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ABSTRACT
                Students in four metropolitan high schools
participated in a survey of marijuana use. It was found that the
personality traits of these early adolescents were related to the
"style" of their marijuana usage, i.e., to the social conditions
under which they tended to use the drug. Further, a given personality
trait's relationship to the style of usage was different from its
relationship to the frequency of a person's marijuana usage.
Frequency of marijuana usage was greater among individuals with a
personality profile suggesting dependence on others and heedlessness.
Style of usage, on the other hand, depended on whether one had a
constellation of characteristics suggesting boldness or a
configuration suggesting tendencies to be self-assured and socially
alert. Implications of the results for understanding the dynamics of
marijuana usage and for the development of drug education programs
were discussed. (Author)

THE EARLY ADOLESCENT'S PERSONALITY

AND HIS STYLE OF MARIJUANA USAGE

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The Early Adolescent's Personality and his Style of Marijuana Usage[1]

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Does the early adolescent's personality influence the "style" of his marijuana use, i.e., the social conditions under which he tends to use the drug? The answer to this question is important in that it would both enhance our understanding of the dynamics of drug usage and also have implications for the development of effective drug education programs.

Unfortunately, past empirical research may be unable to answer the question satisfactorily. First, past studies of the user's personality have typically investigated the extent to which an individual's traits are related to whether or not he uses drugs. It is quite possible, however, that the personality characteristics leading a person to try marijuana may be different from those influencing the style with which he uses it. Further, whatever guidance is provided by these studies is often hindered by the seeming inconsistency of their conclusions (cf. Braucht, Brakarsh, Follingstad, and Berry, 1973).

Second, the bulk of the past studies cannot provide adequately firm guidelines to answer the question since the research designs typically did not fully consider the relationships among personality components.

Much past research has relied upon bivariate inferential techniques. Essentially, the dominant approach, then, has been to seek "one-to-one" relationships between a given personality attribute and marijuana usage. This methodological approach implies the view (probably not held by any

researcher) of personality as a bundle of discrete and independent traits that do not interact in influencing marijuana usage. A more multi-dimensional approach to conceptualization and measurement may well be in order. A given trait may influence the style of marijuana use when that trait is embedded in one configuration of personality traits; but that same trait may potentially be unrelated to usage style when it is part of a different configuration of traits.

Third, a potpourrie of niggling questions about the subject sample and method of administration of some past studies may preclude our confidently applying results of those studies to our question (cf. Braucht, et al., 1973). Tailor-made "personality tests" of unknown validity have been used in more than a few studies. Very few studies have attempted to correct for possible tendencies of subjects to "fake" socially desirable answers (Blake & Heslin, 1971; Edwards, 1957). Given the current illegality of marijuana usage, this oversight may possibly be troublesome. Finally, the use of college students, prisoners and other more adult populations may make generalization of findings to early adolescents difficult.

The present study attempted to assess whether the style of marijuana usage by middle class early adolescents is related to their personality profiles. A second goal was to determine whether those personality characteristics related to the style of marijuana usage are also related to the frequency with which marijuana is used. It was expected that mari-juana would be used more frequently by individuals characteristically more dependent upon others and less concerned about the consequences of their acts (Green, Blake, Carboy, & Zenhausern, 1971; Green, Blake, & Zenhausern, 1973; Hogan, Mankin, Conway, & Fox, 1970).

Method

Subjects

The entire sophomo:e and senior classes (N = 555) at four predominantly white, middle class high schools in a metropolitan New Jersey city participated during the spring of 1973. Elimination of subjects due to clerical errors in questionnaire preparation and respondent errors produced a final sample of 415, 306 females and 109 males drawn about equally from the senior and sophomore classes.

Procedure

In each school subjects were tested in large groups of 30 or more. In a morning session they received a test battery containing the 14 scales of the High School Personality Questionnaire (Cattell and Cattell, 1969) and an index of creativity, the Barron (1953) Independence of Judgment scale. In addition, subjects completed a measure of social desirability bias (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). In a previously unannounced afternoon session subjects completed a survey about the style and frequency of marijuana use. Within each session, the order in which the test questions were administered was varied randomly across subjects. To facilitate frank responses, researchers stressed the anonymity of the answers and told subjects to identify their answer sheets with a randomly assigned number rather than with their names. Further, the survey was conducted by four trained college seniors rather than by school personnel; in fact, every attempt was made to keep school staff out of the testing rooms.

Results and Discussion

Style of Use

Individuals who used marijuana at least once reported how often (not
at all, less than once a month, once - twice a month, once a week, several
times a week) they used it at home, school, with friends and on a date.
Also, on 5-point scales they rated the relative safety of usage and the
extent to which their parents approved their usage. On two 6-point scales
they indicated the proportion of their close friends and of other students
in the school using marijuana. Finally, subjects reported the school grade
in which marijuana was first tried. Responses to these nine items formed
the criteria and the 16 previously described personality tests the predictors
in a canonical correlation analysis. The purpose of this analysis was to
find _combinations_ of personality characteristics which were related to
combinations of usage behaviors.

Two significant variates, i.e., patterns of personality-usage relation-
ships, emerged (see Table 1). The first pattern of relationships pertained
predominantly to individuals who were bold but not conscientious. Such
persons tended more to use marijuana with friends, to have first tried it
at an earlier age, to feel more parental support for the practice, and to
judge that relatively few students in their school used marijuana. The
second, completely independent, pattern of use was found among students who
were intelligent, active, accommodating rather than dominant, serious, self-
assured, and careless of social rules. Students with such a personality
profile reported more frequent usage at school and with friends, but less
on a date, and felt that fewer close friends smoked marijuana.

The first variate seemed to describe a pattern in which individuals
not hesitant to disregard rules in seeking adventure tend to see themselves

as somewhat unique and innovative and prefer to use marijuana principally
with friends. The second pattern appears to be one in which the more self
assured, socially alert individual tends to use marijuana when with his
peers, but tends not to associate himself closely with users.[2]

Frequency of Use

Subjects indicated whether they used marijuana: not at all, less than
once a month, once - twice a month, once a week, or several times a week.
Responses were converted to a scale of 0 to 5 and entered as the criterion
into a multiple regression with the 16 previously described personality
test scores as predictors (see Table 2). The regression was significant
(r = .40; F = 4.65, <u>d.f.</u> = 16/393, p < .01). Marijuana was used <u>more</u>
frequently by the less self-sufficient, the less tender-minded, the less
conscientious, and the less active indivi?   ·   also, it was used more by
those heedless of consequences of their behavior.[3]

Implications

On the theoretical level, the results suggest, first, that personality
traits are related to the style of marijuana usage, and in a manner different
from their relationship to frequency of usage <u>per</u> <u>se</u>. "Intelligence"
(Scale B), for example, was unrelated to frequency of usage but was as-
sociated with the style of usage. Frequency of use was greater among
individuals with a personality profile suggesting dependence on others and
heedlessness; style of usage, on the other hand, depending upon whether
one possessed a constellation of characteristics suggesting boldness or a
configuration suggesting tendencies to be self assured and socially alert.

Although not tested here, the present results suggest one possible
basis for the disagreement existing in popular thought and in the results
of some past studies about personality correlates of marijuana usage.

Perhaps style of usage has sometimes been confounded with frequency of usage in the eyes of observers. If an observer were in an environment in which the first pattern of usage style was more salient, he might conclude that marijuana users tend to be daring, but neither unusually intelligent nor unintelligent. Another observer in an environment in which the second pattern of usage style was more visi. night conclude that marijuana users were intelligent but neither unusually bold nor timid. Perhaps attention to the difference between style and frequency of usage may help to resolve some inconsistencies appearing among past investigations.

A third theoretical implication of the results is that the configuration of an individual's personality traits, rather than simply the strength of individual traits, must be considered if we are to understand marijuana usage. Boldness, for example, was related to usage style when it was embedded in one configuration of personality traits (variate 1), but not when combined with a different profile of traits (variate 2).

On the practical side, the results suggest an approach to developing drug education programs, at least for those adolescents comparable to the present urban middle class sample. A drug prevention program might well structure its format to appeal to those likely to use marijuana, i.e., individuals relatively dependent on others, heedless and passive. On the other hand, drug programs aimed at those currently using marijuana may well consider a two-pronged attack. One program format might be developed for the pattern of usage described by the first canonical variate and the other format constructed for the pattern of usage shown in the second variate.

Footnotes

[1] The assistance of Gerard Costa, Diane De Palma, Stephen Ferrante, and Dennis Ford in gathering the data is gratefully acknowledged.

[2] Interestingly, the tendency to give socially desirable responses was related neither to frequency nor to style of usage. Perhaps the absence of such a relationship reflected the anonymous, non-threatening administration of the survey.

[3] The 16 personality scores were entered as predictors in a discriminant function differentiating non-users from those who used marijuana at least once. Fewer personality traits were significant here than with the multiple regression, suggesting that the frequency analysis above was unearthing more than simply the difference between users and non-users.

Table 1

Canonical Coefficients of Significant Variates*

Variables	Variate 1	Variate 2
Personality		
B: Intelligent	.17	.47
D: Active	.12	.43
E: Dominant	.07	-.44
F: Heedless	-.04	-.34
G: Conscientious	-.59	-.02
H: Bold	.48	-.24
Q_1: Apprehensive	-.17	-.38
Q_3: Controlled	.17	.32
Usage •		
School's usage	-.48	-.08
Friend's usage	-.19	-.47
Parental approval	.32	-.23
Use at school	-.10	.56
Use with friends	.53	.34
Use on date	-.07	-.42
First use	-.53	.23
Roots	.27	.20
Canonical R	.53	.45
Chi-square	215.66	155.32
d.f.	144	120
probability	.001	.02

* For simplicity, variables not substantially contributing ($c \leq .30$) to either variate were deleted from the table.

Table 2

Relationship of Personality Characteristics to Frequency of Use

Variable	β	F
Cattells' HSPQ		
A: Outgoing	.05	.96
B: Intelligent	-.04	.76
C: Mature	-.05	.65
D: Active	-.12	4.55*
E: Dominant	.00	.00
F: Heedless	.12	5.83*
G: Conscientious	-.25	21.82*
H: Bold	.01	.04
I: Tender minded	-.14	5.72*
J: Individualistic	.06	1.56
Q_1: Apprehensive	-.02	.12
Q_2: Self-sufficient	-.12	5.31*
Q_3: Controlled	.00	.00
Q_4: Tense	.08	1.96
Marlowe-Crowne	.01	.01
Independence of Judgment	.07	1.89

* $p < .05$.

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