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PREVENTION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE APPROACH

Enedina Hasanbegović-Anić, Aneta Sandić, Sabina Alispahić

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a developmental period during which, most commonly, use of substances begins. Thus a majority of preventive initiatives target child population and youngsters. With regards that many traditional and widely utilized preventive programs turned out to be ineffective, scientists have put much effort into the development of much more efficacious, contemporary approaches in evidence-based prevention during the last decades. Although the number of available evidence- based preventive programs significantly raised during the past several years, there are still obstacles in recognition of importance in their implementation, as well as obscurities about what that term actually stands for. This paper provides a review of most important scientific insights about substance abuse in the population of youngsters, which are the foundation of good practice in the field of prevention, as well as a more specific definition of programs that bear “evidence-based” label. Key traits of efficacious substance abuse prevention programs targeting family, school, and community are presented, as well as examples of good practice.

Keywords: substance abuse in children and adolescents, preventive programs, evidence-based approaches

INTRODUCTION

Regardless numerous preventive initiatives substance abuse still remains an important public health issue worldwide and it significantly accounts to a frequency of morbidity and mortality in the population of abusers (Hemovic, Lac & Crano, 2012; Lopez, 2006). Namely, many traditional and widely applied preventive programs proved to be inefficacious, thus much effort has been put into development and testing of programs efficacious in the areas of risk prevention, that is behaviors associated with the use of substances (Catalano, Haggerty, Hawkins & Elgin, 2011).

Field of prevention evolved into scientific discipline in the last decades and it accounts to a better understanding of epidemiology, etiology, and complexity of behaviors associated with substance abuse in a significant manner. This involves identification of initiation patterns, as well as a progression towards more severe levels of substance abuse. Those insights resulted in directing a majority of preventive initiatives towards a child and adolescent population (Griffin & Botvin, 2010), and defining key concepts and program methods in contemporary evidence-based preventive programs (Sussman & Ames, 2008).

This paper provides a review of most important insights related to use and abuse of substances in adolescent population which proved to be the foundation in the field of prevention. Contemporary preventive terminology in mental health is presented as well, terminology officially used among scientists and practitioners in the field of substance abuse. More detailed definition of evidence-based preventive methods are portrayed as well. Traits of efficacious preventive programs targeting family, school, and community, as well as examples of good practice are noted at the end of the paper.

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RISKS / PROTECTIVE FACTORS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PREVENTION

Adolescence is a developmental period that is most frequently marked by experimentation that is use and abuse of various substances (Kandel, 2002). Most research conducted in Western countries pointed out that until the age of nineteen about 90% of young people tasted the alcohol, 60% smoked cigarettes, 50% used cannabis and 20% tasted other street drugs as inhalants, stimulants, hallucinogens or opiates (Coughlan, Doyle & Carr, 2006). Epidemiological research consistently proves that prevalence of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs use quickly rises from early towards late adolescence, with the peak at the turn towards younger adult age, after which it declines (Jochman & Fromme, 2010). The most frequent developmental model which leads towards abuse of substances involves the beginning of the use of legal substances (tobacco and alcohol), then cannabis, and in the end the other illegal substances. Mentioning this it is important to note that at every next step of developmental progression the risk of developing psychological disorders related to substance abuse gets higher (Griffin & Botvin, 2010). Most adolescents who use substances will not develop severe problems; however, some less than 10% youngsters from this group will continue their problematic use in adult age (Fagan, 2006). The beginning of substance use in early adolescence (before age of fifteen) is strongly connected with higher level of substance abuse (Arthur, Hawkins, Pollard, Catalano & Baglioni, 2002; Swendsen et al., 2012), and many health issues, as well as psychological and social consequences later on during lifetime. This includes mortality, problems with somatic and mental health, violence, difficulties in the interpersonal field, adaptation issues in the family and academic and working milieu (Newcomb & Locke, 2005).

In accordance with contemporary findings the most efficacious preventive programs are based on relevant etiological psycho-social theories of use and abuse of substances, and are aimed at main risk and protective factors (Griffin & Botvin, 2010). Thus, maintainable prevention models must at the same time be focused on multiple risk and protective factors originating from different domains which include personal traits, family, peers, school and community (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2009), as well as developmental periods when each of the named factors stabilizes as predictor of substance use (Hawkins, Catalano & Miller,

1992). As relation between the number and type of risk and prevention factors influences the risk of individual's beginning of use and abuse of substances, the main goal of preventive programs is to raise the influence of protective factors and reduce or remove influence of risk factors in order to prevent or postpone the beginning of substance use, that is to reduce the level of use of noted substances in the population of youngsters (Hawkins, Catalano & Arthur, 2002). It is also important to note that many of the risk factors in the area of use and abuse of substances represent predictors of other behavioral issues such as delinquency, risky sexual behavior, and school dropout, thus comprehensive preventive programs aimed at risk and protective factors most likely may prevent even those problems in the population of youngsters (Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992).

Preventive programs may be conducted in different social milieus, and so far many efficacious programs targeting family, school and community have been developed. Those can be combined or used selectively. Research evidence shows that multicomponent preventive programs combining two or more effective programs, such as family and school programs may even be more efficacious than single programs aimed solely at school, family or community (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2003).

CONTEMPORARY PREVENTIVE TERMINOLOGY

Traditionally, researchers and practitioners divide all interventions in the field of mental health into primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. However, during that last two decades, there is new terminology being used which additionally differentiates various levels of preventive interventions in this area (Sussman & Ames, 2003). The significant contribution to a conceptual improvement in the field of prevention in mental health was provided by Mrazek and Haggerty (1994), accenting that traditional, medical preventive model is not equally adequate for the mental health issues as it is meant for medical disorders. Those authors suggested an alternative to the medical model of prevention introducing the model of spectrum interventions in mental health, within whose frame interventions are differentiated into prevention, treatment, and maintenance of contemporary state.

Prevention includes three levels of intervening: universal, selective and indicated prevention. This nomenclature is nowadays utilized among researchers and participants who work in the field of prevention of use and abuse of substances. Each level of intervention in the frame of prevention

aims at different levels of risk which are present in the target populations. *Universal preventive programs* are designed for the general population, with the aim to hold back or postpone some state (for example programs targeting all pupils at school). *Secondary preventive programs* are aimed at addressing parts of a population under greater biological, psychological and social risks for development of psychological disorders than it is the case with an average population (e.g. children and adolescents whose parents use substances or children and adolescents with lower academic achievements). *Indicated preventive programs* are applicable to those groups which already express subclinical signs or symptoms of development of the disorder (e.g. experiments with substances, the initial stadiums of involvement into highly risky behaviors) (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994; Sloboda, 2009).

WHAT ARE EVIDENCE BASED-PROGRAMS?

In the past two decades there is a significant increase in available preventive programs aimed at improvement of emotional, behavioral and social functioning of children and adolescents, and great effort has been put in defining standards of good evidence-based practice and ways of achieving it (Forman, Olin, Hoagwood Crowe & Saka, 2009). The principle of evidence-based practice promotes utilization of empirically supported preventive programs supported by research findings which provide evidence about the benefits and predictable outcomes, and which are conducted within valid national laws and policies (Ysseldyke et al., 2006).

Although the term “evidence-based program” became common in preventive science and practice there are still obstacles in recognition of the importance of their implementation as well as obscurity in understanding what is all that is meant under this term? Namely, also the existing terminology may lead to confusion because different terms are being used interchangeably, such as “programs that promise”, “evidence-based programs” and “efficacious programs”. Different agencies and research groups also adopted different criteria for identification whether a certain program is based on evidence or it is not, thus encouraging the application of efficacious and effective preventive programs (Kyler, Bumbarger & Greenberg, 2005).

Efficacy of a preventive program is determined at the grounds of results of controlled (experimental or quasi-experimental) research with

sufficient interior validity, which show that program reliably results with certain positive effects. A preventive program is considered efficacious if identified positive effects have sufficient outer validity that is if it proves that the program is of practical use when applied in different natural surroundings (Hunsley & Lee, 2010). Thus, evidence-based programs are the ones which, besides proved usefulness in controlled conditions, have a proved effectiveness in real life and within the scientific community, and they are often marked in terms of efficacy (Kyler, Bumbarger & Greenberg, 2005).

Further on, after it is identified whether a preventive program is efficacious, it is necessary to submit it to critical validation from the side of independent researchers from the given field, what involves methods questioning evaluation and agreement on conclusions about the effectiveness of programs. When a preventive program has been checked out by independent experts and when there is evidence about efficacy, its authors usually provide it for consideration to the licensed agencies or research groups. Those organizations approve preventive programs, what enables other experts in the field to get acquainted with the preventive programs which satisfy the regulated standards (Cooney, Huser, Small & O'Coonor, 2007).

For example, SAMHSA (The Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration, 2015), American agency whose mission is to reduce an influence of substance abuse and mental disorders in the community, developed The National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). This data basis contains review of more than 340 evidence based preventive and treatment interventions in the field of mental health and substance abuse, in order to make it easier for interested individuals, organizations and communities to learn more about those programs and practices and make decisions about which kind of interventions would be the most suitable for their issues.

Thus, when a community decides to apply for evidence based-preventive program, and when addressed experts or organizations choose a certain program that suits the actual needs in a community, it is needed to culturally adjust the program and evaluate its efficacy before it becomes implemented. When the choice about evidence-based programs are being made the critical attitude is of importance, with respect of the fact that all programs that meet criteria for the label "evidence-based" are not equally efficacious. For example, preventive programs that prove to be efficacious in repeated experimental studies, and programs that involve follow up of

the subjects during the longer period of time, are in general considered to be better than programs evaluated in one or two less rigorous studies (e.g. that utilized quasi-experimental design). Besides this, higher standards are met by those preventive programs that are successfully replicated and evaluated in different surroundings with a wide range of users, and programs that consistently result in a higher power of confirmed effects (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2003).

Advantages and limitations

Evidence-based preventive programs are beneficial on multiple levels, and their adequate implementation means a well thought and responsible manner of utilization of limited resources that the community possesses. Namely, implementation of these programs increases the possibility of achievement of the expected outcomes, what also increases benefits in the community, as it is more effective to use limited resources within programs that proved to be efficacious, than taking into account the programs thought to be efficacious or traditionally used programs. Organizations can choose the program from the specter of an increasing number of evidence-based programs, which often offer already prepared material, education of implementations and technical support, instead of directing their resources towards program development. Proved efficacy of evidence-based programs ensures not only greater economic benefits but a greater support of the donors, public policies and members of target populations as well, what altogether may help to find and keep the program users. In the end, those programs as well contain available information about costs estimation and the utility of programs what is of significant importance in times when responsibility and economic factors rule public policies and decisions about the distribution of resources (Cooney et. al., 2007).

However, it is important to accept that evidence-based programs bear some practical limitations. Namely, many of these programs are copyrighted what results in significant costs what is often the main obstacle to their adoption and implementation. Creators of programs often require that organizations buy the program material and that for full implementation, besides the need to possess a certain level of education or certain certificate; personnel must get involved in professional training. Apart from this, there are also requirements that these programs have to be implemented exactly in the manner they have been conceived, what leaves little space for local adaptation. Finally, it can happen that existent evidence-based programs

are not at the same time suitable for the needs of the target population, an organization that plans their use and/or local community. This usually happens when organizations wish to improve positive outcomes in the target population (e.g. academic success), that is when the aim is not prevention of negative outcomes (e.g. substance abuse, mental illness, violence or delinquency). Namely, in contemporary times we witness a much larger number of evidence-based programs aimed at the problem than promotion of positive developmental outcomes because agencies that sponsor their development in most cases happen to be involved in the solution of some specific mental health issues (Cooney et al., 2007).

Planning and implementation

The planning process of preventive programs focused on children and adolescents should begin with the evaluation of substance abuse in the community. This includes estimation of nature and range of drug abuse, estimation of risk and protective factors, understanding the influence of cultural milieu on drug abuse and vice versa, estimation of consciousness of given community about the problem and identification and estimation of existing preventive activities. The aim of estimation of existing preventive programs is to identify which programs have been currently conducted, whether clear health standards have been used in the check of the programs during their development, whether programs meet needs of the community and in which range youngsters who are at risk have been encompassed by given programs. Another form of evaluation of evidence-based programs is based on the use of existing data on drug abuse among youngsters and related problems during the time. Data gathered in initial estimation of the condition in some community may serve as the beginning for measurement of change during time. As nature and range of issues related to substance abuse changes in the time it is useful to periodically estimate risk and protective factors in the community, as to ensure that existent preventive programs in an adequate manner meet the needs of the community (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2003).

PREVENTION TARGETING FAMILY

Preventive programs may enforce specific family protective factors which increase the possibility of adaptive developmental outcomes in children and adolescents through parental education in various parenting skills. A high number of various preventive programs targeting families

have been developed by now. They can be divided into two categories. One of them targets only parents that are their enforcement, in order to prevent their child from making contact with substances. These programs include education of parents in the field of specific parental skills which involve upbringing, making family rules, connectedness and communication with children, supervision of child activities, and competence in teaching their children prosocial skills and skills of resisting social pressures and helping children to reduce aggressive and antisocial behavior. Another type of programs is aimed at learning certain skills involving both, parents and children. Those programs' aim is to improve family functioning, communication skills, provide support in establishing family rules about substance use, and teach parents about imposition and implementation of those rules. Interventions targeting parental skills and family connectedness proved to be most efficacious in the reduction or prevention of substance use. However, an important possible limitation of programs targeting families reflects itself in hardships related to involving parents in the program, in particular, young parents who are at the greatest risk of substance abuse (Griffin & Botvin, 2010).

PREVENTION TARGETING SCHOOL

Schools are focus of majority of preventive initiatives (Bloom & Gullotta, 2009) as they enable prolonged approach to nearly complete population of children and adolescents, including specific subpopulations who are under higher risk of use and abuse of substances, such as children and adolescents having behavioral issues, hardships in learning or ones that are under risk of dropping-out school (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2003). Further on, in comprehensive preventive programs targeting multiple domains of the social milieu of youngsters, schools represent the main coordinating institution and link with families and the wider community (Stigler, Neusel & Perry, 2011).

Traditional approaches

Results of numerous research proved that many traditional and widely applied preventive substance abuse programs, that involve providing information about substances, effective education, and alternative programs, although at the first glance assuredly, are not efficacious. Failure of those programs reflects itself in the fact that they are not based on relevant theories and integrated knowledge about aetiological factors, but

on intuitive suppositions on how to prevent abuse of substances (Schinke, Botvin & Orlandi, 1991; Foxcroft & Tsertsvadze, 2011; Thomas, McLellan & Perera, 2013).

Providing information about substances and noxious effects of their use represents the most common preventive approach which is based on simple cognitive model according to which people make decisions about the use of substances on the basis of their knowledge about their noxious consequences. Some of these programs, aiming at accenting the noxious consequences of substance additionally utilize techniques that provoke fear or moral, that is religious appeals. *Affective education* is another common approach in prevention and it supposes that encouraging personal affective development (e.g. self-respect, assertiveness etc.) reduces the probability of substance abuse. *Alternative programs* are conceptualized in the manner that to youngsters they offer various creative, recreative and educative activities, with the suggestion that those activities may be a substitute for behaviors associated with substances use (Botvin & Kenneth, 2006).

Contemporary approaches

In the recent decades, much more efficacious school preventive programs on substance abuse issue have been developed and evaluated. They involve resistance to social pressures, normative education, and increase of competence while, within frames of one program, those approaches can be combined (Griffin & Botvin, 2010).

Approaches based on skills related to *resistance to social pressures* are based on Bandura's theory of social learning (1977), and on a conceptual model that accents key role of social influence on the side of peers and media in the initiation of use of substances (Botvin & Kenneth, 2006). The main goal of preventive interventions that follow this approach is to increase consciousness of youngsters about various social influences that support the use of substances and teach them specific skills of efficacious resistance to peer pressure and media to use substances (Botvin, 2000).

Normative education is an approach based on the fact that many adolescents overestimate the prevalence of various substances use in the population of youngsters, what may lead towards views that utilization of substances is taken as normative behavior. Contents of programs and activities based on this approach aim at correction of incorrect normative expectations and beliefs of adolescent population that the use of substances is socially acceptable and not noxious, what is achieved through education of youngsters on actual incidence of substance use through presenting

research results that were conducted on local and/or national level (Griffin & Botvin, 2010). Normative education may have a key role in encouraging adolescents to use strategies of resistance to the peers and media. Results of research suggest that absence of a normative component in preventive programs may reduce effects of training in the area of resistance to pressure imposed by peers and social pressures that promote disuse of substances (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2009).

Approaches focused on *increasing competencies* are some of the most comprehensive programs in the area of prevention of substances abuse and are based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and behavioral problem theory (Jessor & Jessor, 1977). Within this approach abuse of substances is conceptualized as behavior which is, as a result of complex interaction of numerous personal and environmental risk factors, learned in social context and functionally. Namely, adolescents that have weak personal and social skills may be under higher risk to use substances as an alternative to adaptive strategies facing with, for example, anxiety or low self-esteem. Approaches focused on increasing competencies accent teaching youngsters in a wide spectrum of general life and social skills, such as problem-solving skills and making decisions, cognitive skills of resistance to social pressures, skills in increasing self-control and self-respect, adaptive coping with stress and anxiety, general social skills and assertiveness. Those skills are taught by applying proved cognitive-behavioral methods, such as teaching, demonstrating, providing feedback, corroboration, behavioral trials, and homework. Most efficacious programs based on those approaches, apart from accepting the application of real life and social skills in situations that are directly associated with substance use, teach young people how to use these skills in coping with many other challenges in daily life (Griffin & Botvin, 2010; Botvin & Kenneth, 2006; Schinke, Botvin & Orlandi, 1991).

Implementation of preventive programs at schools

In spite of the fact that evidence-based preventive programs targeting schools are available (PAS), research results suggest that the implementation of these programs is insufficient (Forman et al., 2009). Research conducted in the national sample consisting of 1795 public and private schools in the USA (Ennett et al., 2003) revealed that over 80% of schools conducted some kind of drug abuse prevention, but that only 17.4% of schools utilized programs that proved to be efficacious methods (e.g.

interactive approaches), while only 14% of schools applied for efficacious programs. Also, research results show that even when schools use evidence-based preventive programs, those programs are often being conducted in the manner that does not meet established standards (Hallfors & Godette, 2002), what results in reduction of positive outcomes, despite established strong effects of programs in conducted studies (Botvin & Kenneth, 2006).

With time scientists came to the insight that conducting evidence-based preventive school programs appeared to be a complex process which is under influence of a numerous number of personal, organizational and systemic factors. Namely, it is not enough just to offer an efficacious program and guidelines for its implementation as was thought in previous times. In introducing preventive evidence-based programs at schools it is needed to focus effort at factors that are, according to research results, of significant importance for their successful implementation and maintenance, and to strengthen the connection between research and practice. This involves development of support on side of school board and teachers, development of financial resources, enabling higher level training and consultation systems for personal who implements the program, adjustment of preventive program to school goals, programs and policies, ensuring obvious outcomes of programs, and development of strategies of coping with exchange of school personnel and board (Forman et al., 2009).

PREVENTION TARGETING COMMUNITY

Preventive efforts that wish to revise key aspects of social surrounding which increase the risk of substance abuse demand activities at the level of community. Preventive programs targeting community as a whole by the rule are multi-component and often include combining school preventive programs with media campaigns and activities of public policies and interested organizations in the community. The aim is to enforce prosocial behavior and social norms against substances use. By rule, those programs contain a wide spectrum of activities and accordingly demand significant financial and other resources, as well as good coordination. Realization of program components is often achieved through the cooperation of all interested sides, including parents, schools, experts, and leaders in the community. Research results point out that those programs, if comprehensive and well coordinated, may be efficacious in the prevention of substance abuse in youngsters (Griffin & Botvin, 2010).

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

In the text that follows there are briefly described some of the proven efficacious preventive programs related to substance abuse, ones that are developed for target populations of children and adolescents of various school age in the domain of universal, selective and indicated prevention (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, 2015). It is important to accept that scientists, besides continuous development of new programs at the levels of prevention, also put additional effort in research in order to adjust preventive programs to specific populations with regards to gender, ethnic, race and geographic belonging, and additionally raise their effectiveness.

LST program (Life Skills Training Program) is a *universal preventive school program* targeting a wide range of risk and protective factors related to abuse of substances, with the aim to prevent the use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. It contains three main components that involve: 1) learning skills related to control over one's own behavior, 2) learning general social skills and 3) learning skills of resistance towards drug abuse and normative education. It is meant for elementary and high school pupils with age range from thirteen to seventeen. It consists of three years lasting preventive curriculum made up of thirty sessions. Fifteen sessions become realized during the first year of the program, ten additional sessions during the second year, and five sessions in the last year of the program. The logical basis of LST application in those time frames comes out from insights about developmental progression of drug abuse, cognitive and psychosocial changes typical for adolescence, increasing domination of influence of peers, and issues related to transit from elementary to high school. Implementations of the program can be done through educated teachers, peer leaders or health workers. Numerous studies conducted in recent years confirmed the efficacy of LST program in a reduction of the prevalence of use of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs in 50 to 87% compared to the control group. In the last years, a version of LST program has been developed for even younger children (children aged three to five, which is from fourth to sixth grade of elementary school) which proved to be efficacious in the reduction of tobacco and alcohol use.

SF program (The Strengthening Families Program) is a *selective, multicomponent preventive program* aimed at families under risk and

was initially developed with an aim to provide help to parents who abuse drugs, as to improve their parenting skills and reduce risks that might influence children in a negative manner. SF program is designed with the aim to increase resistance and reduce risk factors for the development of behavioral, emotional, academic and social problems in children aged three to sixteen and it consists of three components. The first component includes *training parental skills program*, aimed at teaching parents skills in increasing the wished for behavior in children, through rewards, clear communication, efficient discipline, problem solving and education on the use of substances. The second component consists of *training children skills program*, with the aim to help children accept parental rules, develop and improve skills of efficacious communication, problem-solving, resisting to pressures of peers, social skills, and to understand their own feelings and consequences of substance use. The third component contains *family skills training program*, focused at involving families in structured activities, practicing therapeutic games, learning communication skills, conducting efficacious discipline, mutual support to positive behavior, organizing family meetings, and planning common family activities. The program is being applied through fourteen sessions lasting two hours. Parents and children are separately included during the first hour, and during the second hour, they are included in the program together. Research results suggest that involving families in associated family support groups increase generalization and utilization of learned skills. According to research results this program results with a decrease of family conflict, behavioral issues at youngsters, aggressiveness and drug abuse, as well as an increase of moral skills in youngsters, parental skills and family communication and organization. SF program is linguistically and culturally adapted and evaluated for different ethnic groups in the USA and many other countries including Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, and Slovenia.

Project TND (Project Towards No Drug Abuse) is *indicated, school aimed preventive intervention* designed for adolescents, aged fourteen to nineteen. It was initially designed for youngsters who attend alternative high schools (schools for pupils with poor academic results, discipline issues, negative attitudes toward school, and pupils under greater risk for drug use and whose parents abuse drugs). Afterwards, it was adapted and evaluated for the population of adolescents under high risk in traditional schools. Taking into consideration developmental issues which older adolescents

face with, especially the ones under drug abuse risk, the program has the aim to prevent progression of drug use towards the abuse. Main component of TND program is the curriculum of twelve interactive sessions that involves play, exercise, role play, video materials, and written homework, conducted by teachers or health educators through group discussions in classes. Those sessions include motivational activities, correction of false beliefs, social skills training, skills in making decisions and self-control skills targeting use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and “heavy” drugs, and behaviors related to violence, such as carrying weapon. Project TND was rigorously evaluated in several experimental studies. Results confirmed its efficacy in significant reduction of severe alcohol use compared to control groups.

CONCLUSION

In the last decades utilization of more efficacious evidence-based programs became “golden” standard of highly professional practice in the area of prevention. Namely, a number of well designed, randomized controlled studies support the hypothesis that substance abuse among youngsters in a significant manner can be prevented by implementation of tested programs and policies. These programs are aimed at a decrease of individual, family and peer risks, as well as community risks that are responsible for the beginning of substance use and its progression towards abuse. They also increase the influence of protective factors and processes. In the end, it is important to accent that proven efficacious preventive programs can be cost-effective because of research point out that each dollar invested in prevention saves up to ten dollars invested in treatment of disorders caused by substance abuse.

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DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY LEVELS AMONG CHRONIC KIDNEY PATIENTS

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Abstract

Chronic kidney disease is a progressive and irreversible loss of the kidney function. Besides physical and treatment complications for chronic kidney disease, kidney patients also suffer a number of psychological problems, among which depression and anxiety are very common. This all, not only makes chronic kidney patients', already difficult life, more difficult but also furthermore vulnerable and at risk for earlier death. This study aimed to measure the level of anxiety and depression of chronic kidney disease patients have been measured and compared with the scores of healthy participants. Since haemodialysis is the most common treatment method for CKD, 60 haemodialysis patients at Inegol hospital in Turkey and 60 people from a general healthy population (N=120) were conveniently chosen to participate in this study. Following the literature review indicating possible psychological outcomes of chronic kidney failure and haemodialysis, depression and anxiety level among CKD patients and healthy cohort group was measured. Depression and anxiety levels were investigated using the Beck Depression Inventory II and The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory were used (Turkish versions). Study results indicate, when compared to healthy cohorts (M=12.66, s.d. 5.7), CKD patients scored higher on depression scale (M=18.5, s.d. 7.3) as well as higher

level of anxiety (M=40.76, s.d.10.7) when compared with a healthy population (M=32.40, s.d. 7.8). Results of this study, next to important scientific contribution, indicate importance and the need for professional help psychological support for chronic kidney disease patients in order to diminish the psychological impact of facing chronic illness.

Keywords: *Chronic kidney disease, depression, anxiety, chronic kidney patients, a general population*

INTRODUCTION

Chronic kidney disease, also called, end-stage renal disease is becoming one of the major public health concerns all over the world. The prevalence of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) is expected to rise around 7% of the whole World population and this will cost about 1.1 trillion dollars in medical expenditures (Lysaght, 2002). According to the Turkish Public Health Institute (2014), the prevalence of chronic kidney disease in Turkey is 15.7% which means 7.5 million people have been diagnosed with chronic kidney disease. The same source indicates increasing number of hemodialysis patients stating the number increased 3.6 times from 1995 to 2014 (The Ministry of Health of Turkey, 2014). Since there is no cure for CKD, kidney transplant or dialysis are the most common treatment methods. Hemodialysis, although generally provided at hemodialysis centers at hospitals it is also possible to get home dialysis but research indicates more positive outcomes of hemodialysis in hospitals (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, 2016). Besides facing chronic physical health condition, although rarely timely and properly diagnosed, chronic kidney patients face several psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. Despite poor chances to diagnose psychological problems of CKD patients, depression is the most common psychological problem among CKD patients (Bossola et al., 2010) and it is found to be very much prevalent among CKD patients, affecting up to 20% of CKD patients even before the initiation of dialysis (Hedayati et al., 2009). At the same time, there is a bidirectional relationship between depression and

chronic medical illnesses due to the health risk behaviors and changes in the brain caused by depression which, in turn, increases the risk for chronic medical illnesses (Katon, 2011). Besides physical changes in chronic kidney patients (Goldberg, 2010) which might underlie the development of depression, other possible reasons for depression development among chronic illness patients are related to experiencing multiple pain (Dworkin et al., 1990), and stress due the change of lifestyle (Prince et al., 2007). Additionally, expected and commonly occurring decrease in the overall quality of life of chronic kidney patients makes patients more prone to develop psychological problems such as depression and anxiety (Ottaviani et al., 2016). Chronic kidney patients report experiencing symptoms which match with the symptoms of major depression such as, anhedonia and feelings of sadness, helplessness, guilt, hopelessness, which are usually accompanied by changes in sleep, appetite, and libido (Finkelstein, 2016). Furthermore, chronic kidney patients report experiencing high anxiety levels during hemodialysis treatment, because it enables and triggers their thinking about the long-term health condition, survival and early mortality, financial issues, job status and fear of losing a job and getting the treatment (Acar, 2007). Anxiety, as an emotional reaction which is primarily characterized by feelings of tension and physical changes, affects the cognitive process (Cates et al., 1996). Physical symptoms of anxiety among CKD patients are shown in chest pain, sweating, breathlessness, palpitations with the strong cognitive component in a form of the fear of dying. Given the multiplicity of issues to worry about and strong apprehension feeling due to the dialysis

process; being hooked to hemodialysis machine working as an artificial kidney, with an establishment vascular access on their arms, monitoring the dialysate, the fluid cleaning unwanted waste products from patient's blood and, abundance of medications like analgesic, antimicrobial, hypoglycemic, diuretic, antihypertensive, erythropoietin (Sari, 2016) and potential medical complications (Sousa, 2008), chronic kidney patients face multiple physical strains and psychological challenges. Chronic kidney patients are usually very weak following hemodialysis treatment; depend on others to take them to and from hospitals or private clinics, thus requiring care and support during and after the treatment. This might be additional vulnerability chronic patients feel besides the illness itself, making them vulnerable and prone to develop depression and anxiety (Kocabaşoğlu, 2004). With this study, we aim at investigating the level of depression and anxiety among chronic kidney patients and the healthy control group.

Methodology

Sample

This study has been done on a sample of 120 participants, comprising two groups, experimental and control. The experimental group consisted of 60 chronic kidney patients on hemodialysis (27 females and 33 males) at Inegöl Hospital in Turkey, and the equivalent of 60 people in control group (from different parts of Inegöl city) as representatives of the general healthy

population. All participants were over 50 years of age. The convenient sampling method was used for participants' selection with the diagnosis of chronic kidney disease diagnosis and no chronic kidney diagnosis as a primary selection.

Procedure

After contacting the administration of Inegöl Public Hospital and acquiring permission to contact hemodialysis patients, chronic kidney patients were approached. Following ethical consideration, researcher (Baha Kurulmaz) found 60 CKD patients, explained study aims and objective (ensuring confidentiality) inquired their willingness to participate in the study, after what they all agreed. Given their health condition, the researcher chose to ask participants all questions, one by one, and circled their responses. Participation was voluntary and all went well. After collecting the data from experimental group, researcher reached 60 people, older than 50 years of age (in order to match experimental group), explained study aim and asked them to participate in the study. After they agreed, researcher again (to follow the same procedure) asked participants all questions, one by one, and circled their responses. Collected data has been entered into SPSS 20, which was used to analyze and evaluate data collected.

Research questions and hypothesis

This study aimed to investigate depression and anxiety levels among chronic kidney patients, experimental, and healthy control group.

Hypotheses

H1: Chronic kidney patients will score higher on depression scale compared to the general population

H2: Chronic kidney patients will score higher on anxiety scale compared to the general population.

Measurements

To measure depression and anxiety level of participants, two scales were used, Beck Depression Inventory and level in study groups we used Beck Depression Inventory BDI and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory STAI. BDI (created by A. T. Beck), is a 21-item self-report test presented in a multiple-choice format, which measures presence and degree of depression in adolescents and adults consistent with the DSM-5, evaluating 21 symptoms of depression, 15 of which cover emotions, four cover behavioral changes, and six somatic symptoms. Each answer is scored on a scale value of 0-3. Between 1-10 these ups and downs are considered normal, between 11-16 mild mood disturbances, between 17-20 borderline clinical depression, between 21-30 moderate depression, between 31-40 severe depression and over 40 extreme depression.

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI, Spilberger, 1989) is a commonly used measure of trait and state anxiety. Form TX-2 is the most popular version which is also used in this research. It has 20 items for assessing trait anxiety. Trait anxiety items include: "I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter" and "I am content; I am a steady person." All

items are rated on a 4-point scale (e.g., from “Almost Never” to “Almost Always”). Higher scores indicate greater anxiety. Considering our participants’ background we used Turkish versions of both inventories, translated, adopted and already used in similar studies in Turkey. BDI has been adapted to Turkish language by Hisli (1989) and STAI has been adapted to Turkish language by Öner ve Le Comte (1983).

Results

Given our research aim, investigating depression and anxiety levels, central tendency measures, namely mean scores were, whose differences were further tested using t-test. Below are tables with of mean scores results and t-test results on depression level among both, experimental and control groups.

Participants	N	Mean	Std.	Std. Error
			Deviation	Mean
Depression total/ Experimental group	60	18,5000	7,31031	,94376
Depr total/ Control group	60	12,6667	5,74210	,74130

Table 1. Depression level, mean scores for both groups.

Table one shows depression level mean scores and standard deviation of both, experimental and control group. Depression level mean scores of experimental group is 18.500 while the mean of control group is 12.667.

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Depres. total	1,898	,171	4,861 4,861	118 111,731	,000 ,000	5,8333 5,8333	1,20009 1,20009	3,45684 3,45545	8,20983 8,21121

Table 2: T-test scores on depression for equality of means, both groups

Table two shows t-test results for depression for both control and experimental group. As we can see, sig.(2-tailed) the value is ,000 indicating statistically significant difference in depression scores between two groups.

Anxiety levels were also measured and results are shown in the table below.

Participants	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Anxiety total/ Experimental group	60	40,7667	10,77091	1,39052
Anxiety total/ Control group	60	32,4000	7,80309	1,00737

Table 3: Anxiety level, mean scores for both groups

This table shows mean scores and standard deviation for anxiety level of both experimental and control groups. As we can see, anxiety mean scores of the experimental group is 40, 7667 while mean scores results for control group is 32.4. Significance was further tested with t -test and table

below shows results.

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig.	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Anxiety	8,332	,005	4,873	118	,000	8,36667	1,71707	4,96639	
total			4,873	107,556	,000	8,36667	1,71707	4,96297	

Table 4: T-test results for both groups

In the independent t-test testing, two unrelated groups on the same continuum were compared. As we can see, 005 which is equal to 005 which means that the variances are at the limit of homogeneity, but in the sig.(2-tailed) the value is ,000, what indicates a statistically significant difference between two groups when anxiety levels were compared.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate depression and anxiety levels among chronic kidney patients. We used quasi-experimental research design whereby, from a total of 120 participants, we had 60 chronic kidney patients in the experimental group and 60 from general (no kidney failure diagnosis) in the control group. To measure depression Beck Depression Inventory and The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory were used to measure depression and anxiety levels. Since our aim was to investigate depression and anxiety levels among people with chronic kidney disease and no chronic kidney disease, which were the only selection criteria and no additional demographic information was inquired from participants.

Depression level in among chronic kidney patients and control group

As hypothesized, we found higher depression levels in the experimental group, among chronic kidney patients when compared to control group. Results indicate depression mean scores of experimental group 18.5, and 12.66 in control group. Results of t-test indicate $p = .000$ which less than 0.05 indicating statistically significant difference in means results between the groups. We can here say that the average of the experimental group from BDI match the criteria of depression according to BDI scoring. Our results match similar previous research and studies which also showed higher depression rates among CKD.

Chronic illnesses are difficult to cope with. From the beginning to the end,

chronic diseases indicate many challenges and problems for a patient with chronic illness diagnosis. Life quality of people with chronic kidney failure is negatively affected due to serious physical changes, losing strength, fear of death, fear of losing a job. CKD patients are mostly treated with hemodialysis, scheduled by the hemodialysis services and as expected, their lives are shaped by the disease, its treatment, and outcome. Several similar studies are in line with this study. For example, Chang et al., (2013) conducted a study with 270 CKD patients and found 61 individuals met the criteria for depression based on the Taiwanese Depression Questionnaire, which translates to a crude prevalence of 22.6%. Also, Stasiak et al., (2014) conducted a study Brasil 128 CKD patients and also found 22.6% of hemodialysis patients suffering from depression.

Boing et al., (2012) conducted a study on 1720 chronic kidney disease patients and found 16.2% prevalence of depression of among women, older individuals, widowed or divorced, and poor ones, and even after adjustment for confounders, the prevalence of depression was 1.44 times higher among those reporting one chronic disease and 2.25 times higher among those reporting two or more diseases when compared to those with no diseases. Thus, chronic disease(s) are factors in depression alongside socio-economic factors, family factors, income and age that possibly contribute to the development of depression.

Egede (2007) conducted a study in the United States, comparing one-year prevalence of depression in 10,500 patients who have chronic diseases, matching them with a healthy control group and results point that patients

were three times more likely to be depressed. Depression rate was two times more present among patients with hypertension, diabetes, coronary artery disease, and heart failure while the rate is three times higher among end-stage renal disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cerebrovascular disease patients (Egede, 2007). Studies also indicate more depression among children suffering from chronic kidney disease. For example, Kogon et al., (2013) conducted a cross-sectional on 44 patients aged 9–18 years with chronic kidney disease and found 30% overall prevalence of depression, indicating that depression is a common issue even for children with chronic kidney disease. Based on the study, we might say that not only adults but also children might face depression due to chronic kidney disease and its outcomes.

A possible explanation of high prevalence of depression among chronic kidney disease patients lies in the fact that kidney disease is very challenging disease requiring serious, ongoing and demanding treatment techniques which might be factors contributing to patients depression level. Chronic kidney disease is most commonly efficiently treated with kidney transplantation however, studies state depression might continue even after the transplantation, as demonstrated by Müller and his colleague (2015) study. Similarly, Corruble et al., (2010) conducted a study with 390 chronic kidney disease patients from waiting-list for kidney transplantation whose depression levels were measured in three periods of time; when they are added to the list, 12 months later, 24 months later and 3 months after transplantation, and found that depressive symptoms progressively

increased before transplantation and showed a marked decrease after transplantation.

Given the chronic nature of illness itself, necessary and requiring treatment procedures, patients with chronic kidney disease must face serious life changes and constraints. Although the best treatment for chronic kidney failure is kidney transplantation the number of transplants is low and many patients end up on waiting-list, patients sometimes wait for years to be transplanted. This kidney transplant waiting process poses serious mental health threats appearing in a form of anxiety, negative thinking, pessimism, hopelessness, which could be serving as roots for depression development. Thus, it is no surprise that depression is not only common but most common mental health condition among chronic kidney disease patients. Besides, patients' individual and social /professional life is negatively affected by the disease itself and the schedule for a dialysis process. The average schedule of a patient is 3 days per week and spending 4 hours in hospitals or dialysis services per each day, what negatively interferes with patients daily functioning, preventing patient to have full social and occupational activities. At the same time, being at the hospital and hospital environment itself might influence patients thinking, reminding them of their illness and inability to have a normal fulfilling life and even the fear for their future if they do not receive treatment. This might be also the reason that patients lose their hope and become hopeless, factors underling depression.

At the same time, chronic kidney disease patients lose strength and face having serious physical changes and constrain in their bodies. Patient's

inability to do the things he/she used to do before the illnesses might instill negative thinking about themselves and their capabilities or even the fear of losing more strength, making them vulnerable and necessitating help from others, making them dependent. Being dependent on others, after someone was able to function independently, is a significant factor which might negatively contribute the state of mind (especially man). Independence and physical strength is especially important to men since most cultures and traditions expect a man to take care of others rather than to be taken care of. Besides depression, facing chronic illness diagnosis leads to anxiety because diagnosis indicates a new phase of life with a serious, chronic condition and disease, which is restraining in nature and with troubled and uncertain future. Inability to picture the future and have many questions about the disease is natural but might be anxiety provoking. Uncertainty and anxiety might be factors which might turn into depression after a while. However, it should also be noted that there are other factors which contribute to depression development which we did not include as variables in our study, factors such as, presence of other chronic or non chronic illnesses, gender, marital status, socio-economic status and income, family relationships etc, which could also have played a role in depression level among our participants

Anxiety levels among chronic kidney patients and the control group

As hypothesized, chronic kidney patients scored higher on anxiety in comparison to the general population, control group. Anxiety levels mean

scores for the experimental group is 40.76 and mean scores of 32.30 in the control group. T-test results indicate $p = .000$ which is less than 0.05, indicating the statistically significant difference between experimental and control group. Thus, the second hypothesis is also accepted showing higher anxiety levels among chronic kidney patients when compared to control group.

Ottaviani et al., (2016) conducted a similar study with 100 chronic kidney disease patients in Sao Paulo, Brazil, finding 33.0% of chronic renal patients diagnosed with anxiety. Theofilou (2011), conducted a similar study with 144 patients and found women presented significantly higher scores than men in trait anxiety measured by STAI II.

Müller and colleagues (2015) concluded anxiety to be surprisingly constant after and before the transplantation. Corruble et al., (2010) measured anxiety levels in three periods of time, when they are added to the list, 12 months later, 24 months later and 3 months after transplantation on 390 chronic kidney disease patients from waiting-list for kidney transplantation and found that anxiety symptoms progressively increased before transplantation and showed a marked decrease after transplantation.

In addition, Lee (2013) has conducted a study with 208 pre-dialysis chronic kidney patients and found 27.6% anxiety prevalence among these patients. Cukor and colleagues (2008) with their study show 45.7% of chronic kidney disease patients have met the criteria for anxiety disorder, with specific phobias of 26.6% as most prevalent one followed by 21% of panic disorder. Besides, chronic kidney disease interferes with other bodily functions.

For example, Turkish Kidney Foundation (2012) indicate sexual dysfunction among chronic kidney disease patients, what further creates marital problems, pointing to 70% of male patients having impotence issues and around 50% having marital problems. So, chronic kidney disease is also related to sexual problems marital problems, which additionally complicate already vulnerable physical and mental health of chronic kidney patients. Although we did not investigate these variables, it is possible that they could have influenced study results.

Hence, in line with previous studies, the prevalence of anxiety is quite high among chronic kidney disease patients. Facing chronic illness diagnosis requires different coping skills. Poor or lack of effective coping strategies and skills might be anxiety provoking. Adaption to this new stressful situation is hard, not only for the patient but also his/her family members as well. Disease outcomes like physical changes, itching, sleeping problems, and sexual problems cannot be controlled by the patients, which in turn might make patients anxious, lonely and hopeless. Feeling lonely and isolated pushes patients away from family members and friends, because patients might be feeling uncomfortable to talk about the illness and its outcomes in order to avoid worrying family members. Chronic illness diagnosis usually induces fear and anxiety due to the fear about the future, wondering what will happen and become of them. At the same time, some studies indicate about 57 % of depression cases showed evidence of comorbid anxiety, while only 28% of those with clinically significant anxiety had concurrent depression. So, comorbidity of mental health disorders is common for

patients with chronic disease (Braam et al., (2014).

Still, we ought to acknowledge the possibility of other factors contributing to anxiety development like genetics, gender, age, life quality, family and social support, which we did not include in our study, which might be having a role in our study results and should be included in the future study. Family support and lack of it plays a significant role in disease recovery and mental health problems prevention. Family members play a very important role and also should be included to help chronic kidney disease patients because the entire family is somehow influenced by the disease.

Conclusion

Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health disorders to be found among chronic kidney disease patients. Possible reasons for anxiety and depression development among chronic kidney disease patients lies partially in the disease itself, partially in treatment techniques commonly used to treat this condition and partially in disease's overall aftermath. Given the prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders among chronic kidney disease patients hospital services should offer psychological support and help to patients suffering from chronic kidney disease as well as their family members and some sort of holistic service. Besides diminishing and treating chronic illness and relieve negative outcomes of disease and its treatment, a holistic approach could be very useful in helping patients and family members cope on individual and group level.

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THE VALIDITY EXPLORATION OF GENERAL PROCRASTINATION SCALE (LAY, 1986)

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Abstract

Procrastination is defined as the act of “putting off or delaying an action to a later time.”(Bachrach, 2012).

Measuring procrastination is important for better understanding of this so common habit, but also, for diagnosing and therapy of it.

Lay (1986) matched procrastination with traits, big 5 theory, perfectionism, anxiety, agitation, dejection, and self-discrepancy etc. His scale General Procrastination Scale (GPS) consists of 20 items. Responses across items are summed to obtain a single score, and according to the instructions of GPS, the scale is one-factor only scale, with Cronbach alpha of 0,82 (Lay, 1986) and a retest reliability of 0,80 (Ferrari, 1989).

The purpose of this research is to explore psychometric characteristics of procrastination scale by Lay (1986). For this purpose, the scale was applied to 480 undergraduate students. Results of this study confirmed the evidence of high reliability of scale ($\alpha = 0.876$). Factorial analysis at first showed five factors that were not interpretable but rotated factorial analysis by employing Equamaxrotation with Kaiser's Normalization, showed clearer structure. According to this, there are 5 components of this scale: Factor 1. **Good planning**: items 8, 14, 15, 18, and 20.

Factor 2. **Delaying**: items 5,9,11,12 and 19. Factor 3. **Doing things in last minute**: items 16 and 17. Factor4. **Good time management**: items 3,4,6 and 13. Factor 5: **Poor time management**: items 1,2,7 and 10.

Key words: Procrastination, validity, reliability, factorial analysis.

Introduction

We can say that procrastination is defined as putting off, delaying tasks or postponing activities as a psychological term in dictionaries generally. People who postpone can change important activities to the less important activities. They prefer to delay crucial activities to complete for a later time. Also, people who procrastinate don't have any logical reason to postpone or to put activities off. However, they prefer to complete activities which aren't crucial to do. Even though doing less crucial actions or activities give them some disadvantages, they don't fulfill main duty or task (Saulsman& Nathan, 2008). If a person procrastinates, he/she can postpone with thousands of reasons. People who procrastinate generally wait until last time to complete a task unnecessarily.

On the other hand, procrastination is connected with the personality of a person, habit and ability. According to Steel (2010), there is a relationship between personality traits and procrastination such as dimension of conscientiousness of the Big Five instrument. Conscientiousness is negatively correlated with procrastination in terms that if a person have a a high level of conscientiousness, he/she is less prone to procrastinate because a person with high level of conscientiousness has also a high level of controlling their impulses, diligence, sense of commitment, respect, continuity, and well time management. We can say that people who have a high level of conscientiousness are hard-working at their occupation

(Whitbourne, 2012).

Procrastination is also almost common human characteristic. However, procrastination gives bad outcome to people's life. People who procrastinate can be fired or they can lose communication with their family and friends because they have a problem to finish their duty or tasks on time or they don't fulfill their responsibilities. "The tendency to procrastinate also undermines their self-confidence, convincing them that they are lazy or worthless." (Haederle, 1992).

Nowadays, there is no person who doesn't know procrastination from its own experience. It isn't based on how well at using of time a person is or how dutiful person is. We could say that everybody has the tendency of procrastination, but not all people are procrastinators, just as we can say for every psychological trait.

When a person prefers to put things off or delay his/her duties instead of completing his or her assignments or tasks it can cause negative effects on many aspects of a person's life. Procrastination can affect a person's accomplishments badly (Cherry, 2014). In today's life, most people procrastinate, but according to research "20 percent of U.S. men and women are chronic procrastinators." Those people generally postpone in their home, work school and relationship. Also for these 20 percent of people choose procrastination as their lifestyle (Ferrari, 2010). Also, for Ferrari, people who are in the 20 percent are more prone to have clinical depression or phobias. Those people don't like to complete hard tasks instead they knowingly look for the turnoff. People who procrastinate doing things

better when they have lots of things to do, but it is just a reason for them to procrastinate more.

In the literature, we can find the following negative effects of procrastination:

- *Higher levels of consumption of alcohol* affect people in a negative way that procrastination suggests it, between those people who drink already. Procrastinators drink more than they tend to appearance of generalized problems in self-regulation (Cherry, 2014).
- *Destroy Health and Immune System:* Procrastination can affect some important health problems to occur; it is a behavioral style that may increase defensiveness to sickness and several negative health outcomes (Pychyl, 2008). For many reasons, procrastination is not good for people's health. But delaying something develops higher levels of stress and all those stress hormones release through people's body, tiring it out faster. And this situation put people at risk for inappropriate health because they are just as likely to postpone seeking treatment for medical problems as they are to postpone everything else. In addition, procrastination makes their immune system weak. They cannot sleep properly at night (Marano, 2003). College students who procrastinate have a poor immune system so they have more colds and flu and also they have more gastrointestinal problems (Cherry, 2014).
- Harm teamwork, private relationship and/or social relationship- as

a procrastinator, people delay something all the time, but on the other hand, they have their responsibility. They can make other people disappointed that who believe in them such as their friends, family, co-workers and fellow students. If they continue to delay and turn in a project late or submit until last minute, they can lose their relationship with loved one, friends, or co-workers.

- The igher level of stress: all procrastination occurs at an emotional level, not a logical level. However, people are more inclined to fear what is first concern and people's emotions have not enough to plan for the future. For this reason, people easily delay something because they feel very nervous or tired in order to complete the tasks. However, in long-term this delaying makes them more distress and worried, but at this time their emotions do not think it at all. There is a finding of stress level and procrastination. Students who were procrastinators are stated less sickness and lower distress levels than non-procrastinators. When procrastinators reported higher levels of stress and sickness, this altered dramatically by the end of the term (Cherry, 2014).
- *More Discomfort:* On the disadvantages, procrastination can also produce distinct kind of discomfort. Generally, the more people delay more they might sense guilty or ashamed of their attitudes. They may feel more worried, because a task is getting worse and more overburdened the longer they delay it. They may show

hopeless, as the longer they do not try it more they consider they cannot handle it (Saulsman& Nathan, 2008).

- **Affects mental health:** Procrastination can have a very negative impact on people's physiological wellbeing. People's relationship with their friends and their family can be affected negatively because of procrastination so that situation can harm their mental health. In addition, they can feel upset, anxiousness and uncomfortable, when they delay anything.
- **Insomnia:** People who are systematically procrastinators can also delay their sleep. People who procrastinate are more likely to have sleep disorders. In other case, people who procrastinate generally have many things to do, but they cannot organize to complete it which is their problem. For this reason, going to bed while they have many things to do so in that case, they detect nervously and worry about these unfinished things. As a result, they are not able to sleep properly and effectively. Insomnia can be an issue for those people. However, people fear about life and all its complications and deal with them. They can sleep well if they do this. The most appropriate way to deal with insomnia caused by procrastination is controlling one's life and trying to stop delaying. If still, these people cannot achieve to procrastinate, they need to get help and support (Saulsman& Nathan, 2008).

When it comes about the origin of the procrastination, we could say that nurture is dominant. “People who procrastinate are not born as procrastinators. Procrastination is a kind of learned in the family. It is one of response to an authoritarian parenting style.” When parents control their children all the time harshly, those children cannot have the skills to manage themselves (Marano,2003).

If people postpone something consciously because it is logical to put off some duties, in this situation they are not procrastinating or putting something off. The reason to procrastinate is that they have other things to do more important or they wait for the best moment to finish their task. “Procrastination is when people planned or felt that they should have done the thing earlier, and then delayed anyway. In short, it is putting off despite expecting to be worse off.” (Steel, 2010).

Since procrastination is a common trait, but also considering the fact that being procrastinator can cause many unwanted effects in daily life, as the goal of this research, we wanted to explore the construct of procrastination, and psychometric characteristics of the widely used scale for measuring of procrastination. The final intention would be being able to measure procrastination and to distinct procrastinators from people who are not.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to explore psychometric characteristics of

procrastination scale by Lay (1986), as well as to explore the construct of procrastination among students.

Methodology

Participants

The sample consisted out of 480 students from different universities. The participants were enlisted from Thr Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Faculty of Economics and Business Management, and Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, such as Medical school and Pharmacy school. We used the heterogeneous sample in order to explore factorial structure in the most convenient way.

Gender structure of the sample can be seen from table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of gender among the participants of the research

GENDER					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	227	47,3	47,3	47,3
	female	253	52,7	52,7	100,0
	Total	480	100,0	100,0	

Instruments

In this study, General Procrastination Scale was used (Lay, 1986).
Clarry Lay, PhD, is the author of this questionnaire, the professor of psychology at York University in Toronto. Lay made lots of research about procrastination. He matched procrastination with traits, big 5 theory,

perfectionism, anxiety, agitation, dejection, and self-discrepancy etc. In his research, General procrastination scale consists of 20 items. Responses across items are summed to obtain a single score. The scale has a Cronbach alpha of 0,82 (Lay, 1986) and a retest reliability of 0,80 (Ferrari, 1989) Points are given based on five points where 1 means extremely uncharacteristic and 5 states extremely characteristics. The 5 point item (1=low, 5=high) version of the scale was used since it yields higher item variance and high scores reflect procrastinators behavior. This version was found effective at measuring characteristics of procrastinators across a variety of situations. For example, Lay (1986) reported construct validity information such that GP scores were related to disorganization, tardiness, and independent of the need for achievement, energy level and self-esteem (Ferrari, 1992). The GPS has been evidenced to be a reliable and valid measure with several relevant constructs. GPS can be conducted on both adults and adolescents. There isn't any required time set to complete GPS, but it is estimated that 10-15 minutes will be enough to complete the test because test questions are easy and understandable. There is an instruction at the beginning of the test about how to respond questions. Participants are requested to answer questions regarding how they feel these days by including the day of application of GPS.

The standardization and related studies of GPS were conducted by Lay (1986). This paper considered three studies designed to examine procrastinators behavior. In Study I, a general form (G) of a true-false *procrastination* scale was created. This form was based on an earlier version of the scale

containing parallel forms A and B. Procrastination was positively related to measures of disorganization and independent of *need-achievement*, *energy level*, and *self-esteem*. High scorers on the *procrastination* scale were more likely to return their completed inventory late. Procrastination was unrelated to grade-point average ($R = -.10$). In Study II, subjects completed Form G of the *procrastination* scale and a variation of Little's (1983) Personal Projects Questionnaire. Based on ratings of their personal projects, procrastinators and non-procrastinators were distinguished in a number of ways, foremost being the non-procrastinator's more positive response to the project dimension of stress and the procrastinator's greater sensitivity to how enjoyable the project was in terms of time spent. In Study III, after completing a personality inventory, air-passengers awaiting their flight departure were asked to take an envelope with them and to mail it back on a designated date. Procrastinators were less accurate in doing so than were non-procrastinators. Various aspects of procrastinatory behavior were discussed, including a reconsideration of the defining of the construct.

1.5 Procedure and Research Design;

The research is made on a convenient sample of students. Students were informed that their participation was voluntary and confidential. All students were ensured that their results will be used only for the scientific purpose and any of the private information will not be shared with a third person. All completed questionnaires were then collected by a researcher. For the analysis of data SPSS is used.

Results and discussion

Item Analyse of Procrastination Scale

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of all items of the scale

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before	480	1.00	5.00	3.2438	1.82906
I do not do assignments until just before they are to be handed in	480	1.00	5.00	3.0646	1.29315
When I am finished with a library book, I return it right away regardless of the date it is due	480	1.00	5.00	2.6083	1.41448
When it is time to get up in the morning, I most often get right out of bed	480	1.00	5.00	2.9375	1.48768
A letter may sit for days after I write it before mailing it	480	1.00	5.00	2.3292	1.22431
I generally return phone calls promptly	480	1.00	5.00	2.3417	1.30357
Even with jobs that require little else except sitting down and doing them, I find they seldom get done for days	480	1.00	5.00	2.9542	1.20800
I usually make decisions as soon as possible	480	1.00	5.00	2.4417	1.21092
I generally delay before starting on work I have to do	480	1.00	5.00	2.9229	1.26800
I usually have to rush to complete a task on time	480	1.00	5.00	3.3979	1.21662
When preparing to go out, I am seldom caught having to do something at the last minute	480	1.00	5.00	2.7479	1.33720
In preparing for some deadline, I often waste time by doing other things	480	1.00	5.00	3.3229	1.21142
I prefer to leave early for an appointment	480	1.00	5.00	2.3063	1.29877
I usually start an assignment shortly after it is assigned	480	1.00	5.00	2.8063	1.20799
I often have a task finished sooner than necessary	480	1.00	5.00	2.7229	1.17396
I always seem to end up shopping for birthday or Christmas gifts at the last minute	480	1.00	5.00	2.9458	1.27984
I usually buy even an essential item at the last minute	480	1.00	5.00	2.8417	1.27114
I usually accomplish all the things I plan to do in a day	480	1.00	5.00	2.6271	1.18643
I am continually saying I will do it tomorrow	480	1.00	5.00	3.1521	1.29870
I usually take care of all the tasks I have to do before I settle down and relax for the evening	480	1.00	5.00	2.3167	1.20183
Valid N (listwise)	480				

From the table above, we can see that total range of all items is as maximal as possible (from 1 to 5). The theoretical mean for all items is 3, and as we can see, all items Means do fall into the range from 2 to 4, so if we take as a criterion of discriminativity the range and the means of the items, we can say that discriminativity of all items is satisfying,

Table 2. Item-total statistics for all items

Item-Total Statistics						
		Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1	I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before	52.7875	101.270	-.122	.199	.736
2	I do not do assignments until just before they are to be handed in	52.9042	90.195	.321	.185	.699
3	When I am finished with a library book, I return it right away regardless of the date it is due	53.3604	91.099	.246	.130	.706
4	When it is time to get up in the morning, I most often get right out of bed	53.0313	89.972	.268	.127	.704
5	A letter may sit for days after I write it before mailing it	53.6396	90.803	.319	.169	.699
6	I generally return phone calls promptly	53.6271	93.182	.193	.119	.710
7	Even with jobs that require little else except sitting down and doing them, I find they seldom get done for days	53.0146	92.344	.256	.190	.705
8	I usually make decisions as soon as possible	53.5271	91.507	.293	.179	.701

9	I generally delay before starting on work I have to do	53.0458	88.027	.425	.304	.689
10	I usually have to rush to complete a task on time	52.5708	94.383	.164	.174	.712
11	When preparing to go out, I am seldom caught having to do something at the last minute	53.2208	99.571	-.060	.134	.734
12	In preparing for some deadline, I often waste time by doing other things	52.6458	90.045	.358	.328	.696
13	I prefer to leave early for an appointment	53.6625	92.629	.217	.167	.708
14	I usually start an assignment shortly after it is assigned	53.1625	87.105	.496	.400	.683
15	I often have a task finished sooner than necessary	53.2458	87.827	.479	.445	.686
16	I always seem to end up shopping for birthday or Christmas gifts at the last minute	53.0229	93.158	.201	.221	.710
17	I usually buy even an essential item at the last minute	53.1271	87.481	.448	.375	.687
18	I usually accomplish all the things I plan to do in a day	53.3417	89.136	.411	.301	.691
19	I am continually saying I will do it tomorrow	52.8167	86.889	.462	.411	.685
20	I usually take care of all the tasks I have to do before I settle down and relax for the evening	53.6521	91.050	.316	.225	.699

Although discriminativity of items is satisfying, the item-total correlations of all items are not that good. Items 1,3,4,6,7,8,10,11,13, and 16 (grey), have item-total correlations that are below the given limit of 0.3, and those that have extremely problematic item-total correlations are items 1

and 11, and those items will be additionally checked during the further psychometrical testing.

In addition, those items (1 and 11), if deleted, the reliability of the instrument would be increased, so as the conclusion, we might say that those items should be revised in a manner that they should be replaced with other items, or improved considering the content of items itself.

The Reliability of Procrastination Scale

Table 4: Reliability of Procrastination Scale

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.713	20

According to Cronbach's alpha reliability, our result was 0.713 which is slightly below the limit of 0.8, but still acceptable, considering that other researchers report on different reliability coefficients, such as $\alpha=0,82$ (Lay, 1986) and a retest reliability of 0,80 (Ferrari, 1989b).

Validity of Procrastination Scale

Most of the previous studies on this questionnaire (Lay's Procrastination scale) were consistent about the fact that this is unidimensional scale as Lay (1986) initially proposed and which was confirmed by some researchers (Bustinza, Cema, García, Díaz-Morales, & Ferrari, 2005; Díaz-Morales et al., 2006). But recently we can find some studies that imply on the fact that this scale might be multidimensional, actually two-dimensional, as it was found in Turkish sample (Ferrari, Özer, & Demir, 2009), and those factors were Negative aspects of arousal delays and Positive aspects of

arousal delays. While in Italian sample (Mariani & Ferrari, 2012, according to Argiropoulou M. I. and Ferrari, J. R. 2015), it was found that it is two-dimensional with factors: Tendency to postpone tasks (6 items) and Getting tasks done on time (7 items).

Argiropoulou M. I. and Ferrari, J. R. (2015) found that this scale could be two-dimensional, and they explained two factors: Delay and Procrastination domains.

Other scales that measure procrastination offer a different solution based on their factorial analysis results. Yockey and Kralowec (2015, according to Harrington, 2005), mentioned that procrastination has two dimensions: “frequency of procrastination,” which measures how often students procrastinate on various academic tasks, and “reasons for procrastination. In this research, the initial factorial analysis extracted five factors, that totally explained 48,22% of the variance, but this matrix was not interpretable, so we tried the other possible solutions when it comes about the exploration of the validity.

Table 5: Validity of Procrastination Scale

Table 8: Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3,826	19,128	19,128	3,826	19,128	19,128
2	2,276	11,382	30,510	2,276	11,382	30,510
3	1,227	6,137	36,647	1,227	6,137	36,647
4	1,205	6,027	42,673	1,205	6,027	42,673
5	1,110	5,551	48,224	1,110	5,551	48,224

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The most interpretable solution was when the number of factors was fixed to five, and with Equamax rotation with Kaiser’s normalisation. The rotated

matrix can be seen in table 6.

*Table 6:*Factor analysis with rotation included of the Procrastination Scale

Rotated Component Matrix^a					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before	-,164	-,252	,024	-,047	,691
I do not do assignments until just before they are to be handed in	,343	,148	,312	-,141	,369
When I am finished with a library book, I return it right away regardless of the date it is due	,042	,013	,091	,624	,055
When it is time to get up in the morning, I most often get right out of bed	,167	,021	,117	,497	,013
A letter may sit for days after I write it before mailing it	,347	,362	,225	-,056	-,116
I generally return phone calls promptly	,072	,098	-,062	,580	-,141
Even with jobs that require little else except sitting down and doing them, I find they seldom get done for days	,159	,442	,037	-,066	,481
I usually make decisions as soon as possible	,467	,212	-,122	,232	-,084
I generally delay before starting on work I have to do	,344	,504	,300	-,056	,080
I usually have to rush to complete a task on time	-,049	,233	,024	,046	,692
When preparing to go out, I am seldom caught having to do something at the last minute	,333	-,676	,140	-,069	-,042
In preparing for some deadline, I often waste time by doing other things	,080	,655	,276	,041	,138
I prefer to leave early for an appointment	,158	-,104	,012	,627	-,030
I usually start an assignment shortly after it is assigned	,543	,196	,190	,340	-,024
I often have a task finished sooner than necessary	,615	,171	,124	,342	-,131
I always seem to end up shopping for birthday or Christmas gifts at the last minute	-,154	-,006	,785	,041	-,020
I usually buy even an essential item at the last minute	,101	,144	,787	,120	,111
I usually accomplish all the things I plan to do in a day	,703	,033	,087	,117	-,027
I am continually saying I will do it tomorrow	,144	,534	,498	,109	,104
I usually take care of all the tasks I have to do before I settle down and relax for the evening	,616	-,175	-,036	,214	,142

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Equamax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

Based on this table, we can say that their procrastination is not unidimensional trait, or, that this scale is not unidimensional, but multidimensional, and that it measures (consists out of the) five factors, which, based on the content of the items could be grouped and named as follows:

- *component 1*: good planning,
- *component 2*: delaying
- *component 3*: doing things in last minute
- *component 4*: well time management
- *component 5*: poor time management.

Component 1 consists of the five items, and they could be named as **good planning**.

Table 7.a. Factor I: Good planning

NO	Item	r
8	I usually make decisions as soon as possible	0,467
14	I usually start an assignment shortly after it is assigned.	0,543
15	I often have a task finished sooner than necessary.	0,615
18	I usually accomplish all the things I plan to do in a day.	0,703
20	I usually take care of all the tasks I have to do before I settle down and relax for the evening.	0,616

Component 2 consists of the five items, and they could be named as **delaying**.

Table 7.b. Factor II: Delaying

NO	Item	r
5	A letter may sit for days after I write it before mailing it	0,362
9	I generally delay before starting on work I have to do.	0,504
11	When preparing to go out, I am seldom caught having to do something at the last minute.	0,676
12	In preparing for some deadline, I often waste time by doing other things.	0,655
19	I am continually saying I will do it tomorrow.	0,534

Component 3 consists of the two items, and they could be named as **doing things in the last minute**.

Table 7.c. Factor III: Doing things in last minute

NO	Item	r
16	I always seem to end up shopping for birthday or Christmas gifts at the last minute	0,785
17	I usually buy even an essential item at the last minute	0,787

Component 4 consists of the four items, and they could be named as **good time management**.

Table 7.d Factor IV: Good time management

NO	Item	r
3	When I am finished with a library book, I return it right away regardless of the date it is due.	0,624
4	When it is time to get up in the morning, I most often get right out of bed	0,497
6	I generally return phone calls promptly	0,580
13	I prefer to leave early for an appointment	0,627

Component 5 consists of the four items, and they could be named as **poor time management**.

Table 7.c. Factor V: Poor time management

NO	Item	r
1	I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before	0,691
2	I do not do assignments until just before they are to be handed in	0,369
7	Even with jobs that require little else except sitting down and doing them, I find they seldom get done for days	0,481
10	I usually have to rush to complete a task on time	0,692

In comparison to other research findings, we can say that our factorial analysis does not match to any other which raises the question about the validity of this instrument. In the conclusion, we can say that the validity of this instrument needs to be checked further with the regard of the cultural background of the sample.

Conclusions

General procrastination scale by Lay is the scale for measuring procrastination, which was developed for that purpose only, and the initial

research (Lay, 1986) on this scale provided the information that scale is reliable and valid, and that it fulfills all psychometrical criteria about all parameters.

Based on these research findings, we can conclude that:

- Discriminative power of items is satisfying when it comes about the criteria of the total range of all items and analysis of the means of the items.
- Item-total correlations for items 1,3,4,6,7,8,10,11,13, and 16 are below the given criteria, but the item-total correlations are extremely low for items 1 and 11 which implies that those items should be revised or even excluded from the final version of the instrument, even more since the reliability of the instrument is increased if those items are excluded.
- Reliability of the instrument is 0.713, which is satisfying, but still, it is below the criteria of 0.8, which means that some items should be revised and that item-reliability should be increased in general.
- The validity of the instrument is checked by employing a factorial analysis, which showed the existence of the five factors, and that was the only interpretable solution. The five factors are grouped and named as: good planning, delaying, doing things in the last minute, well time management, poor time management.
- The validity of the scale should be further explored and the scale should be standardized for each population separately because it is evident that there are national differences not only in descriptive statistics measures but in a number of factors and possible interpretations of the results.

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PERCEPTION OF ECONOMICS UNDERGRADUATE ON NON-USAGE OF UNIVERSITY'S ICT PLATFORM IN TEACHING ECONOMICS IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN

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Abstract

This study investigated the perception of economics undergraduate on non-usage of the university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin. Descriptive research of survey type was adopted in this study. The population of this study consists of all Economics undergraduate in the departments of Economic and Economics Education (of the social sciences education department) which is estimated at 937 students. A sample of 278 respondents was drawn randomly in this study. A Researcher's Designed questionnaire with psychometric properties of content validity and 0.71r was used to elicit the needed. Data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviation while the hypotheses formulated were tested using inferential statistics of t-test and ANOVA at 0.05 alpha levels. The study revealed that lecturer's philosophy, lack of appropriate skills, incompatible classroom environment, limited lecture hours and non-satisfaction with ICT results, among others are perceived as reasons for non-usage of ICT platforms for teaching economics. The study, therefore, recommended that the use of visual Google classroom at all levels of the teaching by the university administration should be encouraged.

Keywords: *Perception, Reasons, ICT Platforms and Non-Usage.*

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Introduction

The emergence of technologies for learning, conversation media and smart interface, Open Educational Resources (or Massively Open Online Courses) and increased awareness of “New Generation” have been demanding traditional education and learning systems to be more open, flexible, and customized to what students want to expect. Using ICT in education has been widely accepted as an effective way of challenging such changes attributed to technological advances, societal paradigm shift, and internationalization. It is based on the strong belief that the potential of ICT would bring positive impacts to teaching and learning by providing students and teachers with flexibility, accessibility, more opportunities for participation and collaboration, and more outcomes.

Now is the right time to respond to a simple but critically important question, “what should be done to fully exploit valuable resources for better education in the future?” It would be to use all resources in a smart way to maximize their potentials to meet the different perspectives on ICT from stakeholders: teachers, students, and academic institutions. It is in response to this that the University of Ilorin under the leadership of Professor Abdulganiyu Ambali, decided to make available to all students of the instruction for four years a tablet. This is considered to be very portable, internet access and also subscribe to the Google Apps platform where both lecturers and students are accommodated to effectively carry out their teaching and learning the process. But one question anybody will ask today is how well are lecturers exploring this platform to teach their students?

This is because changes in technology, demography, and internationalization are driving education system to evolve to an open flexible education (or learning) environment which provides learners with quality services encompassing formal, informal, and non-formal education.

To this regard the “Learning for the Future (LFF)” project recently initiated by UNESCO IITE is a comprehensive approach to integrate ICT in education, renew pedagogy, and enhance learning now and the future, which ensures teachers and students effective use of technologies and resources in strengthening the four pillars of learning for the 21st century: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together.

ICTs have the potential to accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, to motivate and engage students, to help relate school experience to work practices, create economic viability for tomorrow’s workers, as well as strengthening teaching and helping schools change (Davis and Tearle, 1999; Lemke and Coughlin, 1998; cited by Yusuf, 2005). In a rapidly changing world, basic education is essential for an individual to be able to access and apply information. Such ability must find include ICTs in the global village.

Conventional teaching has emphasized content. For many years the course has been written around textbooks. Teachers have taught through lectures and presentations interspersed with tutorials and learning activities designed to consolidate and rehearse the content. Contemporary settings are now favoring curricula that promote competency and performance. Curricula are starting to emphasize capabilities and to be concerned more with how the information will be used than with what the information is. Contemporary ICTs are able to provide strong support for all these requirements and there are now many outstanding examples of world class settings for competency and performance-based curricula that make sound use of the affordances of these technologies (Oliver, 2000). The use of information and communication technologies can help revitalize teachers and students. This can help to improve and develop the quality of education by providing curricular support in difficult subject areas. To achieve these objectives, teachers need to be involved in collaborative projects and the development of intervention change strategies, which

would include teaching partnerships with ICT as a tool. According to Zhao and Cziko (2001), three conditions are necessary for teachers to introduce and use ICT in their classrooms or teaching: teachers should believe in the effectiveness of technology, teachers should believe that the use of technology will not cause any disturbances, and finally teachers should believe that they have control over technology. However, research studies show that most teachers do not make use of the potential of ICT to contribute to the quality of learning environments, although they value this potential quite significantly (Smeets, 2005). Harris (2002) conducted case studies in three primary and three secondary schools, which focused on innovative pedagogical practices involving ICT. Harris (2002) concludes that the benefits of ICT will be gained "...when confident teachers are willing to explore new opportunities for changing their classroom practices by using ICT. As a consequence, the use of ICT will not only enhance learning environments but also prepare the next generation for future lives and careers (Wheeler, 2001). The changed pool of teachers will come changed responsibilities and skill sets for future teaching involving high levels of ICT and the need for more facilitative than didactic teaching roles (Littlejohn et al., 2002).

According to Cabero (2001), «the flexibilization time-space accounted for by the use of ICT in teaching and learning processes contributes to increasing the interaction and reception of information. Such possibilities suggest changes in the communication models and the teaching and learning methods used by teachers, giving way to new scenarios which favor both individual and collaborative learning». The use of ICT in educational settings, by itself, acts as a catalyst for change in this domain. ICTs by their very nature are tools that encourage and support independent learning. Students using ICTs for learning purposes become immersed in the process of learning and as more and more students use computers as information sources and cognitive tools (Reeves & Jonassen, 1996), the influence of the technology on supporting how students learn will continue to increase.

In the past, the conventional process of teaching has revolved around teachers planning and leading students through a series of instructional sequences to achieve the desired learning outcome. Typically these forms of teaching have revolved around the planned transmission of a body of knowledge followed by some forms of interaction with the content as a means to consolidate the knowledge acquisition. Contemporary learning theory is based on the notion that learning is an active process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring knowledge and that instruction is the process by which this knowledge construction is supported rather than a process of knowledge transmission (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). In this domain, learning is viewed as the construction of meaning rather than as the memorization of facts (Lebow, 1993; Jonassen & Reeves, 1996). Learning approaches using contemporary ICTs provide many opportunities for constructivist learning through their provision and support for resource-based, student-centered settings and by enabling learning to be related to context and to practice (Berge, 1998; Barron, 1998). Students enjoy learning, and the independent inquiry which innovative and appropriate use of ICT can foster. They begin to acquire the important of 21st-century skills which they will need in their future lives.

Many variables may account for reason lecturers find it difficult to adopt the use of ICT for their lecturers in higher institutions, some which are: government, environmental, lecturers, students and lastly parents various (Zhao & Cziko, 2001). In the work of Susman (1998) it was revealed that Lecturers' variable factors influence their attitude and use of ICT in teaching negatively. Tedla (2012) and Tay, Lim, Lim and Ling-Koh (2012) confirm that lecturers use ICT tools in order to make the lessons more interesting and engage learners according to learners' potentials. Also in the study conducted by Flecknoe (2002), the finding revealed 67.5% of respondents' perceive teachers' level of teaching experience determines the extent to which lecturer uses modern technologies in delivering instructions in the classroom. For instance, it was an acclaimed number

of years of classroom experience reduce certain teachers' beliefs because experienced lecturers were more likely to believe that classrooms should be lecturers' centered and that learning did not always need to be fun". Teachers' age, their level of computer experience and they are lent of years spent at pre-service was and perceived as having serious influence ICT integration (Teo, 2008).

If students are asked to comment on the state or quality of teaching they received without the use of ITC platform provided by the school to them despite their assess to Tablet Portable Computer and Wi-Fi, they are likely to differ in their reasons for avoidance of ICT by their lecturers. This is because the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, (1992) defines perception as the process by which one comes to know and think about others and their work, characteristics, qualities, roles and functions in the society. It adds that when several individuals confront an object or a thing in their environment, the input of information that impinges on their respective sense organs (e.g. eyes and ears) is the same for every individual, though they may perceive it differently. In Hornby's (1991) view, perception is believed to be the ability to show understanding and insight, to be able to notice and have discernment about a situation. Similarly, Miller and McCracken (1988) posit that perception is the ability of a person to know about his environment through the use of his sense organs which must be very active. Various explanations can be offered as to why the individuals perceive the same thing differently, even when they are confronted with the same stimulus. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (1997) identifies some variables as responsible for differences in the perceptual functioning of an individual, age, status, gender, among others.

The gender of an individual is considered an important factor that influence perception in not-usage of University ICT platform in the teaching of economics in the University of Ilorin, due to the differences which male and female members of these areas experienced. The positions an individual occupies in the society also influence their perception of

issues and situation (status).

Perception is the mental function of giving significance to stimuli such as shapes, color, movement, taste, sounds, touch, smells, pains, pressures and feeling. Perceptions give rise to individual behavioral responses to particular situations.

Statement of the Problems

The study has shown that an estimated percentage of University lecturers do not explore the ICT platforms available for them, in order to make teaching and learning more meaningful. This cut across all the faculties and departments, with exception of few departments. This became a source of concern to the school administration which calls for a meeting held with the academic staff of the university trying to create awareness of facilities available to on the university ICTs platform for effective teaching and learning process. Thus, series of workshops, training and re-training of the academic staff of the university by the Centre for Research Development and In-House (*Credit*) on the use of some of the facilities made available for lecturers on the internet such as Google App classroom. Also, the Institute of Education organized a Training workshop titled “*Migration of M.Ed. Sandwich programme to E-learning Platform.*” All these aimed at exposing lecturers to the integrate ICTs platform available for them to use in class. But up till now students portable tablets have not been put into proper use since lecturers are not taking them up on how best to use it for learning possess. Report of economics undergraduate affirm that out of many courses undergraduate undertakes in the department only two has ever explored ICT to teach STATA software and sharing of software textbooks for two microeconomics courses briefly. A cursory look at the table of the performance of economics undergraduate revealed thus:

Table 2: Performance of Economics Undergraduates over three Academic Sessions

Academic Session	% Passed	% Failed
2013/2014	84.95	15.05
2014/2015	88.27	11.73
2015/2016	92.86	7.14

Source: Data Base of University of Ilorin 2017

The above table shows a positive trend of the performance of students over the three academic sessions of the introduction of Portable Tablet Pc for students. This shows that despite non-usage of University ICTs platform economics undergraduates have been performing very well. But in order to compete favorably with global best practices, there is a need for a paradigm shift. Not only to better performance but also to make learning more flexible. In lieu of this, the paper seeks the perception of Undergraduate Economics students on non-usage of University ICT platforms for teaching Economics courses.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of undergraduate Economics of non-usage of the university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin. Specifically the study:

1. Examine the perception of undergraduate economics on non-usage of the university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin.
2. Ascertain whether there is a difference in the perception of undergraduate economics on non-usage of university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin on the basis of gender.
3. Ascertain whether there is a difference in the perception of

undergraduate economics on non-usage of university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin on the basis of the level of their education.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the perception of undergraduate economics on non-usage of the university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin?
2. Is there a difference in the perception of undergraduate economics on non-usage of the university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin on the basis of gender?
3. Is there a difference in the perception of undergraduate economics on non-usage of the university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin on the basis of level?

Research Hypotheses

The following formulated hypotheses were tested in this study.

Ho₁ There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female undergraduate economics on non-usage of university's ICT platform in teaching economics at the University of Ilorin.

Ho₂ There is no significant difference in the perception of undergraduate economics on non-usage of university's ICT platform in teaching economics in University of Ilorin on the basis of the level of their education.

Methodology

Descriptive research of a survey method was employed in the study. The choice of the descriptive survey was in line with Akuezilo and Agu (2003), who maintained that it is concerned with a gathering of information on peoples' opinion. The population for the study consists of all Undergraduates' of Business and Social Sciences faculty while the target population was the Economics Department, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, University of Ilorin. Purposive sampling technique was

used to select the Economics Department which comprises of 937 students. Proportionate sampling technique was used to draw 278 respondents based on the required sample size as stipulated in The Research Advisors (2006) table for sample selection. See table below:

Table 2: Sample Size Selection of Economic and Economics Education Students

Level	Population	Sample Selected
100	283	84
200	194	58
300	203	60
400	257	76
Total	937	278

Source: (Faculty of Education and Faculty of Social Sciences' IT Office, 2017)

The instrument used for the collection of data was a researcher-designed questionnaire, which was tagged “Perception of Undergraduate on Non-usage of ICT Platform in Teaching Economics Questionnaire (PUNIPTEQ) with psychometric properties of contents validity and reliability index of 0.71. The questionnaire was divided into two sections ‘A’ and ‘B’. Section ‘A’ contains demographic information of the respondents like Gender and Educational Level while section B consists of items that elicit information on perception of economics undergraduates on non-usage of ICT in Teaching Economics. The questionnaire was structured on four points Likert-type scale as thus: SA- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree. The coding of the questionnaire was SA = 4; A = 3; D = 2; and SD = 1. The data collected were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, mean and frequency count answer the only research question, while the two hypotheses formulated, was tested using t-test (t) and ANOVA (F) inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the perception of economics undergraduate on non-usage of university's ICT platform in teaching economics in University of Ilorin?

Table 3: Responses on the perception of non-usage of ICT platform in teaching economics

	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Std.	Mean
	The irregular power supply is considered as one of the reasons why some economics lecturers do not use ICT platform for teaching.	71 (25.5%)	112 (40.3%)	52 (18.7%)	43 (15.5%)	1.00	2.76
	Lack of awareness of economic lecturers about available ICT platforms in the university contributes to non-usage of ICT platform for teaching.	24 (8.6%)	79 (28.4%)	129 (46.4%)	46 (16.5%)	0.84	2.29
	The process of setting up ICT platform for lectures is time-consuming to some senior lecturers.	49 (17.6%)	147 (52.9%)	70 (25.2%)	12 (4.3%)	0.76	2.84
	Fluctuation in the university's WiFi's connection jeopardizes lecturers' interest in using ICT platform for teaching.	81 (29.1%)	127 (45.7%)	51 (18.3%)	19 (6.8%)	0.87	2.97
	Incompatible classroom environments to cater for needs of instructors contribute to non-usage of ICT platform for teaching.	72 (25.9%)	147 (52.9%)	44 (15.8%)	15 (5.4%)	0.80	2.99
	Insufficient equipment also hampers usage of ICT platform for teaching among economics lecturers.	90 (32.4%)	136 (48.9%)	40 (14.4%)	12 (4.3%)	0.80	3.09
	Lack of appropriate skills and knowledge in using computers hindered integration of ICT platforms for teachings among lecturers.	71 (25.5%)	131 (47.1%)	58 (20.9%)	18 (6.5%)	0.85	2.92
	Lecturers' philosophy regarding appropriate teaching methods determined whether and how they used ICT platforms for teaching.	85 (30.6%)	136 (48.9%)	47 (16.9%)	10 (3.6%)	0.79	3.07
	Inadequate staff development opportunities hinder some lecturers from using ICT platforms for teaching and learning purpose.	54 (19.4%)	139 (50.0%)	74 (26.6%)	11 (4.0%)	0.77	2.85

	Some economics lecturers are not satisfied with the result of the usage ICT platform in teaching economics.	50 (18.0%)	120 (43.2%)	87 (31.2%)	21 (7.6%)	1.39	2.78
	Students attitude towards plagiarizing answers through the internet may discourage frequent integration of ICT into lecturing	49 (17.6%)	147 (52.9%)	61 (21.9%)	21 (7.6%)	0.81	2.81
	The increase in the level of absence in the classroom by sharing courseware on Google drive hampers usage of ICT platform for teaching.	76 (27.3%)	121 (43.5%)	62 (22.3%)	19 (6.8%)	0.88	2.91
	Insufficient lecture hours may not allow the lecturer to cover the content when using ICT platform for lecture	67 (24.1%)	116 (41.7%)	68 (24.5%)	27 (9.7%)	0.92	2.80
	Students using ICT platform mostly for leisure purposes may hinder the interest of lecturer for embedding ICT into Teaching	41 (14.7%)	108 (38.8%)	93 (33.5%)	36 (12.9%)	0.90	2.55
	Total						

Source: Field Survey, 2017. **Mean ≥ 2.5 = Agreed, Mean < 2.5 = Disagreed*

Responses from table 3 showed that the mean of all the items is ≥ 2.5 , which means that the respondents perceive all the items as reasons for non-usage of University ICT platform by lecturers on Economics Department.

Hypotheses One: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female economics undergraduate on non-usage of university's ICT platform in teaching economics in University of Ilorin.

Table 4: t-test of Respondents

Gender	N	Mean	Std. D	t- cal	df	p-value	Decision
Male	148	39.69	4.82	0.468	276	0.640	Do Not Reject
Female	130	39.42	4.87				

P>0.05

Table 4 reveals that t-value is 0.46 with significant probability value (P-value) of 0.64. Since the probability value, $P\text{-value} = 0.64 > 0.05$ alpha level, the null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This implies that no significant difference existed in the perception of economics undergraduate on the basis of their gender.

Hypothesis Two

H_{o2} : There is no significant difference in perception of undergraduate economics students on non-usage of university's ICT platform in teaching economics in University of Ilorin based on level

Table 5: ANOVA table respondents perception based on level

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	495.628	3	165.209			
Within Groups	5992.574	274	21.871	7.554	.000	Significant
Total	6488.201	277				

$P < 0.05$ level

Table 5 shows that F-value is 7.55 with significant probability value (P-value) of 0.00. Since the probability value, $P\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.05$ alpha level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that significant difference existed in the perception of undergraduate economics students on non-usage of university's ICT platform in teaching economics in University of Ilorin across all levels. This was evident in the Post- Hoc Test where variance existed in the different groups of respondents that are, the Economic undergraduate of 100, 200, 300 and 400 levels respectively.

Discussion of Findings

This study has investigated the perception of undergraduate economics students on non-usage of ICT platform for teaching economic in the University of Ilorin. This study has revealed the perception of the student about non-usage of ICT platforms for teaching among which is inadequate power supply as perceived by the majority of students. Also, students believed that process of setting up ICT platform for lectures is time-consuming to some senior lecturers. Furthermore, the opinion of students signifies the fact that fluctuation in the university's Wi-Fi connection jeopardizes lecturers' interest in using ICT platform for teaching and those incompatible classroom environments make it impossible for utilization of ICT in some situations by lecturers. This finding corroborates that of Lewis and Smith (2002) which revealed the barriers for ICT adoption as follows: limited equipment in the school/ classroom, inadequate skills, minimal support from the school administration, time constraints and the teacher's own lack of interest and belief in the effectiveness of ICT.

Lack of appropriate skills and knowledge in using computers is another factor that was found out to be the hindering integration of ICT platforms for teachings among lecturers, students also perceived lecturers' philosophy regarding appropriate teaching methods determined whether and how they integrate ICT platforms into their teaching. This is in line with Agbamu (2004) whose study revealed that lack of appropriate skills in the use of ICT is one of the determinants of lecturer failure to integrate ICT into their teaching. Also, Ololube, Umunadi and Kpolovie (2014); Kpolovie and Obilor (2013) study's shared the same result by revealed that in Nigeria today, lecturers non-usage ICT services for reasons such as lack of interest, lack of awareness, outrageous rate of service, poor quality of internet service and epileptic power supply. The study also revealed that students' attitude towards plagiarizing answers through the internet may discourage frequent integration of ICT into lecturing while in the same vein, it was brought to a height that increases the level of absence in the

classroom by sharing courseware on Google drive hamper usage of ICT platform for teaching.

The finding of the study also found that there was no significant difference in the perception of economic undergraduates on non-usage of university ICT platform by their lecturers on the basis of gender. This means that the respondents perceived reasons for non-usage the same way. This could be because all the respondents were exposed to the same teaching and learning situation which could influence them to believe, behave, or feel the same way about issues and challenges. This is confirming the findings of Hall and Langton (2006) who found out that the situation which an individual is exposed to can determine or influence his/her level of perception either positively or otherwise. Thus, this could account for why there was no significant difference in their perception.

While significant difference existed in the economic undergraduate's perception on the basis of their educational level. This difference could be as a result of the grouping which respondents belong (100, 200, 300 and 400 levels) as well as the characteristics of each group of respondents. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Samar, Azimi and Dadvand (2007) on socioeconomic status and class perception. Their study reveals that differences existed in the perception of people in the society on the basis of their socioeconomic status, even if they are exposed to the same condition.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, how economics undergraduates perceived the non-usage of University ICTs platform for effective teaching do not differ on the basis of their gender but differ on the basis of their educational level (100,200,300 and 400 level). The following recommendations were drawn:

1. Lecturers should try as much as possible to integrate every relevant university ICTs to maximum use to teach.
2. The university administration should entry into Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) with software package producers for have access to more software for lecturers to use.

3. There should be adequate provision of facilities and equipment that will enhance using of ICT for teaching economics in University of Ilorin.
4. Encourage the use of visual Google classroom at all levels of the teaching by the university administration.

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MYSTICISM IN THE POETRY OF EMILY DICKINSON: A THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to analyze the poetry of Miss Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) in order to reveal the extent of mysticism in it, and it focuses on the concept of "theology." Mysticism involves a deep, almost obsessive, concern with such problems as death, the existence of the soul, immortality, the existence of God and heaven, salvation or redemption, etc. The critical approach was used to analyze some of Dickinson's major poems. A glance at her poetry reveals that it shows an extreme preoccupation with the effect of death and explores various themes such as the nature of the soul, the problem of immortality, the possibility of faith and the reality of God. The researchers also tried to reveal the internal and external influences that shaped Dickinson's poetry. The paper concluded that the theme of death was inexhaustible for her. If her poetry seldom became "lyrical," seldom departed from the colorless sobriety of its bare iambs and toneless assonance, it did so most of all when the subject was death. Although Dickinson's poetry contains some mystical elements, mystical poetry, in the traditional sense, at least, is not her special poetic gift.

Keywords: Death, Emily Dickinson, heaven, immortality, mysticism, theology.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is Mysticism?

Mysticism involves a deep, almost obsessive, concern with such problems as death, the existence of the soul, immortality, the existence of God and heaven, salvation or redemption, etc. Mysticism also means the capacity to establish a spiritual contact with God. The mystic is a visionary who claims to hold a direct communion with the Divine Spirit. Conrad (2000) describes mysticism as an effort that involves both, the body and the mind, the whole human being, who should achieve. It's an effort to defeat and overcome death, something which a realist may find foolish and nonsense. According to Bray (2015), Miss Dickinson "uses strategies of constriction, reduction and anticipation to attempt to control the overwhelming mystical experience of Being" (n. p). According to Clements (2012, as cited in Saavedra-Carballido, 2015) Mysticism is "through which one sheds or suppresses the rational mental constructs that form, organize, and distort immediate experience, in order to experience the world without mediation." In this way, Mysticism can be connected to the unconscious and subconscious. A glance at the themes of Miss Dickinson's poetry, according to Sherwood, (1968), reveals an extreme preoccupation with the effect of death, the nature of the soul, the problem of immortality, the possibility of faith, and the reality of God. Miss Dickinson had a bad experience with death since she was young. This experience is best illustrated by the words of Chunyan

(2015) who claims that “A year after her husband’s death, Mrs. Dickinson became paralyzed and remained an invalid for seven years, largely under the care of her daughter, Emily; and not until this time did her daughter begins to accept and cherish her” (p. 66). The experience Dickinson went through had a great impact on her later poetry. Certainly is the sense that she sought the essential moral truths veiled behind material appearances and tried to experience and perceive the Divine Force. (Or “circumference” as she called it), she was mystically inclined. There are strong mystical elements in her poetry, but on the whole, it would not be precisely true to call her a mystic.

1.2 Two Kinds of Mysticism

The American poet Emily Dickinson’s thoughtful concern with the problems of life, death, and immortality has led to the view that she is a mystical poet. It is worthwhile examining the nature of her mysticism (Miller, 1968). We must remember, however, that there is a difference between a Christian mystic and a non-Christian mystic. The three main stages of all mysticism are purgation, contemplation, and union; and these three stages are developed into the three ways of the Christian mystic: purgative, illuminative and unitive. But essentially Christian mysticism differs from non-Christian mysticism, chiefly through the Christian belief in the Incarnation of Christ. The Christian mystic possesses a model, an inspiration, a mediator, and an object of his love in the person of Jesus Christ. The following words clarify how the poet can often be compared to

Jesus Christ with regard to suffering:

The presence of salvific love in her life came with the insistence that she identifies with the purpose and mission of Jesus of Nazareth, and her writing centers on that mission, never more clearly than at the end of her life when, like Jesus, she offered her love to those who would mourn her. (Harde, 2004, p. 18)

Further, the purificatory process in Christian mysticism is not that of the Platonic ascent ¹. For the Christian mystic holds the doctrine of sin, and he is deeply concerned with his personal guilt. Sin, as related to the Incarnation and the Redemption, inspires in him a sense not only of shame but of sorrow and of love as well. To identify and judge the poetry of Emily Dickinson, this paper, through the analytical style, will try to shed light on and critically examine some of her major poems in order to determine the degree of mysticism in her poetry.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 No Desire for Union with God in Her Poetry

What was the relation of Emily Dickinson's soul to what she conceived as Absolute Reality? Leaving aside a few flippant references, her poetry seems to manifest a sincere and abiding faith in God. Of course, her ideas of God appear to fluctuate, but one need not doubt that "she believed in God and in the things of the spirit" (Sewall, 1974, p. 5). However, we cannot say that her belief was enriched by any contemplative vision of

God or even by a desire for such a vision. Pickard (1967) is of the view that “death and heaven were the objects of constant speculation with Miss Dickinson, almost to the point of obsession, but her speculation was not that communion with the Divine which the mystic longs for” (p. 16). Her speculation was imaginative and entirely based upon sensory experience. Such thoughts are found in “Great Streets of Silence Led Away,” “I Went to Heaven,” “I Died for Beauty,” “Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers,” “Ample Make This Bed,” and “What Inn is This,” as well as many others. Death is seen in these poems as inevitable, its experience indefinable, except in terms of what we know on earth. Union with God was to be reserved until death, for there was no venture into the supernatural beyond the realm of ideas for Miss Dickinson. For this reason, probably, there is none of that longing for death, which the mystic expresses, the result of his communing with God while he remains in the flesh. To consider the following stanza from her poem “Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers” (1861), which deals with the relation between death and immortality, would be worthy:

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers—
Untouched by Morning
And untouched by Noon—
Lie the meek members of the Resurrection—
Rafter of Satin—and Roof of Stone! (No. 216)

As indicated above, this first stanza expresses a religious view of death, with a confident belief in personal immortality. The stanza also gives us a thought about the dead, who were faithful in life and, are peacefully asleep

in their graves. At the beginning, the possibility of immortal life is divorced from all wishful motivations, such as a desire for reunion with the beloved, and made to stand on its own theological legs if it can, but this comes into conflict with the cold astronomical concept of eternity in the end. Again this first stanza echoes the language of the Bible and of Protestant hymns, especially in the two long lines that establish with quiet assurance the coming Resurrection of the meek who lie “safe in their “sleep.” But the short antiphonal lines undercut these orthodox affirmations of faith by reminding us that this is a cold white prison locking out the golden sunshine. Her treatment of the Resurrection is here somewhat orthodox though the emphasis is no more doctrinal than it is mortuary. She achieves objectivity by concentrating on the frozen expectancy of the tombstone, and she achieves irony by implying the skeletons beneath in terms of what they are deprived of. The peace of the grave, in one sense, results from the loss of consciousness. The image of the “meek members” openly satirizes the Book of Revelation’s account of the assembled elect and presents them as timid time-servers, “whose goodness resulted from their fears or damnation and from society’s pressures” Wells (1959, p. 160). The sing-song final lines suggest that their religious convictions are superficial, a decorative coating which cannot conquer the stone reality of death. The words “morning” and noon” suggest that the dead are untouched by the occurrences of this world. Therefore the dead are safe, asleep, abiding without motion or sound, protected by marble and stone, outside time and change until the Resurrection.

2.2 References to Christ

References to Christ in the poems of Miss Dickinson are usually not directly concerned with the person of Christ, but rather with some symbol, as seen in the following stanza from her poem “I should have been too glad, I see”: Defeat whets victory, they say / The reefs in old Gethsemane / Endear the shore beyond. (No. 313). The aforementioned words suggest that the speaker in the poem is not afraid of death, and considers death as a victory rather than a defeat of the soul, thus defeat in the form of death becomes a victory. The reason for this interpretation is that the dead would go to heaven, which is a better place than earth.

There are, however, a few exceptions. A spirit of Christian resignation which joins the individual’s sufferings to those of Christ is found in the following poem entitled “I shall know why, when time is over”:

I shall know, why time is over,
And I have ceased to wonder why;
Christ will explain each separate anguish
In the fair schoolroom of the sky.

He will tell what Peter promised,
And I, for wonder at his woe,
I shall forget the drop of anguish
That scalds me now, that scalds me now. (No. 193)

As indicated in the above words, there is a religious sentiment and a philosophical adjustment of attitude toward suffering. It is not, however, a

mystical document; for, while the Christian practices resignation under the burden of grief and trial, the mystic or the saint beg for the privilege of pain because he is enamored of Christ and is anxious to resemble Him. Christ became a model to them, which eases the suffering of the important people who sacrifice in their life.

While Christian martyrs have written with a burning desire to share the suffering of Christ, Miss Dickinson writes with strong appreciation, but with detachment:

Through the strait pass of suffering—
The Martyrs—even—trod.
Their feet—upon Temptations—
Their faces—upon God—

A stately—shriven—Company—
Convulsion—playing round—
Harmless—as streaks of Meteor—
Upon a Planet's Bond—

Their faith—the everlasting troth—
Their Expectation—fair—
The Needle—to the North Degree—
Wades—so—thro' polar Air! (No. 792)

The martyrs as the above words suggest trod on suffering and do not care about the suffering they had experienced on earth, and they walk with their heads lifted upward, as if observing God, thinking that He is watching them. The celestial danger exhibited in the second stanza suggests that the earth go on without being affected by any danger, same with the martyrs whose faith protected them from spiritual harm when they encountered

violent “meteors” (dangers). She chose martyrs rather than saints because martyrs are the ones who face dangers; they face it heroically, eager to journey to the other world, where justice and peace ever dwells, and where God’s mercy is unquestionable.

2.3 Faith and Religious Conviction

Many of Miss Dickinson’s poems are certainly concerned with the Creator, the Redeemer, with death and immortality. Her view of immortality is best illustrated by what has been stated by Flick (1967), who believed that Chase finds it meaningful to account for her attitude toward immortality by relating it to Gnosticism: According to him, “This extraordinary generalization of immortality, outside of history, church, and dogma, clearly has the quality of Gnosticism” (pp. 19-20). For, like the Gnostic believer of all ages, Miss Dickinson considers immortality as an almost Omni-present magic power, added Flick. What Flick meant to say is that by trying to obscure the fact of death by speaking through suffering or acquiring the whole truth, that the lucky individual may attain immortality in this life. Chase (1951) himself states that “Emily Dickinson believed that the poet was indeed possessed at the moment of utterance by that ‘spectral power in thought that walks alone’” (pp. 190-91). This suggests that the poet has received some kind of illumination while writing her poetry. According to Flick (1967), so many of her poems “can be seen as expressions of the Mystic Way of Death, which through purgation and purification prepares for the supreme experience of

unity” (p. 374).

These are themes which might be described as mystical in nature, and her poems on these themes are the fruit of a very deep insight and an intensely emotional nature. But these poems do not belong to the body of that literature which is based on the search of the mystic for God and for union with Him. There is faith, certainly, and religious conviction; but nowhere is there that complete dedication to the search for perfection which motivates the mystic.

2.4 The Methodology of Mysticism

Mystic literature is most often concerned with the methodology of mysticism. To describe the unitive way is a task which has proved impossible with most mystics. But the way of purgation, especially, has given rise to some very graphic mystical writing. In both Christian and non-Christian mystical literature, there is a deliberate withdrawal from the external things of life in order that attention may be concentrated on the one thing necessary. In the Christian, this purification is motivated by his sense of sin but goes much further than the conscientious effort to rid himself of sin which is the duty of every Christian. For the mystic, there is a deliberate choice of a difficult self-training, and it is this which constitutes the asceticism of the genuine mystic who leaves the things that warm the lives of other men and goes forth on a lonelier and stricter way.

1.5 No True Mystic Quest in Her Poetry

In Miss Dickinson's poetry, we do indeed find that intense sensitivity to experience which is characteristic of the mystic. Duncan (1965) is of the opinion that Dickinson's self-chosen isolation from the world might easily be interpreted as the retirement for contemplation which a mystic practices. But the writing which came out of this solitude does not tell the story of the mystic quest. Her poems seem to evoke the picture of one whose intellectual and emotional equipment for life was extraordinary in perception and depth. There is a deliberate contraction of the circle of experience, and within that circle, the ultimate meaning of each act is traced to its end; experience is related to experience by metaphor; intense conviction of truth is pointed by personification. But there is never the deliberate putting by even of the minimum which could be called the asceticism of the mystic. Miss Dickinson's assertion after her mother left Amherst for Pittsfield: "The time to live is frugal and, good as it is, a better earth will not quite be this" (1878, p. 2) is not the statement of an ascetic.

2.6 Her Poetic Goal

Intellectual discipline in Miss Dickinson means precision of thought and an adequate relationship of the unique happening to its place in her scheme of things; it is the withdrawal into contemplation by which the mystic seeks to establish contact with Ultimate Reality. Her immediate goal, poetic expression, is defined in her own lines:

This was a Poet — It is That
Distills amazing sense
From ordinary Meanings —
And Attar so immense

From the familiar species
That perished by the Door —
We wonder it was not Ourselves
Arrested it — before — (No. 448)

This is a piece of the poem that puts emphasis upon the poet's construction of a poem, which the word "distillation" in the second line of the first stanza came from the sense of distillation of alcohol and perfume. This particular stanza suggests that the meanings and images the poet puts on the page would fill up the room, as immense as "Attar." The first line of the second stanza, the phrase, "familiar species," suggest the sense of ordinary meanings in the poem, the surface meaning of the poem. Finally, Dickinson portrays in the last stanza in the second line with the word "Robbing," which suggests that when we read the poet's poetry, we would be stealing something from him. However, Dickinson suggests in the following lines that designate that this act would not bring harm to the poet at all; rather, it would become a fortune through time for the poet, which designates the sense of the fame and poems of the poet living on.

1.7 Mystically Inclined

As has been said by Gelpi (1965), although Miss Dickinson was not a philosopher, nor even a consistent thinker, "she strikingly illuminated the

hidden recesses in the human soul” (p. 4). Unlike most American poets, she was religiously oriented. A glance at her themes reveals an extreme preoccupation with the effect of death, the nature of the soul, the problems of immortality, the possibility of faith, and the reality of God. Certainly, in the sense that she sought the essential moral truths veiled behind material appearance and strove to experience and perceive the divine force (or “circumference,” as she called it), she was mystically inclined. Antony and Dewan (2012) assert the fact that “Being a mystic she believes in the deathlessness of death” (p. 2). What their words mean is that death is only second to God. Death, according to Antony and Dewan is a very powerful free agent. All things vanish with the passage of time, all things except God. “This undoubtedly confirms the immortality of death and reinforces its divine nature” (p. 2), added Antony and Dewan.

2.8 Her Calvinistic Upbringing

Although later influenced by Transcendentalism, Miss Dickinson was reared in an Orthodox tradition, where Biblical truths were stated in Calvinistic terms. Nor did she ever eradicate the hardcore of these beliefs from her philosophy. The basic Calvinistic approach maintained that man was depraved and conditioned to evil by original sin, and that he was utterly dependent on God for any good that he might accomplish. Further, this God was absolute and arbitrary, freely deciding to save or to damn. According to Farzana (2016), “Her real reverence to God that makes her a mystic lies in a more manifest and more beautiful evidence of divine will than creeds and churches” (p. 1). Knowing men’s fate beforehand, God predestined the

course of their lives. Allied to this was the concept of irresistible grace; that is, once given, it could not be refused or lost. The key words in this context were sanctification and justification. One was “justified” when God gave him the grace necessary for a good life and “sanctified” when he continued to prove his election by living an acceptable Christian life. Underlying this whole complex structure was the belief that God directed all men’s acts and behaviors.

2.9 A Rebel against religious Orthodoxy

In nineteenth-century Amherst, these Calvinistic beliefs were not so rigidly enforced, and anyone who so desired could declare his own justification and become one of the elect. All that was needed was a willingness to attend church regularly and to manifest a moral life. Even this as too much for Miss Dickinson. Deppman (2008) stated that “Dickinson’s attraction to Emerson and Transcendentalism, her commitment to a new poetics, her various emphases on the mind as an active, dangerous, and powerful experimental agent, and her idiosyncratic departure from religious orthodoxy share this lineage” (p. 32). She found herself a rebel and quite mystified by the doctrine of election. During the 1850s, she stopped attending church and noted that all her family members were religious except herself. By this, she meant that she could not accept the harsh dogmas of innate depravity, arbitrary election, and predestination, or treat the Bible

as true history and the only moral guide for man. In other words, she rejected all that made man insignificant and helpless before the crushing force of God. In many poems, like “Abraham to kill him,” (No. 77) and “Of God we ask one favour,” (No. 1601), she satirizes the orthodox belief that all men are responsible for the sin of the first parents. Continually, she pictures God the father as an aloof tyrant, indifferently dealing out blind punishments, unresponsive to prayer, and unconcerned about human suffering. In one poem, “Heavenly Father-take to thee,” (1461), she ironically comments on God’s duplicity for creating men with original sin and then condemning them for fulfilling their nature. As for Christ, her attitude was marked by cautious ambivalence that emphasized his human rather than divine qualities. Scheurich (2007) notes that “Her poems suggest a complex view of the ambiguous relation of suffering to human action and meaning” (n. p.). However, if Miss Dickinson could not accept conventional religion, she still retained unshakable trust in God’s actual reality and continually re-examined older fundamental concepts like the Trinity, Resurrection, Hell, angels, and immortality. Throughout her life, the ultimate mystery of immortality perplexed and intrigued her. Especially in her later years, the problem obsessed her, but she remained a doubter until her death.

2.10 A Testing of the Soul in the Fire of Pain

In the main Dickinson's poetry typified the moral earnestness of the old Puritans with their confidence that the human soul could overcome imperfection through struggle and self-discipline. She clearly perceived that the soul's inner reality contained true value, not the external world of Nature. Like Thoreau she felt that each individual must strip life down to its bare bones and taste for himself its essence, sweet or bitter. Her exhilaration with the process of living remained uniquely her own and she repeatedly exclaimed: "I find ecstasy in living-the mere sense of living is joy enough" (Dickinson, 1830, p. 4). Part of this intensely developed from the lonely struggle to preserve her integrity and the continual testing of her soul in the fire of pain. She was a particularly introspective poet, interested in probing self-analysis for the exclusion of any outside issues. Her isolation from contemporary affairs was total, and the major historical event during her lifetime, the Civil War, she passed over with only a few incidental references to soldiers and Lincoln's re-election.

2.11 References to Paradise

Sometimes Miss Dickinson looks upon death as the gateway to the next existence, "Living in a rural setting a century and a half ago, she was aware of the cycle of existence, from birth to death and birth again. Most of the people also would have been aware of that cycle, living on farms, tending to animals, watching the seasons change" (Antony & Dewan, 2012, p. 2), which is conceived of as a special glory having something in common with the conventional paradises offered in the hymns and sermons of her day, or

with the Book of Revelation. Beyond the tomb, after the “white election,” God presides over an opulent kingdom whose splendors are signified by Miss Dickinson with words like “purple,” “royal,” “privilege,” “emerald,” “diadem,” and “courtier.” Such words and concepts help to reinforce her view of immortality. In certain moods she can write in her poem “The Only News I Know”:

The only news I know
Is bulletins of day
From immortality.
The Only Shows I see
Tomorrow and Today
Perchance Eternity. (No. 827)

In the above poem, Dickinson sees the world as a cold place, devoid of any warmth or love, to compensate for this loss; she often mentions God, Immortality and Eternity. This makes the readers start visualizing a place where they desire to be. Although the poet thinks that she is deeply religious and spiritual, she is unsure whether she will go there. Therefore, these places remain mysterious to human beings, and only those who sacrifice will be rewarded by the Lord and might go there.

Sometimes she expresses posthumous beatitude, as in the following poem “Great streets of silence led away”:

Great Streets of silence led away
To Neighborhoods of Pause —
Here was no Notice — no Dissent
No Universe — no laws —

By Clocks, 'twas Morning, and for Night
The Bells at Distance called —
But Epoch had no basis here
For Period exhaled. (No. 1159)

This is technically a mystical poem: that is, it endeavors to render an experience which is foreign to all human experience, yet to render it in terms of a modified human experience. The experience dealt with here is that of rapt contemplation, eternal and immovable, which may be described as the condition of beatitude. Yet there is no particular reason to believe that Emily Dickinson was a mystic or thought herself a mystic. The poems of this variety and there are many of them, appear rather to be efforts to dramatize an idea of salvation, intensely felt, but an idea essentially inexpressible. She deliberately utilizes imagery irrelevant to the state with which she is concerned, because she cannot do otherwise; yet the attitude toward the material, the attitude of rapt contemplation, is the attitude which she probably expects to achieve toward something that she has never experienced. The poems are invariably forced and somewhat theoretical; they are briskly clever, and lack the obscure but impassioned conviction of the mystical poems of Very 3; they lack the tragic finality, the haunting sense of human isolation in a foreign universe, to be found in her greatest poems of which the explicit theme is a denial of this mystical trace.

2.12 A Mixture of Puritan and Free-Thinker

Like Emerson, Miss Dickinson was, from the beginning, and she remained all her life, a singular mixture of Puritan and free-thinker. The problems of good and evil, of life and, obsessed her; the nature and destiny of the human soul; and Emerson's theory of compensation. Toward God, as one of her earliest critics is reported to have said: "she exhibited an Emersonian self-possession." Indeed, she did not, and could not; accept the Puritan God at all. She was frankly irreverent on occasion, a fact which made her editors a little uneasy. What she was irreverent to, of course, was the Puritan conception of God and the Puritan attitude toward God. In her poem "Drowning" she observes:

The Maker's cordial visage,
However good to see,
Is shunned, we must admit it,
Like an adversity. (No. 1718)

In one poem "Some keen tile Sabbath going to church" (No. 324), she refers to God as a "noted clergyman" and on another occasion in the poem "I never lost as much but twice" (No. 49), she refers to him as a "burglar, banker, father," a flippancy which might have annoyed even the most liberal of her contemporaries. But perhaps her perfect metaphysical detachment is most precisely and frankly stated in the famous mock-prayer (In the Single Hound), in which addressing God, she impertinently apologizes to Him for His "duplicity."

2.13 Mystical in Her Reverence for Nature

Such is Emily Dickinson's opinion of the traditional and anthropomorphic God. Her real reverence, the reverence that entitles her to be regarded as a mystical poet, was reserved for Nature, which seemed to her a more obvious and a more beautiful evidence of the Divine will than creeds and churches. Many of Miss Dickinson's conventional Nature poems praise Nature as "the gentlest mother," who soothes and comforts her bruised children. In these poems, she delights in Nature's external pageantry and expresses a sentimental enthusiasm about the red breast of the robin and the butterfly's beautiful colors. But her later poems show the distrust of such analogies and depict an ironic contrast between Nature's ordered majesty with man's doomed mortality. In these poems, Nature mocks man rather than comforts him.

Some of Miss Dickinson's poems emphasize Nature's decaying and corruptive power. Death lies at the core of Nature, continually threatening a man with extinction. Many poems like "The Morning after Woe" (No. 364), and "I Dreaded that first Robin" (No. 348) analyze Nature's betrayal of those hearts that love her best. In a poem about the frost's killing a flower, "Apparently with no Surprise" (No. 1624), she even questions if Nature has any meaning at all because a universe that proceeds indifferently and is untouched by such crimes haunts one with terror.

Nature she saw, observed, loved, with a deep simplicity and passion which nevertheless did not exclude her nimble sense of humor. She sings of the seasons in "A Light exists in Spring," (No. 31), and "As imperceptibly as

Grief" (No. 45); "A Route Of Evanescence" gives us a glorious picture of the hummingbird. In this connection, to quote the whole poem would be worthy:

A Route of Evanescence,
With a revolving Wheel –
A Resonance of Emerald
A Rush of Cochineal –

And every Blossom on the Bush
Adjusts it's tumbled Head –
The Mail from Tunis – probably,
An easy Morning's Ride – (No. 1489)

Miss Dickinson here presents a humming bird's elusiveness by using the word "evanescence." In the poem, the word is rendered in terms of motion, sound, and color intricately woven into an image of pattern by synaesthesia. The visual effect is the converse of the photographic one of multiple rapid exposures of a moving object on a single plane. The first line records not the simultaneous vanishing of the bird at every point. The second line "With a revolving Wheel," helps to complicate this effect because it does not describe the actuality of vibrating wings so much as the optical illusion created by them. Lines 7-8 are intended to convey the full effect of the bird's flight beyond the barriers of space and time. "The Mail from Tunis" suggests the speed of the bird when it flies. "Tunis" because it was a very remote place to her. This poem also conveys the poet's sense of Nature's mystery and elusiveness. As has

been seen, all the images in the poem evoke the beauty of Nature and Dickinson's reverence for it.

Miss Dickinson's only memorable poem on summer deals with the sense of loss that summer's departure brings; she says in the poem: "As imperceptibly as grief / The summer lapsed away" (L: 1-2, No. 1540).

Her Nature poems are not, however, the most secretly revelatory or dramatically compulsive of her writings, nor on the whole the best. They are often of extraordinary delicacy; but they are often superficial, a mere affectionate playing with the smaller things that gave her delight. She was attracted by the odd and neglected creatures of Nature such as the spider, the frog, the rat, and the bat, and has written poems about all of them. "A narrow Fellow in the Grass" (No. 24) contains a disturbing investigation of Nature's mystery. Here Miss Dickinson examines the terror and awe that the presence of a snake can give rise to. The snake in the poem develops into a symbol of man's fear of the unknown and evil itself. Here the sense of hidden terror behind Nature's surface beauty fascinates and frightens the onlooker. Perhaps it is only in this poem that Dickinson treats Nature as actively hostile. But even here just the two concluding stanzas, a kind of epilogue, are connected with this hostility: "Several of Nature's People / I know and they know me" (L: 17-18), while the final line "Zero at the Bone" (L. 20) creates the shock of sheer terror. The poetess's reaction to the snake goes deeper than a mere freezing of the heart. Is this the Eden serpent, the

traditional embodiment of the devil? The answer to this question remains a mystery. All this Nature poetry may be regarded as emanating from a latent mysticism in Miss Dickinson.

Miss Dickinson constantly examined man's relation to the world of natural phenomena. She did not resort to any easy religious affirmation or indulge in excessive romantic enthusiasm. She looked closely at natural objects, contemplated their functions, and recorded her responses with scrupulous exactness. This is amply illustrated in the poem "Of Bronze and Blaze" (No. 290) which considers the grandeur of the northern lights, the poem "How Happy is the little Stone" (1510) dealing with the simplicity of a stone. The following poem "Further in Summer than the Birds" deals with the song of the crickets is the best example to illustrate:

Further in Summer than the Birds
Pathetic from the Grass
A minor Nation celebrates
Its unobtrusive Mass.

No Ordinance be seen
So gradual the Grace
A pensive Custom it becomes
Enlarging Loneliness.

Antiquiest felt at Noon
When August burning low
Arise this spectral Canticle
Repose to typify

Remit as yet no Grace
No Furrow on the Glow

Yet a Druidic Difference
Enhances Nature now. (1068)

The crickets exist in summer than the birds because they live hidden in the soil close to Nature's essence, while the birds build in the trees, inhabiting the sky and remaining longer into autumn. Their mating foretells their coming death. So it can be compared to the sacrifice of the Mass, where Christ's love perpetuates the death sacrifice of Calvary by the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into his body and blood. The religious significance of the act is deepened by terms like "ordinance," "canticle," and "Druidic." The crickets' song assumes a religious significance that typifies a temporary respite, the brief hesitation of the pendulum before it begins its downward sweep. The concluding lines enlarge this concept by noting that there is as yet no lessening of summer's beauty and abundance, nor any wrinkling or aging on its low. Yet man's awareness of the son's foreboding implications, its connection with his own mortality, produces a primitive sacredness that makes the moment especially treasured.

These poems clearly illustrate the slow artistic melting of material images into provocative thought.

All Miss Dickinson's best Nature poems continually challenge and invite new readings, and will, therefore, continue to fascinate as long as there are sensitive readers of poetry. Her unique approach to the external beauty

of Nature, the power of storms, the strangeness of Creation, the fleeting aspects of the material, and the mystery of the seasonal process fully demonstrate that even the most neglected and hackneyed subjects can be revitalized by genius.

2.14 Her Mystical Speculation

To see Miss Dickinson at her best and most profound, we must turn to the remarkable range of metaphysical speculation and ironic introspection which we find in those poems that have been classified by her editors as falling under the headings of “Life,” “Time” and “Eternity.” In these poems, we have her set meditations on the nature of things. They have no trappings, only here and there a purple patch. They may even appear to be too bare, bleak, and fragmentary. They could be regarded as poems containing disembodied thought. The thought is there, hard, bright, and clear; and her symbols and metaphors have comparable clarity and transparency. The following words can best illustrate the point:

This tendency in Dickinson’s verses; he refers to the poet’s “self-corrections”: “Many poems circle around a topic without ever reaching a conclusive statement. Often they repeat the definitional gesture by introducing a series of metaphors, enhancing and seemingly refining the meaning and creating subtleties of mood without following any apparent order or progression. (DEPPMAN, 2002, p. 54, as quoted in Lorenzo, 2010, p. 82)

This clearly suggests that there is apparent cohesion between the different metaphors that Dickinson uses in her poems. They seem to be jumbled together without any logical connection between them, or without a clear distinction of their various meanings, something which may puzzle and confuse the average reader of her poetry.

For example, In her poem “The Brain – is wider than the Sky – “ the poet relies on the metaphor of the container, “by asking if an unworthy man can ‘contain’ God, who is measureless, and by wondering ‘what place is there’ into which God might enter”” (Lorenz, 2010, p. 75). Here the physical and the spiritual, the material with the abstract, have been liked and compared. Here the metaphor may have so many different meanings, but the one explained above may be the exact meaning. “In the case of dualistic thinking, Dickinson ponders the meaning of the body and the soul throughout her writing, sometimes affirming or negating either or both” (Harde, 2004, p. 8). But she has affirmed the superiority of the soul which can transcend the body and be united with God in the afterlife.

2.15 Epigrammatic Style

We also have here a downright homeliness which is a source of constant surprise and delight. Miss Dickinson here tunes up Emerson’s gnomic style to the epigrammatic. She often carries the epigrammatic to the point of the cryptic; she becomes what we might call an epigrammatic symbolist

Lay this laurel on the one
Too intrinsic for renown.
Laurel! Veil your deathless tree,-
Him you chasten, that is he! (No. 1393)

This verges perilously on the riddle. Indeed, her passionate devotion to a concise statement in terms of metaphor has left for us a small rich emblem of which the colors tease, the thought entices, but the meaning escapes. Against this, however, should be set her capacity for a wonderful simplicity illustrated in such poems as “My Life Closed Twice before its Close,” (No. 1732). To quote the whole poem is noteworthy in this respect:

My life closed twice before its close—
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me

So huge, so hopeless to conceive
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell. (No.1732)

With a private female poet like Emily Dickinson, biographical facts become often necessary to provide the key to the complete understanding of the above poem. The poem clearly states that the poetess has suffered the “equivalent of physical death by two previous losses” Lindberg-Seyersted (1986, p. 8). Now she wonders if Immortality (God or fate) has still another such event in store for her. According to Johnson (1955) “Biographically the two losses could be Newton and Wadsworth; her separation from Newton by physical

death and her separation from Wadsworth by geographical distance and moral barriers” (p. 52). Prophetically she wonders about a possible third figure (and one actually came in the 1870s with her passion for Judge Otis Lord). The second stanza concisely summarizes the overwhelming sense of desolation that these losses produced. Parting reveals heaven, since its ecstasy rivals paradise, besides emphasizing the soul’s dependence upon heaven for future happiness. At the same time, the experience of hell comes in the anguish of separation. Lorenz (2010). Believes that “the poetry of Emily Dickinson is heavily invested in exploring and representing the experience of ‘the sublime,’ a concept that strongly influenced the Romantic poets” (p. 76). Farzana (2016) is of the opinion that “An interesting aspect of Emily Dickinson’s poetry is that of her reverence for words in a way in which she frequently uses terms of language and communication” (p. 12). This is what makes her ideas clearly stated to a large number of audiences, and made the sublime clear and understandable by all.

3. CONCLUSION

The number of poems by Miss Dickinson on the subject of death is one of the most remarkable things about her. As has been seen in the discussion in this paper, Death, and the problem of life after death, obsessed her. She thought of death constantly, she probed death daily; and we might say she died all her life. Ultimately the obsession became morbid, and she developed an excessive desire to know the details regarding how a particular individual had died. But the preoccupation, with its horrible uncertainties, its doubts about immortality, its hatred of the flesh, and its many reversals of both positions, gave us her sharpest work. The theme was inexhaustible for her. If her poetry seldom became “lyrical,” states Griffith (1964) “seldom departed from the colorless sobriety of its bare iambics and toneless assonance, it did so most of all when the subject was death” (p. 12). One searches in vain for the more particular signs of the Christian mystic in the poetry of Miss Dickinson. The expression of personal guilt for sin, the feeling of Christian humility, the symbol of earthly love used to explain the Divine, the ecstatic joy of union, and the utter desolation of the “dark nights of the soul” (Moore, 2004, p. 2). All these are recorded in the writings of the great mystics, but they are not found in the poetry of Emily Dickinson. Mystical poetry, in the traditional sense, at least, is not her special poetic gift.

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EDWARD ALBEE'S *THE SANDBOX* IN THE LIGHT OF NEW HISTORICISM

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Abstract

History is an important part of human being's life in that it plays an important role in shaping our private, public, and political viewpoints. It serves as a mirror to life because it connects past events with present ones and may at times affect the future as well. Likewise, history enables us to ponder about the reason behind some past events and their influence on the individuals' present lives. The wide range of history and its broad coverage of different causes and effects of life events are the two focal issues that open the readers' eyes to the inherent features of the New Historicists' examinations of various works of literature. With this critical standpoint in mind, the present paper intends to study Edward Albee's play *The Sandbox* to reveal the existing factors that link the play with the previous historical events present in the American history of the time. By choosing New Historicism as the main model, the paper will shed light on such issues as power, resistance, and subversion put forward by such leading figures of this critical approach as Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt.

Key Words: New Historicism; History; Edward Albee; Power; *The Sandbox*

New Historicism is a critical approach to literature based on the assumption that a work of art is the product of its historical, social, and cultural background that cannot be analyzed as an autonomous literary work. This new approach emerged in the late 1970s and the early 1980s and found its roots in the reaction to the New Critics who “focus the interpretive process on the text itself rather than on historical, authorial, or reader concerns” (Bressler, 1999, p. 212); therefore New Historicists maintain that literature and history are inseparable. Their main argument highlights their emphasis on the interrelationship between literature and history, meaning “In literature can be found history and in history, much literature” (p. 214).

The seeds of New Historicism are believed to have been terminated with the publication of Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and Louis Montrose’s essay “Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes”. Such leading New Historicist critics claim that we should read literature “in relation to culture, history, society, and other factors” to reach “a text’s meaning” (p. 215). They also argue that the New Critics could not provide the reader with a clear-cut definition of “what the term *literature* really means” (p. 217). Hence, in an effort to break with the previous modes of thought that argued “texts had some universal significance and essential historical influence to impart,” New Historicists tried to “break down the simplistic distinction between literature and history and open up a complex dialogue between them” (Brannigan, 1998p. 3).

The influences on the afore-mentioned critics were the result of the efforts of such key figures as Michel Foucault on the one part and Marxist scholars-Walter Benjamin, Raymond Williams, and others- on the other part. They shared the same viewpoint with Foucault by “questioning the nature of literature, history, culture, and society ... they refused to accept the traditional, well-worn answers” (Bressler , 1999, p.217). Marxist critics, also, taught them the notion of “interconnectedness of all life” and that “history is shaped by the people who live it” (p. 217). Thus, we can infer that New Historicism is a reconstruction of the past with a present perspective. As Veenser asserts, “New Historicists have evolved a method of describing the culture in action (1994, p. xi).

In his essay, “Professing the Renaissance,” Louis A. Montrose concedes that New Historicism is concerned with “*the historicity of texts*” and “*the textuality of history*” (as cited in Booker, 1996, p.136). He defines “the historicity of texts” as “the cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing” and by “textuality of history” he means “we can have no access to a full and authentic past” (p. 136). The two notions express the need for a fresh examination of the literary works in the historical and cultural milieus in order to uncover the inherent historical and culture-bound meanings and their interrelationships. That is why it is always said that New Historicism eschews “those methods and materials that gave old-fashioned literary study its immense interpretive authority” (Veenser, 1994, p. xii). Therefore, the New Historicists’ tendency to put forward “the *parallel* reading of literary and non-literary texts” is the main reason for

the application of this approach to Albee's "The Sandbox" within this short research paper (Barry, 2009, p.116).

As the product of the American playwright, Edward Franklin Albee (1928-2016), *The Sandbox* (1959) is a modern one-act play that opens with a bright day the Young Man is doing calisthenics near a sandbox at the beach. Mommy and Daddy have brought Grandma to the beach and placed her in the sandbox, waiting for her imminent death. The other player in the play, the Musician, is presented playing on and off as the other players command him. While, throughout the play, Mommy and Daddy do not pay attention to Grandma and treat her in a cold manner, the Young Man treats her well and he is the one who smiles on her. As time passes and the deepest night is around the corner, Mommy and Daddy acknowledge that Grandma's death is near. When Grandma notices their indifference and lack of attention, she takes the toy shovel throwing sand at her. As daylight sets, Mommy weeps shortly near the sandbox and exits the scene with Daddy. Upon their leaving, Grandma finds herself half buried in the sand and unable to move. Then the Young Man stops doing calisthenics and approaches her and asks her to "be very still" (Albee, 2006, p.1061). He says, "I am the Angel of Death. I am ... uh ... I am come for you" (p. 1061). Though he seems to be an amateur, Grandma compliments him and closes her eyes with a smile.

Set in an American context, the play serves as a satire on the ideal American family life. Albee pokes fun at the American Dream and the situation of the family in his time. He satirizes lack of love and empathy felt within familial relationships. As the play opens, the audience sees the

imposing character, Mommy, followed by her subservient husband, Daddy. From the very beginning, the audience notices that Mommy and Daddy cannot communicate with each other because they do not have anything meaningful to say. Besides, if the conversation starts on the part of Mommy, the only thing Daddy can do is to approve of her words. A good case in point is the part following Mommy's talking about the place as a good one and asking for Daddy's opinion, which goes as, " Whatever you say, Mommy" (Albee, 2006, p. 1057).

The submissive character of the husband, Daddy, is an evident sign of Albee's poking fun at the principles of the American Dream whose ideals were grounded in equality of all the American people. As McCarthy (1987) puts it,

The Sandbox betray[s] first-hand experience of the emasculating tensions of the marital couple, and throughout his work the struggle of powerful frustrated women and their indeterminate, morally weak partners is exploited in the creation of his family settings. (p. 5)

The passive role of Daddy and the commanding figure of Mommy showcase the fact that family as the fundamental organization of love, mutual respect and understanding has lost its value and coherence; as a result, what we see is the loss of familial bond. Moreover, the subversion of the accepted beliefs pertaining to familial issues in favor of the authoritative roles ends in the death of the merits that grant meaning to life and result in the soulless life of Mommy and Daddy.

In line with Albee's concern with the absence of the true values

within the families, the character of Grandma gains importance here due to the fact that she is the image of the so-called traditional codes of behavior. In the middle of the play we are informed that following the marriage of the fifty-nine-year-old Mommy with the rich Daddy, Grandma has been forced to sell her farm and move to the city where Mommy and Daddy "... fixed a nice place for me[Grandma] under the stove ... gave me an army blanket ... and my own dish ... my very own dish!" (Albee, 2006, p. 1059). Mommy and Daddy's cruel treatment of Grandma echoes devaluation of life and Grandma is cognizant of that too, asserting "There's no respect here" (p.1058). She, additionally, criticizes their marriage since it is based on "... money, money, money" (p.1059).

Grandma's criticism is again Albee's attempt to deride the hypocrisy and clichés of the good life prevalent in the 1950s society. Albee's main struggle in the play is to challenge the hot norms of the time through his emphasis on "the meaninglessness of the American life" (Canaday, 1966, p. 28). In such society, family members grow farther and farther from one another and life gets discolored. So, the way Albee exposes us to identify ourselves with the characters is quite different from what was expected to be. We are faced with an uncaring Mommy figure who is the anti-American ideal woman of the time. On the word of McCann, "Edward Albee's plays are ferocious attacks on lethargy and complacency in American society" and "a savage denial that everything is just dandy" (as cited in Canaday, 1966, p. 28).

Mommy's treatment of everyone in the play is demanding. Her

feeling superior to Daddy shows her disregard for his personality and dignity. And her relationship with Grandma is a scene of complete cruelty towards the mother who did not give up after the death of her husband and despite all the agonies she went through, she raised her daughter all alone. As Harris claims, Albee “attempts to satirize a situation which he sees as both painful and irremediable” and so his work is “a negation of the possibility of meaningful human action” (p. 31). A working example highlights the part Grandma mentions her daughter and son-in-law’s ill-treatment of her when she says, “So, what have I got to complain about? Nothing, of course. I’m not complaining” (Albee, 2006, p. 1059). Grandma’s words shed light on Albee’s lack of hope for the future. As Miller acknowledges, “Sadly, however, we cannot say that Albee’s outlook produces any ... hope” (as cited in Canaday, 1966, p. 31). That is why Grandma refuses to complain anymore and comes to terms with her doomed life.

As mentioned earlier Foucault’s ideas regarding power and its influence on human beings have been a source of inspiration for New Historicists in that “the paradoxical circumstance of trying to control the uncontrollable is played out in the New Historicism” (Harpham, 1991, p. 360). However, how Foucault treats the notion of power is worth mentioning here since “His work is very critical of the notion that power is something which a group of people or an institution possess and that power is only concerned with oppressing and constraining” (Mills, 2003, p. 33). As seen in the play, Mommy is the one who is in control of everything and power is at her disposal. Yet, Grandma in a way disdains her domineering role,

addressing her as a “kid” or a “cow” and asking her to “be brave” (Albee, 2006, p.1060). This shows the productive aspect of power to bring about “new forms of behavior rather than simply closing down or censoring certain forms of behavior” (Mills, 2003, p. 2). This view of the role of power justifies Grandma’s sweet smile in the sandbox since, as Foucault claims, “Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application” (as cited in Mills, 2003, p. 35).

Another important aspect of Foucault’s elaborating on power casts light on the fact that Albee’s Mommy tries to gain the liberal thinking and power through her marriage with the obedient Daddy who is looked down on by Grandma, believing her daughter has married money. Though she has married the rich and powerless man, she cannot communicate with him because she is living a dull life. Undoubtedly such view of life is the emblem of Albee’s frown on the hollow rituals and America’s desire for pleasure, wealth and satisfaction. The choice of nameless characters is very telling as well since they are presented as dehumanized individuals who are just types. As reported by Stenz (1978), in *The Sandbox*:

All the characters self-consciously play roles in a ceremony which is being put on for the sake of appearances. Mommy and daddy, after all, are not concerned with expressing real feelings. They are dedicated to the principal of comforting outwardly to what they believe other people expect of them. (p. 34)

As Kolin further clarifies, “*The Sandbox* encapsulates such familiar Albee targets as anti-Momism, hollow rituals, failure to communicate,

sterile couplehood, complacency, and hypocrisy (as cited in Bottoms, 2005, p. 26). Kolin's mention of "anti-Momism" is another principal point in the New Historicist reading of the play owing to the fact that it originates from Albee's childhood and being adopted by the wealthy Reed A. Albee and his wife, Frances Cotter with whom he did not have a good relationship. This play reveals Albee's main concern with families because they are the first institutions that form a child's identity. The only honest character in the play is Grandma, who is the symbol of the old rural values, juxtaposed with Mommy and Daddy's modern marriage. Thus, we may infer that Grandma is the only realistic figure in the play aware of the hollowness of life. Her understanding of acceptance of her imposed death shows that "To Albee, the official culture is both rotten and irredeemable" (Samuels, 1964, p. 189). This negative view of life and culture is, according to Kolin, the reason behind Mommy and Daddy's treating Grandma "like a dog" (as cited in Bottoms, 2005, 27).

Considering Albee's method of writing and his stage effects, one may wonder about his absurdist attitude as opposed to the conventions of the realist theatre of his time. His choice of the word players rather than characters shows *The Sandbox* is, in Kolin's opinion, "a witty performance of a performance" (p. 27). His players refer to the audience directly as when Grandma breaks away with the theoretical conventions demanding, "Don't put the lights up yet ... I'm not ready; I'm not quite ready" (Albee, 2006, p. 1060). In line with that, the Young Man undercuts the realist conventions when he says, "Uh... ma'am; I... I have a line here" (p. 1061).

Even the sounds coming from off-stage activities that Mommy and Daddy infer as a signal for Grandma's death time in reality showcase the theatrical aspect of the play. Albee's goal in so doing, in Kolin's view, is to draw our attention to "the artificiality of role-playing in the theatre of realism" (as cited in Bottoms, 2005, 27). In the same manner, Stenz argues, "The author deliberately parodies theatrical conventions in order to satirize the vacuity and hypocrisy of a death watch" (1978, p. 34). Again and again we witness that what Albee intends to do is to turn a blind eye to the status quo and this aim, based on Kolin's argument, is achieved through the employment of satire and breaking up with the realist "conventions, deftly, comically" (as cited in Bottoms, 2005, 27).

The significance of studying the play through the lens of New Historicism in this short research paper was owing to the fact that it shows that Albee had not been ignorant of the existing moral issues of his time and his writing method is, actually, an effort to mirror the lost values and nostalgia human beings face in modernity. His dramatic art provides the reader with a deep understanding of the link between past and present and how these two may at times challenge our mindsets regarding the oft-quoted and accepted rituals.

As explained in depth, Albee, like other dramatists, was concerned with the follies of human beings in their private and social lives and how they got through their lives. He was greatly affected by family and familial issues; that is why we witnessed the harsh treatment of marriage in *The Sandbox*. His depiction of Grandma as the most aware character in the

play reveals, “Grandma looks death in the face and accepts it without fear” (Stenz, 1978, p.36). While, on the other hand, this unsympathetic “experience does not touch them [Mommy and Daddy]” and in the end, they “leave the scene with the same indifference and insensibility with which they arrived” (p. 36). To make it short:

In all of Albee’s plays the moral imperative is the obligation for everyone to live with awareness. The demands of institutions and the barriers people build around themselves prevent them from seeing the realities of their condition and foster the creation of self-destructive illusions. (p. 132)

Then, we can conclude that Albee’s writing was a total break with the traditional modes of writing. In his review of Albee and Stoppard’s recent plays, Brantley mentions:

Mr. Albee and Mr. Stoppard are directly descended from Beckett. Like him they consider the meaningless of a life that knows its own extinction, of being in the face of nothingness. They share this worldview with that other great successor to Beckett, Harold Pinter. (as cited in Bennett, 2011, p. 7)

Thus, with the New Historicist reading of the play, the reader can reach a thorough understanding about the cultural and historical issues that were the outcomes of the failed American Dream, at the core of which such notions as the ideal American family life and unflawed American marriage were supposed to provide all individuals with equality, mutual respect, and positive attitudes towards one another and consequently lead to a productive life both privately and publically. As a result, the main conclusion that can be drawn from this short paper is that Edward Albee’s *The Sandbox* has

a lot to offer about the socio-historical conventions that were dominant in America and how they affected familial relationships, leaving people with hollow grounds and uncertain feelings about what happiness, prolific life, and success were really meant to be. Likewise, the New Historicist examination of the play can provide the reader with a new angle that casts light on the fruitless promises of the American Dream of the 19th and 20th centuries.

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