



Identity as a cannabis user is related to problematic patterns of consumption among emerging adults



Claire E. Blevins^{a,b,*}, Ana M. Abrantes^{a,b}, Bradley J. Anderson^a, Celeste M. Caviness^a,
Debra S. Herman^{a,b}, Michael D. Stein^{a,c}

^a Butler Hospital, Behavioral Medicine and Addictions Research, United States

^b Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, United States

^c Boston University, Department of Health Law, Policy, and Management, United States

HIGHLIGHTS

- Cannabis self-concept (i.e., cannabis identity) is understudied.
- Cannabis self-concept is associated negative outcomes in emerging adults.
- Higher rates of self-concept are related to less motivation to reduce cannabis use.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Cannabis identity
Emerging adulthood
Motivation
Normative beliefs

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Cannabis use has become a more normative, socially-acceptable behavior in the United States, despite research indicating that frequent use may become problematic for some individuals. Emerging adulthood, a time of identity development, is the most common time for cannabis use. Cannabis self-concept, or one's identification with cannabis as part of their personality or identity, is one factor that may influence use behavior. This study extends previous research that reported a link between self-concept, motivational factors, and normative beliefs by evaluating relationships between cannabis self-concept, motives for use, motivation to change, perceived descriptive norms, as well as cannabis-related outcomes (use, using alone, and cannabis-related problems).

Methods: Emerging adults who used cannabis in the previous month ($n = 345$, 53.9% male, mean age 21.0, 67.5% Non-Latino White) were recruited from a community sample for a health behaviors study. Participants were assessed for explicit cannabis self-concept, frequency of use, problems associated with use, motives for use, motivation to change, and normative beliefs about others' use.

Results: Participants reported using cannabis on an average of 17.9 (SD = 11.1) days of the previous month. Correlational analyses revealed that cannabis self-concept was positively associated with frequency of use, use-related problems, several motives for use, descriptive norms, and with using cannabis alone. Multivariate analyses revealed that rates of use, problems, and social and enhancement motives were independently and positively associated ($p < 0.05$) with cannabis self-concept, while self-concept was negatively associated with desire to reduce cannabis use.

Conclusions: Cannabis self-concept may be a marker for more problematic patterns of use.

1. Introduction

Cannabis use is highly prevalent in emerging adulthood, second only in rates of use to alcohol (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2017). Indeed, emerging adulthood represents the most common time period of cannabis use: over half of emerging adults, aged 18–25, report lifetime cannabis use (51.8%), one-third

report past month use (33.0%), and 20.8% report past week use. Among emerging adults, 5.0% meet diagnostic criteria for a cannabis use disorder in the past year (DSM-IV criteria, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2017). Regular (i.e., daily or near-daily) cannabis use, particularly when initiated from adolescence or young adulthood, is associated with a host of negative consequences, such as neurocognitive deficits (Meier et al., 2012), school dropout

* Corresponding author at: Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Blvd., Providence, RI 02906, United States.
E-mail address: Claire_Blevins@Brown.edu (C.E. Blevins).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2017.12.021>

Received 27 October 2017; Received in revised form 18 December 2017; Accepted 19 December 2017

Available online 20 December 2017

0306-4603/© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

(Silins et al., 2014), adverse mental health outcomes (McGrath et al., 2010; Silins et al., 2014), decreased self-esteem, and problems with family and friends (Stephens, Babor, Kadden, & Miller, 2002). With recent recreational legalization in Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, and the District of Columbia, and with increased legalization for medical use, there is emerging evidence that cannabis has become more normative in the United States (see Sznitman & Taubman, 2016 for a discussion). Most Americans (57%) now support the legalization of cannabis, particularly individuals between the ages of 18–35 (71%) (Geiger, 2016). Along with this trend of legalization, perception of risk for cannabis use has decreased and perception of approval by others has increased (Carliner, Brown, Sarvet, & Hasin, 2017; Kosterman et al., 2016; Pacula & Smart, 2017).

Emerging adults are transitioning into adulthood during this period of shifting views as cannabis becomes more accepted for both medical and recreational purposes. Emerging adulthood is a period of time when individuals more firmly establish their identity, as they gain independence and transition into different roles (e.g., as an employee, as a college student, as a life partner) (Arnett, 2015, 2000). Identity formation – a sense of self-concept – is influenced by these factors, primarily resulting from an increased independence to engage in new and different behaviors and new peer groups (e.g., Arnett, 2000; Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). Substance use is one behavior that can impact or influence self-concept. Despite the growing acceptance of cannabis use among emerging adults, the risk of negative consequences remain, and it is important to determine what factors may impact problematic patterns of cannabis use: cannabis self-concept (i.e., an individual's identification with cannabis as part of their personality or part of their identity) is one such factor.

Self-concept may convey important information regarding an individual's risk for problematic use. The theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991), which provides a theoretical background to the examination of substance-specific self-concept, asserts that normative beliefs, attitudes, and past behavior predict future behavior. In an examination of the relationship between self-concept and the theory of planned behavior, Conner, Warren, Close, and Sparks (1999) found that the addition of self-concept to TPB-relevant variables (norms, attitudes, past behaviors) explained additional variance in alcohol use. Alcohol self-concept has been studied most commonly with college students (see Lindgren et al., 2017 for a review) and has been associated with rates of alcohol use (Foster, Young, Bryan, Steers, Yeung, and Prokhorov, 2014; Foster, Yeung, and Neighbors, 2014; Foster, Yeung, and Quist, 2014; Foster, 2014; Foster et al., 2017; Lindgren, Ramirez, Namaky, Olin, & Teachman, 2016; Lindgren, Gasser, Wertz, et al., 2016) and alcohol-related problems (Foster, Young, Bryan, et al., 2014; Foster, Yeung, and Neighbors, 2014; Foster et al., 2017; Lindgren et al., 2016; Lindgren, Gasser, Wertz, et al., 2016). Additionally, alcohol self-concept is higher among individuals with more severe drinking patterns (Rinker & Neighbors, 2015). Similarly, tobacco smoking self-concept is associated with rates of use and problems among adolescents and adults (Falomir & Invernizzi, 1999; Hertel & Mermelstein, 2013; Shadel, Mermelstein, and Borrelli, 1996; Shadel & Cervone, 2011). Therefore, viewing alcohol or tobacco use as part of one's identity or personality appears to be a marker for more high-risk patterns of use.

Self-concept is also associated with other motivational and cognitive factors that influence patterns of substance use: motives for substance use, motivation to change substance use, and normative beliefs. The addition of alcohol self-concept (i.e., drinking identity) to a model including variables such as norms and motives adds significant variance explained in alcohol use and problems (Lindgren, Ramirez, Olin, and Neighbors, 2016), suggesting that they are related yet distinct constructs. Several studies of alcohol use have reported that self-concept is related to motives for use, most notably the motive for substance use of coping with negative affect (Dibello et al., 2018; Foster, 2014; Lindgren, Neighbors, Teachman, & Greenwald, 2013). Additionally, results in tobacco literature suggest that self-concept as a user is

negatively related to intention to quit using (Falomir & Invernizzi, 1999; Tombor, Shahab, Brown, & West, 2013): thus, the more individuals internalize substance use as part of their identity, the less likely they are to be motivated to change their use. Emerging adults may be particularly influenced by perception of behavior of friends: for example, cannabis use rates are associated with the perceived descriptive norms of close friends (Buckner, 2013). Given the importance of friend groups in identity formation, having friends who consume cannabis and believing that use is normative among others of the same age group may be significantly related to one's cannabis self-concept.

While social use of cannabis in emerging adulthood is common, solitary use (i.e., using while alone) may also be a marker for more problematic patterns of use. Using cannabis alone is a distinguishing factor between dependent and non-dependent sample (Noack, Höfler, & Lueken, 2011; Van der Pol et al., 2013). In the alcohol literature, drinking alone is associated with more negative consequences of use, less motivation to reduce use, patterns of negative affect, and using for the motive of coping with negative affect (Christiansen, Vik, & Jarchow, 2002; Cooper, Kuntsche, Levitt, & Barber, 2016; Creswell et al., 2015; Creswell, Chung, Clark, & Martin, 2014). Despite evidence of a relationship to factors that have been studied in the self-concept literature (i.e., problems, motivation), no known study has evaluated the link between cannabis self-concept and using alone.

Cannabis self-concept has not been explicitly studied, with two known exceptions. Results from a descriptive study of college students from 11 universities reported that cannabis self-concept was correlated with rates of cannabis use, perception of cannabis use approval, several motives for cannabis use, and with use-related consequences (Pearson, Liese, & Dvorak, 2017). However, overall cannabis self-concept was low among users. This study included only college students and, given that the goal was to describe cannabis use and related constructs, the study included non-users in evaluations of relationships. In another study, in-depth interviews of how cannabis relates to personal identity were conducted among Canadian college students and found that cannabis use was often described as a socially acceptable “rite of passage” (Mostaghim & Hathaway, 2013). However, no known study has evaluated relationships between cannabis self-concept, cannabis use, and related constructs among a community sample of regular cannabis users.

The purpose of the current study is to contribute toward substance use self-concept literature, which has been primarily focused on alcohol and tobacco self-concept, by studying cannabis self-concept among a community sample of recently-using emerging adults. Specifically, the aims of the current study are: (1) to examine bivariate associations between cannabis self-concept, cannabis use, cannabis-related problems, using cannabis alone, motives for cannabis use, motivation to change cannabis use, and normative beliefs about cannabis, and (2) to explore multivariate relationships between cannabis self-concept and these related constructs. We hypothesize that cannabis self-concept will be associated with problematic patterns of use, such as more frequent use, greater problems, and using alone. We also hypothesize that individuals with higher self-concept will report higher cannabis norms (i.e., hold beliefs that more emerging adults are also cannabis users and have more close friends who are cannabis users), that self-concept will be associated with motives for use, and that high self-concept will be negatively associated with a motivation to make a change in cannabis use.

2. Methods

Participants were recruited between January 2012 and May 2016 by Facebook advertising, through Southern New England Craig's List, through print advertisements (placed in local and college newspapers and on public transportation), and on commercial radio (Caviness, Anderson, & Stein, 2017). Specifically, advertisements stated that men and women between 18 and 25 who have recently used alcohol or

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7259418>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7259418>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)