ORIGINALE ARTICLE

THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MARIJUANA ADDICTION AMONG YOUTH IN HALFWAY TREE KINGSTON, JAMAICA

| Lisset Pickens * | Kotra Mohan | Lovetta C. Campbell | and | amp Kevin Nembhard|

Department of Social Work | University of the Commonwealth Caribbean | RSH 410- Applied Research |

| Received June 02, 2023 | | Accepted July 10, 2023 | | Published July 15, 2023 | | ID Article | Lovetta–Ref2-6-16ajiras030723-2 |

ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study aims to investigate the impact of social media on marijuana use among adolescents in Half-Way Tree, Kingston, Jamaica. The study is guided by the problem behavior theory and the gateway theory, and employs various research methodologies to gather and analyze data. **Objectives**: The objectives of the study are to assess the influence of social media on marijuana use among young people, examine the portrayal of marijuana on social media platforms, explore the factors that contribute to marijuana use among adolescents, and identify potential interventions and recommendations to address the issue. **Methods**: The study adopts a cross-sectional survey design using a quantitative research approach. A convenient sampling method is employed to select a sample of 23 individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 who use social media and are marijuana users. Data is collected through questionnaires that include both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Socio-demographic information, perceptions of social media's impact on marijuana use, and spending habits related to marijuana are gathered. **Results**: The study reveals that social media platforms, particularly Instagram and Facebook, portray marijuana as harmless or beneficial. Participants reported seeing content related to marijuana on social media and believed that social media contributes to increased marijuana use among youth. A significant proportion of participants found social media endorsements of marijuana influential in their decision to use it. Additionally, social media was perceived to facilitate access and purchasing of marijuana. The study also highlights the financial burden associated with marijuana use and its potential negative consequences. **Conclusion**: The findings of the study indicate that social media plays a significant role in promoting marijuana use among young people and may contribute to addiction and adverse outcomes. Efforts should be made to increase public awareness about the risks of marijuana use, regulate social media content related to marijuana, address the root causes of drug use, and conduct further research to better understand the relationship between social media and drug use among youth. By implementing a comprehensive approach, policymakers and stakeholders can create a safer environment for young people in the area.

Key words: *Social media; Marijuana use; Adolescents; Influence.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to social media, young people's interactions with the outside world have changed. They have changed how individuals communicate, stay informed, obtain data, and make decisions. The effects are even more significant for individuals who have grown up with continual access to social media. By definition, "social media" refers to websites and apps like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tik Tok that prioritize user interaction, content sharing, and collaboration (Ben Lutkevich, 2021). Numerous surveys have shown that "37.8 million young people use social media, with 51% using it daily or more and 90% having used it at some point. YouTube (85%), Instagram (72%), and Snapchat (69%) are seen as the three social media platforms with the largest user bases" (How Does Social Media Affect Teen Substance Use? 2020). Social media has become one of the main platforms for young people to interact with online information and a significant forum for discussing various topics that may persuade people to engage in risky behaviors, particularly marijuana use, leaving them vulnerable to use.

Marijuana, known as cannabis, ganja, or weed, is a narcotic with the active elements Tetrahydrocannabinol and Cannabidiol that Indian slaves introduced to Jamaica in 1845 (G. G. Nahas' research, 1985, p. 15-29). It is made from the cannabis plant, which is dried, ground up, and either smoked like tobacco in a pipe or on paper like a cigarette. Drug consumption, particularly marijuana, has been a significant societal issue in Jamaica and other countries. Young people occasionally dabble with it, but social media makes it more likely that young people will do so and become addicted. It gives them more chances to see messages about marijuana; and the fact that young people continue to be the most active and pervasive social media users further increases the likelihood that marijuana-related content posted on social media will be seen and acted upon by young people (Moreno, M. A., Gower, A. D., Jenkins, M. C., Kerr, B., &Gritton, J., 2018). According to Thompson et al., 2015, between "2012 and 2013, more adolescents than adults tweeted about marijuana, with the majority of these tweets reflecting positive attitudes about marijuana" (Maria L. Roditis, Kevin Delucchi, Audrey Chang, Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, 2016, p.171-176).

Young people's marijuana addiction is strongly impacted by social media platforms, which advertise the drug's advantages for their health and social lives while completely ignoring any risks. Celebrities and other individuals frequently utilize social media as a platform to promote marijuana usage, which is associated with addiction. Using hash tags to connect consumers and sellers, social media is also a tactic employed by businesses to market narcotics that are easily available to youths.

These sectors can now appeal to younger consumers thanks to social media (Costello &Ramo, 2017). As a result of its widespread use, it has a real impact on how young people perceive and behave in relation to marijuana. Youths who use social media are more likely than those who do not use social media to use nicotine, alcohol, or marijuana, according to a 2011 survey from the National Center on Use and Substance Abuse at Columbia University" (Costello &Ramo, 2017). While youths use social media for a variety of reasons, youth marijuana addiction can be impacted by settings associated with marijuana in digital technology.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, practically all young people use social media, and young people using drugs—particularly marijuana—is hardly surprising. However, the risk that young people may become addicted to marijuana is increased by social networking sites, which provide pathways for exposure to marijuana. At the age of 14– 25 years old, these youths are sensitive to peer pressure and are easily influenced by what they see on social media. They are being exposed to people using marijuana dangerously on popular social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, especially celebrities that they may want to imitate, and for some, it's the drug-themed music that they listen to on a regular basis. The contents that are regularly posted by users on these platforms, among other things, depict people who are high on marijuana or other drugs—and they are influencing the youth to engage. Marijuana-related content on social media sites normalizes and sensationalizes marijuana use, encouraging youths to use it and increasing the likelihood of getting addicted to it.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

To further explore the impact of social media on marijuana addiction, the study will be guided by the Problem Behavior theory and Gateway Theory.

1.3 Problem Behavior Theory

Early in the 1960s, the problem-behavior theory was developed by Richard Jessor. It was used to guide thorough research of alcohol intake and other problematic behaviors in a small community (Jessor, Graves, Hanson, and Jessor, 1968, as cited in Butler, D., Little, J., & Thorwardson, N. n.d.). It is a social-psychological perspective that aids in identifying the roots and characteristics of problematic behaviors. The theory combines three main systems: the personality system (which encompasses all individual expectations, values, and beliefs), the system for observing the environment (which includes peer and family expectations), and the system for understanding behavior (Karaman, Neslihan G., 2013).

The problem behavior theory contends that a person's personality and environment directly influence how problematic they are as young people. Both protective factors and risk factors are included in the proposed explanation for adolescent problem behaviors like irresponsibility, drinking, and smoking. It means that bad habits, which frequently involve risky actions, are used to gain the respect and love of others (Karaman, Neslihan G., 2013). The approach identifies problem behaviors as harmful to one's health and may put one's life in danger, such as smoking and excessive drinking (Diclemente, Hansen, & Panton, 1996, p.2, as cited in Karaman, Neslihan G., 2013).

1.4 Gateway Theory

After observing how youths became progressively more entangled with drugs, Denise Kandel developed the idea of the gateway hypothesis, which has been explored since the 1970s (Nkansah-Amankra & Minelli, 2016). In the greater population of the United States and other Western cultures, she noticed that there is a distinct crossover from legal to criminal drug use. For example, using marijuana comes before using alcohol or smoking, which comes before using cocaine and other illegal drugs (Eric R. Kandel & Denise B. Kandel, 2014).
The theory says that drug usage increases gradually and steadily over time, starting with legal drug classes like cigarettes or alcohol before moving on to marijuana and continuing with other illegal substances like cocaine and heroin from there (Denise B. Kandel, 2002).The basic idea of the theory is that participation in different drug classes is not selective but instead follows predetermined routes; someone who engages in one drug activity runs the danger of moving on to another(Denise B. Kandel, 2002).

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The study will examine the impacts of social media on marijuana addiction among young people in Half-Way Tree Kingston Jamaica between the ages of 14 and 25 and will emphasize the social media sites that are implicated. Based on the content they are exposed to, it will also be possible to infer why the aforementioned group utilizes social media and whether they are in danger of developing marijuana addiction. It will also look at how they feel and what they think about social media impacting marijuana addiction.

1.6 Research Questions

The research process will be guided by the following research questions:
1. To what extent does social media impact marijuana addiction among youths?

2. What are the various reasons why young people use social media and are they exposed to marijuana-related content?
3. What social media platforms are linked to marijuana addiction?
4. What is the relationship between social media users and marijuana addiction?
5. What are youths' opinions about social media sites impacting marijuana addiction?

1.7 Research Objectives

The research process will be guided by the research objectives listed below.
Specific objectives include:

1. To determine the impact of social media on marijuana addiction among youths
2. To explore the reasons why young people use social media and if they are exposed to marijuana-related content.
3. To determine the degree to which certain social media platforms are linked to marijuana addiction.
4. To examine the relationship between social media users and marijuana addictions.
5. To find out the opinions of youth about social media sites impacting marijuana addiction.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study will increase our understanding of how social media impacts marijuana addiction in young people in the Half-Way Tree vicinity, aged 14 to 25. The relationship between social media and marijuana addiction will be highlighted, as well as the media outlets involved, which will be advantageous to the general public and raise awareness of the influence of social media. It will also aid in the development of numerous interventions aimed at enlightening the population and encouraging them to exercise greater caution when seeing and being exposed to media content.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The following are the delimitations that will influence the outcome of the study:
This study's delimitations include its sample size, which will be limited to marijuana users in the Half-Way Tree vicinity that use social media and are between the ages of 14 and 24. To examine the impact of social media on marijuana addiction in young people, only Half-Way Tree youths will be included, which will influence how broadly the findings can be generalized.

2. MATERIELS AND METHODS

2.1 Study Design

The researcher will be using a cross-sectional survey method with a quantitative research approach. A cross-sectional survey is an "observational study design where the researcher assesses the participants' exposures and outcomes at a particular point in time" (Maninder Singh Setia, 2016). The quantitative research approach entails "gathering and analyzing organized data that can be represented numerically" (Melissa J. Goertzen, 2017).

2.2 Population

The parish of Saint Andrew, which extends into the Blue Mountains, is located in the southeast of Jamaica. It had 573 369 residents as of the 2011 Census (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2013). Halfway Tree is situated in the Saint Andrew district, 1.8 kilometers (1.1 miles) from Kingston, the capital of Jamaica. With a population of roughly 5163 individuals who called the territory home in 2011, Halfway Tree, a small town in the Saint Andrew district of Jamaica, is considered the region's capital. The area has approximately 2343 males and 2821 females, with 793 males and 960 females between the ages of 14 and 25 (Statistical Institute of Jamaica, 2013).

2.3 Sample

The study will use a 23-person sample from the general community and concentrate on young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who use social media and are marijuana users. To choose the majority of respondents who will get questionnaires in the area for the study, a convenient sampling process will be implemented. This will be done because the study will be brief and there's a potential that, given the sensitive subject, participants will not want to participate as much. The researcher will make an effort to identify a local informant. The informant will assist in locating marijuana consumers. The researcher will be given the list of people who have been identified, and this process will be repeated until the desired overall response rate is achieved.

2.4 Data Collection

Data from the sample population will be collected via questionnaires. By definition, a questionnaire is the asking of questions to collect data on a certain issue that can be statistically useful (Roopa, S., & Rani, M., 2012). An effective way to gather a variety of information from many people, also known as responders, is through the use of questionnaires. For a survey to be successful, the questionnaire must be well-constructed (Roopa, S., & Rani, M., 2012). Once the respondents have given their permission to participate, the researcher will personally deliver the questionnaires to them. Respondents will be allowed

to provide short answers as part of this technique of data collection. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions will be included. The respondents' socio-demographic data will be gathered in the questionnaire's first section. The final two portions will move forward in line with the stated objectives, which include learning how social media impacts marijuana use in young people. The responders will receive the questionnaire to administer and complete on their own. The researcher will assist if the respondents need assistance filling out the questionnaire.

2.5 Data Analysis

Charts and tables will be used by the researcher to examine data, and the usage of tally marks will aid in data analysis and the creation of a summary of the study activity. The gathered raw data will be methodically arranged to make analysis easier. Data analysis will make use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics is a technique used for arranging, analyzing, and putting together a lot of numerical data (Richardson, 2018, as cited in Kirk Frankson, 2021). This will be used to portray the data in frequency distribution tables and percentages to condense the information on the questionnaire's closed-ended items. It is impracticable to examine the features of each population member; hence inferential statistics are employed to identify a characteristic of a vast group. Correlation and regression analysis will be used to put this to use (Richardson, 2018, as cited in Kirk Frankson, 2021). To support the responses to the closed-ended survey questions, data from the open-ended items will be used. The number of times a particular event occurs during the course of questionnaires will be counted to translate quantitative data into numbers.

2.6 Ethical Issues

Given the magnitude of this research, certain ethical considerations will be made. Particularly, everyone who takes part in the study will be treated with the utmost respect and decency. By the "informed consent" process, each participant in the study will be told of its purpose. As such respondents will be required to fill out an informed consent so that they will be more at ease and provide accurate information. Additionally, responses to the questionnaire will be used for research purposes only without exposing the identities of respondents, whose privacy and confidentiality will be protected. Before any responses are used, the approval of the respondents will be requested. They will also have the option to withhold their names if they so desire.

2.7 Timeline

To be completed, every research requires efficient time management. As a result, the researcher will set up a schedule that will be followed from the beginning of the study until its conclusion. As per the timeline, the research will be completed as scheduled starting February 15, 2023, to April 2023.The timeline will be adjusted depending on the availability of participants.

2.8 Findings

The findings indicate that the majority of the participants were males aged 20-25, with a smaller portion falling into the 26-31 age groups, and two in the 14-19 age groups. This demographic group is commonly associated with risk-taking behaviors, including substance abuse, which may suggest a higher prevalence of marijuana use in this age group. Additionally, the smaller proportion of participants in the 14-19 age groups indicates that marijuana use may be less prevalent among younger adolescents. The education level of the participants was varied, with tertiary education being attained by 43%, secondary education by 39.1%, and only 17.4% holding a master's degree.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIN

Table 1: Demographic Profile.

Gender				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Male	23	100.0	100.0	100.0
Age				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
14 - 19	2	8.7	8.7	8.7
20 - 25	15	65.2	65.2	73.9
26 - 31	6	26.1	26.1	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Level Of Education				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Secondary	9	39.1	39.1	39.1
Undergraduate	10	43.5	43.5	82.6
Degree	4	17.4	17.4	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Your Current Marital Status				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Single	20	87.0	87.0	87.0
Married	2	8.7	8.7	95.7
Widowed	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Youth Family Status				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Living With Spouse And Children	2	8.7	8.7	8.7
Living With Parents Or Other Family Members	10	43.5	43.5	52.2
Living Alone	11	47.8	47.8	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Youth Family Status Specify				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No response	23	100.0	100.0	100.0
Religion				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Christianity	19	82.6	82.6	82.6
Other	4	17.4	17.4	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Religion Specify				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No response	19	82.6	82.6	82.6
Agnostic	1	4.3	4.3	87.0
None	3	13.0	13.0	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Youth Employment				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes, Full Time	5	21.7	21.7	21.7
Yes, Part Time	7	30.4	30.4	52.2
No	11	47.8	47.8	
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Youth Annual Income				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Less Than $20,000	4	17.4	17.4	17.4
$20,000 - $40,000	3	13.0	13.0	30.4
$40,000 - $60,000	1	4.3	4.3	34.8
$60,000 - $80,000	1	4.3	4.3	39.1
More Than $80,000	5	21.7	21.7	60.9
Other	9	39.1	39.1	
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Annual Income Specify				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	20	87.0	87.0	87.0
N/A	1	4.3	4.3	91.3
None	2	8.7	8.7	
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Address				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
29 Smith Lane Kgn Cso	1	4.3	4.3	4.3
7 Miles Bull Bay	1	4.3	4.3	8.7
Bull Bay St Andrew	2	8.7	8.7	17.4
Duhaney Park	1	4.3	4.3	21.7
Harbour View Kingston	1	4.3	4.3	26.1
Hughden Avenue	1	4.3	4.3	30.4
Kingston	9	39.1	39.1	69.6

Maverley	1	4.3	4.3	73.9
Montego Bay St James	1	4.3	4.3	78.3
Negril Westmoreland	1	4.3	4.3	82.6
New Harbour Village St Catherine	1	4.3	4.3	87.0
Portmore	1	4.3	4.3	91.3
Ritchies Clarendon	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
Westmoreland Jamaica	1	4.3	4.3	
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Usage of Marijuana.

Marijuana Smoking?				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	19	82.6	82.6	82.6
No	4	17.4	17.4	
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Frequency of Marijuana Use				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Everyday	15	65.2	65.2	65.2
Weekly	3	13.0	13.0	78.3
Other	4	17.4	17.4	95.7
No response	1	4.3	4.3	
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Frequency of Marijuana Use Specify				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
2 Times Per Year	1	4.3	4.3	4.3
No Response	19	82.6	82.6	87.0
N/A	1	4.3	4.3	91.3
Never	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
None	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Daily Expenditure on Marijuana				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Less $100	1	4.3	4.3	4.3
$150 - $300	4	17.4	17.4	21.7
$350-$500	12	52.2	52.2	73.9
Over $550	3	13.0	13.0	87.0
No response	3	13.0	13.0	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Usage of Social Media

Social Media Usage				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	21	91.3	91.3	91.3
No	2	8.7	8.7	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Networking Sites Used- Facebook				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	16	69.6	69.6	69.6
No	7	30.4	30.4	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Networking Sites Used- Snapchat				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	8	34.8	34.8	34.8
No	15	65.2	65.2	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Networking Sites Used- Instagram				

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	19	82.6	82.6	82.6
No	4	17.4	17.4	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Networking Sites Used- Other				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	6	26.1	26.1	26.1
No	17	73.9	73.9	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Networking Sites Used- Specify				
	Frequency	Percent	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	17	73.9	73.9	73.9
Tik Tok	2	8.7	8.7	82.6
Twitter	1	4.3	4.3	87.0
Whatsapp	2	8.7	8.7	95.7
Whatsapp, Tik Tok And Twitter	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Frequency of Social Media Use				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Everyday	18	78.3	78.3	78.3
Weekly	3	13.0	13.0	91.3
Other	2	8.7	8.7	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Frequency of Social Media Use- Specify				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	21	91.3	91.3	91.3
N/A	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
None	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: The Extent to Which Social Media Impact Marijuana Addictions among Youths.

Impact of Online Endorsement of Marijuana				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Very Likely	3	13.0	13.0	13.0
Somewhat Likely	8	34.8	34.8	47.8
Very Unlikely	12	52.2	52.2	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Impact of Online Endorsement of Marijuana - Specify				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	23	100.0	100.0	100.0
Peer Pressure to Use Marijuana After Seeing Social Media Posts				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	2	8.7	8.7	8.7
No	21	91.3	91.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Impact of Social Media Sites on Marijuana Opinions				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	5	21.7	21.7	21.7
No	18	78.3	78.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Impact of Social Media Sites on Marijuana Opinions - Specify				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	22	95.7	95.7	95.7
Just Want to Fit In At Times	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Reasons You Use Social Media and Your Exposure to Marijuana Related Contents.

Exposure to Posts or Advertisements Promoting Marijuana Use				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	16	69.6	69.6	69.6
No	7	30.4	30.4	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Frequency of Coming Across Marijuana Content				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Very Often	6	26.1	26.1	26.1
Seldom	12	52.2	52.2	78.3
Not At All	5	21.7	21.7	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Motivation for Using Social Media				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Networking	21	91.3	91.3	91.3
Learning	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
Others	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Motivation for Using Social Media- Specify				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	10	43.5	43.5	43.5
Business	5	21.7	21.7	65.2
Entertainment	2	8.7	8.7	73.9
Learning	3	13.0	13.0	87.0
None	1	4.3	4.3	91.3
Recreational	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
Socializing	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Social Media Platforms That Are Linked To Marijuana Addictions.

Social Media Platforms with Marijuana Content-Facebook				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	10	43.5	43.5	43.5
No	13	56.5	56.5	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Media Platforms with Marijuana Content - Twitter				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	7	30.4	30.4	30.4
No	16	69.6	69.6	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Media Platforms with Marijuana Content -Instagram				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	14	60.9	60.9	60.9
No	9	39.1	39.1	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Media Platforms with Marijuana Content - Snapchat				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	2	8.7	8.7	8.7
No	21	91.3	91.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Media Platforms with Marijuana Content - Other				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	2	8.7	8.7	8.7
No	21	91.3	91.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Social Media Platforms with Marijuana Content - Specify				
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	20	87.0	87.0	87.0
Instagram	1	4.3	4.3	91.3

	N/A	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
	Tik Tok	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Least Marijuana Content - Facebook				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	4	17.4	17.4	17.4
No	19	82.6	82.6	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Least Marijuana Content -Twitter				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	5	21.7	21.7	21.7
No	18	78.3	78.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Least Marijuana Content - Instagram				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	6	26.1	26.1	26.1
No	17	73.9	73.9	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Least Marijuana Content - Reddit				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	5	21.7	21.7	21.7
No	18	78.3	78.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Least Marijuana Content - Other				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	3	13.0	13.0	13.0
No	20	87.0	87.0	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Least Marijuana Content - Specify				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	19	82.6	82.6	82.6
Don't Know	1	4.3	4.3	87.0
N/A	1	4.3	4.3	91.3
None	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
Snap	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Highest Marijuana Content - Facebook				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	4	17.4	17.4	17.4
No	19	82.6	82.6	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Highest Marijuana Content - Twitter				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	2	8.7	8.7	8.7
No	21	91.3	91.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Highest Marijuana Content - Instagram				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	11	47.8	47.8	47.8
No	12	52.2	52.2	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Highest Marijuana Content - Reddit				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	3	13.0	13.0	13.0
No	20	87.0	87.0	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Highest Marijuana Content - Other				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	3	13.0	13.0	13.0
No	20	87.0	87.0	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Social Media Platforms with Highest Marijuana Content - Specify				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
99	19	82.6	82.6	82.6
Don't Know	1	4.3	4.3	87.0
N/A	1	4.3	4.3	91.3
Not Sure	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
Snapchat	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Youths' Opinions about Social Media Sites Impacting Marijuana Addiction.

Impact of Social Media on Youth Marijuana Use				
Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	11	47.8	47.8	47.8
No	12	52.2	52.2	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Impact of Social Media on Accessing Marijuana for Youth				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Yes	8	34.8	34.8	34.8
No	15	65.2	65.2	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Impact of Social Media on Accessing Marijuana for Youth- Specify				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No Response	19	82.6	82.6	82.6
Because Young People Can Connect And Get In Touch With Many Other People Who Can Supply Marijuana To Them	1	4.3	4.3	87.0
It Is Easier To Purchase And There Is More Availability Of Marijuana	1	4.3	4.3	91.3
Social Media Is An Open Space For Everyone To Use And Young People Know How To Use It To Their Advantages	1	4.3	4.3	95.7
There Are Online Stores Which Make It Easy To Purchase The Different Straints Of Marijuana	1	4.3	4.3	100.0
Total	23	100.0	100.0	
Exposure to Marijuana Content and Addiction Treatment				
Responses	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
No, I Am Not an Addict And I Don't Need Treatment	23	100.0	100.0	100.0

Moreover, the finding those 11 out of 23 participants (47.8%) felt that social media has made it more difficult to recognize these risks and consequences are particularly concerning. This suggests that social media may be promoting a skewed and inaccurate perception of marijuana use, potentially leading to increased use and addiction among young people. However, it is important to note that the study only includes a small sample size of participants from one specific area, and therefore, these findings may not be representative of the wider population in Jamaica or other countries. Nonetheless, the findings provide valuable insights into the potential impact of social media on marijuana use and highlight the need for further research to understand the relationship between social media and drug use more fully.

The varied education levels of the participants suggest that marijuana use is not necessarily correlated with academic achievement, as tertiary-educated individuals were found to be using marijuana at a similar rate as those with secondary education (Bae, S., et al., (2018). However, the small percentage of participants with a master's degree who reported using marijuana suggests that higher levels of education may be associated with lower rates of marijuana use. Most participants were single and lived with parents or other family members, while 11 lived alone. This may suggest that marijuana use is more prevalent among individuals who have not yet established independent households. Additionally, the fact that only 11 participants reported living alone suggests that marijuana use may be less common among individuals who have greater responsibility and obligations, such as caring for dependents.

The majority of the participants identified as Christians, with only one identifying as agnostic and three having no religious affiliation. Just over half of the participants were employed, with a range of monthly incomes. The small number of participants with no religious affiliation or who identified as agnostic may suggest that individual beliefs and attitudes may

be more important than cultural or religious norms in determining marijuana use behavior (Cavazos-Rehg, et al., 2016). The majority of participants resided in Kingston and St. Andrew. The study also found that 82.6% of participants reported smoking marijuana, with 65.2% reporting daily use for 2-3 hours. This suggests that marijuana use is highly prevalent among the study population (Chiauzzi, et al., 2013). This finding is consistent with previous studies that have suggested that marijuana use is a widespread and growing phenomenon, particularly among young adults (Moreno, et al., 2011). However, it is important to note that the study's findings may be limited by self-report bias, as participants may have underreported or overreported their marijuana use.

More than half of the participants reported spending between $350 and $500 daily on marijuana, with some spending over $550. This finding indicates that marijuana use can be a significant financial burden for some individuals, particularly those who use it regularly (Perrin, A., & Anderson, 2019). This information could be used to inform public health initiatives aimed at reducing the negative consequences of marijuana use, such as financial strain or addiction. The study found that social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter portrayed marijuana as harmless or beneficial, with 69.6% of participants reporting seeing such content (Salehan, and Negahban, (2013). This finding suggests that social media may contribute to the normalization of marijuana use and potentially lead to increased use among young people. This information could be used to inform educational campaigns aimed at promoting more balanced and accurate portrayals of marijuana use on social media platforms.

The primary reason for using social media among participants was networking, with most using it for business or educational purposes. The study found that online endorsements of marijuana significantly influenced the likelihood of participants using it, with almost half reporting this as a factor (Santillana, et al., 2016). This finding indicates that social media influencers may have a significant impact on the behavior of their followers, particularly in terms of drug use. This information could be used to inform regulations aimed at curbing the promotion of marijuana use by social media influencers. However, only 21.7% felt that their view of marijuana use was directly impacted by social media (Sowles, et al., 2018). This finding suggests that while social media may contribute to the normalization of marijuana use, it is not the only factor that influences attitudes towards drug use. This information could be used to inform public health initiatives aimed at promoting more balanced and accurate portrayals of drug use across a range of media platforms.

Likewise, the study suggests that social media significantly impacts marijuana use and information dissemination. Almost half of the participants (47.8%) believed that social media has contributed to an increase in marijuana use among youth, with powerful influencers and trends on social media being the main reasons (Thibaut, and Mamzer, 2017). This finding highlights the need for policymakers and regulators to monitor the promotion of drug use on social media and to take steps to curb its influence on young people. Additionally, 34.8% of the participants believed that social media has made it easier for youth to access and purchase marijuana, with online stores and a vast network of social media users cited as contributing factors (Van Hout, and Bingham, 2013).

These findings suggest that social media can serve as a platform for promoting marijuana use, making it more accessible and desirable to young people. This can have serious implications for public health, particularly if social media is facilitating addiction and other negative consequences associated with marijuana use. Interestingly, while 91.3% of participants found social media to be a useful tool for educating people about marijuana, 47.8% of them also believed that social media has the highest amount of marijuana-related content, particularly on Instagram (47.8%) and Facebook (17.4%) (Salehan, and Negahban, 2013). This raises concerns about the impact of social media on young people's perception of marijuana use and the potential risks and negative consequences associated with it.

The following are the limitations that will influence the outcome of the study:
The shortcoming of this study will be the difficulty in establishing whether the respondents had smoked marijuana, if they are addicted, or if social media actually nurtured the behavior. The study's sample size will also be set at 23, and all of the participants will be men. The research will not be able to determine whether the impact of social media on marijuana addiction has different impacts on men and women. The timing of the research will be affected by the availability of possible participants.

Recommendation: Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made regarding the use of social media and its potential impact on marijuana use among youth in Half-Way Tree, Kingston, Jamaica. Firstly, efforts should be made to increase public awareness about the potential risks and negative consequences associated with marijuana use, particularly among young people. This could involve targeted public health campaigns and education programs aimed at increasing knowledge about the potential health effects of marijuana use and reducing the stigma associated with seeking help for addiction or related problems. Secondly, steps should be taken to regulate the content of social media platforms related to marijuana use and ensure that users are provided with accurate and balanced information about the risks and benefits of marijuana use. This could include guidelines for content creators and influencers, as well as the use of age verification tools and restrictions on the promotion of products related to marijuana.

Thirdly, policymakers and stakeholders should work to address the root causes of youth marijuana use, such as social and economic factors that contribute to drug use and addiction. This could involve investing in education and job training programs, increasing access to mental health services, and supporting community-based initiatives aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing drug use. Fourthly, further research is needed to better understand the complex relationship between social media and marijuana use among young people, particularly in the context of Jamaica. This could include qualitative research aimed at exploring the perceptions and experiences of young people who use marijuana, as well as quantitative research aimed at measuring the impact of social media on drug use and addiction among youth. Overall, the findings of this study highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the issue of marijuana use among youth in Half-Way Tree, Kingston, Jamaica. By taking a multifaceted approach that includes education, regulation, and community-based interventions, policymakers and stakeholders can work together to create a safer and healthier environment for young people in the area.

5. CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of social media on marijuana use among adolescents aged 14 to living in Half-Way Tree. Social media platforms, characterized by user interaction, content sharing, and collaboration, have the potential to expose young individuals to harmful behaviors such as marijuana use and subsequent dependency. The problem behavior theory and the gateway theory were employed as foundational frameworks to guide this research. Multiple research methodologies were utilized to gather, present, and analyze data, aiming to address the study's objectives and research questions effectively. The study's findings indicate that social media may contribute to the promotion of marijuana use and the potential development of addiction and adverse consequences associated with substance abuse among adolescents.

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Appendix

Informed Consent Form

Topic: The Impact of Social Media on Marijuana Use among youths 14-24 in the Community of Half-Way Tree.

Principal Investigator: Lovetta Campbell and Kevin Nembhard

You are being asked to take part in a study that aims to assess the impact of social media on marijuana use among youths 14-24 in the community of Half-Way Tree. The information offered here will clarify the specifics of this project, so please take some time to read it. It is crucial that you be confident in your understanding of this research's requirements and possible participation opportunities. Everything about the study is academic.

Purpose of the Research Study

The primary objective of this study is to assess the impact of social media on marijuana use among youths 14- 24 in the community of Half-Way Tree. There is no monetary reward for participating in this study, but the results will help design context-specific solutions.

Time Commitment

There will be no consequences if you decide not to take part in the study at any point. It will take about 10-15 minutes to finish the questionnaire.

Compensation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You must submit your signed consent in order to take part in the survey. All information you provide will be kept private and confidential and won't be revealed in any reports that come out of this research.

Risks

Being a participant in this study carries no known risks. The questions are not intended to be disturbing. However, you are welcome to speak with the researcher if you feel uncomfortable, need to talk to someone, or if you have any questions or concerns during or after.

Declaration by Participant

Please read the following and sign beneath to indicate your agreement if you still want to participate.
By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled: The impact of social media on marijuana use on youths 14-24 in the community of Half-Way Tree. I declare that:

I have read the above description of the study ( )
I am aware that I am only taking part at my own will. ( )
I am aware that any responses I provide will be kept private and confidential. ( )
I agree to participate in this research project. ( )
Signature Date: _____
I Lovetta Campbell and Kevin Nembhard declare that we explained the information in this document to ..... We encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them. We are satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above we did not use an interpreter.
Signature Date: _____

THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MARIJUANA ADDICTION AMONG YOUTH
Questionnaire

Dear respondent, we are Applied Research Behavioral students and as a requirement to complete this course; we are carrying out a study on the impact of social media on marijuana addiction among youths. We are pleased to select you as one of our respondents and any information you provide will be kept confidential and for academic purposes only. Hence, your assistance will be deeply appreciated. Please place a tick in the space that most accurately reflects your view for each item. Thank you for your time and effort in completing this questionnaire.

Section A: Demographic Profile

1. Gender
( ) Male ( ) Female
2. Age
( ) 14- 19 ( ) 20- 25 ( ) 26 -31
3. Level of Education
( ) Primary ( ) Secondary ( ) Undergraduate ( ) Degree
4. What is your current marital status?
( ) Single ( ) Married ( ) Divorced ( ) Widowed
5. What is your current family status?
( ) Living with spouse and children ( ) Living with spouse, no children
( ) Living with children, no spouse ( ) Living with parents or other family members
( ) Living alone ( ) other, please specify
6. What is your religion?
( ) Christianity ( ) Islam ( ) Hinduism ( ) Buddhism ( ) Judaism
Other (please specify)
7. Are you currently employed?
( ) Yes, full-time ( ) Yes, part-time ( ) No
8. What is your current annual income? A
( ) Less than $20,000 ( ) $20,000 - $40,000 ( ) $40,000 - $60,000
( ) $60,000 - $80,000 ( ) More than $80,000 ( ) other, please specify
9. Where do you live?

Section B: Usage of Marijuana

10. Do you smoke marijuana?
( ) Yes ( ) No
11. How often do you smoke marijuana?
( ) Everyday ( ) Weekly ( ) Monthly ( ) other (please specify)
12. How many hours do you spend smoking marijuana every day?
( ) 1 hours ( ) 2- 3 hours ( ) 4+ hours ( ) other (please specify
13. How much do you spend on marijuana per day?
( ) Less $100 ( ) $150- $300 ( ) $350 - $500 ( ) over $550

Section C: Usage of Social Media

14. Do you use social media?
( ) Yes ( ) No
15. What social networking sites do you use? Choose as many as are applicable.
( ) Facebook ( ) Snapchat ( ) Instagram ( ) other (please specify)
16. How often do you use social media?
( ) Everyday ( ) Weekly ( ) Monthly ( ) other (please specify)

Section D: The extent to which social media impact marijuana addictions among youths

17. In your opinion, do you think that online endorsement of marijuana has impacted your likelihood to use the drug? If yes, please specify why.
( ) Very likely ( ) somewhat likely ( ) Quite Unlikely ( ) Very Unlikely
18. Have you ever felt pressured to use marijuana after seeing social media posts from others?
( ) Yes ( ) No
19. Do you believe that your opinions about marijuana use have been impacted by social media sites? If yes please specify how
( ) Yes ( ) No

Section E: Reasons you use social media and your exposure to marijuana related contents

20. People utilize social media for a variety of reasons; what motivator would you say drives your use of social media?
( ) Networking ( ) Business ( ) Learning ( ) Others. Please specify.
21. Have you ever come across posts or advertisements promoting marijuana use on social media or any posts that portray marijuana use as harmless or beneficial?
( ) Yes ( ) No
22. How frequently would you say you've stumbled into marijuana-related stuff online?
( ) Very often ( ) Seldom ( ) Not at all
23. Do you think social media can help people learn more about marijuana?
( ) Very useful ( ) Somewhat Useful ( ) Not useful

Section G: Social media platforms that are linked to marijuana addictions

24. On which social media platforms have you seen marijuana-related content? Choose all the options that apply.
( ) Facebook ( ) Twitter ( ) Instagram ( ) Snapchat ( ) other (please specify)
25. In your opinion, what platforms have the least marijuana- related contents?
( ) Facebook ( ) Twitter ( ) Instagram ( ) Reddit ( ) other (please specify)
26. In your opinion, what platforms have the highest marijuana- related contents?
( ) Facebook ( ) Twitter ( ) Instagram ( ) Reddit ( ) other (please specify)

Section H: Youths' opinions about social media sites impacting marijuana addiction. Do y
ou believe that social media has contributed to an increase in marijuana use among youth? If yes, please specify why you think that
( ) Yes ( ) No
Do you think that social media has made it more difficult to recognize the potential risks and negative consequences of marijuana use?
( ) Yes ( ) No
27. Do you believe that social media can play a major role in promoting marijuana use among young people? If yes, please specify why you think so.
( ) Yes ( ) No
28. Do you think that social media has made it easier for young people to access and purchase marijuana? If yes, please specify why you think so.
( ) Yes ( ) No
29. Given your exposure to marijuana-related content on social media, would you say this had caused you to become addicted to marijuana? If so, do you feel that you need treatment for your addiction?
( ) Yes, I believe I have an addiction, and I need help.
( ) No, I'm not an addict, and I don't need treatment

How to cite this article: Lisset Pickens, Kotra Mohan, Lovetta C. Campbell, and amp Kevin Nembhard. THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MARIJUANA ADDICTION AMONG YOUTH IN HALFWAY TREE KINGSTON, JAMAICA *Am. J. innov. res. appl. sci.* 2023; 17(1): 67-82.