**COM 822 Persuasive Communication**

Susan Flores-Edwards

Omega Graduate School

 May 22, 2024

Professor

Dr. Curtis D. McClane

PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION/ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY OUTLINE #1

**The negative impacts of medical marijuana pose a threat to the health and welfare of teenagers and young adults.**

1. Introduction

 The legalization of recreational marijuana led to a global increase in youth consumption, raising concerns about addiction and mental health. (Kourgiantakis et al., 2022). Zimlich (2019) cautioned a prevalence of marijuana use among 8th and 10th graders in the United States. Gabaglio et al. (2020) highlighted a 19% rate of marijuana usage among 15 to 24-year-old adolescents in Europe. The act of legalizing recreational marijuana correlated with a 13-15 percent rise in the usage of marijuana among individuals aged 12 to 17. (Hollingworth et al.,2020).

1. Description of problem/Hook

 Young people in society are especially deceived by the legislation around medicinal marijuana and recreational marijuana.

1. Setting the environment & counterclaim

Cannabis advocates and consumers lack awareness of the health risks, impact on brain development, and misguided treatment benefits (Sabet, 2021;Barne-Matthews, Fischer et al., 2020; Kroon et al., 2020; Berenson, 2019). Cort (2017) reported that 4.2 million individuals in the United States, aged 12 and above, met the criteria for cannabis use disorder (CUD).

1. Last sentence Thesis statement. The heightened THC levels exacerbate mental health and cognitive impairments in teens and young adults (Mennis et al., 2023). Nevertheless, supporters of medical marijuana disregard this detrimental impact.
2. MAIN ARGUMENT #1 There exist a concerning trend of young individuals experiencing fatalities and frequent hospitalizations due to cannabis consumption (Anderson & Rees, 2023).

A. Supporting Point #1 Sabet (2021) asserted that in Colorado, marijuana-related ER visits rose by 54% from 2013 to 2017. Hospitalizations increased by 101%, and calls to poison control for marijuana exposure increased. Cannabis adversely affects the brain, leading to an increased risk of motor vehicle accidents and psychotic symptoms in adolescents (Scheier & Griffin, 2021; Gabaglio et al., 2021; Anderson & Rees, 2023). Similar to alcohol, even sporadic consumption of THC can hinder an individual's capacity to safely drive a vehicle, potentially resulting in severe harm or fatalities to innocent bystanders (Larkin). Cannabis is the scientifically defined term for marijuana (Larkin, 2021), but it is also a euphemism used to make marijuana appear more socially acceptable (Gogek, 2015).

1. Supporting Point #2 Studies reveal most teens are unaware of marijuana use potential psychological risks (Sabet, 2021). In 2017, almost 10% of American teens and adults used marijuana monthly, a 60% increase from a decade ago (Berenson, 2019).
2. Supporting Point #2 Evidence suggests that cannabis decriminalization, along with medical and recreational legalization, could lead to higher rates of cannabis use among drivers. (Windle et al.,2022).
3. MAIN ARGUMENT #2 The prevalence of mental health disorders has been on the rise since the 1970s. This increase has been linked to the rise in THC levels, as highlighted by (Berenson, 2019).
4. Supporting Point #1The *cannabis effect* indicates that prolonged and excessive use of cannabis lead to the onset of depression (Womack et al, )Research suggests a common co-occurrence between cannabis use and depressive symptoms, especially prevalent among adolescents and young adults (Brook et al., 2002).
5. Supporting Point #2 Public stigma and self-stigmatization intertwine with depression and substance abuse. Consequently, young adults grappling with depressive symptoms often avoid treatment and turn to substance use. (Barnes-Matthews, 2023).
6. Supporting Point #3 Due to factors like race, gender, and societal expectations, black men may adhere to different masculine norms than white men. Those embracing black manhood norms and the intersection of traditional and black masculinity faced more public scrutiny and shame hence resisting psychiatric treatment (Coleman-Kirumba et al., 2023). Dogan et al, () reported that African American men turn to cannabis as a means of dealing with internal struggles, discriminatory encounters, and systemic policies that perpetuate cultural racism and biases within the justice system.
7. MAIN COUNTER ARGUMENT # 3 Medical Marijuana Law (MML) aims to address recognizing cannabis use as an individual choice for adults and replacing the illicit market with a legal and regulated one (Husock, 2024). Alpandinar (2021) suggested that legalizing recreational marijuana involves legislative changes that allow regulated access to marijuana, similar to the sale of alcohol.
	1. Supporting Point #1 Advocates in favor of legalizing cannabis argue that such a move leads to the decriminalization of individuals arrested for possession of the substance. This, in turn, has the potential to contribute towards reducing the prison population, addressing concerns related to overcrowding and the criminalization of non-violent offenses (Mohr-Avitia, 2024).
8. MAIN COUNTER ARGUMENT #2 Legalizing recreational marijuana (RML) entails amending laws to enable legal access to marijuana through regulated distribution policies, akin to the sale of alcohol (Alpandinar, 2020). Recreational Marijuana Laws (RML) reduce marijuana-related arrests which alleviates jail overcrowding (Sabia et al., 2021).
	1. Supporting Point #1). Legalization frequently suggests that marijuana is risk-free. Medical marijuana that meets state legal requirements should be utilized for therapeutic purposes and made accessible, including for students within educational institutions (Weiler & Westbrook, 2020).
9. Supporting Point #2 Legalization enables a home cultivation market that allows cannabis enthusiasts to give the substance as gifts (Kilmer & Pérez-Dávila, 2023).

VI COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS. Those in Marijuana industry excel at normalizing harmful substances to expand their business by targeting increasingly younger audiences (Sabet, 2021).

1. Recent research shows that young individuals with a family history of mental illness, high THC consumption, and substance use face a higher risk of developing severe conditions like schizophrenia (Malabadi et al., 2023; Fischer et al., 2020; Scheier & Griffin, 2021). Yet, a public misconception about marijuana's therapeutic benefits exists, pushing for its legalization and recreational use for profit.
2. Kilmer & MacCoun (2017) discovered that the average THC content of confiscated flowers in the U.S. around 2000 was about 5%. Currently, retail market flowers average around 20% THC, with some exceeding 25%. The level of THC has increased compared to the "Woodstock weed" era, (Sabet, 2021) but it is detrimental to individuals who consume marijuana with a THC content of 20% or more, as it is associated with psychosis, other mental health issues, impairments in brain development, and decreased intelligence quotient (IQ). (Larkin, 2021).
3. States with higher youth marijuana consumption typically allow recreational or loosely regulated medical sales (Berenson, 2019). Berenson further argues that legalization creates a strong industry, attracting investments and reducing costs. While legal home cultivation fuels an underground economy with lower prices.
4. Cannabis advocates fail to connect the increasing the risk of exposing vulnerable individuals in society to a legalized market. The expanding cannabis market, facilitated by grassroots lobbying, enables an augmented product of harmful substances to young individuals (Feldman, ;Gabaglio et al., 20) Moreover, the ineffectiveness of taxes not only impacts the financial situation of struggling individuals but also creates an environment where they become vulnerable targets for illicit markets (Choudhary, 2023).
5. CONCLUSION: Frame the sociological integration of faith/religion and society.

A Christian worldview is rooted in divine-human values, contrasting with secular outlooks shaped by sociology and psychology. In times of chaos and discord, young marijuana users and proponents seek innovative solutions based on factors like racism, classism, wealth, industry, and relative morality.

# Analysis through Sociological Theory

* + - 1. Durkheim’s *collective conscience* addresses this issue (McIntyre, 2013). Individuals foster connections among themselves, driven by shared interests and desires, resembling a unified machine.
			2. Marijuana advocates and users collaborated to legalize and allow the recreational use of marijuana, driven by the promise of wealth and the autonomy to choose their intoxications/ self-medications.
1. Those championing teen health and catalysts for change emerge as natural pillars of support, drawing from expertise and resources to foster mutual help. Through psychoeducation, they cultivate solidarity from diverse perspectives on cannabis. Durkheim coined this relationship *organic solidarity* (McIntyre, 2013).

* 1. **Faith Analysis through N.T. Wright’s 7 Universal longings**

 The idea of *truth*, as outlined by N.T. Wright's 7 Universal Longings, (Wright, 2020) is crucial in understanding the necessary societal changes through the perspective of a Christian worldview.

The pursuit of truth is a divine gift, granting humanity the courage to seek honesty and challenge deceit. However, at times, society adopt worldviews believed as truth, diverge from God's ultimate truth. The scriptures reveal the truth bestowed upon humanity by God, as Christ declared himself the embodiment of truth (*Holy Bible English Standard Version*, 2001 John 14: 6-10). It is imperative for change agents to enlighten the young minds about the harsh reality of depression, a silent affliction that touches all of humanity. One important aspect of navigating information is the ability to distinguish between truths stemming from external sources - credible references or experts, and falsehoods that stem from internal biases or social influences. This discernment is key in critically evaluating information and making informed decisions (Heddendorf &Vos, 2009).

1. High levels of THC, the psychoactive component in marijuana, can have detrimental effects on the mental health and cognitive functions of teenagers and young adults. Despite these potential risks, advocates of medical marijuana often fail to address or acknowledge the negative impact it can have on this demographic. Proverbs 14:12 serves as a powerful reminder that individuals may believe they are on the right path, only to discover it leads to an undesirable outcome. Young people in society are especially deceived by the legislation around medicinal marijuana and recreational marijuana.

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