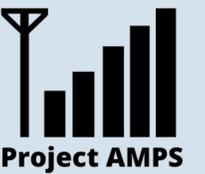




Differences in Marijuana Motives, Use, and Consequences among 2- and 4-year College Students



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Introduction

- As marijuana laws in the U.S. have become more liberal, marijuana use among college students has increased (Schulenberg et al., 2020).
- While nearly 40% of college students in the U.S. attend 2-year institutions, little is known about marijuana use and risk factors for use among 2-year students relative to 4-year students (Eren & Keeton, 2015).
- College students that use marijuana report many motivations for use (e.g., enhancement, conformity, coping motives) which are proximally related to both frequency of marijuana use and likelihood of experiencing marijuana-related consequences (Lee et al., 2009).
- Enhancement and coping motives are related to greater marijuana use and consequences (Lee et al., 2009; Patrick et al., 2019).
- The present study examines 1) differences in marijuana motives, use, and consequences for 2- and 4-year students, 2) associations between motives and marijuana outcomes, and 3) whether college status moderates associations between motives and marijuana outcomes.

Methods

Participants

- Sample included 1517 individuals who completed an online survey as part of determining eligibility for a larger study.
- Data included current 2- and 4-year college students (38% 2-year; 59% female) who reported past month marijuana motives, past month and past year marijuana use, and marijuana-related consequences.

Measures

- Marijuana Use** – Participants reported how many occasions they used marijuana in the past 30 days and past 12 months. Response options were: 0 (0 occasions), 1 (1-2 occasions), 2 (3-5 occasions), 3 (6-9 occasions), 4 (10-19 occasions), 5 (20-39 occasions), and 6 (40+ occasions).
- Marijuana-Related Consequences** – Participants reported how many times they attended class while high and/or drove to or from campus while high. Response options were the same as questions assessing marijuana use.
- Marijuana Motives** – Participants were asked 9 questions regarding potential reasons to use marijuana (adapted from Lee et al., 2009) representing five motives: **social** (1 item: “to be social”), **enhancement** (2 items; e.g., “to get high”), **conformity** (1 item: “to fit in with a group I like”), **coping** (4 items; e.g., “to cheer me up when I am in a bad mood”), and **boredom** (1 item: “because I was bored”). Response options ranged from 1 (Never/almost never) to 5 (Almost always/always). For each motive mean scores were calculated.
- College Status** - Participants reported if they were currently enrolled in 2- or 4-year college.

Analytic Strategy

- Independent sample t-tests were conducted to assess mean differences between 2- and 4-year college students in marijuana motives (i.e., social, enhancement, conformity, coping, and boredom motives), marijuana use, and marijuana-related consequences.
- Controlling for gender, age, college status, and academic quarter, Poisson regression analyses were conducted to examine associations between the five drinking motives and marijuana use and related consequences.
- Subsidiary analyses examined if associations between marijuana motives and marijuana outcomes differed as a function of college status.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	2-year (n = 575)	4-year (n = 942)
	M (SD) or %	M (SD) or %
Age ^a	20.98 (2.20)	20.30 (1.43)
Female ^a	379 (65.9%)	521 (55.3%)
Past month use ^a	4.43 (1.87)	3.89 (1.71)
Past year use ^a	5.72 (1.63)	5.53 (1.60)
Attended class high ^a	2.53 (2.06)	1.89 (1.56)
Drove to campus high ^a	1.71 (1.64)	1.27 (0.94)
Social	2.05 (1.30)	2.19 (1.35)
Enhancement	3.71 (1.31)	3.81 (1.20)
Conformity ^b	1.44 (1.00)	1.56 (1.05)
Coping ^a	1.90 (0.94)	1.54 (0.80)
Boredom	2.77 (1.54)	2.65 (1.46)

^a 2yr>4yr, p<0.05

^b 4yr>2yr, p<0.05

Results

- On average, participants reported using marijuana 6-9 times in the past month (SD=1.8) and 10-19 times in the past year (SD=1.6).
- Over 40% (n=614) had attended class while high at least once, and 15% (n=225) had driven to/from campus while high.
- Two-year students reported greater past month and past year use and were more likely to report both marijuana-related consequences compared to 4-year students (p's<.05).

Results, cont.

- Two-year students reported greater coping motives, but decreased conformity motives compared to 4-year students (p's<.05)
- Controlling for covariates, enhancement, coping, and boredom motives were positively associated with frequency of marijuana use and marijuana consequences whereas social and conformity motives were negatively associated with frequency of use (p's<.05).
- In tests of moderation, associations between coping, boredom, and conformity motives and driving to/from campus while high were more pronounced for 2-year relative to 4-year students (p's<.05).

Discussion

- Two- and 4-year students endorsed marijuana motives differently; 2-year status moderated links between motives and marijuana consequences.
- Two-year students reported greater marijuana use than 4-year students and were more likely to attend class while high and drive to campus while high.
- Two-year students were more likely to endorse coping motives and coping motives were associated with increased marijuana use and related consequences. As such, marijuana and mental health interventions targeting 2-year college students are needed.

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Table 2. Estimates of associations between marijuana motives and marijuana outcomes

	Past month use		Past year use		Attend class high		Drive to campus high	
	b (SE)	p-value	b (SE)	p-value	b (SE)	p-value	b (SE)	p-value
Age	0.05 (0.02)	.029	0.08 (0.02)	<.001	0.02 (0.02)	.324	0.00 (0.02)	.868
Female	-0.30 (0.08)	<.001	-0.23 (0.07)	.002	-0.48 (0.09)	<.001	-0.34 (0.06)	<.001
Quarter	-0.05 (0.04)	.160	-0.04 (0.03)	.251	-0.06 (0.04)	.158	-0.05 (0.03)	.085
2-year	0.25 (0.08)	.003	-0.03 (0.08)	.682	0.50 (0.09)	<.001	0.41 (0.07)	<.001
Social	-0.11 (0.03)	.001	-0.11 (0.03)	<.001	-0.07 (0.04)	.065	-0.02 (0.03)	.475
Enhancement	0.28 (0.04)	<.001	0.38 (0.03)	<.001	0.08 (0.04)	.038	0.02 (0.03)	.579
Conformity	-0.18 (0.04)	<.001	-0.20 (0.04)	<.001	0.00 (0.05)	.970	0.01 (0.03)	.761
Coping	0.07 (0.05)	<.001	0.52 (0.05)	<.001	0.48 (0.06)	<.001	0.18 (0.04)	<.001
Boredom	0.17 (0.03)	<.001	0.13 (0.03)	<.001	0.16 (0.04)	<.001	0.14 (0.03)	<.001

Note. Bolded estimates are significant p<0.05