

Lack Of Education Of Benefits And Risks And Support Marijuana Legalization

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Abstract

Marijuana legalization is a conflicting issue in the US, and its usage and possession have been decriminalized or legalized in twenty-nine states of the US. Marijuana is the most common illegal stuff used by US citizens. The focal problem about Marijuana legalization is a lack of education about its benefits and risks. A lot of people from different age groups are involved in drug use or abuse.

A healthy relationship is found in the previous studies between lack of education and the legalization of Marijuana. It is a substance of the same class as tobacco and alcohol, so it can be treated in the same way. It was found that citizens agree that medical use of marijuana should be legalized and recreational use should be restricted with the help of law reforms. The government should start awareness programs for the residents of states about the risks and benefits of Marijuana, as done in the past for alcohol and tobacco. Its prohibition is more dangerous than its legalization. The prohibition is the cause of limited medical research on Marijuana, as it can heal a lot of diseases. The current study will focus on the correlation between a lack of education and the legalization of Marijuana based on a survey method. The study will provide fruitful results regarding the legalization of Marijuana in different states and will bring to light the damaging effects of reduced education on this topic.

Introduction

The legalization of Marijuana in the US is a conflicting issue between federal and state governments as well as state residents. Its use and possession had already been decriminalized or legalized in about twenty-nine states of the US. The most common illegal substance being used in the US is Marijuana, and the main problem is a lack of education about its benefits and risks. A lot of people from different age groups are involved in drug use or abuse(Cooley, 2017).

Huge money is being spent by the government on drug prohibition, yet the benefits that we get from prohibition are little. Once prohibition is repealed, tax revenues would be collected by the government and can be used to regulate marijuana in the right way. Like cigarettes, marijuana usage must be discouraged from everyone, especially the youth. Legalization would create a strong policy on marijuana possession, and people would be informed about marijuana's risks and benefits, which would reduce the potential for abuse (Flister, 2012).

Due to marijuana being a controlled substance, the topic was ignored or avoided, which resulted in the least awareness in the population regarding the drug. Marijuana legalization is a current and notable issue within politics, but the major concern is the lack of education and the opinion of citizens about the legalization of marijuana. The introduction reports the research question(s) and the hypothesis or hypotheses. The specific parts of the introduction are: The introductory paragraph tells the reader what to expect, the main portion or literature review supports the research, and the summary paragraph indicates what research is being reported and how it was accomplished. Nor during any time during this study will deception nor personal bias be utilized. The scientific approach to this study allows provable, factual and truthful procedure versus the casual inquiry, which can consist of human error and bias and must be applied to alleviate from becoming involved with bias from personal opinion.

Hypothesis

H1: The hypothesis for this study is that there is a relation to the lack of education involving the benefits and risks of the legalization of marijuana.

The current study will test the correlation in detail with the help of survey methodology, which is discussed below, in detail.

Literature Review

Welfares

Recent medical studies proved that the Cannabis plant is advantageous and beneficial due to its scientific uses. According to research, Marijuana is effective in treating seizures in certain types of epilepsy. Research is planned in regard to studying the effect of a strain of the plant “Charlotte’s Web” on the genes of patients with Dravet Syndrome(Pickert, 2014). So many families moved to the state of Denver to specifically access the marijuana strain. Although certain federal laws exist, there is an extreme lack of support due to legal barriers, and enough testing studies on the drug are not reported. Similarly, members of the National Institute for Drug Abuse revealed that the chemical within the plant itself contains chemicals that contain the potential to treat cancer, long-term illnesses, pain, and nausea(Hill, 2015).

Through medical studies, FDA-approved THC-based medications are used for these purposes. THC may also decrease pain, inflammation (swelling and redness), and muscle control problems. CBD is a cannabinoid that does not affect the mind or behavior. It may be useful in reducing pain and inflammation, controlling epileptic seizures, and possibly even treating mental illness and addictions (Maa, 2014). Other substances like tobacco and alcohol are legal and highly recognized by citizens for their benefits and risks through advertising; the information and the facts about them are open to

society. But in the case of marijuana, people are not properly aware of the risks and benefits of marijuana and its legalization. This is the major drawback in society, which resulted in ignorance about the medical studies being conducted on marijuana. National Institute on Drug Abuse mentioned that researchers had not conducted enough large-scale clinical trials that show that the benefits of the marijuana plant outweigh its risks in patients it is meant to treat, although there are some risks related to its cannabinoid ingredients. Evidence from one cell culture study suggests that purified extracts from whole-plant marijuana can slow the growth of cancer cells from one of the most serious types of brain tumors. Research in mice showed that treatment with purified extracts of THC and CBD, when used with radiation, increased the cancer-killing effects of the radiation (NIDA, 2016). Scott, Dalglish, and Lui contributed that results were recapitulated in an orthotropic murine model for glioma, which showed dramatic reductions in tumor volumes when both cannabinoids were used with irradiation (Scott, Dalglish, & Liu, 2014). These findings satisfy that there are true medical benefits that deserve to be showcased.

Risks

Due to the federal prohibition of marijuana and its classification as a controlled substance, it is quite obvious for individuals to ignore information and education about an illegal drug, but the recent memorandum allowing the recreational use of cannabis by adults and the ability for an adolescent to gain access to the drug (NIDA, 2016). Legalization of cannabis in some states would send wrong and confusing signals to youth and society in general, giving a false impression that drug abuse might be considered normal and even, most disturbingly, safe. The National Drug Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has concluded that it is a drug that has earned its popularity through its usage by a higher proportion of adolescents for recreational purposes (NIDA, 2016). As the statistics showed, despite more than 12 million marijuana arrests since 1965, over 95 million Americans have used marijuana at least once (Christiansen, 2010).

Captures concerning Marijuana in the US from the mid of the 1990s dropped to a very low level, according to information publicized by the United States FBI. As declared by the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, a police force made 643,122 captures for crimes related to Marijuana in 2015. From these captures, 574,641 were accused of only keeping Marijuana, not farming or trading in it. The annual report of all captures shows about a 25% falloff from 2007, the time when police captured more than ever 872,721 Americans for disobeying Marijuana laws (FBI, 2017).

Since 2012, four countries and the region of Columbia have permitted the consumption and ownership of a personal amount of cannabis in adults, leading to an intense decrease in captures regarding Marijuana in those dominions. In the last few years, captures related to Marijuana ownership were very insignificant in the western counties of the US, where owning the plant is allowed and legal (Armentano, 2016). According to a general analysis of statistics gathered by the Associated Press, the majority of people in America are now demanding that the consumption of marijuana should be permitted for adults (Armentano, 2016).

According to the NIDA report (2017), the main psychoactive substance in cannabis is known, it seems that because of the ingredients in marijuana come more potent in this age, concern for the youth as well as the operating of motor vehicles while under the influence could bear an issue to citizens similar to alcohol. It is evident that as education serves its purpose of aiding people with the skills to make an educated decision, so does the lack of education about marijuana in the legislative procedure. Over 20 states have found a solution to the problem in the legalization of marijuana, which has led to almost half the country legalizing it for either medical or recreational use. "Voters in Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington state also passed initiatives legalizing the sale and distribution of marijuana for adults 21 and older under state law"(NIDA, April 2017).

Machan (2012) believes that the prohibition of drugs didn't stop people from acquiring them because drugs are even available at the front of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Pentagon and the Federal prison system, which shows us that prohibition didn't achieve its goals. Now, let's take a further look at what's happening within the prohibition. Seventy years have already passed on drug prohibition, yet the government couldn't stop millions of people from acquiring drugs (Machan, 2012). "On marijuana prohibition, the law has been unsuccessful at installing enough social disapproval to mitigate marijuana use; its strong function has mostly failed.

Although marijuana has been legally prohibited for more than seventy years, in 2007, over 25 million people used marijuana"(Christiansen, 2010). Miron and Waldock (2010) declared that the black market is so powerful that preventing citizens from acquiring marijuana is not even working. Gangs and organizations continue to become rich and, at the same time, are the cause of increasing crime rates (Miron & Waldock, 2010). The cannabis being consumed by Americans yearly has no proper labeling, has no safety measures given by the government, is for sale to everyone, and doesn't undergo proper testing (Roffman, 2013). On the given facts and records, decriminalizing marijuana possession would decrease the crime rates, and the money being spent by the government on enforcing marijuana prohibition could be spent somewhere else. On the argument on health, scientific evidence also proves that marijuana is not that harmful compared to some legal substances today, like tobacco and alcohol (Weber, 2013).

It should be stated in the state law that public use and driving under the influence of the drug is illegal. Is it possible that the education of this drug is being withheld due to it being labeled a Schedule 1 drug by the Drug Enforcement Administration? It is exceptionally difficult to do high-quality studies on its medicinal effects in the U.S. due to the high taxes infringed on marijuana treatment in the past. Physicians prescribing cannabis, retail pharmacists selling cannabis, and those cultivating medical cannabis essentially fell out of favor as a treatment for patients. Thaneerananon's study also concluded that the use of "Thinking skills and the application of knowledge for solving problems and decision making are important parts of the learning process"(Thaneerananon & Triampo, 2016).

Education is therefore required for the correct measure in analytical thinking to make sound, clear and concise judgments utilizing critical thinking. The enactment of educational advertising could lead

to a more educated populace that can make decisions about whether to support or go up against the legalization of marijuana. The next factor associated with education is critical thinking in the decision-making process. These studies have addressed how both perceptions and behaviors might be affected by expectations associated with the social populace regarding education about marijuana. Overall, the purpose of this study is to recognize if there is a correlation between the lack of education to the support of marijuana to determine if, in fact, education programs lead to the support of the legalization of marijuana. Inquisitiveness plays a valid role and serves as a positive emotional-motivational system associated with the recognition, pursuit, and self-regulation of novel and challenging opportunities (Kashdan & Rose, 2004).

“Critical thinking is a primary skill among high-order thinking skills; for this reason, students are supposed to evaluate, make decisions, and, before making a judgment, think critically (Halpern, 1998). With facts and opinions separated from each other, then individuals will be able to choose what is more beneficial for their well-being.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to analyze how education about Marijuana can help the government of the United States legalize it. It is considered that lack of education increases the risks associated with the legalization of Marijuana. For this purpose, a feedback survey will be conducted via which it will be easier to understand how important education is for the legalization of Marijuana. One of the steps in the research was to get IRB approval for my survey. By getting the format of the application, work was started on the consent form. It was desirable to make sure that participants were aware that all their rights were protected. They also have to know that this survey is anonymous, so they do not worry that their information can be revealed to anyone. Participants have to be older than eighteen years of age. If any of the participants have any questions regarding this research, there is contact information provided by the researcher.

Sample Size

A sample is a subdivision of components in the entire population of concern for a researcher. In research, the sample is used to find assumptions regarding population, with no cost, time and means needed to conduct research on the whole population. To make a research successful, sampling techniques should be utilized which help to make sure that the sample is expressing all the population. The sampling will be done, and 150 female and male students of Park University will be selected to collect data through a survey. However, data will be received from 200 participants originally. By cleaning up the data (some questions were skipped, the wrong information was entered, or participants left the survey before even evaluating any information), we got 150 participants, 24.32% females (27) and 75.68% males (84). Because of the difference in age of participants, the evaluation will be based on age groups. All students who fill out the survey belong to the

undergraduate Department of Law and Criminal Justice, Park University.

Firstly, it will be ensured that participants of the survey are citizens of the United States of America. The reason is that every country has its specific education system and traditional values, which could make it more difficult for the study to come up with a particular conclusion. For example, in some countries, Marijuana is already legalized, but at the same time, in America, most of the states consider it illegal. Another question that is very important is the age. In the contemporary world, a lot of people tend to go to college at older ages to get a master's. It's very important to know how old is the person taking part in the research project as a participant. The question about age is also included in the survey to gather or analyze data by age groups as well as gender.

During the creation of the survey, the main goal was to make it precise and more specific so that better answers could be obtained. As long surveys are tiring, and participants lose their interest after attempting a few questions, leaving the survey incomplete, or just answering without thinking to finish faster. This part was challenging because originally, there were thirty questions, which were reduced after being discussed with the instructor and senior researchers. Going through this process, the main objective is to concentrate specifically on the theme and emphasize the questions that have a direct correlation with the topic.

Then, the part that consumes a lot of time is how to formulate questions so that a participant has a clear understanding of what is being asked. Also, just in case the question was not that specific details were added. For example, if it is asked: "Are you aware of the benefits of Marijuana?" So, the main thing being focused on is what are the benefits that are asked in the question, whether medical or recreational. Most people are unaware of the medical uses of marijuana due to a lack of education about it and consider it harmful due to its illegal status.

So, a lack of basic information is the main obstacle to getting proper results from the participants. To resolve this issue, the participants will be advised to review the internet links provided with the survey, as those links will be able to provide enough information about the risks and benefits of marijuana to complete the survey. The survey questions, after being finalized, then get reviewed and attempted by instructors and senior researchers at the campus to eliminate any mistakes and misunderstandings in the questions. Their suggestions are considered, and further corrections are done, in the survey. Then the survey link is posted to all the participants to complete it in the period of a week according to their convenience and availability. The results will be collected after one week and organized properly to evaluate them.

Data Description

The intended population of this research is undergraduate students of Park University in the United States of America. The population surveyed included 150 college students who are older than 18 years. This includes both male and female students. The purpose of the survey was to learn more about the relationship between lack of education and the benefits and risks of Marijuana legalization.

After completion of the survey, data will be collected and evaluated.

Collecting data is important for multiple reasons, but the primary focus of all data gathering is the same: ensuring accurate, honest, and reliable data collection. But before diving into how to collect data, data types will first be discussed. Qualitative Research is a “numeric explanation of one’s exam meanings and patterns of relationships.” Quantitative Research “provides a means of describing and explaining a phenomenon through a numerical system.” Qualitative Research types include field interviewing, field observations, focus groups, ethnographic studies, sociometry, histography and content analysis. Quantitative Research types include surveys, field research, evaluation research, combination research, and unobtrusive research (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012). When conducting criminal justice research, quantitative survey styles dominate data collection methods. As mentioned earlier, the survey method is preferred for this study. The information obtained was not recorded in a manner that human subjects could be identified. A convenience sample was used, and the survey link was posted on different online sites, such as Facebook and Instagram. Also, the survey was distributed among university students by sending emails.

Initially, there were more participants in the survey, and approx 500 feedbacks were received, but then the data with incomplete information or false information was eliminated, and finally, the sample of 150 students was included in the research. The data received with this survey will be processed via Excel or STATA to present the graphical or statistical information about how education related to the legalization of Marijuana. These graphical and statistical information will be helpful to conclude the results of the study.

Data Analysis

Due to time constraints, the quantitative research method was chosen over the qualitative method. The Quantitative Method “provides a means of explaining phenomenon through numerical findings.” Qualitative research involves the examining of a topic through a concept”. Once the data collection is complete, then come to the analysis of the data. The analysis will be completed by Descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are the facts that are used to precise and explain information. The term “data” means the statistics which are gathered from an experiment, analysis, old information, etc.(Dantzker & Hunter, 2012). For example, in evaluating birth certificates, a descriptive statistic could be the ratio of certificates allotted in New York or the mean age of the mother. Any other quantity picked to calculate is also considered as a descriptive statistic for data from which the value is calculated. Some descriptive statistics are frequently managed at a time to express complete data records. (Liu & Parelius, 1999). Descriptive statistics present awareness of the American civilization.

Descriptive statistics are small expressive numbers that precise a certain data collection, which might be a demonstration of the whole collection or a model of it. Descriptive statistics are divided into a process of central tendency and a process of variability. The process of central tendency consists of the mean, median and mode; on the other hand, the process of variability consists of the standard

deviation or variance (Liu & Parelius, 1999). Individuals use descriptive statistics to resolve difficult numerical perceptions for a great amount of data into small-sized descriptions. For instance, the grade point average of a student (GPA) is a good example of a descriptive statistic. To understand the data under exploration, all of the descriptive statistics practice graphical forms, tables and common arguments to help individuals sympathize with the data (Liu & Parelius, 1999).

Variability is the degree to which data steps in an arithmetic division or data set vary from the average or mean, quantity and the point to which these data extents vary from one another. There are four practice procedures of variability: range, mean, variance and standard deviation. Standard deviation is a process of the diffusion of a collection of information from its mean. It is considered as the square root of variance through verifying the difference in each data extent as compared to the mean. If data extents are more than the mean, there is a greater difference present in the data collection. Variance is the extent of variation among numbers in a data collection. The variance extent is how different every number in a set is from the mean. Variance is computed by measuring the change in all numbers of a set and the mean, squaring the change in number (to turn them into positive figures) and apportioning the totality of the squares by some values in a set (Statistics, 2015).

From the time of its beginning as a way of methodical investigation, researchers belonging to criminology and criminal justice have always employed assessable data to define and explicate criminal conduct and social reactions toward this conduct. While other forms of data are used to add significant inputs to criminological belief, the exploration of numerical data always works as the basis for the enlargement of awareness regarding crime. Based on my results, I would build graphs and come up with conclusions. The most exciting part for me is that I did not find anyone doing the same research that I am doing, which means that I will be the first one that discover something different and new (Dantzker & Hunter, 2012).

Expected Results

The expected results of the research state that more than 75% of the respondents favored the legalization of marijuana for remedial uses. The highest percentage is found to be 82.2% which is in favor of its medicinal use and is from the respondents of the age group of 26-33. The respondents of the other two age groups, 18-25 and 33-40, also gave a similar response, nearly 82%. While the last group of participants older than 41 years of age is not in high favor of marijuana like other groups, their response is 63.9% in favor of the medical use of the drug. So, a total of 78% of participants are in favor of the legalization of marijuana for remedial use (Cooley, 2017).

About 43% of participants favored the legalization of marijuana for recreational use. It is clear from the results of the survey that more than 90% of participants believe that age restrictions should be there on the recreational use of marijuana (Analytics, 2014). About 30% of respondents mentioned the necessity of age restriction for medical use of the drug. About 51% of respondents declared their

awareness of marijuana's risks and benefits. About 80% of participants mentioned that healthcare providers should be accountable for providing instruction to patients aiming to take marijuana for remedial use. Addiction is considered the most substantial unease concerning the use of marijuana by respondents of all age groups. A lot of participants mentioned that there is no serious concern related to the use of the drug. The results based on the evaluation of the survey are presented in Tables 1 and 2 (Analytics, 2014).

Table 1 Significant Concerns Associated with Consumption of Marijuana (Analytics, 2014)

Age	Addiction (%)	Disease (%)	Minors (%)	Others (%)	No concerns (%)
18-25	16.2	5.9	5.6	9.4	20.2
26-33	15.3	5.7	8.6	10.2	20.0
33-40	14.1	6.5	8.4	13.0	14.1
41+	20.0	4.4	6.5	11.4	7.0

Table 2 Legalization of Marijuana for Medical Purposes (Analytics, 2014)

Age	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)
18-25	82.0	18
26-33	82.2	17.8
33-40	81.3	18.7
41+	63.9	36.1

Conclusion

Conclusively, it can be said that legalization and decriminalization of Marijuana is a growing issue in the United States. However, the alterations in laws related to the drug would disturb the criminal justice system of the United States. There are chances that drug legalization may or may not increase

the rate of crimes or violence in the states. The crimes related to Marijuana are very low in proportion as compared to others. However, the cases related to the drug are considered an extra workload for the court system, which must be reduced by complete legalization or prohibition of the drug. If it is legalized in all states of the US, then how will the government deal with the criminals present in jail due to cases related to the drug? So, there are several aspects regarding the legalization of the drug that should be dealt with appropriately by the government (FBI, 2017).

The minimal education and information of residents of the states is also an issue to be dealt with by the government for the legalization of Marijuana. According to some citizens, its medical use should be legalized in the states, but recreational use should either be prohibited or controlled by the government with the help of certain laws, rules and regulations. Still, if the drug is legalized by the state, then proper educational programs should be introduced by the government at all levels to increase the information of citizens about the risks and welfare of the drug (Roffman, 2013). In the case of legalization, all legal marijuana sales should be through the unified retail market. There should be an adequately funded and aggressive media educational campaign (paid radio, television, billboard, print advertising, the internet and social media) that includes an advertising campaign to counter marijuana advertising, as well as public relations for general market and population-specific communities, with the goals of preventing initiation and minimizing marijuana consumption (Pickert, 2014).

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