

## **EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SMOKING ADDICTION AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how higher education students see smoking addiction from a variety of perspectives. Smoking is still a major problem among this group despite significant public health initiatives, with negative effects on both individual health and larger society results. This study aims to clarify the cognitive, social, and environmental aspects that influence students' perceptions of smoking addiction through qualitative and quantitative approaches. This research will offer a thorough understanding of how students perceive smoking addiction, the factors influencing their attitudes toward it, and potential interventions to mitigate its prevalence within higher education settings by using a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The purpose of this study's conclusions is to provide guidance for focused therapies, laws, and educational programs intended to lessen smoking addiction. The results indicate that students' perceptions of the effects of smoking addiction on their academic performance are not all the same, with 35.8% of respondents pointing out different effects depending on the severity of the addiction. 29.5% of respondents think it has a negative impact on grades, whilst 22.1% perceive no discernible relationship and 12.6% think it has a good impact on academic success. 20% of people think smoking can help mental health, while 56.8% think it has a negative impact on wellbeing. 13.7% of respondents detect no association, while 9.5% propose different effects depending on the respondent.

**KEYWORDS:** Addiction, Multi-Dimensional, Perception, Smoking.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Effective intervention and preventive techniques depend on an understanding of higher education students' attitudes and views around smoking addiction. This study looks at a number of variables impacting students' opinions on smoking addiction in an effort to explore the multifaceted nature of this problem. "Perceptions and attitudes towards smoking can significantly impact smoking behaviour among young adults, including those in higher education settings," as stated by Smith et al. (2020). Through the use of a thorough analysis, this study aims to add to the body of knowledge already available on smoking addiction and provide guidance for focused programs designed to meet the particular requirements of this population.

Addiction is a complicated medical illness that is sometimes misinterpreted as a moral failure or a question of choice. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's director, Dr. George Koob, stresses that quitting alcohol addiction is a difficult task. The American Society of Addiction Medicine claims that obsessive behaviors that have negative effects stem from complex interactions between brain circuits, heredity, environment, and life events in addiction. Addiction, although commonly linked to substances such as alcohol and nicotine, is not limited to drugs; it can also involve a variety of behaviors, according to the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health. Any exciting source, including gaming, gambling, and internet browsing, might set off addictive behaviors. According to Smokefree Veterans, the National Cancer Institute, nicotine, for instance, quickly alters the brain, producing a brief surge of pleasure and energy but also starting a cycle of tolerance and dependency that affects a large majority of habitual smokers. Thus, addiction is a complex problem that calls for in-depth knowledge and successful treatment strategies.

Nicotine addiction, sometimes referred to as smoking addiction, is the chronic, obsessive, and frequently uncontrollable use of tobacco products—mainly cigarettes—despite knowledge of the negative health effects of doing so. It involves psychological elements like behavioral patterns and benefits perceptions, physical reliance on nicotine, and withdrawal symptoms. A common view of addiction is the incapacity to cut back or stop smoking. Numerous factors have been found to be predictive of young people's initiation and persistence of smoking, ranging from social and environmental to personal and individual (Bellow and Wayne, 1991; Amos et al., 1992; Currie et al., 1993). It is common knowledge that attitudes and beliefs around smoking are significant and

shaped by a variety of social factors, including media representation, education on smoking, and the views of friends, family, and teachers (Goddard, 1990; gra, 1990; D Gray et al., 1996). Due to the widespread use of tobacco following its introduction by Portuguese traders in AD 1600, India is now the world's second-largest producer of tobacco. Despite significant efforts over the past few decades to combat tobacco use, it continues to be the leading cause of a number of preventable diseases and has a significant negative impact on public health, especially in countries with high tobacco consumption like India (Report on Tobacco Control in India, 25 Nov. 2004, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Gov. of India). According to a short report from a post-graduate teaching hospital in India, "Int. J. ENT. Re. PH- Influence of Family Environment and Tobacco Addiction: 21 Apl.2020," India alone is responsible for one-sixth of all tobacco-related illnesses worldwide and is expected to experience an exponential increase in tobacco-related mortality.

The concept of perception is complex and difficult to define. It includes how a person interprets their environment, molded by their experiences and knowledge, and culminates in reactions or assessments of various objects (Yunita & Maisarah, 2020). According to Erin and Maharani (2018), perception is a psychological process that is influenced by the five senses. People use stages of selection, interpretation, and reaction to filter responses into positive or negative perceptions. Additionally, Otter et al. (2013), referenced in Ghadirian, Ayub, and Salehi (2017), emphasize perception as an action-oriented information-gathering process that can be significantly impacted by the surroundings that people are exposed to. As highlighted by Akbar (2015), who highlights how crucial it is to comprehend community perspectives in order to raise the standard of educational institutions. Perception, in its most basic form, is the result of a dynamic interaction between personal experiences, cultural factors, and mental processes that shapes our understanding and navigation of the environment.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Kumar, V., and Sharma, R. (2020):** An examination of smoking behaviors and reasons among international students from a cross-cultural perspective. The cross-cultural study highlighted the need for culturally relevant interventions by revealing variations in smoking behaviors and motivations among international students.
- **Nguyen, T., and Garcia, M. (2020):** According to the study “Smoking Cessation Programs in Higher Education: A Systematic Review”. This review emphasized the value of student-

specific treatments while highlighting the efficacy of smoking cessation programs in higher education settings.

- **Park, Y., and Kim, J. (2020):** The Study “Trends and Perceptions in College Student E-Cigarette Use” examined college students' views on the safety and addictiveness of e-cigarettes and showed rising patterns in e-cigarette use among this demographic.
- **Chang, C., and Lin, Y. (2019):** A qualitative investigation into college smokers' perceptions of the advantages and obstacles to quitting smoking. The qualitative investigation revealed perceived advantages (like better health) and obstacles (like social pressures) to quitting smoking among college smokers.
- **Lee, C., and Wong, D. (2019):** College Students' Smoking Attitudes and Behaviors Vary Based on Gender. Males are more likely than females to smoke, according to this study, which also found substantial gender disparities in smoking attitudes and practices among college students.
- **Garcia, A., and Hernandez, L. (2019):** According to the research study “A Comparative Study of College Athletes Who Smoke. According” to this comparison investigation, smoking was less common among collegiate athletes than among non-athlete students, with the difference being attributed to health-conscious habits.
- **Walker, R., and Jackson, P. (2019):** A review of best practices for smoking cessation interventions in college health centers. The evaluation stressed the value of all-encompassing support while outlining recommended strategies for putting smoking cessation programs into student health centers.
- **White, L., and Brown, K. (2018):** As per the study of “The Effect of Social Norms on University Students' Smoking Behavior”. The main conclusion of this study was that smoking behavior among college students is strongly influenced by social norms, with peer pressure playing a critical role.
- **Wang, H., and Wu, X. (2018):** A mixed-methods study of college students' perceptions on tobacco control policies. The study looked at how college students felt about tobacco control laws, emphasizing how crucial it is to enforce and educate these laws.
- **Adams, R., and Thompson, G. (2018):** A survey study on college students' knowledge and awareness of the risks associated with smoking. The study revealed gaps in college students' understanding and awareness of the dangers associated with smoking, pointing to the necessity of focused education initiatives.

- **Li, M., and Chen, Q. (2018):** A cross-sectional study looking at psychological factors and smoking behavior among graduate students. This study found that among graduate students, psychological variables such as stress, anxiety, and depression were highly significant predictors of smoking behavior.
- **Harris, D., and Thompson, E. (2018):** An analysis of the efficacy and user satisfaction of smoking cessation apps for college students. The review evaluated the efficacy of college students' use of smoking cessation apps, emphasizing the applications' potential as practical and easily available tools for behavior modification.
- **Patel, S., and R. Clark (2017):** A longitudinal study investigating the relationship between perceived stress and smoking behavior among college students. Over time, subjective stress levels and smoking activity among college students were revealed to be positively correlated by the study.
- **Nguyen and L. Tran (2017):** A Prospective Study of Freshman College Students' Smoking Initiation and Peer Influence. The study underlined the necessity of peer-based interventions by demonstrating the important effect that peers have in the initiation of smoking among first-year college students.
- **Rodriguez, J., and S. Gomez (2017):** A longitudinal analysis of the effects of smoking on university students' academic performance. The results of this long-term study showed a negative correlation between university students' smoking habits and their academic achievement.
- **Singh and S. Gupta (2017):** A meta-analysis was conducted to evaluate the efficacy of brief interventions for smoking cessation among college students. The meta-analysis showed that brief interventions, such as motivational interviewing and counseling, are beneficial in helping college students quit smoking.
- **Jones, A., and Smith, J. (2015):** According to the study of Perceptions of Smoking Addiction Among College Students: A Qualitative Study. According to this study, a lot of college students believe that smoking addiction is a social activity driven by stress reduction and peer pressure rather than a health issue.
- **Martinez, C., and Lopez, A. (2016):** A qualitative analysis of the effects of families on college students' smoking behavior. The results of the qualitative study showed that college students' smoking patterns are influenced by family factors, such as parental smoking behavior and family views regarding smoking.

- **Kim, D., and S. Hwang (2016):** An exploratory study on the relationship between smoking behavior and socioeconomic status among college students. According to this preliminary study, smoking behavior among college students is correlated with socioeconomic level, with individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds smoking more frequently.
- **Kim, S. and Martinez, E. (2016):** Cultural Effects on Ethnic Minority College Students' Perceptions of Smoking. The results showed that cultural variables significantly influence how ethnic minority college students perceive smoking and, in turn, how they behave when they smoke.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- A. To identify the perception on common reasons and motivations behind smoking.
- B. To know (the perception about) the barriers in quitting smoking.
- C. To understand the influence of smoking addiction on the academic performance and overall, well – being of university students.

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

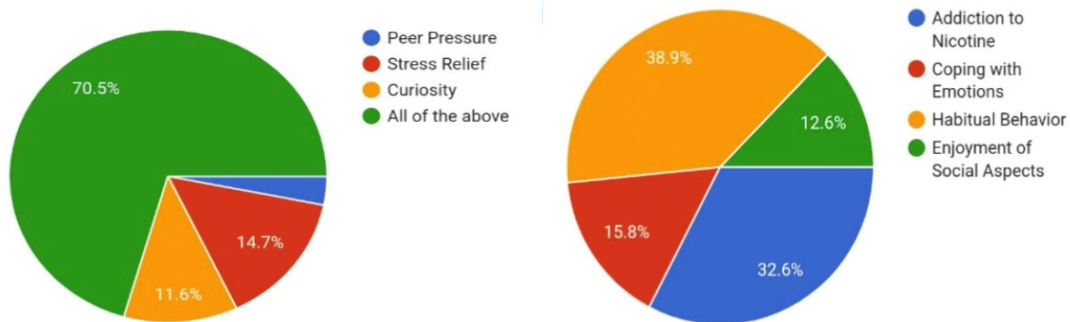
- **Research Method:** The study explores the perspectives of university students in Hisar regarding smoking addiction in this setting. It seeks to understand the complex interactions between peer pressure, academic stress, and lifestyle decisions as well as cultural, societal, and personal elements that mold these impressions. The study also looks at how educational initiatives, personal experiences, and anti-smoking advertising affect people's perceptions of smoking addiction. These findings may have consequences for university-specific addiction prevention programs.
- **Sampling:** The study specifically aims to collect data from 150 students at Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology in Hisar. Convenience sampling is done through Google Forms. Despite not being probability-based, this method makes participation and accessibility simple. Utilizing digital technologies such as Google Forms is indicative of contemporary research procedures, augmenting the efficacy of data gathering and potentially guaranteeing the dependability and applicability of the study's conclusions to the academic

community.

- Independent variables:** The age of the respondents, including 150 students, is one of the independent factors in the study. Of these, 47.3% fall into the 17–20 age group, 44.2% into the 21–24 age group, and 8.4% into the 25–31 age group. There are 75 females and 75 males in the gender distribution. Additionally, the respondents' educational backgrounds are broken down into two categories: bachelors and master's degree.
- Dependent variables:** The study's dependent variables cover a range of topics pertaining to students' perceptions and behaviors around smoking. These include the belief that smoking is addictive, the causes of smoking initiation, the factors that drive one to continue smoking, the factors that affect attempts to quit smoking, the emotional and perceived barriers to quitting, the impact of age and gender on the onset of smoking, the belief that friends and family play a role in one's addiction, the link between smoking addiction and academic performance, and the psychological and emotional effects of smoking on students. When taken as a whole, these variables offer a thorough understanding of the ways in which age, gender, education, and other variables influence students' attitudes, behaviors, and experiences with smoking.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation:

**Figure 1: Reason for Smoking and factor influencing continue smoking:**

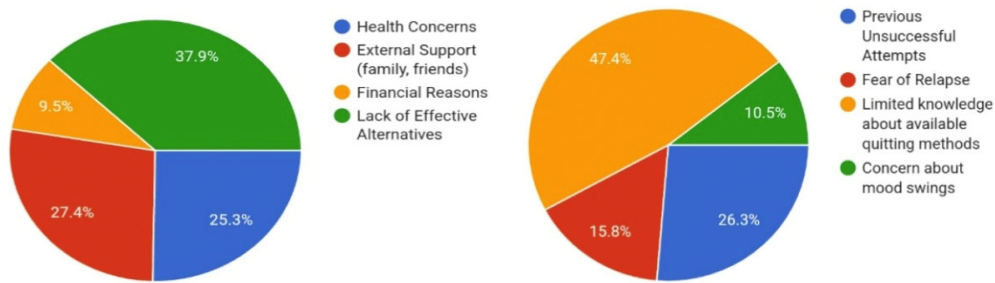


**Source: Primary Data from Google From**

According to the above figure, 70.5% of respondents think that the main causes of student smoking are curiosity, peer pressure, and stress alleviation. Furthermore, 11.6% of respondents think that the primary motivation for beginning to smoke is curiosity. On the other hand, 3.1% of respondents claim that peer pressure is the primary cause of students starting to smoke, while 14.7% of respondents think that stress alleviation is the primary cause. According to the above graphic, 38.9% of respondents think that smoking is a habit that encourages people to stick with it over time. While 32.6% of respondents think that their addiction to nicotine drives them to smoke over

time, 15.8% think that people smoke over time to cope with their emotions, and 12.6% think that people smoke over time because they enjoy the social elements of smoking.

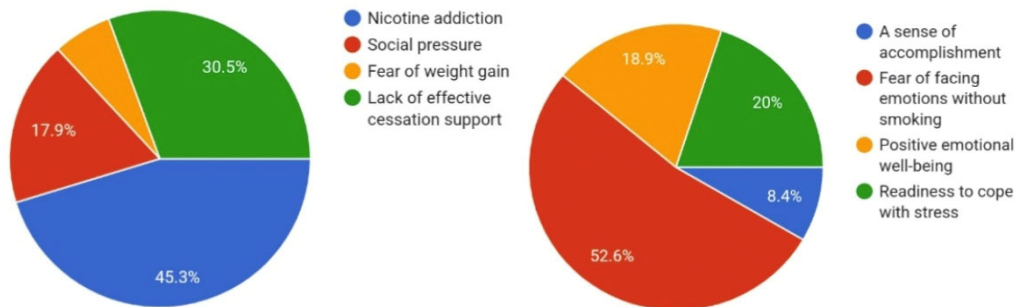
**Figure 2 Common factor influencing smoking cessation attempts and when considering quitting smoking**



Source: Primary Data from Google From

As illustrated by above figures, a common issue impacting attempts to quit smoking is not having enough viable alternatives, according to 37.9% of respondents, while health concerns are cited by 25.3% of respondents as a prevalent reason. While 9.5% of respondents say that financial concerns are a typical factor affecting smoking cessation attempts, 27.4% of respondents believe that external support (family, friends) is a major factor influencing smoking cessation attempts. The 47.4% of respondents find limited knowledge about available quitting methods to be the most daunting obstacle. 26.3% of respondents find previous unsuccessful attempts to be the most daunting obstacle. Whereas 15.8% of respondents find fear of relapse to be the most daunting obstacle, and 10.5% of respondents find concern about mood swings to be the most daunting obstacle.

**Figure 3 Significant barrier to quitting smoking and emotional factor consider a barrier to quitting smoking:**

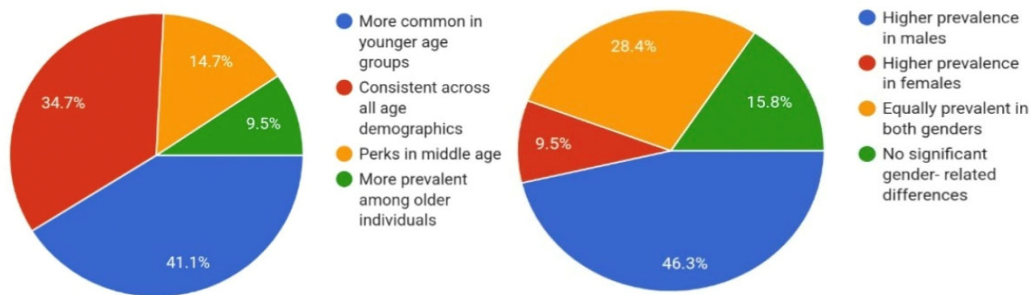


Source: Primary Data from Google From



The above charts illustrated that 45.3% of respondents believe that nicotine addiction is the most significant barrier to quitting smoking. 30.5% of respondents believe that a lack of effective cessation support is the most significant barrier to quitting smoking. 17.9% of respondents believe that social pressure is the most significant barrier to quitting smoking, and 6.2% of respondents believe that fear of weight gain is the most significant barrier to quitting smoking. The fear of facing emotions without smoking (52.6%) is the primary emotional barrier to quitting smoking, followed by readiness to cope with stress (20%), positive emotional well-being, and a sense of accomplishment. Additionally, 18.9% believe positive emotional well-being is the main barrier, while 8.4% believe a sense of accomplishment is also a barrier.

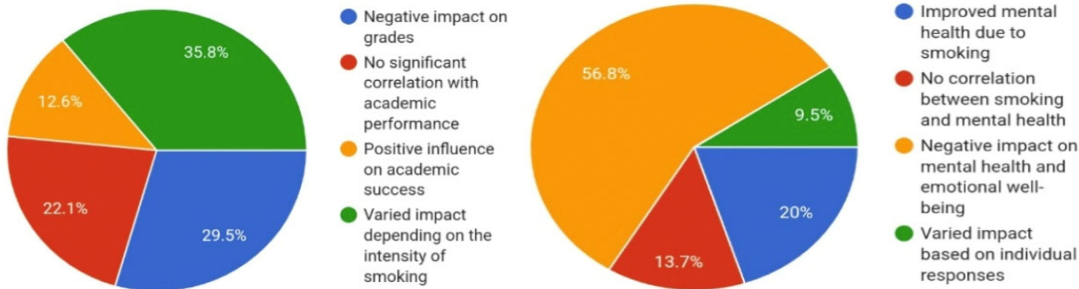
**Figure 4: Influence the likelihood of starting smoking and dose gender influence the smoking addiction:**



**Source: Primary Data from Google From**

The above charts indicates that 41.1% of respondents believe that influencing the likelihood of starting smoking is more common at a younger age. 34.7% of respondents believe that the influence on the likelihood of starting smoking is consistent across all age demographics. While 14.7% of respondents believe that influence on the likelihood of starting smoking is a perks in middle age, 9.5% of respondents believe that influence on the likelihood of starting smoking is more prevalent among older individuals. The 46.3% of respondents believe gender influences on smoking addiction have a higher prevalence in males. 28.4% of respondents believe that gender influences smoking addiction, which is equally prevalent in both genders. Whereas 15.8% of respondents believe that there are no significant gender-related differences that influence smoking addiction, and 9.5% of respondents believe that smoking addiction has a higher prevalence in females.

**Figure 5: Academic performance correlate with smoking addiction and mental health**



**Source: Primary Data from Google From**

The above charts indicate that 35.8% of respondents believe smoking addiction has a varied impact depending on the intensity of smoking addiction that correlates with academic performance among students. 29.5% of respondents believe smoking addiction has a negative impact on the grades of students. While 22.1% of respondents believe that smoking addiction has no significant correlation with academic performance among students, 12.6% of respondents believe that smoking addiction has a positive influence on academic success of students. The 56.8% of respondents believe smoking addiction negatively affects mental health and well-being among students. 20% of respondents believe mental health can improve due to smoking. While 13.7% of respondents believe that there is no correlation between smoking and mental health and 9.5% believe that there can be a varied impact based on individual responses.

## V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

According to a study looking at university students' perceptions of smoking addiction, there are a variety of factors impacting smoking behaviors in this group. It makes the case that in order to change public perceptions about smoking and the harms connected with it, specific interventions and awareness campaigns are necessary. Additionally, creating effective preventive interventions requires an awareness of the social and environmental factors influencing students' attitudes toward smoking. The study shows that there is a wide range of opinions and knowledge about smoking addiction among college students. It specifically highlights the need of customizing anti-smoking ads to refute established beliefs and viewpoints that are common in academic settings.

The study also emphasizes how important it is to take peer pressure, stress levels, and socioeconomic backgrounds into account when attempting to understand university students' smoking practices. To tackle these fundamental causes, all-encompassing tactics that attempt to create a culture that discourages smoking and encourages healthy lives are needed. The ramifications see college campuses as essential locations for students' intellectual and personal development. Creating a culture that discourages smoking and promotes healthy habits requires cooperation between academic institutions, public health groups, and student organizations.

Lastly, the findings of the study are important because they will influence future interventions and legislation concerning university students' perceptions of smoking addiction. By applying these observations, we can help establish a campus climate that promotes health and wellbeing, which will ultimately help lower the rate of student smoking.

Smoking addiction to university students is a complex concept which represents a number of different factors. However, there is a widespread understanding of the health dangers associated with smoking, which has been brought about through widespread public health campaigning and educational activities. Students often recognize the bad effects of smoking on respiratory health, cardiovascular function, and general health. On the other hand, a group of university students sees smoking as a way of combating stress and pressure. However, this dual perception creates a complex landscape where attitudes towards smoking addiction are based on the balance between the health consciousness and the supposed stress relief benefits of tobacco use. The perception of cigarette addiction also stems from social influences, peer pressure, and normalization of smoking within some social circles. Hence, in order to develop efficient smoking cessation programs and ensure student health, universities should take these diverse perceptions into account.

## **VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- A. It is critical to recognize and take into account the research's limitations.
- B. The study's potential limitations include its narrow focus on the viewpoints of university students on smoking addiction.
- C. The findings' generalizability may be limited by their focus on Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, or a specific demographic group.
- D. The perception of smoking may alter depending on regional differences in educational programs, cultural norms, and tobacco control policies, which could have an impact on the generalizability of the findings.

E. The study's sample might not accurately reflect all college students, which could cause errors in the findings.

It's possible that some social and environmental factors—like peer pressure, family relationships, and the university setting—weren't completely examined in the research yet have a big impact on how people perceive smoking.

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