

# Relationship between personality and substance abuse



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## Abstract

Substance use is a huge problem in our society, but also around the world. Certain personality traits, like neuroticism and conscientiousness, can be linked to substance use and misuse. Using the Five- Factor Model, researchers are able to understand which scores are more likely to be linked to substance abuse. A person's environment and social environment can also be a factor in substance use and that person's personality. Adoptive and biological parents influence a child's personality in some way. It's important to understand that parents do affect the family's environment. Personality disorder such as bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder, have some links to substance use as well.

## Personality and Substance Abuse

The use and misuse of different substances is a huge problem in society. There have been many studies done that link personality traits and substance use. There as been a link between certain personality traits and disorders that result in certain substance use. The use of substance can impact a person's personality traits. Certain personality traits can give researchers results about risk factors for substance use disorders (SUDs) as well. Risk factors can be anything from family care, environmental, and psychological.

There are two types of risk factors that can play into drug use. The first being societal and cultural factors, which provide the legal and normative expectations for behavior (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). This would include raising taxes on alcohol, raising the drinking age, and having <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-personality-and-substance-abuse/>

restrictions on how alcohol can be sold. The second factor being factors that lie within individuals and their interpersonal environments (Hawkins et al., 1992). The interpersonal environment can be anything like school, friends, and family. Some examples of this type of risk factor would be physiological factors, family alcohol and drug behavior and attitudes, poor family management practice, and family conflict. All of these factors can play a role in a person's life and shape their personalities.

### Personality traits

One particular study compared personality profiles of tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin users and non-user's using the Five-Factor Model of personality in a diverse community. The Five-Factor Model of personality covers the five major traits that define human personality across cultures (Terracciano, Lockenhoff, Crum, Bienvenu, & Costa Jr., 2008). The five major traits are Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative emotions (Terracciano, et al., 2008). Some negative emotions are anxiety and depression. Extraversion is the tendency to be social. Openness is the tendency to be imaginative, creative, unusual, emotionally and artistically sensitive (Terracciano, et al., 2008). Agreeableness is the dimension of interpersonal relations (Terracciano, et al., 2008). Conscientiousness is the tendency to be organized, strong-willed, determined, reliable, and a follower of rules and ethical principles (Terracciano, et al., 2008). The researchers used 3, 481 people in the East Baltimore area. They first were first interviewed in 1981 then for a second time in 1992-1998 and a third time in 2004-2005 (Terracciano, et al., 2008). Researchers left out those who had

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-personality-and-substance-abuse/>

Mini Mental State Scores below the cut-off value of 23 (Terracciano, et al., 2008). The outcome showed that current smokers scored higher on Neuroticism and lower on conscientiousness compared to those who have never smoked before (Terracciano, et al., 2008). Former smokers scored in-between on both Neuroticism and Conscientiousness (Terracciano, et al., 2008). With that being said, smokers as a group, were high in depression and vulnerability, but scored low in obedience, competence, and dutifulness (Terracciano, et al., 2008). All these things are consistent with past studies. When looking at marijuana users, those participants scored comparable to those who were smokers. Low conscientiousness is a characteristic of marijuana users along with average scores in Neuroticism and high Openness which is different compared to those who are users of other substances (Terracciano, et al., 2008). Former cocaine/heroin users scored lower on Conscientiousness, but did not differ from the never-users in Neuroticism (Terracciano, et al., 2008). Cocaine/heroin users scored high on vulnerability and excitement seeking, but did score low on trust, straightforwardness, and obedience. Those who were just cocaine users scored a lot higher on Neuroticism and lower on Conscientiousness compared to those who have never used this particular drug. This study showed that the results were consistent with other studies which is that drug users generally score higher on negative emotionality or psychopathology and low on Conscientiousness (Terracciano, et al., 2008). Extraversion doesn't show any link to substance use. Basically, this study showed that certain scores for certain traits are linked to substance users.

#### Environmental factors

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-personality-and-substance-abuse/>

A study done by Nozomi Franco Cea and Gordon E. Barnes, wanted to find if there is a link between Addiction-Prone Personality traits in biological and adopted families. The Addiction-Prone Personality scale is a new dimension that has been created to predict vulnerability to substance use illness (Cea & Barnes, 2015). This scale is able to tell the difference between users and non-users, but also the severity of the addiction. The APP scale was significantly correlated with the Five- Factor Personality Scales – high APP scores are correlated with high Neuroticism, low agreeableness, and low Conscientiousness (Cea & Barnes, 2015). There were three research questions that Cea and Barnes were testing which were:

1. Do the parents' APP scores and family socialization factors predict the offspring's APP scores and does the association pattern differ in biological and adoptive samples?
2. Do offspring's and parent's perceived family socialization factors show different association patterns with offspring's APP scores?
3. Does the effect of the family environment on offspring's APP scores diminish over time and does this diminished effect differ in biological and adoptive samples? (Cea & Barnes, 2015).

The researchers took a total of 601 families (biological and adoptive) and administered an APP test then followed up seven years later with another APP test. The results of this study showed that it is consistent with previous studies. Both this study and a previous one showed that there is a significant influence of parental socialization on offspring's personality, as well as a significant association between parents' and offspring's personality traits in older offspring (Cea & Barnes, 2015). The researchers found that the results

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-personality-and-substance-abuse/>

from the first and second tests were similar. These findings showed that family interaction on offspring hold up across different sources (Cea & Barnes, 2015). However, there isn't a lot of research done on this topic. Lastly, the researchers looked at family environment over time. With the biological families, it seems that the effect of family environment decreased over time, whereas with adoptive families, it increased. This study's findings showed the social environment does play a factor in Addiction-Prone personality traits. It's also important to note that family care is extremely important as well.

### Psychological factors

Studies have shown that certain personality disorders are linked to substance abuse as well. Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is characterized by unbalanced relationships, identity disruption, affecting instability and impulsivity (Few, Grant, Trull, Statham, Martin, Lynskey, Agrawal, 2014). There is one comorbidity that is between BPD and substance use disorders (SUDs). Clinical experience proposes that substance use disorders are common among people who have borderline personality disorder (Zanarini, Frankenbur, weingeroff, Reich, Fitzmaurice & Roger, 2010). Individuals with borderline personality disorder are more likely to transition from asymptomatic to symptomatic substance use, persist in problematic use over a 3- year period, and are four to 10 times more likely to meet criteria for SUDs relative to those without a borderline diagnosis (Few, et al., 2014). One particular study looked at genetic structural equation modelling to screen the variance in and covariance between personality traits, borderline personality features (BPF), and SUDs into genetic, shared <https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-personality-and-substance-abuse/>

and individual-specific environment factors (Few, et al., 2014). The participants were 3, 127 Australian adult twins who were given questionnaires. The SUDs were assessed by using the Semi-Structured Assessment of the Genetics of Alcoholism interview. BPF was assessed by using a self-reported Personality Assessment Inventory-borderline scale (Few, et al., 2014). The study showed the genetic and environmental influences to comorbid BPF and SUDs, as well as the extent to which variant in FFM traits can explain this overlap such as BPF and SUDs, which were associated most regularly with neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Few, et al., 2014). Another personality disorder that is linked to substance use is bipolar disorder (BD). This particular study done looked at how personality traits contribute to the likelihood of substance abuse in people with bipolar disorder. There are particular personality traits could help with the prevention of substance abuse in those with BD (Haro, et al., 2007). The researchers wanted to measure the four temperament dimensions in three different groups of participants with bipolar disorder: (a) those without a history of substance related disorder (SRD), (b) those with a lifetime history of SRD but no use, abuse or dependence currently, and (c) those with current SRD (Haro, Calabrese, Larsson, Shirley, Martin, Leal, & Delgado, 2007). The sample size was 59 patients. The results were that certain personality traits, as well as the diagnosis of SRD, seem to be related to the diagnosis of BD (Haro, et al., 2007). It also showed that there appears to be a larger tendency to develop an SRD in those who have BD and have higher novelty seeking scores (Haro, et al., 2007). Bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder both can be linked to substance use and misuse depending on certain traits.

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-personality-and-substance-abuse/>

## Conclusion

There are a few things that can be linked to substance use which are personality disorders, environment and family factors, and certain personality traits. If future studies can pin point exactly which personality traits and facets are linked to substance use and misuse, then substance abuse may not be such a big societal problem. There are people who turn to substance use to help cope with mental illnesses like bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder.

## References

- Cea, N. F., & Barnes, G. E. (2015). The development of Addiction-Prone Personality traits in biological and adopted families. *Personality and Individual Difference*, 107-113.
- Few, L. R., Grant, J. D., Trull, T. J., Statham, D. J., Martin, N. G., Lynskey, M. T., & Agrawal, A. (2014). Genetic variation in personality traits explains genetic overlap between borderline personality features and substance use disorders. *Society for the Study of Addiction* , 2118-2127.
- Haro, G., Calabrese, J. R., Larsson, C., Shirley, E. R., Martin, E., Leal, C., & Delgado, P. L. (2007). The relationship of personality traits to substance abuse in patients with bipolar disorder. *European Psychiatry* , 305-308.
- Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., & Miller, J. Y. (1992). Risk and protective factors for alcohol and other drug problems in adolescence and early adulthood: implications for substance abuse prevention. *Psychological Bulletin* , 64-105.

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-personality-and-substance-abuse/>

- Terracciano, A., Lockenhoff, C. E., Crum, R. M., Bienvenu, O. J., & Costa Jr, P. T. (2008). Five-factor model personality profiles of drug users. *BMC Psychiatry*.
- Zanarini, M. C., Frankenbur, F. R., Weingeroff, J. L., Reich, D. B., Fitzmaurice, G. M., & Weiss, R. D. (2010). The course of substance use disorders in patients with borderline personality disorder and axis II comparison subjects: a 10-year follow-up study. *Society for the Study of Addiction* , 342-348.