


From traits to trouble: Exploring the role of Drug Abuse between Clinical Personality and Criminal Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the mediating role of drug use history in the relationship between clinical personality patterns and criminal behaviour among convicted inmates, a topic that remains underexplored. A total of 450 convicted inmates from Kwara State participated, with ages ranging from 19 to 52 years ($M = 36.7 \pm 0.7$). The study employed an ex post facto design with purposive sampling. Standardised instruments employed included the Drug Abuse Screening Test, the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory, and the Brief Criminal Attitude Scale. The results revealed that clinical personality traits significantly predicted the previous drug use and abuse of the individuals (a-path: $b = 0.28$, $t = 9.79$, $p < .01$). In turn, drug use history was a significant predictor of criminal behaviour (b-path: $b = 0.06$, $t = 3.68$, $p < .001$). Moreover, clinical personality traits exerted a direct effect on criminal tendencies, even when drug use was considered (c-path: $b = 0.02$, $t = 5.12$, $p < .05$). Mediation analysis indicated that drug use history partially mediated the link between clinical personality and criminal behaviour (c'-path: $b = 0.45$, $t = 14.07$, $p < .01$; bootstrap CI = 0.007 to 0.027). In conclusion, the study shows that drug abuse serves as a significant but partial mediator in the relationship between personality and crime. These findings underscore the importance of structured psychological interventions and integrated treatment approaches that target both clinical personality traits and substance use histories to reduce criminal behaviour and recidivism.

Keywords: Convicted Inmates, Criminal Behaviour, Clinical Personality Patterns, Drug Use History

INTRODUCTION

Criminal behaviour is often described/regarded as any externalised action and conduct that violates the societal or collective laws that guide a community.¹ Crime, in general, represents an unlawful act that contravenes a community's value system and is subject to legal sanctions. Beyond perpetrators, crime inflicts severe psychological, social, and economic distress on victims, communities, and society at large.² The crux of the investigation is motivated by the rising crime rate in Nigeria and worldwide. Among the crimes committed are mass killings, robbery, kidnappings, and ritual killings.³ In response, policymakers and researchers have explored various interventions, including unemployment reduction

¹ Željko Bjelajac, "The Concept of Criminal Profiling in Contemporary Crime Suppression Policies," *Kultura Polisa* 21, no. 2 (2024): 44–75.

² Luca D'Acci, "Urban Quality of Life Estimates," in *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research* (Springer, 2024), 7433–44.

³ C. Egwu, C C Nwogbo-Egwu, and A C Udensi, "Youth Unemployment And Rising Crime Rates In Nigeria," 2024.

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PUBLICATION HISTORY - Received : 10th May, 2025 | Accepted: 17th March, 2026 | Published: 21st May, 2026.

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE – Olaseni, Abayomi O. "From traits to trouble: Exploring the role of Drug Abuse between Clinical Personality and Criminal Behaviour." *Journal of Education and Learning Technology* 7, no.4 (2026): 423 - 432. <https://doi.org/10.38159/jelt.2026746>

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strategies,⁴ poverty alleviation programs,⁵ and drug use control measures,⁶ to curb rising crime rates. Criminal acts manifest themselves in various forms, including physical assault, communal killings, ethnic violence, domestic abuse, robbery, and homicide, leading to severe consequences such as physical injuries, psychological trauma, and fatalities.⁷

However, major research outputs emanating from Nigeria and the Global South have centred on social and environmental determinants of crime. At the same time, several studies examine the inherent influence of personality traits that predispose individuals to criminal behaviour. Personality is a relatively enduring and stable set of traits that influences patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaviour.⁸ This study conceptualises personality traits based on Theodore Millon's theory of personality, which emphasises evolutionary adaptations, distinguishing it from non-clinical personality classifications such as the Big Five Personality Model.⁹ The Big Five framework identifies five major domains: neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Research has shown that low conscientiousness, high neuroticism, and low agreeableness increase the likelihood of aggressive and antisocial behaviours.¹⁰ Bo et al. examined three fundamental personality dimensions, namely, psychoticism, extroversion, and neuroticism. They found that high psychoticism scores, compared to extroversion and neuroticism, were more strongly associated with delinquent behaviour.¹¹ In other words, psychoticism has been consistently linked to criminal behaviour. However, extroversion and neuroticism have also been found to be related to criminal tendencies, particularly among young and adult offenders, respectively.

This study aims to examine the mediating role of drug use and abuse in the relationship between clinical personality and criminal behaviour among convicted inmates in Nigeria. The specific objective of the study is to explore the mediating role of drug use and abuse in the relationship between clinical personality and crime propensity and behaviour among the convicted inmates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cunha et al. found that personality traits predict criminal behaviour among offenders, regardless of sex, ethnicity, age, or location. Reinforcing the significance of personality characteristics in explaining criminal tendencies, this study seeks to deepen the understanding of the unique role of clinical personality traits in criminal behaviour.¹² By adopting a novel approach to personality conceptualisation, this research aims to make a significant contribution to the existing literature in forensic psychology and criminology. Recent studies have established a strong association between schizoid personality disorder and criminal behaviour, particularly among prisoners and individuals in restrictive settings.¹³ Schizoid traits have also been linked to violent behaviour.¹⁴ Edwards et al. found that many surveyed adults with a history of involvement in the criminal justice system (N = 314) had

⁴ Egwu, Nwogbo-Egwu, and Udensi, "Youth Unemployment And Rising Crime Rates In Nigeria."

⁵ Ikuomola Adediran Daniel, "Poverty, Road Culture and Deviance among Areabosy in Lagos Central Neighbourhood," *International Journal of Prevention and Treatment* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–10.

⁶ Joseph J. Sabia et al., "The Effects of Recreational Marijuana Laws on Drug Use and Crime," *Journal of Public Economics* 234 (2024): 105075.

⁷ Etienne G Krug et al., "The World Report on Violence and Health," *The Lancet* 360, no. 9339 (2002): 1083–88; L. Miller, *Constructivist Epistemology* (London: Routledge, 2016); Mohamed Seedat et al., "Violence and Injuries in South Africa: Prioritising an Agenda for Prevention," *The Lancet* 374, no. 9694 (2009): 1011–22.

⁸ Kevin M Beaver et al., "The Association between Psychopathic Personality Traits and Criminal Justice Outcomes: Results from a Nationally Representative Sample of Males and Females," *Crime & Delinquency* 63, no. 6 (2017): 708–30.

⁹ Theodore Millon and S Grossman, *MCMI-IV: Inventario Clinico Multiaxial de Millon-IV* (Pearson, 2018).

¹⁰ C. E. Sleep et al., "The Link between Individual Personality Traits and Aggression: A Systematic Review," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 58 (2021): 101546.

¹¹ Sune Bo et al., "Psychopathy in a Forensic Sample—the Factor Structure of the PCL: SV in a Danish Forensic Sample," *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 60, no. 5 (2019): 447–55.

¹² Olga Cunha and Rui Abrunhosa Gonçalves, "Male Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: A Comparison Between Incarcerated and Community Offenders," *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 62, no. 11 (August 21, 2018): 3260–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X17741070>.

¹³ Jeremy W Coid, "Assessment of Personality Disorder, Psychopathy and Associated Offending Behaviour," in *Seminars in Forensic Psychiatry* (Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 2024), 262.

¹⁴ Casey Lewandowski, "Evaluation of Schizoid Personality Disorder: Background, Misconceptions, and the Interrelation with Violence," *Global Happiness and Humanitarian Assistance*, 2024, 129–41.

co-morbid antisocial personality disorder, which predisposed them to criminal behaviours.¹⁵ Similarly, Choy and Raine, in their neurobiological examination of antisocial personality disorder, concluded that this disorder is associated with more extensive criminal involvement and negative life experiences, including substance use and abuse.¹⁶

Sadistic personality disorder has been identified as a potential risk factor for engaging in criminal behaviour.¹⁷ Likewise, histrionic personality disorder has been reported to have the highest prevalence among individuals with a history of criminal behaviour.¹⁸ Additional personality characteristics, such as compulsive and narcissistic personality traits, have also been linked to criminal outcomes.¹⁹ More broadly, research has demonstrated an overall association between personality patterns and criminal behaviour.²⁰

Despite these findings, there is a notable lack of research exploring the mediating role of drug use and abuse in the association between personality characteristics and criminal behaviour. In other words, little is documented about the role of drug use and abuse in the association between clinical personality traits and criminal behaviours among convicted inmates in Nigeria and across Africa. This study seeks to bridge this existing gap by bringing to light how drug use and abuse can determine how personality profiles dictate criminal tendencies and behaviours.

Hunduh et al. revealed a significant link between drug abuse and criminal activities in Nigeria, underscoring its mediating or moderating capacity in eliciting criminal behaviour through the influence of innate characteristics, such as personality.²¹ Recent studies found that while increased marijuana use among adults has led to a reduction in marijuana-related arrests, it has also been associated with a significant increase in violent crimes among users.²² Similarly, Jakupi highlighted the strong influence of drug use and abuse on criminal behaviour, providing a greater understanding of how substance use contributes to the occurrence of criminal activities among individuals struggling with addiction.²³

Several research studies have explored the specific drugs associated with criminal behaviour. For example, Daldegan-Bueno et al. identified crime and violence as major adverse consequences scientifically linked to cocaine use.²⁴ Their findings, based on a systematic analysis of peer-reviewed articles, examined the relationship between cocaine use and the perpetration or initiation of physical violence in Brazil between 2000 and 2024. The study highlighted high rates of victimisation and perpetration of violent crimes, including robbery, assault, homicide, and sexual abuse, among cocaine users. Additionally, toxicology reports frequently detected cocaine in victims of violent injuries or fatalities.

¹⁵ Emily R Edwards et al., “Prison or Treatment? Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Inequities in Mental Health Care Utilization and Criminal Justice History among Incarcerated Persons with Borderline and Antisocial Personality Disorders.,” *Law and Human Behavior* 48, no. 2 (2024): 104.

¹⁶ Olivia Choy and Adrian Raine, “The Neurobiology of Antisocial Personality Disorder,” *Neuropharmacology* 261 (2024): 110150.

¹⁷ Liliana Hurezán et al., “Dark and Bright Personality Dimensions as Predictors of Criminal Behavior and Recidivism,” *Scientific Reports* 14, no. 1 (2024): 18565.

¹⁸ Ali Zendegani et al., “Comparison of Personality Disorders Among Elderly Criminals in Tehran Prisons Based on the Type of Crime in 1403,” *Salmand* 0, no. 0 (January 6, 2025): 0–0, <https://doi.org/10.32598/sija.2025.3903.1>.

¹⁹ E Canpolat, D Koca, and E H Yukseloglu, “Relationship between Impulsivity and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in Forensic Sciences,” *NOFOR* 3, no. 1 (2024): 16–20; Bárbara Castillo-Abdul, Eglée Ortega Fernandez, and Luis M Romero-Rodriguez, “Corporate Social Responsibility Communication of Male Luxury Fashion Brands: Analysis on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok,” *Management Decision* 62, no. 2 (2024): 471–91; Akiko Hinds, “The Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-IV (MCMI-IV) Personality and Clinical Scales of Male Sex Offenders versus Male Drug Offenders at an Outpatient Forensic Site” (Adler University, 2022); Hurezán et al., “Dark and Bright Personality Dimensions as Predictors of Criminal Behavior and Recidivism.”

²⁰ Cristian Delcea and Alexandra Enache, “Personality Traits as Predictor of Crime,” *Rom J Leg Med* 29, no. 2 (2021): 227–31; N K Tharshini et al., “The Link between Individual Personality Traits and Criminality: A Systematic Review,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 16 (2021): 8663; Edelyn Verona and Bryanna Fox, “Pathways to Crime and Antisocial Behavior: A Critical Analysis of Psychological Research and a Call for Broader Ecological Perspectives,” *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* 21, no. 1 (2025): 439–64.

²¹ A. V. Hunduh, A. Y. Izang, and F. B. Hunduh, “Relationship between Drug Abuse and Crime in Jos North Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria.,” *Lapai International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 16, no. 1 (2024): 216–28.

²² Sabia et al., “The Effects of Recreational Marijuana Laws on Drug Use and Crime.”

²³ Shaban Jakupi, “The Influence of Drug Addiction on Criminal Behavior,” *JUSTICIA–International Journal of Legal Sciences* 12, no. 21–22 (2024): 249–60.

²⁴ Dimitri Daldegan-Bueno and Benedikt Fischer, “The Association between Cocaine Product Use and Violence Outcomes in Brazil: A Comprehensive, Systematized Review,” *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 74 (2024): 101891.

Similarly, Claro et al., in a cross-sectional study, posited that drug use and abuse contribute to a chain of events leading to mental health issues, which, in turn, exacerbate criminal and violent behaviours.²⁵ Furthermore, Dietze et al. investigated the impact of alcohol and intravenous drug use, establishing a significant link between substance abuse and both criminal activity and the overall well-being of users.²⁶

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted an ex post facto design, which is appropriate for examining how the independent variable influences the dependent variable without manipulation. This design allowed the researcher to profile the clinical personality dimensions of already convicted criminals, providing insights into their potential role in criminal behaviour.

Study Setting

The research was conducted among convicted inmates in the Nigerian Correctional Institution in Ilorin, Kwara State. The facility, originally built in 1914 to accommodate approximately 150 inmates, currently houses a significantly higher number, suggesting overcrowding.²⁷ The rate of crime, including armed robbery, human and drug trafficking, terrorism, kidnapping, and rape, has been on the rise in Ilorin and Nigeria at large.²⁸ Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara State, is strategically located approximately 306 km from Lagos, Nigeria's commercial hub, and 500 km from Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. Kwara State is one of the 36 states that make up Nigeria.

Population/Participants

The study's population consists of inmates who competent courts of jurisdiction have convicted. A total of 450 prison inmates were purposively selected to participate in the study. Age ranged from 18 - 25 years (n=20; 04.4%), 22 - 25 years (n=73, 16.2%), 26 - 29years (n=03, 0.7%), 30 - 33 years (n=165, 36.7%), 34 - 37 years (n=53, 11.8%), and 38 and above years (n=136, 30.2%). For gender, 423 (94.0%) self-identified as males, while 27 (06.0%) identified as females. 244 (54.3%) of the participants were Christians, 197 (43.8%) were Muslims, while 03 (01.3%) identified with other religions. 327 (72.7%) of the respondents were Yoruba, 41 (9.1%) were Igbo, 59 (13.1%) were Hausa/Fulani, and 21 (4.7%) were from other ethnic groups. 126 (28.0%) of the respondents had secondary school education, 132 (29.3%) had Ordinary National Diploma, 87 (19.3%) had Higher National Diploma, 90 (20.0%) had first degrees, while 15 (3.3%) were second-degree holders. As regards marital Status, 224 (49.8%) were single, 168 (37.3%) were married, and 58 (12.9%) were divorced.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- Ability to read and understand the English Language
- Must be 18years and above
- Must have been found guilty of the committed crime and convicted

Instruments

Data for the study were collected using a well-structured, standardised, and validated instrument. The data were collected across four phases/scales: demographic data, the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST), the Million Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI-III), and the Brief Criminal Attitude Scale.

²⁵ Heloísa Garcia Claro et al., "Drug Use, Mental Health and Problems Related to Crime and Violence: Cross-Sectional Study," *Revista Latino-Americana de Enfermagem* 23, no. 6 (2015): 1173–80.

²⁶ Paul Dietze et al., "The Relationship between Alcohol Use and Injecting Drug Use: Impacts on Health, Crime and Wellbeing," *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 128, no. 1–2 (2013): 111–15.

²⁷ Oladeinde Olawoyin, "Kwara Govt Moves to Relocate Oke-Kura Prison" (Premium Times. , 2017).

²⁸ Anche Ugah Sabo, Aminu Davidson, and Kaze Akwanga Bashama, "The Need for Community Policing In Providing Security and Curbing Rising Crime in Nigeria," 2020.

Section A: Demographic Data: This section contains the socio-demographic information of the participants, including age, gender, religion, marital status, educational qualifications, work experience, and ethnic affiliation.

Section B: Clinical Personality: To assess clinical personality traits, the study utilised the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI-III), developed by Theodore Millon. This psychological assessment tool measures twelve personality dimensions, including schizoid, avoidant, depressive, dependent, histrionic, narcissistic, antisocial, sadistic, compulsive, masochistic, and negativistic traits. The original scale consists of 175 items, but for this study, 107 items specifically related to clinical personality traits were adopted. The response format followed a dichotomous (True/False) structure, with the scale demonstrating strong internal consistency, as reflected in a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89.

Section C: Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST): The DAST is a validated screening test designed to provide a brief clinical drug use screening and treatment. DAST is a 28-item self-report scale in which the combination of items in a total DAST score yields a quantitative indicator of problems related to drug use and abuse. The reliability estimate was substantial (.81). Participants are expected to respond either 'yes' or 'no' to the listed questions. For the scoring patterns, a score of "1" is given for each 'Yes' response, except for items 4, 5, and 7, for which a 'No' response is scored "1". Interpretatively, the higher the scores of the respondents, the higher the problematic issues with drug use and abuse. DAST presents the Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.805.

Section D-1: Brief Criminal Attitude Scale: The scale was developed by A.W. Taylor to measure criminal tendency and attitude; in other words, it assesses the degree of criminality of any offender and reflects changes in attitude resulting from treatment or recommendations. This is a two-point scale on which participants indicate their agreement as True or False. It consists of 15 statements with no right or wrong answer, which represent opinions that some people hold. The scale presents the Cronbach's alpha of .076.

Section D-2: Crime and Criminal Behaviour Checklist: The scale consists of a 5-item statement with no right or wrong answers that represents participants' lived experience. The statement sought the participants' acknowledgement of the crime, expression of criminal behaviour before arrest, frequent affirmation of committing a crime, etc.

Data Analysis

The data for this study were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Descriptive statistics, including percentages, were used to analyse demographic variables. Inferential statistics were applied to test the significance of research hypotheses, utilising PROCESS MACRO and regression analysis to determine the predictive relationships between clinical personality traits and criminal behaviour.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the University of Ilorin's Ethical Committees through the Department of Psychology's ethical review process, ensuring compliance with research integrity and ethical standards. To gain access to the correctional facility, an official introduction letter and a request for permission were submitted to the Controller of Corrections, Kwara State Command, and formal approval was granted. Informed consent was a crucial component of the study, with participants receiving detailed information about its purpose, objectives, potential risks, and benefits. Individuals who met the inclusion criteria were thoroughly briefed and provided with consent forms for voluntary endorsement. The procedure for obtaining informed consent was also outlined in the proposal submitted to the ethical review committee to ensure transparency. Upon obtaining consent, participants were guided through the structured questionnaire to ensure clarity and adherence to ethical research practices. Ethical approval was granted by the Ethical Review and Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology (ERC/2021/s7733/0531), ensuring compliance with established ethical guidelines. All ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the data collection process and beyond.

Informed consent was obtained from all study participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and understanding of the study's objectives, potential risks, and benefits.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This section presents the data collected on the mediating role of drug use and abuse in the relationship between personality and criminal behaviour among the study participants. The study’s objectives were established using the regression process macro as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The bias-corrected mediating role of drug use history in the relationship between clinical personality patterns and criminal behaviour

Factors	B	Std. E	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
A-Path	0.28	0.259	09.79	< 0.01	0.207	0.312
B-Path	0.06	0.016	03.68	< 0.05	0.028	0.092
C-Path (Direct)	0.02	0.008	05.12	< 0.05	0.060	0.026
C’-Path (Indirect)	0.45	0.520	14.07	< 0.01	0.007	0.027

**p < .01, *p < .05

Table 1 above revealed that clinical personality significantly influences previous drug use and abuse (a-path analysis; $b = 0.28, t = 9.79, p < .01$). Further analysis revealed that a history of drug use and abuse significantly influences criminal behaviour (b-path analysis; $b = 0.06, t = 3.68, p < .001$). While clinical personality had a significant impact on criminal tendency and behaviour, holding constant the mediating role of drug use and abuse (c-path analysis; $b = 0.02, t = 05.12, p < .05$).

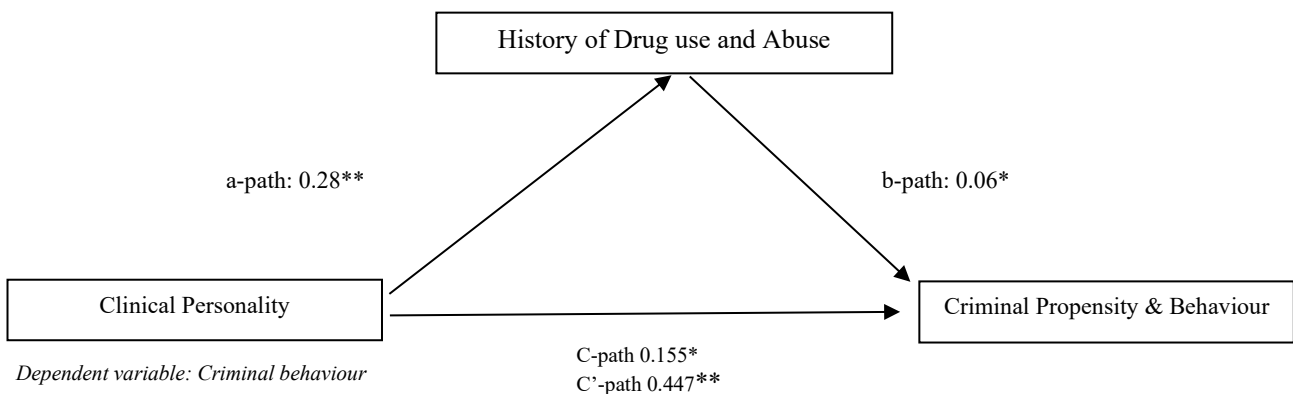


Figure 1: Mediation Model

However, in Table 1 and Figure 1, the mediating analysis revealed that a previous history of drug use significantly (and indirectly) mediated the relationship between clinical personality and criminal behaviour (c’-path analysis; $b = 0.45, t = 14.07, p < .01$; bootstrap = 0.007 and .027). According to Preacher and Hayes (2004), establishing a mediating effect in the Structural Equation Model (SEM) framework is dependent on the significance of the total effect ($X*Y$) and the direct effect ($X*Y-M$). In other words, the analysis of direct effect showed that a history of drug use partially mediated the relationship between clinical personality and criminal behaviour.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study showed a significant correlation between participants’ clinical personality and drug use and abuse. Participants’ history of drug use and abuse significantly correlates with criminal tendency and behaviour. Furthermore, outcomes revealed that clinical personality significantly correlates with criminal tendency and behaviour, in the absence of drug use and abuse. However, in the presence of drug use and abuse, the association between clinical personality and

criminal propensity and behaviour became significantly stronger. The outcomes of the study are similar to some recent studies conducted in different settings. For instance, a study by Cunha et al. reported that personality traits predict criminal outcomes among offenders.²⁹ In exploring clinical personality traits, Coid and Lewandowski's studies in the past identified the significant role of the schizoid personality trait associated with criminal behaviour among prisoners.³⁰ In agreement with the study's findings, Edwards et al. and Choy and Raine established a strong association between criminal behaviour and antisocial personality traits.³¹ Other clinical personality traits, such as sadistic personality traits,³² histrionic personality traits,³³ compulsive and narcissistic personality traits,³⁴ and overall broad personality traits.³⁵

Although previous but recent findings did not account for or explore the mediating role of drug use and abuse in the association between personality traits and criminal behaviour, some overwhelming publications and findings attempt to explore the association between drug use and criminal behaviour, and drug use and personality. In agreement with the findings of the study, Hunduh et al. concluded that there was a significant association between drug abuse and criminal activities.³⁶ In a similar direction, the work of Claro et al., Daldegan-Bueno et al., Sabia et al., and Jakupi reported a positive association between drug use and criminality, indicating that the increase in the use of substances (e.g. marijuana, cocaine, etc.) increases the possibility of committing a crime, and the less likely of substances decreases the possibility of committing a crime.³⁷

In essence, the current study is largely contributing to knowledge by explaining criminal behaviours from the intersectionality of clinical personality, drug use and abuse, and criminal outcomes. Although clinical personality is associated with criminal propensity and behaviour, with the introduction of a mediating factor (such as drug use and abuse), the relationship/association between clinical personality and criminal propensity and behaviour among the inmate participants became stronger, thus establishing that drug use partially mediates the relationship between clinical personality and criminal propensity and behaviour.

Study Limitations and Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following measures are suggested to understand crime predisposition and, importantly, proper management of criminal tendency or behaviour and in turn reduce overcrowding of correctional services in Nigeria:

For Practice: At the moment, there is no structured intervention guide for psychologists working in Nigerian prisons to reduce the likelihood of re-arrest or criminal behaviour. Based on the

²⁹ Cunha and Gonçalves, "Male Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: A Comparison Between Incarcerated and Community Offenders."

³⁰ Coid, "Assessment of Personality Disorder, Psychopathy and Associated Offending Behaviour"; Lewandowski, "Evaluation of Schizoid Personality Disorder: Background, Misconceptions, and the Interrelation with Violence."

³¹ Edwards et al., "Prison or Treatment? Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Inequities in Mental Health Care Utilization and Criminal Justice History among Incarcerated Persons with Borderline and Antisocial Personality Disorders."; Choy and Raine, "The Neurobiology of Antisocial Personality Disorder."

³² Hurezan et al., "Dark and Bright Personality Dimensions as Predictors of Criminal Behavior and Recidivism."

³³ Zendejani et al., "Comparison of Personality Disorders Among Elderly Criminals in Tehran Prisons Based on the Type of Crime in 1403."

³⁴ Canpolat, Koca, and Yukselgolu, "Relationship between Impulsivity and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in Forensic Sciences"; E., Castillo et al., "Impulsivity in Antisocial Personality Disorder and Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder in Prison Population," 2024; Hinds, "The Millon Clinical Multi-axial Inventory-IV (MCMI-IV) Personality and Clinical Scales of Male Sex Offenders versus Male Drug Offenders at an Outpatient Forensic Site"; Hurezan et al., "Dark and Bright Personality Dimensions as Predictors of Criminal Behavior and Recidivism"; Nungala Usman Isaac, "Behaviour Disorders of Childhood and Adolescence: Implications for Education in Nigeria," *Bulletin of Islamic Research* 2, no. 4 (2024): 573–90.

³⁵ Delcea and Enache, "Personality Traits as Predictor of Crime"; Tharshini et al., "The Link between Individual Personality Traits and Criminality: A Systematic Review"; Verona and Fox, "Pathways to Crime and Antisocial Behavior: A Critical Analysis of Psychological Research and a Call for Broader Ecological Perspectives."

³⁶ Hunduh, Izang, and Hunduh, "Relationship between Drug Abuse and Crime in Jos North Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria. ."

³⁷ Claro et al., "Drug Use, Mental Health and Problems Related to Crime and Violence: Cross-Sectional Study"; Daldegan-Bueno and Fischer, "The Association between Cocaine Product Use and Violence Outcomes in Brazil: A Comprehensive, Systematized Review"; Sabia et al., "The Effects of Recreational Marijuana Laws on Drug Use and Crime"; Jakupi, "The Influence of Drug Addiction on Criminal Behavior."

outcome of the study, clinical personality assessments and previous history of drug use are important factors to consider in the quest for developing functional interventions among inmates. Based on the study's outcomes, early screening and intervention are recommended for people with high-risk clinical personality traits. Mental health practitioners and other concerned institutions should implement early screening for clinical personality traits and substance abuse history to identify at-risk individuals (for criminal behaviour). The study results could be very helpful for integrated treatment approaches. The rehabilitation programs should integrate personality-focused psychotherapy with substance abuse interventions to reduce criminal tendencies or recurrence after incarceration. Outcomes can also help develop and maintain community-based monitoring, as psychologists and/or law enforcement agencies should collaborate to monitor individuals with known clinical traits and drug-use histories to support preventive interventions.

For Theory: There is a paucity of psychologically based theories that examine the role of a third factor/variable in determining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. For example, the behavioural model explains how a stimulus elicits responses in subjects, while the cognitive model explains how a third variable (usually cognitive factors) mediates the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable. Outcomes of the study further affirm that clinical personality and criminal behaviour models establish a strong relationship by empirically validating partial mediation through a history of drug use and abuse. It reinforces the idea that clinical personality traits may translate into criminal behaviour through behavioural conduits like substance use. The results supported the bio-psychosocial models of criminality that consider both direct personality effects and mediated behavioural pathways.

For Research: The outcome of the current study should be interpreted with caution, as the study was limited by the chosen design and considered a limited construct that did not fully mediate the variables of interest. The study recommends that researchers further explore similar or other potential mediators or moderators (e.g., peer influence, socioeconomic status, trauma) to understand the pathways from clinical personality to criminal behaviour fully. In addition, longitudinal studies are needed to determine causal relationships among the independent, mediating, and dependent variables over a relatively stable period. Furthermore, the study is limited by its design and narrow focus, suggesting that future research should explore additional mediators or moderators and adopt longitudinal designs to understand causal pathways better.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the mediating role of drug use and abuse in the relationship between clinical personality and criminal behaviour among convicted inmates in Nigeria. The findings of this study show that the study's independent variable (i.e. clinical personality traits) significantly predicts previous drug use and abuse, which in turn significantly influences criminal behaviour. While clinical personality continues to have a direct effect on criminal behaviour even after accounting for drug use, the mediation analysis shows that drug use history serves as a partial mediator. This suggests that individuals with clinical personality traits may be more likely to engage in criminal behaviour, partly because they are also more prone to substance abuse. Thus, the pathway from personality to criminality is both direct and indirect, with substance use acting as a meaningful mechanism in this relationship.

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