuse affect depression and problematic behaviors in adolescents? The roles of emotional regulation and anger. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 129, 105641. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105641>.