

## **Sadistic Impulsiveness and Violent Behaviour in Prisoners of Lahore**

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### **Abstract**

The present study was designed to explore the tendency of sadistic impulsiveness and violent behavior in prisoners of Lahore, Pakistan. The study was initiated with the hypotheses that there will be a positive relationship between sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behavior as well as the sadistic-impulsiveness can predict violent behavior in prisoners. Gender differences were also examined. The sample was comprised of 280 convicted and under trial prisoners, who were drawn from District and Central Jails of Lahore (182 men and 101 women). Measures for data collection including Short Sadistic Impulse Scale (O'Meara, 2011) and Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Warran, 2000) were used to analyze sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behavior in prisoners. Results indicated that sadistic-impulsiveness was positively related and predicted violent behavior in both men and women prisoners. Men prisoners were higher on aggression while women prisoners scored high on sadistic impulsiveness. Implications of the study and directions for the future research were also established.

**Key Words:** Sadistic- impulsiveness, aggression, violent behavior, prisoners.

### **Introduction**

Crime related issues are increasing day by day and affecting the life style of Pakistani residents, therefore it is very important to understand various aspects behind immoral aspects prevailing in our society. Crime rate was also increasing with the passage of time and about 405,895 cases were reported last year while about 408,283 cases were reported in 2016. The present study tried to throw light on the factors that

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may lead a person towards criminal acts and it was highlighted by means of their emotional and psychological urges in the form of impulsiveness (Humble & Snowling, 2013). The hidden motives behind all illegal acts will be predicted on the basis of their impulsive nature. The criminals is once the victim of such acts and their inner aggression develop with the passage of time to such a deadly extend that they themselves get involve in practicing various criminal acts (Tahir, 2011).

According to Fedoroff (2008) sadistic tendency refers to the desire to look others in pain to seek gratification by hurting others in several ways either by killing or hitting others and also tried hard to achieve personal gratification by embracing others in gathering. Sadistic individuals get jealous by seeing others happy or contented, as the aim of their lives was to scatter the happiness of others; they were addicted to sadistic acts and without the fulfillment of their internal satisfaction they become very aggressive and anxious.

Sadistic behaviour was the practice of fantasizing such acts in which they were sucking others happiness, they love to control and dominate others for imposing their self-made decisions. The motive of such people was to spread pain into air so that no one can live happily, they consider that giving pain to others was their inborn right and they were born to hurt others, to get internal pleasure (Apter & Murgatroyd, 1993).

The sadistic person was the man of cruel, aggressive, manipulative and dominative personality. They always want attention from their audience and adopt such behaviour which makes them bold and dominant. They were also very aggressive and become cruel whenever somebody interferes in their matters and they were very quick in reading mind of others (Segal, Coolidge & Rosowsky, 2006).

Impulsiveness means to act immediately even without thinking of cause and effect, they become anxious and stressed frequently. Impulsive actions were always derived from ambiguous stimuli. They were very weak in controlling their feelings, emotions and acts and suffer a lot from panic and anxious attacks. They were self-forced to kill others by throw things away or at people, thus their primary motive was to hurt others physically to become relax (Humble & Snowling, 2013).

Impulsivity can lead people towards impulse control disorder, as they were unable to control their emotions, feelings of hate, anger, bad temper, impulsive urge and stressed out to reach low mood to knock others. The part of brain that was

involved to control impulsivity was prefrontal cortex. Aggressive, impulsive, emotionally disturbed people were suffering from error in prefrontal region of their brain (Stowe, 1994).

Haller (2014) stated that violent behaviour refers to the composition of anger, frustration, irritation and the existence of physical, verbal, hostile and indirect aggression. Violent individuals love to hurt others and apply various ways for torturing others either physically or psychologically by means of threatening others. By doing such behaviour they gain power, dominance and attention from others which gives them internal happiness. Aggressive people were very unpredictable with low level of tolerance, their mood goes on switching that leads them towards immoral acts and they were forced to spread violence even without the existence of any valid stimuli. They aim to hurt others and always try to explore various ways that meant to hurt others by striking, biting, cutting or by throwing things to spread violence in order to gain pleasure, satisfaction and dominance.

Physical aggression being the most occurring form of aggression that rotates around the use of physical power in order to hurt others or to injure others by kicking, pushing or by throwing things away, in this way they seek personal gratification. As studied by Coyne and Ostroy (2018) physical aggression was the most commonly used and practiced by men as they believe that physical aggression was linked with their muscularity. Men were always unable to control their emotions and they practice various aggressive methods to shed their anger, frustration and irritation, they believe that it was their inborn right to control and threaten others to gain respect and dominance in society. Men undergo more unforgiving, cruel and torturing behaviour towards their wives as they consider their wives as their slaves and they never gave them space to live freely and independently.

Anger was such an emotional response which occurs suddenly after facing stressed or irritated occasions. Chapman (2008) considered anger to be a positive way for tossing internal frustration and irritation in order to become relaxed and satisfied whereas anger cause violence at large scale. Human beings get annoyed due to the violation of self-made limitations that lead them towards immoral behavioural response. Anger was characterized by the increase of heart-beat, makes the person stressed, anxious and ultimately leads them towards impulsive acts.

According to Izard (1991) hostility means the conflicting, irritating and unfriendly behavioural response to others, these acts were linked with fearful stimuli or threat. The roots of hostile aggression were linked with anger and they get pleasure

by taking revenge from others. The central aim of such personalities was to take revenge from their enemies therefore they try their best to give them physical and psychological pain. Hostile aggression was deeply linked with impulsive behavioural response that includes the demonstration of hidden emotions in terms of the repetition of negative emotions of anger or by insulting to hurt others. It includes the bullying of others especially in gatherings in order to shed their self-worth thus giving them psychological pain.

Indirect aggression was the most destructive form of aggression, it occurs due to the disagreement between two or more people and ultimately get converted into war, both parties try to demolish the social status of their opponents and try to manipulate others to join them in their battle. This type of the aggression causes harm at large scale but undergoes at a very slow speed, it was also called as relational aggression. Relational aggression stands for the manipulation of others to destroy social relations of their opponents without directly showing symptoms of hate, anger or hidden conflict. Indirect aggression always occurs secretly but causes psychological damage to its sufferers; those people who were addicted to rehearse this type of aggression always try to destroy the social relation of their opponent's and forced them to live alone (Osterman & Bjorkqvist, 2010).

According to Dowler (2003) it was very important to throw light on the criminal aspects by means of public opinion about crime and it was revealed that media was the main source for raising criminal acts throughout the world as they were continuously presenting amazing ideas for criminals. The daily watching of such programs was developing criminal tendencies in human beings and it was also stated that all criminals were those who watch crime related programs at least 15 hours per week, thus these programs were being used as the platform of future crime related acts.

According to Dinstein (2017) the impulsive decision that leads towards the killing and murdering of others and was the most commonly occurred crime, as it was considered that by killing enemies life stratification was achieved. Murder reveals hidden inner-aggression which was initiated immediately by mental stress and frustration and weapons can be used as poisonous drugs, knives or guns as these all ensure the dead at the very spot.

Weinshenker and Siegel (2002) explored the relationship of fear and aggression, whenever fear or threat was detected by human beings, they were likely to behave with impulsivity or act without any consideration of the consequences.

Therefore fear or threat in any situation arise anger in human beings and in order to win the situation they use physical, verbal, hostility or indirect aggression, that gives them pleasure and satisfaction. This gratification was converted into addiction and human beings become addicted to seek such type of pleasure after doing violent acts.

Ebner et al (2014) studied the most pathetic aspect of sadistic nature regarding sexual gratification without the considering other human beings, thus cause physical and psychological harm to other's self-worth and cause long lasting effects on human beings. Internet was the platform for raising sexual curiosity in human beings due to which rape rate was rapidly increasing.

Rappaport and Thomas (2004) postulated that human social interaction plays vital role in the development of personality and proves to be positive or negative for human beings. Unfortunately if a person gets stuck around depraved peer, they get indulged into negative behaviour and try to violate social or moral ethics in order to gain peer appraisal. Thus, gratification develops in such human beings and they perform more violent acts to gain satisfaction.

### **Rationale of the study**

Pakistan is unfortunately facing various social evils like murders, robbery, violence and terrorism. Sadistic-impulsiveness refers to seek satisfaction and pleasure by hurting others physically, emotionally or psychologically. Sadistic-impulsiveness was directly proportional to violent behaviour and the raise in sadistic tendencies will lead human beings towards violent acts (Campbell & Muncer, 2008). Men and women respond differently due to their hormonal composition, it was observed that women commit crime up to four days of their menstrual cycle (Morrison, 2000). Pakistani women were forced to accept their husband's crime for the sake of their children's welfare (Anwar & Shah, 2017). The aim of the study was to analyze the factors that are contributing their active part towards the development of criminal acts, through the reflection of sadistic-impulsiveness. It is very important to point out such aspects that are responsible for the raise of violent and illegal activities. By throwing light on the sadistic-impulsiveness of criminals the hidden factors will also be appeared that provide help for the control of these illegal acts. Research gap also exists and it seems to be productive for the elimination of crime from one's state by focusing on its etiological factors. The results will prove to be a useful addition in forensic psychology.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to obtain the above mentioned objectives;

- There will likely to be a positive relationship between sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behavior in prisoners.
- Sadistic-impulsiveness will likely to be the predictor of violent behaviour in Prisoners.
- Convicted and under trial prisoners both men and women will likely to be different regarding all study variables.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

Cross sectional correlational research design was used to find the relationship among sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behavior in prisoners.

#### **Sample**

With the help of G power analysis and effect size analysis, sample size of 280 participants was determined for present research. The convenient sample of 280 prisoners (Men,  $n=180$ ; Women,  $n=100$ ) was drawn from two jails located in Lahore (Central jail Lahore and from district jail Lahore). Inclusion criteria was the length of confinement should be in between 1 – 5 years. Death sentenced criminals or those suffering from any psychological disorder were not included in present population. Other detail description of demographics of prisoners is also mentioned in table 1.

#### **Assessment Measures**

- Short Sadistic Impulse Scale developed by O'Meara (2011).
- Aggression Questionnaire by Buss and Warren (2000).

#### **Short Sadistic Impulse Scale (O'Meara, 2011)**

The Urdu version of the scale was used in the current study which was translated by the authors of the present study. The scale consist of 10 items, in which 5-point likert scale was used, that range from 1= strongly-disagree to 5= strongly agree. The reliability of the scale is  $\alpha= 0.86$  which indicate that it is highly reliable (O'Meara & Hammond, 2016).

#### **Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Warren, 2000)**

The aggression questionnaire was developed by Buss and Warren (2000), which consist of five major divisions including physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, hostility aggression and indirect aggression. The scale consists of 34 items, and each item was rated on a 5-point scale, that range from 1 strongly-disagree to 5 strongly agree. The reliability of physical aggression was 0.88, verbal aggression is 0.76, anger was 0.78, hostility was 0.82, in-direct aggression was .71 while reliability of scale was .94 (Buss & Warren, 2000).

### **Procedure**

For the purpose of present research, the permission to use the scales and translate into Urdu was taken from respective authors. Permission letters were obtained from Institute of Applied Psychology. The letters authenticated the researcher's identity and the topic under investigation. Permission was taken from IG Prison and then prisoners were selected from Central and District Jail, located in Lahore. Individual consent was also sought from the participants after explaining the nature and purpose of the research. The participants were assured about the confidentiality of all the information obtained from them and that they were free to leave the study at any time. All the queries were answered by the researcher, Questionnaires including the Demographic Information Sheet, Short sadistic impulse scale developed by O'Meara (2011) and Aggression Questionnaire by Buss and Warren (2000). 283 questionnaires were administered on prisoners the questionnaires were orally administered but the response rate was 100%. After data collection, questionnaires were scored and datum was analyzed by applying suitable statistical procedures.

### **Results**

The data was analyzed in 5 steps. The data analysis strategy began with reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha for scales and subscales. Analysis indicated good internal reliability of all the scales and subscales. At second step, descriptive statistics of study variables were computed (see table 2). At third step, Pearson product moment correlation (see table 3) was computed to assess the relationship among study variables that included sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behaviour along with its demographic variables. The results suggested significant positive relationship between sadistic impulsiveness and aggression. At fourth step, hierarchal regression analysis (see table 4) was conducted in order to find out the predictive strength of sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behaviour. At fifth step

independent sample t-test (see table 5) was conducted to examine gender differences along with convicted and under trial prisoners.

The table-4 revealed that sadistic-impulsive model was significant, it explained 23% variance regarding physical aggression  $F(4, 278) = 17.70, p = .00$ . Age, gender and education were significantly positive predictor of physical aggression. Thus, sadistic-impulsiveness was found to be positive predictor of physical aggression. 7% variance was found regarding verbal aggression  $F(4, 278) = 5.16, p = .00$  while age, gender and education were significantly positive predictor of verbal aggression. 23% variance was found regarding anger  $F(4, 278) = 13.42, p = .00$  whereas age, gender and education was found to be the positive predictor of anger. The variance of 21% was found regarding hostile aggression  $F(4, 278) = 11.87, p = .00$ , while age, gender and education were significantly positive predictor of hostile aggression. The variance of 21% was found regarding indirect aggression  $F(4, 278) = 16.30, p = .00$ . Hence, 27% variance was found regarding violent behaviour  $F(4, 278) = 18.64, p = .00$  whereas age, gender and education were found to be significantly positive predictor of both indirect aggression and violent behaviour.

The table-5 revealed that significant difference was found regarding all study variables except physical and verbal aggression. On Sadistic- impulsiveness women got high scores while on all other variables men got high scores.

## Discussion

The present study results revealed that sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behavior were positively associated in prisoners. Results can be supported by some other empirical findings like Smith, Waterman and Ward (2006) studied that anger and aggression was the predictors of violent behavior and that increase the urge for gratification. Likewise Rubio-Garay, Carrasco and Amor (2016) stated that due to anger, hostility, physical and verbal aggression crime rate is raising and people do usually for their personal satisfaction. According to Chester and DeWall (2015) impulsivity and aggression seems to be positively related and most of the criminal undergo crime in order to take revenge from others and to satisfy their self-made limits.

The present study results also exhibited that sadistic impulsiveness is the predictor of violent behavior, and finding stated that relational aggression was the main cause behind all sadistic and aggressive acts. The most leading cause behind all criminal activities was aggression and revenge which indicate the existence of indirect



aggression for the fulfillment of sadistic tendencies (Leff, Waasdorp & Crick, 2010). According to Campbell and Muncer (2008) sadistic tendencies predict violent behavior and they respond differently, women prefer to throw objects when alone or talk to a third party and men directly explodes anger by throwing things and become relaxed.

Gender differences were also found regarding sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behavior. Men prisoners were more aggressive as compare to women prisoners. Men were more verbally aggressive as compare to women prisoners and verbal aggression. Björkqvist (2018) also concluded that men are more physically aggressive. Hamilton (2011) stated that rate of verbal aggression vary regarding individuality and the way of responding towards unfriendly stimulus.

Potegal and Archer (2004) claimed that women express their expressions of anger by crying and men express by means of throwing things. Cross, Copping and Campbell (2011) revealed that women are less aggressive due to their hormone oxytocin which reduce stressful and aggressive response in women, whereas both convicted and under trial women consist of oxytocin hormone that reduce stress. According to Ditta (2004) men and women have different body language regarding aggression and pleasure seeking, women prefer to use harsh language and sometimes respond by ignoring, teasing, gossiping and spreading rumors where as men show anger to seek dominance. According to Lundh, Daukantaite and Wangby- Lundh,( 2014) the victim of direct and indirect aggression make its victims more aggressive, thus boys are more sufferer to direct aggression whereas girls are victims to indirect aggression. In 2016, Rubio-Garay, Carrasco and Amor studied that aggression was the main cause behind all crimes and the present study also concluded that violent behavior was the main reason behind all criminal acts and under trial men prisoners were more aggressively active.

### **Conclusion**

It was concluded that there is a positive relationship between sadistic impulsiveness and violent behavior of prisoners. Results also indicated that sadistic impulsivity proved a significant predictor of violent behavior in prisoners. Gender differences were also found related to the aggression and sadistic impulsivity.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

The results of present study may contribute its valuable role in maintaining social peace by eliminating various aspects of sadistic-impulsiveness and violent

behavior from society. By using the results of present research counseling programs can be designed for criminals to reduce their impulsive and aggressive tendencies. Results also indicated the need of forensic psychologist for assessment and counseling. It is important to investigate the causes of excessive sadistic-impulsiveness and violent behavior in prisoners to reduce the level of maladaptive behaviors which ultimately increase their quality of life. These kinds of researches could be very helpful to investigate the causes and solutions of such problems.

**Table 1-Demographic Description of the Participants (N=280)**

Characteristics	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>f</i>	(%)
Age	33.83	11.67		
Gender				
Men			180	64.4
Women			100	35.6
Status of imprisonment				
Men				
Under trial			95	32.6
Convicted			85	28.6
Women				
Under trial			30	10.1
Convicted			70	23.8
Marital status				
Married			154	51.7
Un-married			100	34.2
Widow			14	5.3
Divorced			1	4.6
Profession				
Unemployed			107	37.7
Government employed			24	8.5
Private employed			127	45.8
Self employed			23	8.5
Family status				
Join family system			180	61.4
Nuclear family system			100	33.9
Family income				
11-20 thousand			63	22.4
21-30 thousand			44	16.0

	31-40 thousand			9	3.2
	Above 40 thousand			62	23.5

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's Alpha of Sadistic-Impulsiveness and Violent Behaviour (N=283)**

Variables	k	Men (n=182)		Women (n=101)		Range		Skew	$\alpha$
		M	SD	M	SD	Potential	Actual		
Sadistic-impulsiveness	10	9.22	5.81	12.34	6.82	10-50	.38-2.6	.93	.65
Violent behaviour	34	88.97	25.16	79.13	21.03	34-170	1.85-3.63	.40	.87
Physical aggression	8	19.71	6.95	18.60	7.00	8-40	1.85-3.63	.40	.72
Verbal aggression	5	12.90	4.14	12.04	4.11	5-25	2.04-2.92	.48	.50
Anger	7	19.13	6.34	16.34	4.7	7-35	2.40-2.83	.35	.57
Hostility aggression	8	22.01	6.87	18.58	6.11	8-40	2.15-3.01	.31	.69
Indirect aggression	6	15.83	5.56	13.86	4.47	6-35	1.88-2.97	.35	.61

**Table 3 Correlation among Sadistic-Impulsiveness and Violent Behaviour (N=283)**

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Violent behaviour	-	.81**	.77**	.86**	.84**	.82**	.30**
2	PHYSICAL AGGRESSION		-	.53**	.64**	.56**	.66**	.36**
3	VERBAL AGGRESSION			-	.59**	.61**	.54**	.18**
4	ANGER				-	.66**	.66**	.21**
5	HOSTILITY AGGRESSION					-	.60**	.19**

6	INDIRECT AGGRESSIOIN								-	.29**
7	SADISTIC-IMPULSIEVENESS									-

**Table 4-Hierarchal Regression Analysis of Sadistic-Impulsiveness and Violent Behaviour (N=283)**

Variables	PA		VA		AA		HA		IA		Total A	
	$\Delta R^2$	B	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Model 1	.03***		.01		.07***		.07***		.05***		.06***	
Age		-.15		-.09		-.14		-	.08		-.08	-.15
Gender		.10		.09		.24		.28		.28		.22
Education		-.08		.00		-.05		-	.09		-.09	-.07
Model 2	.20***		.06***		.16***		.14***		.19***		.21***	
Sadistic-impulsiveness		.42		.23		.30		.27		.37		.39
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.23***		.07***		.23***		.21***		.21***		.27***	

**Table 5. -Independent Sample t-test for Gender Differences regarding Sadistic-impulsiveness and Violent Behaviour in Prisoners (N=283)**

	Men		Women		t(282)	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	(n=182)		(n= 101)				LL	UL	
	M	SD	M	SD					
Sadistic-impulsiveness	9.22	5.81	12.34	6.82	4.05	.00	1.60	4.62	.04
Violent behaviour	88.97	25.16	79.13	21.03	-3.35	.00	-15.64	-4.03	.42
Physical aggression	19.71	6.95	18.60	7.00	-1.28	.20	-2.81	.59	.15

Verbal aggression	12.90	4.14	12.04	4.11	-1.67	.09	-1.86	.15	.20
Anger	19.13	6.34	16.34	4.74	-3.86	.00	-4.21	-1.36	.49
Hostility aggression	22.01	6.87	18.58	6.11	-4.18	.00	-5.04	-1.81	.52
Indirect aggression	15.83	5.56	13.86	4.47	-3.05	.00	-3.24	-.70	.30

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