



Power Addiction: A Current Review

Fırat Ünsal*^a & Zafer Korkmaz^b

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Abstract

Anyone who said power was not addictive had never really experienced it. Dan BROWN. "The strongest is never strong enough to be the master unless he transforms strength into right and obedience into duty." Power addiction is a sickness that sometimes goes unnoticed. Most individuals undoubtedly believe that power addiction does not exist. This article reveals that this addiction is equally as harmful and devastating as a drug, alcohol, or sex addiction. Although power studies have concentrated on power's impacts, processes, and causes, a more fragmented approach to addressing power has been presented (Krause & Kearney, 2006). Power is required to dominate people, engage them, and wield influence. Individuals with a strong desire for power love being in control of something, influencing others, displaying their status, and acquiring it via the influence of others. In other words, they prefer to achieve success by leveraging their position rather than putting in a stellar effort (Özkalp & Kirel, 2011). An addiction is a chronic dysfunction of the brain system that involves reward, motivation, and memory. It is about how your body craves a substance or behaviour, especially if it causes a compulsive or obsessive pursuit of "reward" and a lack of concern over consequences. Someone experiencing addiction will be unable to stay away from the substance or stop the addictive behaviour, display a lack of self-control, have an increased desire for the substance or behaviour, dismiss how their behaviour may be causing problems, and lack an emotional response. Researchers have discovered that sensations of pleasure are linked to dopamine, a strong neurotransmitter produced in the nucleus accumbens, often known as the "pleasure centre" of the brain. According to researchers, dopamine is also produced in reaction to drugs and alcohol and several behaviours such as sex, eating, gambling, and even shopping. A preoccupation with riches and power may lead to an individual being more preoccupied with obtaining money or attaining prestige. Everything else, including family, friends, and health, becomes secondary. Over time, a person's whole identity becomes entwined with generating money or accomplishing additional "wins." People are assessed not on their qualities but on their achievements, influence, or financial holdings. Addicts to riches and power tend to feel most strongly when controlling others, with little tolerance for anything that gets in the way of their upward trajectory. They are often exceedingly competitive and have a strong desire to be correct. As a result, individuals may become subjects and objects in their drive for power due to their desire for power and adoration for the powerful. In this scenario, since identification with the adored person leads to the need to be admired, the individual will feel dominated by somebody similar. Imitating power has much more disastrous implications than actual power.

*Corresponding Author: brukani@gmail.com

^a Dr., Van Yuzuncu Yil University, Van/TURKEY, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9561-554X>

^b Dr., Batman/TURKEY, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6789-2064>

Introduction

Power, particularly ultimate and unfettered power, is enticing. It influences cellular and neurochemical levels. They exhibit themselves behaviorally in several ways, ranging from enhanced cognitive skills to a lack of restraint, bad judgement, severe narcissism, twisted conduct, and heinous brutality Al-Rodhan, N. (2022).

Dopamine, the same chemical transmitter responsible for providing a sensation of pleasure, is the key neurochemical involved with the power reward that is recognised today. Power, like drug addiction, triggers the same reward circuitry in the brain and produces an addictive "high." Most individuals in positions of power, like addicts, will attempt to retain the high they obtain from authority at any cost (Şener & Çetinkaya, 2016). Power, like any highly addictive drug, causes cravings at the biological level, resulting in a significant behavioural reluctance to give it up. Checks and balances exist in responsible communities to prevent the unavoidable consequences of power. However, when leaders wield unlimited and unrestrained authority, leadership changes and transitions to a more consensus-based government are unlikely to be seamless. The only way to assure that someone will tolerate abandoning total power is to remove it gradually.

Dopamine, the same chemical transmitter responsible for delivering a pleasant feeling, is the primary neurochemical involved in the power reward that is now recognised. Power addiction, like drug addiction, activates the same reward system in the brain, producing an addictive "high." Most people in positions of leadership, like addicts, would do everything to keep the high they get from power (Cobb, 1984). Power, like any highly addictive narcotic, produces biological cravings, culminating in a considerable behavioural unwillingness to give it up. In responsible societies, checks and balances exist to avert the inescapable consequences of power. However, when leaders have unrestricted power, leadership changes and transitions to a more consensus-based administration are unlikely to be smooth (Luthans, 2011). The only way to ensure that someone will endure relinquishing absolute authority is to lose it gradually.

The urge for power stems from man's desire to control his surroundings. As a result, individuals and organisations are not afraid to use whatever measures necessary to maximise their efficacy and make their voices heard in their environmental interactions (Şener & Çetinkaya, 2016). All attempts to be superior and control the work and activities of others may lead to individual conflict and conflict with others. To some degree, this hazard restrains the human need to be vital. As a consequence, the degree of this desire differs greatly among individuals (Eren, 2010).

As a result of individuals' search for power and admiration for the powerful, individuals can become subjects and objects in their search for power. Since identification with the admired person will lead to the desire to be admired, in this case, the individual will feel under the domination of someone like himself. Imitating power has more devastating consequences than power itself. To gain the respect of the masses under their command, practitioners can always be crueller than power orders (Meşe, 2013). Başaran (2000) indicates that "A person who grows up in an oppressive, authoritarian environment develops these characteristics in his personality and becomes prone to oppression and authoritarianism. When a person enters an organization, they seek an opportunity to satisfy this tendency. The power basic motive is the dominant motive in such an employee's motivational pattern. These employees are more inclined to become directors, be experts in their work, and show power over others by looking at other employees. He is very eager to take risks to prove himself. He or she is oriented to retaining all the tools and methods to influence business decisions, striving to seek shortcuts for advancement. In this study, power addiction will be analyzed.

Addiction

The word "addiction" derives from the Latin word "advice", which means "to devote". Based on dozens of theories with very different approaches, the definition of addiction has been made. While it is difficult to categorize these different theories, they address the behavioural, social, or biological aspects of addiction and are built accordingly. The result is that addiction is a biopsychosocial phenomenon (Wells et al., 2006)

We know that since the first ages when we had access to written information, human beings made intense efforts to raise their mood and to feel more joyful, happy, and productive. Addiction is a brain disease and is considered one of the biggest health problems in our recent history. In this disease, voluntary substance use behaviour turns into compulsive substance use depending on the structural and neurochemical changes in the

brain of the addicted individual (Pincus & Wilson 2001). As a result of addiction, serious mental and physical problems are seen in the person, and this enslavement, which starts at the individual level, endangers the whole health, family, and work life of the individual, and can lead to many social problems, sometimes to crime. Depression, bipolar disorder, substance and alcohol use disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, antisocial, narcissistic, and borderline personality disorders are psychiatric disorders that often accompany all kinds of addictions (Bornstein et al.,1993). Addiction is also considered a family disease. Having an addicted member also means experiencing all the consequences/losses of addiction for the family. Scientific studies and narcotic records in our country reveal the fact that alcohol and drug use is increasing rapidly towards younger ages. As a result, the number of dependents is increasing.

What are the Causes of Addiction?

It is known that addiction is caused by biological, social, psychological, behavioural, and genetic reasons. However, it is not possible to explain the reason with a single factor. Possibly, when many factors come together, a picture of dependency occurs. Family studies, especially twin studies, help us to distinguish the importance of genetic and environmental factors. Adoption-type studies show that there is a significant increase in the "risk of addiction" in the children of parents with addiction problems, even when the children are separated from their biological parents shortly after birth and are not aware of it again. Genetically, it is accepted that more than one gene contributes to the development of addiction. Different sociocultural theories have been developed for the development of addiction in studies conducted with different social groups. Although it is difficult to investigate sociocultural factors, we know that environmental events are an important risk in the development of addiction.

What Happens in the Brain in Addiction?

It is known that many brain regions such as the ventral tegmental area, which is known as the reward centre of the brain, and the frontal cortex, which is responsible for many functions of the brain such as reasoning, decision-making, impulse control, amygdala, which is responsible for the management of emotions, the Nucleus Accumbens, and the striatum, which are associated with learning, are responsible for the development of addiction.

At each stage of addiction, changes occur in different parts of the brain. Substance use causes high levels of dopamine to be released from the reward centre. This dopamine release causes intense pleasure. The dopamine release triggered by substance ingestion affects the frontal cortex over time, causing wrong decisions to be taken and the chosen actions to be in the direction of substance use. At the same time, dopamine also affects learning-related areas of the brain such as the Nucleus Accumbens and Striatum, resulting in impaired learning ability. People who develop substance addiction also develop impairment in their ability to learn, record, and remember new information. All addictive drugs, directly and indirectly, affect the brain's network that controls and regulates the feeling of pleasure.

Dopamine and Addiction

Human beings, as I have already said, are defined by "emotional amoral egoism." Humans are emotionally oriented, and our moral compass is pliable and significantly impacted by circumstances, survival values, and our perceived "emotional self-interest" (for the majority of us, most of the time). Emotions, on the other hand, are not immaterial: they are neurochemically mediated and physical in the sense that they have neurochemical counterparts (Wise & Robble, 2020).

Dopamine is important for providing a sensation of pleasure and assisting us with memory retention and reward-driven learning. It is produced in specific areas of the brain as a result of rewarding events like success, food intake, and other life pleasures. However, it is also created by potentially harmful and life-threatening behaviours like drug misuse or gambling. In any case, dopamine release is what motivates individuals to return to these activities. Dopamine stimulates a reward system that has proven critical to our survival as a species, urging us to re-engage in life-sustaining behaviour. This is what I used to call the "neurochemical pleasure concept." Even the anticipation of a reward is thought to act similarly to the reward itself.

However, just as our reward systems continually induce good behaviour, so do they frequently induce undesirable behaviour. Cocaine, nicotine, and amphetamines all cause an increase in dopamine in the brain's

reward system (Kim et al., 2015). Addiction is a severe kind of behaviour that uses pre-existing neural networks to create manic behaviour, which manifests as euphoria, heightened intellect, and grandiose self-perceptions. Hitler, Stalin, and Napoleon, for example, all looked devoid of empathy or understanding of the worth of human life, executing thousands in disastrous military battles. However, power was probably responsible for amplifying certain behavioural tendencies that each person displayed.

Power

Power; It is a situation encountered in all areas of life. However, although idioms and proverbs about him are in everyone's language, it is very difficult to define conceptually. Because in every situation where there are two living beings, power relations will be mentioned. Özdemir (2008) emphasized that the multiplicity of these relations makes power comprehensive and uncertain, and stated that this wide scope and uncertainty makes it very difficult to define power because it requires taking into account many factors. Again, Bayraktaroğlu states that power is a complex concept that is difficult to define and conceptualize (Bayraktaroğlu, 2000).

The reason for this difficulty is perhaps the absence of absolute power, rather the existence of power relations that change according to time and situation. Although it is difficult to define, it is difficult because it is a concept that is mentioned in all relationships; It deserves to be researched and measured (Russell, 1938). Because, to express the power relations, which are thought to be as old as the history of humanity, the definition of the concept of power is also a necessity (Weber, 1947). Accordingly; In the unknown, in environments where uncertainty prevails, there is a mystery, and to solve this mystery, that thing must be defined. The concept of power has been defined in various ways by various writers/thinkers in different periods to eliminate this ambiguity.

The brain is neurochemically pre-programmed to seek pleasure, regardless of its social acceptability or how it is derived. We are, therefore, all addicts, of one sort or another, to the extent that we are all engaged in pursuits that ensure dopamine and other neurochemicals flow. As such, we all avoid doing things that would result in dopamine withdrawal. In a similar way to drug addicts and alcoholics, people find it hard to admit that they are addicts of acceptance/esteem/power because of dopamine withdrawals that would result in doing so. Moreover, stopping addictive behaviour that is harmful to self or others is not simply a question of willpower.

Much like addictive drugs, power uses these ready-made reward circuitries, producing extreme pleasure. In moderate amounts, dopamine can enhance dimensions of cognitive function, but may also make people impulsive, less risk-averse, and less empathetic. High levels of dopamine are associated with a sense of personal destiny, risk-taking, preoccupation with the cosmic or religion, emotional detachment that can lead to ruthlessness, and an obsession with achieving goals and conquests.

The Relationship of Power and Addiction

The most important feature of power is that it is a function of addiction (Robbins & Judge, 2011). As B's dependence on A increases, A turns out to have more power. A's strength depends on B's perception and how important it is to B what is in A's force field. Two important factors affect addiction. The first is the value that the parties attribute to what they will gain from addiction (motivational investment). The second is the possibility that the result to be obtained from this relationship can be obtained from other individuals (Emerson, 1962: 32). If attribution value and alternatives are exemplified respectively; As the value attributed by B to the outcome of B's relationship with A increases, his dependence on A will increase, and A's power over B will increase. As the probability of obtaining the value that B will derive from its relationship with A from other sources decreases, B's dependence on A will increase, and therefore A's power over B will increase (Doğan, 2012).

Hickson et al. (1971), who dealt with the dependency expressed by Emerson in terms of subunits for the first time in the literature, considered power as a dependent variable in their theory, which they called the strategic contingencies theory. According to the theory, the strength of subunits depends on their ability to cope with uncertainties, their centrality, and their non-substitutability (Hickson et al., 1971).

Power is an asymmetrical concept in nature and is based on the individual taking an award from someone and imposing penal sanctions on others. The source of power is one-sided dependence. Because mutual solidarity (double-sided dependency) and mutual interaction of equal forces indicate weakness (Blau, 1986). In unilateral dependency, the person holding the limited resource will have significant power over the other party. Riggio

(2016) states that a person who has a significant level of experience has a unilateral power source. Because those who do not have that experience will get help from an experienced person to get their work done. For example, considering an officer, although he has more specialized knowledge than a sergeant, he should get on well with a sergeant when he is first appointed because he has no experience. All living beings or institutions in an open system are in constant exchange with their environment to survive.

They distribute output to their environment by obtaining resources from their environment. The importance of the resources needed determines the framework of the dependence on the environment (Koçel, 2011). When the power of the subunits (employees in the subordinate position) in the institutions is examined, the importance of resource dependence, which is one of the components of dependency, will be seen. Because the units in the organizational structure have to exchange valuable commodities such as money, personnel, and information among themselves. The unit holding the resource needed by the other unit will have power over the other unit since it will need these resources for the other unit to continue its activities (Greenberg et al., 2000).

Conclusion

Addiction to power and wealth are often telltale signs of narcissistic personality disorder, a not uncommon trait of highly successful and powerful people. They are often addicted to drugs, alcohol, pornography, gambling, overeating, etc. to escape their inner shame, their painful void of lack of nurturing in their childhood. They need constant distraction and excitement and are thus prone to engage in criminal behaviour, building and destroying businesses, “empires”, relationships and families. Narcissists can be found in treatment centres when their world falls apart or the justice system sent them there. However, they hardly ever have the desire or the ability to change their lives for the better, therefore it is important to carefully diagnose them and help them as much as they can accept, not more, not less. As a result of individuals' search for power and admiration for the powerful, individuals can become both subjects and objects in their search for power (Şener & Çetinkaya2016).

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