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Identifying Factors Influencing the Tendency Toward Cannabis Use Among Adolescents and Young Adults Based on Grounded Theory

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the first paragraph of the Method section, the authors state that sampling "initially began using purposive sampling and subsequently continued through snowball sampling." This procedure requires clarification in relation to grounded theory methodology. Classical grounded theory generally emphasizes theoretical sampling after initial categories begin to emerge. Please explain whether later participants were selected specifically to elaborate, contrast, or challenge developing categories, or whether snowball sampling alone determined recruitment. If theoretical sampling was not actually employed, the authors should acknowledge this methodological limitation and avoid implying full adherence to grounded theory procedures that were not implemented.

In the second paragraph of the Method section, the statement "The interviews were conducted in public places such as parks and public green spaces" raises important concerns regarding confidentiality, privacy, and data quality, particularly because cannabis use is a sensitive and potentially stigmatized or legally consequential topic. The authors should explain how privacy was ensured in these environments, whether conversations could be overheard, whether participants selected these locations,

and whether interviews were conducted at sufficient physical distance from others. The potential influence of public settings on disclosure of illegal or socially sensitive behaviors should also be acknowledged in the limitations.

In Table 1, the reported mean age at first cannabis use of 20.70 years (SD = 4.13) appears inconsistent with the individual values shown in the table and should be recalculated directly from the participant-level data. Similarly, the reported mean age and standard deviation should be independently verified. Because the complete participant-level values are available, arithmetic errors are readily detectable and may undermine confidence in the broader analysis. Please recalculate all descriptive statistics from the raw data and ensure that decimal notation follows APA conventions consistently.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the third paragraph of the Method section, the sentence “In cases where participants objected to audio recording, simultaneous note-taking was used to document the content of the conversation” requires additional information about data equivalence. Verbatim transcripts and contemporaneous interview notes differ substantially in richness, detail, and interpretive reliability. Please report how many interviews were audio-recorded and how many were documented only through notes, whether quotations reported in the Results were taken exclusively from audio-recorded interviews, and how the authors addressed the possibility that note-based interviews contributed less detailed data to coding and category development.

In the paragraph beginning “One of the primary data collection instruments was a semi-structured interview…”, the interview guide is insufficiently described. Because the validity of qualitative findings depends substantially on the questions used to elicit participants’ experiences, the authors should provide the principal interview questions, probes, and developmental process of the interview protocol. Please indicate whether the guide was pilot-tested, reviewed by subject-matter experts, modified during data collection, and informed by preliminary coding. At least several representative questions should be reported in the Method section or provided as supplementary material.

In the paragraph describing credibility and trustworthiness, the sentence “To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the following procedures were implemented…” should be reorganized according to established qualitative trustworthiness criteria, such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. The current procedures—secondary review of interviews and expert feedback—are relevant, but it is unclear whether member checking, reflexive journaling, audit trails, negative case analysis, triangulation, or peer debriefing were conducted. The authors should specify which procedure addressed which dimension of trustworthiness and describe exactly how disagreements in interpretation or coding were resolved.

In the paragraph describing data analysis, the sentence “The stages of analysis within this approach included: (1) open coding… (5) integration of categories” is too general to permit assessment of analytic rigor. The authors should provide the actual number of initial/open codes generated before consolidation into the reported 88 statements, 22 subthemes, and 6 main themes. They should also explain the transition from codes to concepts and categories, whether axial coding involved specifying conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences, and how the core phenomenon was selected. Including a worked example showing the progression from raw quotation to initial code, subtheme, main theme, and paradigm-model component would substantially improve transparency.

In the ethics paragraph, the approval code “IR.IAU.ARAK.REC.1403.329” is appropriately reported; however, the manuscript requires clarification regarding informed consent procedures for participants younger than 18 years. Table 1 shows participants aged 16 and 17 years. Please state whether parental or guardian consent was obtained in addition to adolescent assent, whether any waiver of parental consent was approved because disclosure of cannabis use could expose participants to risk, and what specific safeguards were implemented for minors. This issue is essential for evaluating the ethical adequacy of the study.

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In the first paragraph of the Research Findings, the sentence “Regarding marital status, the majority of participants, comprising 15 individuals (88.2%), were married, while the remaining 2 individuals (11.8%) were also married” is inconsistent with Table 1, where 15 participants appear to be single and only 2 are married. This is a substantive reporting error and must be corrected. The authors should systematically cross-check all narrative demographic statistics against Table 1, including gender, education, age, and age at first cannabis use, to ensure that frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and ranges are internally consistent.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.
Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.

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