UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT USERS OF CANNABIS IN A GHANAIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

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# DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, EMMANUEL OPOKU DUODU, hereby declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature ……………………………....................

Date…………………………...............................

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
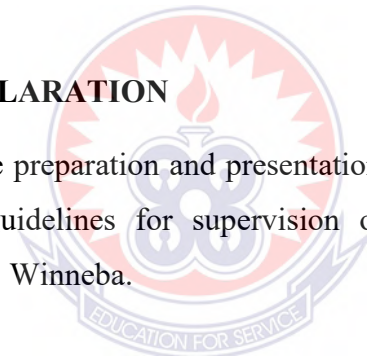
Dr. Albert Agbesi Wornyo (Supervisor)

Signature:…………………….................................

Date:…………………...

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated, first and foremost to God Almighty. This study is also dedicated to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Duodu. Your rudimentary sense of patriotism is what prompted me to undertake this research. God bless you all.

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This thesis would not have been successful without the help of numerous people. I am particularly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Albert Agbesi Wornyo, not only for his guidance and generosity throughout the research period but also for teaching me the essence of self-discipline in graduate studies. His time and patience are very much appreciated.

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ABSTRACT

Although there are many studies conducted on cannabis and its effect on the people who use them, with regards to their health, relationships and personal development, each user may have unique reasons and experiences that spur him or her on to use it. The study is limited to only the undergraduate student users of cannabis at the University of Education, Winneba with the aim of finding out the culture that surrounds the consumption and use of cannabis. The data collection methods used included, interviews and participant observation as well as focus group discussions. The study also examines the identities that the undergraduate students construct as well as how they negotiate their identities around their cannabis consumption. Using the theory of symbolic interactionism, the identity negotiation theory and the social cognitive theory; through a qualitative research approach which was anchored on a descriptive research approach, the findings were properly analysed and themed. The study showed that factors such as ease of access, socialization, music and academic self-efficacy are pertinent motivations that influence the undergraduate students to consume cannabis. The study also showed that the participants, through their performances at the smoking avenues constructed multifaceted identities including personal identity, gender identity and social identity. The phenomenological study also showed that, in negotiating their identities around cannabis consumption, the strategies adopted by the participants included fashion, unity and entertainment. The study therefore concludes that the use of cannabis or marijuana among undergraduate students in universities and colleges is significantly normalised.
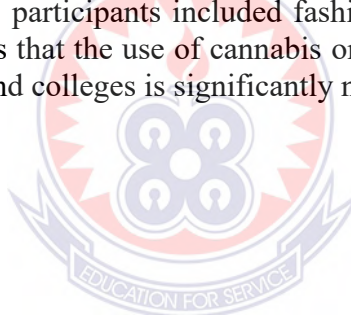
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In many societies, cannabis has been used by a substantial minority, and in some, majority of young adults, even though its use is prohibited by law (Hall, Johnston, & Donnelly, 1998). "Marijuana 'use' is to be defined as infrequent ingestion of marijuana that has not led to psychological or physiological dependence (that is, perceived dependence versus physically requiring the drug in order to function normally), or interference in the daily functions of the individual (meaning the individual user can still function normally within social and career contexts)," (Borcherding 2016, p.30). Therefore, by definition, marijuana 'use' could be anything from trying the drug once, to occasionally using the drug once or twice every few months.

Cannabinoids are substances found in the cannabis plant that act on specific receptors in the human brain and body; they are the main active ingredients in both the medicinal products derived from cannabis and cannabis preparations. Cannabinoids are also found in the human body (endocannabinoids). They act on a specific receptor that is widely distributed in the brain regions involved in cognition, memory reward, pain perception, and motor coordination. of the sixty identified cannabinoids, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is the active chemical compound found in the marijuana plant (*Cannabis sativa)*, and it is responsible for the psychotropic and physiological effects on the central nervous system (Goodman & Gilman, 2006).

All of the cannabinoids, including THC, are found in varying concentrations throughout the entirety of the plant, including the stem, leaves, and the seeds (Ashton, 2001). The two most extensively studied cannabinoids are THC and CBD.

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Those who ingest THC orally have a slower onset (but longer duration) of effects, due to slow absorption throughout the alimentary canal. Upon absorption, THC is readily absorbed to other tissue areas at a rate proportional with blood flow (Agurel, Halldenl & Lindgren, 1986). Most of the THC that is inhaled as smoke is readily absorbed through the lungs, entering the bloodstream (and the brain) within several minutes (Agurell, Halldin, Lindgren, Ohbson, Widman, Gillsepie & Holliste, 1986).

Upon reaching the brain region, the psychoactive response occurs within few seconds (Goodman & Gilman, 2006). Due to the 'high' nature of THC, the complete excretion of a single dose may take up to thirty days (Ashton, 2001). Most of the pharmacological researches regarding THC concentration were carried out in the late 1970s, whereby typical concentrations of THC in a single marijuana cigarette (joint) ranged between 5-25 mg (World Health Organization, 1997).

The effects of THC have long been known to produce a seemingly pleasurable "high" after ingesting marijuana derivatives, making it a very commonly used recreational drug. The THC content is highest in the flowering tops, declining in the leaves, lower leaves, stems, and seeds of the plant. Upon continual ingestion, high concentrations can accumulate within specific regions of the brain: particularly the motor, sensory, and limbic regions of the cerebrum (Ashton, 2001). In fact, no country that permits medical use of cannabis preparations (medication) recommends smoking as a mode of consumption (World Health Organization, 1997).

Cannabis may be smoked in a "joint", which is the size of a cigarette, or in a water pipe. Tobacco may be added to assist burning. Smokers typically inhale deeply and hold their breath to maximise absorption of THC by the lungs (Agurell et al., 1986). Marijuana or hashish may also be eaten. Cannabis produces euphoria and

relaxation, perceptual alterations, time distortion, and the intensification of ordinary sensory experiences, such as eating, watching films, and listening to music (Goodman & Gilman, 2006). Research has shown that cannabis use is correlated with gender, family finances and other substance use (Adlaf & Ivis, 1996).

Marijuana (THC content 0·5–5·0%) is prepared from the dried flowering tops and leaves which is called the "hashish" (THC content 2–20%). It consists of dried cannabis resin and compressed flowers (Adams & Martin, 1996). Marijuana may also be eaten (Ashton, 2001). However, with the increased potency of marijuana via advanced cultivation and breeding techniques, THC concentrations have risen to upwards of 150 mg (Ashton, 2001). So, today's marijuana cigarette is roughly equivalent to 6 high potency marijuana cigarettes of the 1970s (Borcherding, 2016). The fastest route to intoxication and the traditional mode of consumption for recreational users is to roll the herbal cannabis or cannabis resin into a cigarette; often mixed with tobacco and smoke it. When used in a social setting, marijuana consumption may produce infectious laughter and talkativeness, short term memory and attention, motor skills, reaction time and skilled activities are impaired, while a person is intoxicated (Budney, Roffman & Walker, 2007). People have a motivating inner life that helps explain their external actions (Hewitt, 2002). According to Anderson (1998), while in that euphoric state, the abuser may reconstruct him or herself and identify with the perceived positive state of mind associated with the drug induced euphoria.

Under the international drug control treaties, the use of cannabis is limited to scientific and medical purposes only (UNODC, 2013). The treaties impose requirements on signatory countries that permit the medical use of cannabis and other drugs that are under international control (INCB, 2017). The treaties require tighter

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regulation of cannabis than medicines that are not under international control. For example, these treaties require that governments establish a national agency that controls cannabis production and supply for medical use. This agency has to report to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) on the quantities of cannabis that are used for medical purposes and on the number of patients who are treated using cannabis-based medicines (UNODC, 2013). These treaties also require that the medical use of cannabis and cannabinoids should be supervised by medical practitioners and that these drugs should only be dispensed by prescription (INCB, 2017).

Again, cannabis should only be used if there is evidence of their quality, safety and efficacy for medical use (INCB, 2017). At the national level, the medical use of cannabis and other controlled drugs may involve monitoring the behaviour of prescribers and patients to ensure that cannabis-based medicines are appropriately prescribed and that they are not unduly diverted to non-medical use or abused by patients (UNODC, 2013). North America was the first region to introduce the medical use of cannabis. This happened first in several states in the United States that passed citizen-initiated referenda to legalise medical use of cannabis in the mid-1990s (Institute of Medicine, 1999).

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, prescription stimulant use can lead to abuse and dependence, depression and other mental health concerns, and for those that misuse prescription stimulants, and as well may lead to serious adverse health ramifications, such as cardiovascular concerns, heightened body temperature, and seizures (Volkow, 2010). However, throughout history, humans have used psychoactive drugs for many purposes such as recreation, therapy, art and religion (Budney & Lile, 2009).

To date, fourteen major life-events have been hypothetically linked to the identity change from non-user to drug abuser (Borcherding, 2016). These life events, as stated in Borcherding (2016) include; divorce or separation of parents (Anderson, 1998), death of someone significant (Hoffman, 1993), frequent geographic moves of the family (Anderson, 1998), inappropriate sexual activity with an adult (Barrett, Trepper, & Stone-Fish, 1991), caretaker responsibilities for siblings or other family members (Anderson, 1998), rigid and regular domestic responsibilities along with strict guidelines and expectations (Baumrind, 1985), the individual's early biological reproduction (Anderson, 1998), physical abuse by caretakers (Anderson, 1998), frequent physical or verbal punishment at school along with multiple school suspensions, fights, or placement into different school programs (Anderson, 1998), and/or negative police interaction (Anderson, 1998).

Marijuana use is typically seen as a deviant social behaviour as demonstrated by popular culture and other media sources (Borcherding, 2016). Currently, among the legal drugs, alcohol and cigarettes are the most often used drugs in the world (Blackman, 2004). In some countries, lifetime cannabis use among 16-year-olds is moving towards 50% (Hibell et al. 2004).

Social groups and their associated norms play a crucial role in how people use marijuana (Borcherding, 2016). Daily use of marijuana falls within the realm of abuse. This interpretation is done with particular reference to Anderson's (1998) definition of marijuana abuse. With regard to the 'use' of marijuana, in the early 1970s, the phrase "amotivational syndrome" was first associated with marijuana use (Goode, 1971). It was thought that marijuana use is directly related to apathy and overall lack of motivation, particularly in young people (Goode, 1971; Anderson, 1998).

In fact, Anderson (1998) avers that a person who abuses a drug must meet all of the following parameters: 1) A pattern of heavy and regular use over a significant period of time, 2) a set of drug-related problems (e.g. at work, school, or within the family unit), 3) previous and failed attempts at cessation of consumption, 4) self-identification as to having a drug problem. Durdle et al. (2008) claim the abuse of marijuana is linked to major depressive disorder. Culture shapes and constrains conduct, but it is also the product of conduct (Hewitt, 2002).

Anderson (1998) claims that educational and economic opportunity; popular culture and identification with a drug related sub-cultural group provide the social opportunity to transition from a marijuana non-user to a marijuana abuser. Meanwhile, one of the most commonly studied meanings of drug use is 'affect control,' that is, using the drugs to cope with negative feelings about one's self, others, or society at large (Anderson, 1998). Society hands down models for the social acts that we perform, however those acts do not persist by themselves, but only because interacting people use their understandings of these acts as templates to reproduce them (Hewitt, 2002).

Cannabis is the most frequently used illicit drug and its use is increasing. Actually, there is currently a growing research literature which focuses on cannabis use as normal behaviour: (Calafat et al. 2001; de Zwart 1999; Hammersley et al. 2001; Ho¨ fler et al. 1999; Kandel et al. 2001; Rødner 2005, 2006; Shedler & Block 1990; Kuntsche2004; von Sydow et al. 2002;). For instance, Parker et al. (1998, 2002) and other researchers (; Duff 2003, 2005 Hammersley et al. 2002) have placed emphasis on high marijuana prevalence rates which come close to 50% and further inferred that this is one indication of drug normalisation. Perhaps even more significantly, Parker et al. found that 25% of their research participants were regular

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marijuana users by the age of 21 (Parker et al. 1998; 2002). Duff's (2005) results supports Parker's (2002) claim that there is currently a strong demand for marijuana use among the otherwise conforming young adults. For example, Duff acknowledges that ''these young people are utterly 'normal' in their employment, demographic and education profiles, and their clubbing and drug use profiles are becoming increasingly normalised as well'' (Duff 2005: p.168). However, Shiner and Newburn (1997; 1999) have argued that it is an exaggeration that drug use has become normalised. Furthermore, Shiner and Newburn argue that the normalisation thesis exaggerates marijuana use. This is because non users continue to outnumber marijuana users. Likewise, Shiner and Newburn (1997; 1999), Ramsay and Partridge (1999), note that for a large proportion of young people, illicit drugs are unusual and exceptional.

There are multiple factors that influence young people's academic performance in schools and colleges. Two of these areas are knowledge of study skills and support networks, such as friends, family, mentors, and peers (Looby, Kassman, & Earleywine, 2014). Students often face greater difficulty in the college setting when some of these factors, including study skills, support networks, are not as established as other students, which can ultimately lead to negative coping strategies (Hillman, 2016). DiLalla and Gottesman (1991) find psychiatric disorders could play a role in the antisocial and maladaptive or aggressive behaviours found in children and adolescents.

According to Anderson (1998), personal marginalization refers to the experiences during adolescent development that severs one from socially acceptable behaviour. One can attain a coherent self and maintain self-esteem by cheerful cooperation with the organized life of a community, but one can also obtain these ends through more individualistic means (Hewitt, 2002). For instance, it is supposed

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that marijuana allows the user to 'escape' from his or her reality and fills an otherwise devoid person with a sense of completeness (Henderson & Boyd, 1992).

This study therefore focuses on investigating how young people in college who are users of marijuana negotiate their identity. The self is a valued and crucial human object, a major source of the purposes that people bring to their environment (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009).Human beings do not merely wish to act in concert with others to secure the things they are taught by culture to value, but they also wish to find a sense of security and place (Hewitt, 2002). That is, a sense of social identity through integration into group life. It is pertinent to note that the discomfort with one's own self leads to a drug-related identity change in an effort to become comfortable with the self (Anderson, 1998).

1.2   Statement of Problem

People act on the basis of their definitions of the situations (Hewitt, 2002). Some university students have been using marijuana in various capacities for many decades, and the trend does not appear to be changing any time soon (Borcherding, 2016). For instance nearly 33 percent of university students in the United States reported using marijuana within the past year with the number projected to increase exponentially in the years to come (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman & Schulenberg, 2007). Meanwhile, attending college has long been associated with finding oneself academically and socially prepared for life (Borcherding, 2016). Social learning factors, such as friend's views, individual characteristics, such as, stress related to grades, study skills, and overall ability to excel in the college setting, may influence the use of drugs among college students (Weyandt et al., 2012).

Becker, Collins, and Luciana (2014) hypothesized that the users of marijuana appear to be less persistent in the absence of motivation-enhancing instruction. This

means that marijuana users are often impaired with tasks that require intrinsic motivation, and quite successful when external motivation exists. However, academic self-efficacy is defined as one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals, related to the college setting (Hillman, 2016). Self-efficacy is domain specific and can differ according to the given situation (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018). Bandura (1997; 42) opined that: "in some circumstances, people may feel more confident about their own behaviours and ability to successfully perform a task, and in others they may not. This is especially important in learning environments where access to resources varies."

Despite years of research on marijuana and its effects on the human body, significant gaps in the literature still exist. These gaps range from the true medicinal benefits of the drug to the physical effects on learning, memory, and social integration (Anderson, 1998). The controversy with the drug and its effects has turned heads within the scientific community in terms of effectively researching the drugs purported positive and negative effects (Hall & Solowij, 1994). For instance, between 1840 and 1900 over 100 articles in American and European journals purported marijuana's therapeutic values, ranging from the treatment of gout to uterine haemorrhaging (Thomas, 2010), without any health ministry challenging the authenticity of those claims. Consequently there are further gaps in the marijuana literature that effectively exclude those individuals who are enrolled in the colleges and universities (Borcherding, 2016).As Borcherding (2016) indicated, college students are commonly engaging in late-night partying, all-night studying, and rigorous schedules, placing some of these students at a greater risk for substance use.

Therefore, this research will try to examine the influence of cannabis consumption on undergraduate student users with regards to their own personal

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identity construction on campus; vis-a-vis, 'sympathetic introspection,' that is, the study in which the researcher takes the standpoint of the actor whose behaviour he or she is studying and attempts to use the actor's own categories in capturing the meanings for the actor during social interactionsm (Carter & Fuller, 2015). This is because, the non-medical use of prescription stimulants is a significant problem for college students and higher education professionals that work with them (Hillman, 2016). Moreover, factors such as academic self-efficacy and those included in the social learning theory (Peralta & Steele, 2010) shall be scrutinized to assess their role in marijuana use among college students.

In view of this, this study shall probe to examine only the undergraduate student users of cannabis in the University of Education, Winneba, with the main objective of finding out the culture that surrounds the consumption and the use of cannabis. Again, the study shall explore the gap in literature by examining the identities that the undergraduate students construct as well as how they negotiate their identities around their cannabis consumption.

1.3   Research Objectives

Marijuana is one of the most widely used recreational drugs on college campuses. It is imperative that educators and administrators understand how marijuana affects college students, and how marijuana use and abuse directly impact the overall college experience including other adverse or risky behaviour (Borcherding, 2016). The research objectives are:

1. To identify the motivations for which the undergraduate students in the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) use cannabis.

2. To identify the kind of identities that the undergraduate student users of cannabis in UEW create around cannabis consumption.

3. To examine how the undergraduate student users of cannabis in UEW negotiate their identities through cannabis consumption.

1.4   Research Questions

1. What are the motivations for which the undergraduate students in UEW use cannabis?

2. What are the kinds of identities undergraduate student users of cannabis in UEW construct?

3. How do the undergraduate student users of cannabis in UEW negotiate their identities around their cannabis consumption?

1.5   Significance of the Study

This project is undertaken with the belief that this work shall serve as a reference point for students and educators as well as policy makers by providing empirical information on the individual identity negotiation processes of student users of cannabis. Again, it will assist policy makers in formulating awareness campaigns and conscientization. Furthermore, this work shall be a useful to the police to uphold law and order, with the aim of creating a safer and healthier Ghana, free from the menace of illicit cannabis use.

1.6   Delimitation

This study focused on investigating the culture that surrounds the immediate smoking and the consumption of cannabis among University of Education, Winneba Campus students. It involves identifying all activities and performances that take place during the consumption of cannabis, while at the same time, investigating what motivates the cannabis users to consume cannabis.

The study is limited to only the undergraduate student users of cannabis at the Winneba Campus. With the aim of finding out the culture that surrounds the consumption and use of cannabis, the researcher operationalised culture and identity in this study to refer to any emergent behaviour at the selected sites before, during and after the consumption of cannabis by the student users identified.

1.7   Organisation of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter which embodies the background of the study, the objectives of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, delimitations and the organisation of the study.

The second chapter presents a review of literature on the study and outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Chapter three presents the methods and procedures used for the collection of data for analysis. Issues discussed under this chapter comprised the research approach, research design, the sample size and sampling technique, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and method of data analysis. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the findings and discussions of the study. It discusses the themes and issues that came up along with theories and concepts in chapter two to explain them. The final chapter presents the summary, conclusions from the findings and makes recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

This chapter evaluates, assesses and critically analyses the literature that is of relevance to the study. Therefore this chapter shall carefully examine and critique the theories used for the study. Moreover, it also describes the importance of the theories to this study.

2.1   Behaviour and Cannabis Use

People act based on their ideas about the world. The reality of the world is not merely something that is "out there" waiting to be discovered by us, but is actively created as we act in and toward the world (Hewitt, 2002). Relaxation or tension reduction is commonly identified as marijuana use motive or effect expectancy (Lee & Neighbors, 2007). Meanwhile, there is association between heavy cannabis use in adolescence and the risk of leaving high school education and of experiencing job instability in young adulthood (Ashton, 2001). Also, adolescents with a history of poor school performance, who initiate cannabis use in the early teens, are at increased risk of using other illicit drugs and of becoming dependent on cannabis. Furthermore, subtle impairments of attention and memory that persist while the user remains chronically intoxicated may or may not be reversible after prolonged abstinence

Human beings live in a world of objects that they constantly create and recreate by symbolically designating and acting toward them. And their orientation to the objects that constitute the environment at any given time is purposive and goal oriented (Hewitt, 2002). Behaviour is simply an actor's idiosyncratic way of reacting

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to an interpretation of a situation (Carter &Fuller, 2015). Human behaviour is socially coordinated, often in very complex ways over extended periods of time. Understanding social behaviour, therefore, requires an interpretive perspective that examines how behaviour is changing, unpredictable, and unique to each and every social encounter (Carter & Fuller, 2015).

2.2   Drug Use Acceptance in Education

To say more, Parker et al., (1998) argues that drug use acceptance is spreading across a range of social backgrounds, including women and high economic classes, which were previously less likely to be involved with drugs.   With particular reference to sub-cultural groups, family culture has also been shown to have positive effects on academic motivation and achievement (Andrews & Duncan, 1997). Parker et al. (1998, 2002) conclude that among young people, drugs are not closely associated with deviance. The researchers go on to argue that recreational drug use is embedded in a range of interrelated social processes including education, the youth labour market, housing and living arrangements, marriage and the family (Parker et al.,1998; 2002).

Educational and economic disparities may be enough of an impetus to engage in drug related behaviour (Borcherding, 2016). Anderson (1998) posits that drug abuse is a product of several factors that lead to a drug-related identity change. There are also reports of impaired educational attainment in adolescents and underachievement in adults in occupations requiring high-level cognitive skills (Anderson, 1998).

Currently, there is some evidence suggesting that marijuana use, be it acute or chronic has negative effects on the human brain and its capacity to learn new information (Ashton, 2001). However, the effects of them on one's ability to learn

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have yet to be fully studied, particularly the effects of marijuana consumption on those people aged 25 years and younger due to the brain's developmental state during those years (Ashton, 2006; Borcherding, 2016)

Again, the high and the growing drug prevalence levels have led to a theoretical turn in drug theory and research. In other words, interest has shifted from extreme forms of drug use to drug research based on social and psychological behaviour (Brock, 2011). Conventional theories on drugs attempt to explain drug use as self-motivated and as individual pathology (Anderson 1998; Ashton, 2001; Borcherding, 2016). Self is the capacity to exert control over conduct. This means the individual's ability to coordinate behaviour with that of others and as a result create complex social acts and social objects (Hewitt, 2002).

The acute and chronic effects of THC on motor function vary greatly throughout the literature (Borcherding, 2016). For example, according to Liguori, Gatto, and Jarrett (2002), acute ingestion of THC has been linked to increased body sway, indicative of a reduced ability to maintain balance. Meanwhile, Grant et al. (2016) concluded that the long-term effects of THC on motor impairment were inconsistent at best, and varied widely depending on the method of use and personal user history.

2.3   Cannabis Use Impairments

Moreover, Frieberg et al. (2013) compared daily and non-daily marijuana users' executive function and motor control ability by using an electroencephalogram (EEG) and several stimuli based tests. The results of the study showed no statistical difference between groups, and that users and non-users made a similar number of errors throughout the test (Frieberg et al., 2013). The effects of marijuana consumption on short-term memory are noticeable within 12-24 hours of use

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(Borcherding,2016). To add to, Hart et al. (2001) showed that chronic users, which they defined as consuming 24 marijuana cigarettes per week, showed reaction time impairment at high doses. However, their other abilities were not impaired including attention, memory, visual/spatial processing, reasoning, flexibility, and mental calculation, (Hart et al., 2001).

Popular culture often provides a glimpse into drug related subgroups and erroneously glamorizes the associated behaviours and lifestyle that accompany drug abuse (Borcherding, 2016). This assertion is clearly demonstrated in Anderson (1998). Anderson's theory posits a positive correlation between lower economic opportunity and the identification with a drug subculture, thus linking poverty with drug abuse. Anderson (1998) claims that educational and economic opportunity, popular culture, and identification with a drug related sub-cultural group provide the societal opportunity to transition from non-user to abuser.

Furthermore, deviant or more risky behaviour, such as engaging in drug use, can be learned from associations one has with their intimate social groups (Akers, 1985).Anderson (1998) defines social marginalization as a person's, "disadvantaged or oppressed economic, social, and cultural situation in comparison to important groups and/or entities around him or her" (p. 245). Meanwhile, Smith (2003) claims that membership in a religious group augments norm adherence. This too is relevant for discussion in the sense that, such high pressure social conformity, which is very indicative of all religious institutions, could cause separation from the religious group, and lead that person to another social group whose peer pressure is of the opposite persuasion (Borcherding, 2016).

For example, Hirschi's social control theory (1969) argues that deviant impulses that all people presumably share are often controlled by strong bonds to

conventional society, family and school. Social control (bonding) theory (Hirschi, 1969) focuses on the intricate and diverse nature of deviant behaviour, looking at the different motivators involved across different situations (Ford and Shroeder, 2008). This theory therefore tries to explain abnormal behaviour and normality based on the level of social control that the individual is exposed to (Elliott et al., 1985; Kandel et al., 1986; Hawdon, 1996).

Another study indicated that the frequency and duration of use adversely affect one's verbal memory (Wagner, Becker, Gouzoulis-Mayfrank, & Daumann, 2010). This team of researchers was able to assess verbal memory in a group of chronic marijuana users by utilizing the Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test (RAVLT). The results of the study imply that long-term marijuana use has a residual effect on memory and learning. Verbal memory is a concept that refers to memory for verbally presented information (Squire, 1987). Actually there are various ways of measuring verbal memory capability including learning of word lists, story recall and the learning of sequences of paired words (Tulvin, 1983).

2.4   Well-being and Marijuana Use

Meanwhile, there is extant literature on the adverse effects of cannabis consumption (Bloch, 1983; Bachman et al., 1997; Bloom et al., 1997; Fergusson & Hoorwood, 1997;Gieringer, 2001; Grinspoon, 1997; Hall et al., 1994; Kandel et al., 1992; Zuckerman et al., 1983; Zimmer & Morgan, 1997; etc.). For instance, Hall et al (1994), talks about the adverse effects of the consumption of cannabis on mental health and the psychological effects on cannabis use. They revealed that cannabis smoking or ingestion of THC increases heart rate by 20–50% within a few minutes to a quarter of an hour; this effect lasts for up to three hours (Hall et al., 1994).

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Moreover, Allen and Holder (2014) provide further evidence suggesting the relationship between emotional well-being and marijuana use. Their study revealed that there is a link between marijuana use and depression and anxiety. Moreover, Beardslee, Keller, Seifer, Lavori, Staley, Podoresky and Shera (1996) conducted a study on family history of depression and found it was a significant predictor of emotional and behavioural problems in adolescents. To support this claim, Borcherding (2016) avers that people, who are already afflicted by an emotional disorder, are more prone to seek out and use marijuana. Anderson (1998) posits that the external pressures involved in developing a positive identity lead to higher risk with regards to drug abuse. For instance, Baumrind (1983) reported that unrealistic parental expectations and/or extreme authoritativeness lead to the loss of individual control over positive identity construction during childhood and adolescent development. Thompson (2006) also finds depression runs in families and the outcomes relate to negative or maladaptive outcomes.

Furthermore, Becker, Collins, and Luciana (2014) further posit that the prolonged and the daily use of marijuana increase one's dependence on external motivational factors as opposed to the more intrinsically driven self-reliance and self-organization. In other words, the marijuana user would rather sit ideal and procrastinate rather than perform chores that are not dependent on any other external factors. They hypothesize that it would otherwise be true to claim that, prolonged and daily users may excel in situations where external sources of motivation are significantly high.

Also Multiple clinical studies have found that long-term, frequent marijuana smokers exhibit signs of respiratory damage, including chronic bronchitis, sore throat, inflammation, impaired immune function, and precancerous cell changes (Tashkin,

1993). With regards to the adverse effects of marijuana on respiratory health, Grinspoon (1997) as well as, Tashkin (1993) suggest solid evidence to show a relationship between heavy cannabis smoking and respiratory disease. In short, respiratory harm has been called "the only well-confirmed deleterious physical effect of marijuana" in the words of Dr. Lester Grinspoon (Grinspoon 1997, p.250). However, oral dosages do not have the same pharmacological action as inhaled marijuana, since orally ingested THC does not pass directly into the bloodstream, as with smoking, but is rather processed by the liver, where it is transformed into another, even more psychoactive metabolite (Zimmer & Morgan, 1997).

In conclusion, human society is distinctive because of the capacity of each member to act independently (Carter & Fuller, 2015). No matter how far-fetching the idea about implementation of new national drug laws is; should legalization come to pass, the entire citizenry as well as students, are entitled to accurate information regarding the effects of marijuana, on both short and long-term, should they choose to consume the drug (Borcherding, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

2.5   Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Human behaviour is not an innate behaviour (Luluk, Achmad, Mintari & Achmad, 2017), therefore in order to understand human behaviours, it is necessary to understand definitions, meaning and processes formed by humans first. Elements such as social roles, traditional structures, rules, laws, purposes, etc. provide raw material to the individuals for forming definitions (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). Consequently symbolic interaction is a process of "interpretation of the action" (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009, p. 1). To achieve the expected behaviour, it takes a process of learning through self-experience, learning from others and

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learning from the surrounding environment (Luluk, Achmad, Mintari & Achmad, 2017).

2.5.1 Symbols and Meanings

Human beings live in a world of objects, not of things or stimuli (Hewitt, 2002). Symbolic interaction is one of many theories in communication studies. This theory claims that facts are based on and directed by symbols. Moreover, it is not important whether the interpretations of these facts are accurate or not (Thomas, 1928). This opinion is supported by Berg when he alleged that, fact is based on personal perceptions and changes in time (Berg, 2000). Truth is, therefore, not absolute, but is always relative to the needs and interests of organisms (Hewitt, 2002).

Meaning is triadic (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). This means that when an individual makes an act, he or she immediately reveals to the other person what he or she intends to do. Moreover, meaning is triadic could also mean that after the said act is made by the individual, it is assumed that the responder knows exactly what to do in response. The third and final explanation why meaning is triadic is because through every social act, social object is created (Hewitt, 2002). The principal condition for the formation of a meaning is the existence of an event (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin&Demirbuken, 2009).

2.5.2 Cognition and Conduct

George Herbert Mead is recognized as the single intellectual ancestor that all interactionists honour. Mead assumes that symbols develop mind and they are used as means for thinking and communication (Ashworth, 2000). Mead's work came to be popular through his students at the University of Chicago, who assembled notes on his courses in social psychology into a book, *Mind, Self, and Society,* after his death in 1931.

Theory and research in symbolic interactionism has developed along three main areas of emphasis. The first of the three schools of thoughts is Herbert Blumer. His impression of symbolic interationism was referred to as the Chicago School; Manford Kuhn's was referred to as the Iowa School whereas the Sheldon Stryker theoretical approach to symbolic interactionism was called the Indiana School (Carter & Fuller, 2015).

Mead argued that mental events are a form of behaviour that can be observed. Human beings talk about inner experiences and in so doing, they make them observable. Moreover, he believed that the mind and ego are products of society (Ashworth, 2000). Symbolic interaction theory acknowledges the principle of meaning as the centre of human behaviour (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). For instance, Mead intended the concept of the "I"to capture the spontaneous, immediate and impulsive aspect of conduct. Whereas the individual's awareness of his or her own initial response to a stimulus signals the beginning of the "me" phase of the self. This can also be referred to as the 'object' phase of the self because the individual takes herself into account as an object (Hewitt, 2002).

Herbert Blumer coined the term 'symbolic interactionism' and was the first to formulate Mead's ideas into a cohesive theory with specific methodological implications for study (Carter & Fuller, 2015). According to Blumer (1969), human forms "meaning" in two ways. The first is meaning is something attributed to objects, events and phenomenon. The other is meaning is a physical attachment imposed on events and objects by human. However, there are three core principles in the symbolic interaction of Blumer's (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009).

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2.5.3   *Interactions among Social Objects*

Interaction occurs within a particular social and cultural context in which physical and social objects (persons), as well as situations, must be defined or categorized based on individual meanings (Carter & Fuller, 2015). An object that comes into existence as the result of a social act is what is termed social object. In other words, social object is an object borne from shared experience, understanding and meaning. An example of a social object is 'power' (Hewitt, 2002).

Blumer's symbolic interactionism centres on the processes actors use to constantly create and recreate experiences from one interaction to the next (Carter & Fuller, 2015). To him, symbolic interactionism was simply "the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings" (Blumer, 1962, p. 179). According to him, meanings are inter-subjective and perceived (Carter & Fuller, 2015). There are no meanings inherent in the people or objects which an actor confronts, but individual actors rather place meanings upon such entities, which are constantly reinterpreted among individuals and are perceived as unique (House, 1977). So "the meaning of things directs action" (O'Shaughnessy, 1992, p. 158).

Symbolic interactionists demonstrate differences in respect of their points of view. However, interactionists agree that the source of data is human interaction ((Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). Mead argued that too much cultural diversity, novelty, and complexity exist for instincts to be a satisfactory explanation of human conduct. Thus, Mead rejected an instinctivist approach and the psychological theory that was the prevailing wisdom of the time. For example, according to them, mental events such as thoughts, ideas and images were to them irrelevant because, they believed, such events were unobservable (Hewitt, 2002).

Symbols transform the very nature of the environment in which the human species lives. This is true in the sense that Symbols transform the environment by expanding its scope both spatially and temporally (Hewitt, 2002). Mead's theory of mind attempts to account for the origins and development of human intelligence. He links mind and conduct, and shows that the origins of human mind lie in human society. Symbolic interaction is a process including the interpretation of actions because symbolic meanings might be formed differently for anyone (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009).

Symbolic interactionism emphasizes inner experiences as being capable of observation, because we can report and communicate our private experiences and feelings to others using significant symbols. Mead focused on how people interact in their daily lives by means of symbolic interaction and how they create order and meaning (Korgen & White, 2008). As a result of having the capacity to move from subject to object, humans not only better develop the ability to control and monitor their own behaviours, but more importantly, the development of the selfbecomes more pronounced (Hewitt, 2002). There is actually a general agreement among the symbolic interactionists that perspectives and empathy developing abilities of participants are the key subjects of symbolic interaction (Stryker & Vryan, 2003).

2.5.4   *The Named World*

Blumer believed that meaning is a condition that emerges as a result of the interaction of group members. Therefore, meaning is created as a result of the interaction between people, and meaning allows people produce some of the facts forming the sensory world (Tezcan, 2005). People cannot act toward that which they cannot name. Therefore, symbolic interactionists are of the belief that humans live in a named world, and that naming is also an activity that is central to the way they

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approach the world. It is for this reason why it is said that language is the most powerful reality shaping set of symbols employed by human beings (Hewitt, 2002).

The interactionist conceives of a role as a perspective from which conduct is constructed (Hewitt, 2002). Symbols make it possible for the individual to be part of the very environment to which he or she responds, and thus make it possible the effectual development of self. In other words, we might simply suggest that an act begins with a problem to be solved, a goal to be reached, something to be overcome by the human being in the environment (Hewitt, 2002).

Symbolic interaction is a dynamic theory because according to this theory objects feature meanings within themselves and individuals formulate their activities in the direction of their evaluations of themselves and also people and objects around them. In that, symbolic interactionists stress the possibility of meaning being transformed, and they recognize individual as well as shared meanings. Clearly, human beings are restricted to certain kinds of meaning by the words they learn, for words represent the objects they can imagine. Thus, it is the users that attribute meaning to objects according to their perspective (Schenk & Holman, 1980). In order for people to engage in social interaction, and thus complete the social object of a social act, they must first be able to interpret. That is to assign meaning to one another's act (Hewitt, 2002). Role taking is the process wherein the person imaginatively occupies the role of another and looks at self and situation from that vantage point in order to engage in role making whereas role making is the process wherein the person constructs activity in a situation so that it fits the definition of the situation is in consonant with the person's own role and merges with the activity of others (Hewitt, 2002).

Symbols are not tied to the actual presence of the things for which they stand, because of that we can invoke them even when those things may be quite a distance in space and time (Hewitt, 2002). This is because the individual human being is both an acting subject and an object through his or her own experience. Human beings give meaning to symbols and they express these things by means of language. Consequently, symbols form the basis of communication. In other words, symbols are indispensable elements for the formation of any kind of communication (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). However, the most important gestures for people are lingual.

2.5.5 *Language and Human Association*

Humans are animals that possess language and whose conduct occurs in a world of words (Hewitt, 2002). Language is defined briefly as a culturally constructed and socially established system of standardized and conventionalized symbols, which have a specific and arbitrarily determined meaning and common usage for purpose of socially meaningful expression and for communication in a given society (Hewitt, 2002).

Most human acts, interactionists think, are not individual acts but social acts, requiring the coordinated efforts of several individuals. The individual's act does not consist merely of what may be observed by others, but also entails an internal process of control in which the individual directs conduct toward some goal or object (Hewitt, 2002). Echoing Mead, Blumer believed that the study of human behaviour must begin with human association (Carter & Fuller, 2015). Therefore the initial part of any act, whatever the source of impulse, involves an acting "subject" who is becoming aware of the environment and the objects within it toward which action must be directed (Hewitt, 2002).

In the simplest sense, names substitute for things, and thus enable us to bring the external world inside our minds and manipulate it there in fairly complex but also economical ways (Hewitt, 2002). Mead used the personal pronouns "I" (impulsive personality) and "me" (reflective personality) to describe the two phases of process whereby the self is created and recreated; the 'I' and the 'me' continually alternate in ongoing conduct (Hewitt, 2002).

Human language constitutes the most important and powerful set of conventional signs or symbols one can identify (Hewitt, 2002). Human beings live in a world of objects. Language provides meaning to humans by means of symbols. Central to the symbolic interactionist thought is the idea that individuals use language and significant symbols in their communication with others (Carter & Fuller, 2015). It is symbols that differentiate social relations of humans from the level of communication of animals. That is, to say in other words that, our human world is made up of symbolically designated things, ideas, people, activities, and purposes (Hewitt, 2002). Individuals act based on the meanings those objects have for them (Carter & Fuller, 2015). An object is anything to which attention can be paid and toward which action can be directed (Hewitt, 2002).

The most important concept which symbolic interactionists have based their analysis of human conduct on is the concept of the significant symbol. A significant symbol is a vocal or other kind of gesture that arouses in the one using it the same response as it arouses in those to whom it is directed. As a result of the ability to employ significant symbols, human beings interact with one another on the basis of meanings. Therefore, their responses to one another depend on the interpretation of symbols rather than merely on the enactment of responses they have been conditioned

to make. Meanings emerge from interactions with other individuals and with society (Carter & Fuller, 2015).

The significant symbol provides humans with a form of control over their own conduct that other animals lack: self-consciousness. Blumer's work has been seen as the most comprehensive overview of Mead's symbolic interactionist ideas (Carter &Fuller, 2015). Blumer's methodology emphasizes "intimate understanding rather than the inter-subjective agreement among investigators, which is a necessary condition for scientific inquiry to have worth" (Carter & Fuller, 2015, p.3). For a good measure of his time, Blumer was the first to interrogate the science behind symbols. For instance, he defined a sign as something that stands for something else. That is, an event or thing that takes the place or signifies some other event or thing. Meanwhile, a conventional sign or symbol is a thing or event associated with some other thing or event, but it is produced and controlled by the very organisms that have learned to respond to it (Korgen & White, 2008).
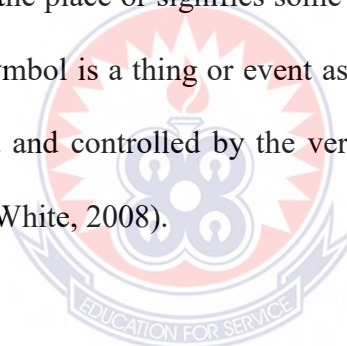
2.6.1   Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory is a theory that derives from Psychology, yet has been adopted in other interdisciplinary subject areas, including communication studies (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018). There are three underlying assumptions in the social cognitive learning theory. First, learning by individuals to imitate what is in their environment, especially the behaviours displayed by models. Second, there is a close relationship between the individual and his/her environment. Learning occurs through linkage between the behaviour, the individual (cognitive), and the environment. Third, the outcome of learning behaviour form visually and verbally codes manifested in everyday behaviour (Surya, 2014).

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Moreover, conceptually, there are four interrelated components of the social cognitive learning theory namely, attentional processes, retention processes, motor reproduction processes, and motivational processes (Yang & Hsiang, 2001). Social learning theory explains that people learn through the social processes of observing, imitating, and modelling the behaviours of others (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018). According to the tenets of social learning theory, however, behaviours are learned through interactions with the variety of socializing agents to which one is exposed (Brown et al., 2005). Hjelle and Ziegler (1992) state that the most important physiological function believed to be understood in Bandura's learning theory is the emphasis on continuous reciprocal interaction between the environment, the individual and the learning process. According to Sellers, Cochran and Branch (2005), in order for social learning to happen the four elements namely: imitation, definitions, differential associations and differential reinforcements must be present.

To begin with, definitions refer to the attitudes and values individuals have in regard to the morality and the acceptance of the law in general as well as an individual's understanding of wrongfulness. It is pertinent to note, though, that such attitude may change depending on the situation (Sellers et al., 2005). Furthermore, differential association refers to the influence the definitions have on another's conduct. Meanwhile, the impact of such influence varies depending on frequency, duration and intensity of that relationship.

2.6.2 Human Behaviours and Environmental Influences

Bandura adapted social learning theory as the social cognitive theory to encompass those determinants of learning that are neglected in the former (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018). Interactions between social and cognitive factors of learning as determinants of behaviour are, therefore the main distinctive features of the social

cognitive theory from the social learning theory (Pálsdóttir, 2013). The theory goes on to emphasize the continuous reciprocal interaction between the factors of individuals' behaviour (cognitive) and the environmental influences in order to understand the social cognitive learning process. Therefore, learning in this theory is more aimed at observational learning (Luluk, Achmad, Mintari & Achmad, 2017).

Recognizing the importance of reciprocal relationships that occur between the behaviour, the individual (cognitive), and the environmental influences helps in understanding how individuals learn. In this regards, Bandura (1971) proposed what he termed the 'triadic reciprocal causation' which in turn defines the three sets of factors that interplay, interact and bear influence. These are, firstly, cognitive and other personal factors such as values, goals and beliefs. Secondly, the environmental factors; and the last of the three factors is behavioural factors. That is, those personal factors that determine how individuals model and reinforce actions observed in other others. (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018).

Individual learning is done not only through their own experience but also through the process of observation that is by selectively observing and considering the current behaviour model (Slavin, 2008). According to social learning theory, behaviours and feelings may change through observation and taking someone as a model. Most of a person's behaviours are shaped by means of observing others, seeing about their ideas and the guidance effect of those ideas. Therefore the extent to which one emulates the behaviour of a role model is imitation. In order for imitation to happen there must be a perceived personal relationship and a direct observation of the role model's behaviour. Moreover, Behaviours get adopted through reward; behaviours get maintained through reinforcement while behaviours get extinguished through punishment (Brown et al., 2005).

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In conclusion, the social cognitive theory is a psychologically derived theory that explains how individuals within social systems enact multiple human processes, including the acquisition and adoption of information and knowledge (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018). Cognition can be defined as a process of learning and understanding by sensing, experiencing and thinking to produce some meaningful action (Baddeley, 2007). While Bandura's social learning theory holds that it is the imitation of behaviours that trains youth (Bandura & Huston, 1961) there are also genetic conditions, more specifically psychiatric disorders, that could play a role in antisocial, maladaptive or aggressive behaviour in children and adolescents (DiLalla & Gottesman, 1991) rather than social learning.

2.7   Identity Theory: Identity Negotiation Theory

Identity negotiation refers to "an individual's multifaceted identities of cultural, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, family/relational role, and personal image(s) based on self-reflection and other-categorization of social construction processes" (Ting-toomey, 2015, p.1). The major aspect in any communication is an ongoing negotiation of a person's discourse identity within several discourse systems (Scollon, 1996). Our understanding and our perceptions of others will influence how we relate to them and determine the nature of our relationship (Ann, 2013).So Individuals have identities either consciously or subconsciously. This means that the kinds of identity or identities they make salient depends on the particular situation they are in (Huang, 2011). This is because of the reason that communication relies on successfully matching the discourse identity and one's expected social identity (Scollon, 1996). In other words, in any discourse you are expected to be what you claim you are! Satisfactory identity negotiation outcomes

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include the feeling of being understood, respected, and affirmatively valued (Ting-toomey, 2015).

2.7.1   *Group Identities and the Self*

Within every group, divergences of matched discourse identity from social identity may be taken as expressions or demonstrations of insincerity, deviance, or dishonesty (Scollon, 1996). Desired identity outcomes, therefore, can include mutual identity understanding, mutual identity respect, and conjoint identity valuation and satisfaction (Ting-toomey, 2015). This is the reason why individuals tend to experience identity emotional security in a culturally familiar environment and experience identity emotional vulnerability in a culturally unfamiliar environment (Ting-toomey, 2015). "People derive self-views by noting how significant others appraise them and inferring that they must have deserved these appraisals. For instance, if a boy senses that his parents hold him in low regard, he will develop correspondingly negative self-views." (Smith & Henry, 1996, p. 7)

Again, every person simultaneously negotiates a position among all of the discourse systems to which he or she belongs as a crucial aspect of his or her ability to communicate in the environment (Scollon, 1996). For instance, Tropp and Wright (2001) found that people who identified with a group were more inclined to include that group in a visual representation of the self. Moreover, individuals tend to feel included when their desired group membership identities are positively endorsed (e.g., in positive in-group contact situations) and experience differentiation when their desired group membership identities are stigmatized (Ting-toomey, 2015).Thus, Smith avers that: "inclusion of a group as part of the self is more than just a metaphor. This is due to the fact that it reflects a concrete reality concerning the cognitive representation of the self" (Smith &Henry, 1996, p. 641).Through competent or

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incompetent communication skills, situational identities can influence the way people view themselves, either negatively or positively (Huang, 2011).

2.7.2   Types and Components of Identities

To continue with, identity negotiation posits that human beings in all cultures desire positive identity affirmation in a variety of communication situations (Ting-toomey, 2015). It is for this reason that Ting-Toomey espouses two groups of identities: primary and situational identity. The primary identities include cultural identity, ethnic identity, gender identity and personal identity. Situational identity includes role identity, relational identity, facework identity and symbolic interaction identity. The four situational identities change from situation to situation. Meanwhile, these two groups of identities have interactive relations (Huang, 2011). Tropp and Wright (2001) found that people who identified with a group were more inclined to include that group in a visual representation of the self.

One important component of the identity negotiation process is self-verification, as manifested in the efforts of targets to bring perceivers to see them as they see themselves (Swann, 1999). Two considerations motivate such activities, however. First, self-views provide people with an invaluable means of defining their own existence, organizing experience, predicting future events, and guiding their social interaction (Smith &Henry, 1996). Secondly, stable self-views will stabilize the behaviour of targets and thus make targets more predictable to their relationship partners (Smith & Henry, 1996). This is because, within every group, divergences of matched discourse identity from social identity may be taken as expressions or demonstrations of insincerity, deviance, or dishonesty (Scollon, 1996).

The basic features of individual's group membership identities and personal identities are formed via symbolic communication with others. The basic features of individual's group membership identities and personal identities are formed via symbolic communication with others (Ting-toomey, 2015). This means that identity is intertwined with and contingent upon one's place in a world filled with other people (Ann, 2013). To engage in a meaningful identity change process, individuals need to transform their habitual way of thinking, seeing, reflecting, and deciding (Ting-toomey, 2015).Therefore, "discourse identity is the persona along with the degree or range of power a particular person can claim in a specific discourse. It consists of the range of production/reception format roles intersecting with the social interactive roles over which one has the power, right, or obligation to enact in any particular discourse" (Scollon, 1996, p.7).

2.7.3   *Homogenization and Individuation/Targets and Perceivers*

To add to, a 'with' is a party of more than one whose members are perceived to be 'together' (Goffman, 1971, p. 19). The characteristics which describes this phenomenon is that the 'with' shows ecological proximity. That is "they will stand, sit, or otherwise orient themselves toward each other within a relatively small space" (Scollon, 1996, p.4). Meanwhile, "any person or group of persons who are perceived to have attention to some spectacle as the central focus of their (social) activity, the spectacle together with its watchers constitutes the watch" (Scollon 1996, p.5). The identity negotiation theory is exemplary to this study especially because it presents the researcher an avenue to situate the study in a more epistemological context. For instance the theory demonstrates that perceivers, in this case the researcher, can use at least two distinct types of information in forming impressions of targets (Smith &Henry, 1996). They are the homogenization strategy and the individuation strategy.

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In the homogenization strategy, the researcher may note the race, gender, and other characteristics of the target and consider the target as a 'just-a-part' of one or more of the aforementioned categories (Smith &Henry, 1996). Individuation strategy on the other hand means perceivers treat the target as an individual rather than a mere exemplar of a category. Specifically, "perceivers note what the targets say and do and use this idiosyncratic information as a basis for their impressions" (Smith &Henry, 1996, p. 10).

Furthermore, perceivers who are neutral or negative toward targets may pay relatively little attention to targets unique qualities. Instead, they may focus on superficial cues to group membership and use these cues as a basis for making homogenized inferences about them. Thus: "when perceivers are relatively negative toward targets, more diversity should lead to more homogenization" (Smith &Henry, 1996, p. 11). In contrast, perceivers who have positive impressions of targets may attend to the idiosyncratic qualities that provide the basis for individuating such targets. Thus, when perceivers are relatively favourable toward targets, more diversity should lead to more individuation (Smith &Henry, 1996).

Nonetheless, "identity-support strategies such as mindful listening and dialogue, shared empowerment and alliance formation strategies, and constructive identity validation and empathetic inclusion behaviours are some productive identity interaction moves that can promote quality intergroup and interpersonal relationship satisfaction outcome" (Ting-toomey, 2015, p. 6). Moreover, homogenization is associated with appraisal effects whereas individuation is associated with self-verification effects. Once targets become convinced that the identities they are to assume are non-negotiable, they may simply attempt to be the persons that they sense that perceivers expect them to be. Simply put, targets will display appraisal effects.

On the contrary, targets who recognize a willingness of perceivers to individuate them may conclude that perceivers can be persuaded to see them as targets see themselves. So convinced, targets may take steps to ensure that perceivers recognize them for who they are. In this way, individuation may foster self-verification effects (Smith &Henry, 1996). This is further espoused, thus; "identification with groups triggers a depersonalization of self-perception, a shift toward the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of self as a unique person defined by individual differences from others." (Turner, et al., 1987, pp. 50-51).

In conclusion, "regardless of whether we may or may not be conscious of identities, identity self-conception and other typecasting influence our everyday behaviours in a generalized and particularized manner" (Ting-toomey, 2015, p.2). It is for this reason the concept of Mindful identity attunement was proposed. Mindful identity attunement is conceptualized as the conscious development of cultural and interpersonal responsiveness knowledge concerning cultural membership and personal identity issues in self and others. In brief, Mindful identity attunement is the cultivation of mindfulness, and the behavioural practice of appropriate, effective, and adaptive communication styles(Ting-toomey, 2015). After all, the "'negotiation' in the identity negotiation theory refers to the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between the two or more communicators in maintaining, threatening, or uplifting the various socio-cultural group-based or unique personal-based identity images of the other *in situ"* (Ting-toomey, 2015, p.1).

2.8   Relevance of the Theories to my Study

The identification of a suitable theoretical framework is a key question to address when designing research that is multi-disciplinary. Such a framework needs to be

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proper and applicable to the main themes of the study, and also offer the flexibility to cope with the inherent interdisciplinary of the research themes (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018). This is as a result of individual's behaviour always has a certain background, focused on specific objectives, and has a relationship with the environment, so they can change if they relate to an individual effort to meet its needs in interaction with the environment.

2.9   Summary

Cognitive processes involve active collection of information, processing it into a form meaningful to us and retaining (storing) it for future use (Baddeley, 2007). The social cognition theory also recognises the value of agency. Whereas, hereupon, the individual human agency is two-fold: individuals are considered dependent agents that are both 'products' of the social system in which they live, as well as 'determinants' of that system's production knowledge (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018) Learning is categorized into two types: enactive learning and vicarious learning. Enactive learning is through actual doing or learning from consequences of one's actions. Vicarious learning is through observing models perform (Zimmerman, 2013). However, in order for imitation to happen there must be a perceived relationship and a direct observation of the role models behaviour (Sellers, 2005).

Recognizing the importance of learning for individuals, this study shall refer to Bandura's social cognitive learning theory. According to Bandura, observational study involves an impersonation, but it is not limited to it. This means that, what is learned is not an exact imitation to what was observed on the model (Luluk, Achmad, Mintari & Achmad, 2017). It is for this reason that the theory of symbolic interactionism shall be explored in order to properly assess the participants in the study really perceive their world and as a result, shape their own versions of realities.

This is because symbolic interactionists shift their attention to the interpretation of subjective viewpoints and how individuals make sense of their world from their unique perspective (Carter & Fuller, 2015). Meanwhile, the identity construction theory shall be effectively used throughout the study to find out and discuss the various kinds of identities that the undergraduate students create while they use cannabis.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter espouses the various procedures that were employed to collect and analyse data on identity construction processes of undergraduate student users of cannabis in the UEW. Significantly, this chapter also discusses the various principles and assumptions that underpin the methods and procedures as well as the rationale behind their selection. Furthermore, this chapter examines the processes used in the collection of data for the study.

3.1   Research Approach

Qualitative research approach is used for this study. This is because qualitative research is more interested in culture, experience and behaviour. It believes in multiple realities. As a result, qualitative research deals with epistemological and ontological assumptions. Also, it treats context as important. Again, qualitative research deals with subjectivity. This means that, the researcher refrains from biases by indicating his or her stand on the matter.

Qualitative research approach is the approach for exploring and understanding the meanings that people ascribe to social challenges (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, qualitative research approach involves data that is collected from within the settings of the participants and that the data should be analysed inductively (Creswell, 2014). Also, qualitative research approach permits the researcher to make interpretations of the meanings of the data accrued. Qualitative research is concerned with the experiences, opinions and the feelings of individuals thereby producing subjective

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data (Hancook, 2002). Qualitative research therefore describes a social phenomenon as they occur naturally.

Moreover, qualitative research seeks to preserve and analyse the situate form, content and experiences of a social action rather than subject to mathematical and formal transformations (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In tandem with this, this study was not subjected to any statistical and frequency interpretations. Meanwhile, qualitative research approach involves a wholly interpretative and naturalistic approach to research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, qualitative researchers "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that people give to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.3). In consonance with the above submission, this study focused on the cultural milieu of the study participants to identify the various kinds of identities that emerge through the consumption of cannabis by some undergraduate students of UEW. Again, this study also focused on investigating the participants' experiences in terms of negotiating their identities and the rationale behind the negotiation.

3.2   Research Design

The research design can be described as the strategy, plan and the structure of planning and conducting a research. Therefore, the selection of a particular research design is mostly dependent on the nature of the research problem being addressed, the researcher's personal experiences as well as the participants of the study (Cresswell, 2014). In view of these, this study adopted the phenomenological design based on the nature of the topic and the behaviour of the participants of the study.

3.2.1   Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach which explores the experiences of individuals living a particular phenomenon (Vagle, 2014) thereby, leading the researcher to gain full and a deep understanding of the experiences as conveyed by those individuals living the experience (Hellman, 2016). This is because "phenomenology focuses not on *what* appears, but on *how* it appears" (Lewis & Staehler, 2010, p. 1). The main goal of phenomenological research is to obtain vivid descriptions of a human experience as it was lived in the context of time, space, and relationships (Finlay, 2009).There are two approaches to studying phenomenology. They are the descriptive phenomenology and the interpretive phenomenology.

Descriptive phenomenology is primarily focused on describing human experience as "understood and described from the perspective of those who have had the lived experiences and are able to describe it" (Polit & Beck, 2008, p. 228). Hellman (2016) opines that four steps occur in descriptive phenomenology. They are: bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing (Polit & Beck, 2008). Bracketing means the researcher tries to approach the phenomenon in a fresh, somewhat naïve manner (Finlay, 2009). Intuiting involves "remaining open to the meanings attributed to the phenomenon by those who have experienced it" (Polit & Beck, 2008, p. 228). Analysis focuses on "identifying and extracting important statements and reflections by those interviewed, categorizing them, and evaluating them for their contribution to understanding the studied phenomenon" (Hellman, 2016, p. 74). Researchers perform the last step by simply describing their conclusions which were drawn from the data analysis.

This study embraced the understanding of each participant's world and their experiences as obtained through individual participant interviews, therefore the research data resulting from this phenomenological research is the detailed narrative accounts by the participants, regarding their knowledge and experience (Lopez & Willis, 2004) regarding the subject of study: identity construction processes of undergraduate student users of cannabis.

3.3   Sampling Technique

Qualitative research cannot truly capture all events as they unfold because that would take a number of analysts to code and interpret (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In furtherance, qualitative researchers use a sampling strategy that limits the researcher's choices on what events to observe and even whom to interview. It is for this reason that Daymon and Halloway (2014) avers that, the chosen sampling technique guides the researcher to gain rich and in-depth knowledge about the phenomenon understudy. So, whom the researcher recruits for the study, the field and the time of the research depend on certain criteria that are all ultimately determined by the purpose of the study. In tandem with these assertions, the snowball sampling was used.

Noy (2009) characterize purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based on a variety of criteria which may include participants' knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. In relation to this, Berg (2000) also advance the argument that purposive sampling includes data or subjects that are selected for possessing specific features that are in line with the study. On that note, Creswell (2014) defines purposive sampling as the selection of sites or participants that will help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. Bernard (2002) also posits that

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purposive sampling is a non-random technique where the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide information by virtue of knowledge and experience.

Snowball is a sampling method in which "one interviewee gives the researcher the name of at least one more potential interviewee. That interviewee, in turn, provides the name of at least one more potential interviewee, and so on, with the sample growing like a rolling snowball if more than one referral per interviewee is provided" (Kircherr & Charles, 2018, p. 1). However, the quality of the referring process is naturally related to the quality of the interaction: therefore, if the researcher did not win the informant's trust there and then, then the chances that the latter will supply the former referrals will decrease (Noy, 2009).

Moreover, the snowball sampling is a special non-probability method that is used for developing a research sample where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. This sampling technique is often used in hidden populations which are difficult for researchers to access; such as an investigation into drug use and commercial sex workers (Katz, 2006). With regards to the employment of the snowball technique for this study, a *whatsApp* platform was created for the purpose of this study whereby interested persons could automatically join the group by clicking on the shared link. It is pertinent to note, though, that all participants on the platform were duly advised to use pseudonyms for the purpose of their identity protection. All members on that *whatsApp* platform were promptly made *whatsApp* administrators, too, so that they could add other participants as the snowball technique demands.

3.4   Sample and Sampling Size

To start with, the sample size is the terra incognita of the qualitative sampling strategy (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In other words, there is no rule to guarantee when the sampling is big enough. It is for these reasons that Kuzel (1999) postulates that there are really no rigid rules for the sample size of a research. Moreover, with regards to qualitative studies, the sample size does not necessarily determine the quality of the study (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). In fact, according to Wallcott (1994), the need to recruit a large sample is a tenet of quantitative research whereby the researcher needs to generalise.

Again, a small sample size allows the researcher to capture the participants' exact responses and experiences with a given phenomenon (Kuzel, 1999). The qualitative sample size for research that involves individual interviews does not usually exceed the number fifty (Creswell, 2014). In view of this, the sample size for the study was thirty undergraduate student users of cannabis: twenty-eight of the thirty selected undergraduate students' users of cannabis were selected and put into three different focus group discussions, with seven participants in each focus group discussion. The remainder, that is the remaining two participants, was selected for personal interviews.

This sample actually consisted of individuals from diverse economic, social and religious backgrounds. The sample size was important because the researcher was interested in gaining in-depth knowledge into the phenomenon understudy, that is, the identity construction processes of undergraduate student users of cannabis. Therefore, the sample size was also taken to give the researcher the opportunity to record the participants' experiences of the shared phenomenon.

3.5.0   Data Collection Methods

With regard to the data collection methods, interviews (exploratory) and participant observation as well as focus group discussions were employed. Phenomenological study describes the common meaning of individual of their lived experiences (Hellman, 2016). This is because every phenomenological study is about the object of human experience. Therefore, the data collection procedure basically looks at the various steps, ways and means through which the researcher applied the various data collection instruments to gather data for the research study. "Collecting credible data is a tough task, and it is worth remembering that one method of data collection is not inherently better than another." (O'Leary, 2004, p. 150). However, every qualitative research requires a vivid description of events on the field (Halai, 2006) therefore participant observation and interviews are very crucial in a research of this nature (Hancock, 2002).

3.5.1   *Participant Observation*

Participant observation is a method in which an observer takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interaction and events of the people being under studied as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspect of their culture (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2001). This means that, participant observation is a method in which the observer takes part in the daily activities: rituals, interaction and events of the people being researched, as a means of learning the explicit (emic) and tacit (etic) aspect of their culture (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2001). It is for these reasons that Gans (1999) asserts that "participant observation is the term used to describe the professional craft of experiencing and recording events in social settings" (p.134).

In relation to the above, the research involved the observation of participants in their natural setting for the opportunity to live their 'cultural' life. Because the

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study focused on finding deeper meaning and insight into the identity construction processes of the undergraduate users of cannabis, the researcher consciously went to the places that these students patronize the cannabis and observe the performances that these students make through their cannabis consumption. For instance, according to Fetterman, the most important element of fieldwork "is being there to observe, to ask seemingly stupid yet insightful questions, and to write down what is seen and heard" (Fetterman, p.19, 1989).

Participant observers are very keen in whatever is going on in the site in order to better get abreast with the participants' feelings, or the "emic" experiences. In view of this, events were recorded as they happened in empirical manner. This allowed an insider's perspective of the reasons underpinning the various performances as well as the identity negotiation strategies that participants use in constructing their respective identities.

With regards to the participant observation for this study, the process was involving because there was no accurate timing for the smoking sessions. Moreover, there are more than one smoking joints/areas whereby the undergraduate students users of cannabis frequent. Specifically, there are three smoking zones that are organised around the three UEW campuses: North campus, Central campus and the South campus. Friday was chosen for the observation because Friday precedes the weekends and therefore on that day students engage in extra-curricular activities to throw off some of their dissonance. The researcher made contacts with some of the student users of cannabis around and became familiar with them. On subsequent visits, the researcher introduced himself officially to the cannabis sellers who are the gatekeepers of the field. The purpose of this move was to reassure them by indicating that the research was for academic purpose and not a detective investigation.

Everything that was seen and heard during the various meeting sessions was recorded. Field notes were taken during the observational period. The behaviour and actions of the users as well as other events as they unfolded were recorded. The field notes were taken intermittently at periods when the session had not gotten to the peak. This was done in order not to prevent them from having the impression that their every moves and actions were being recorded. Besides it gets quite uncomfortable for the participants when they identify that every detail is being recorded. In such circumstances, they either choose to get out of the smoking area altogether. Also for fear of telling on them to the police or other authorities in charge, participants often decline to hang around the smoking area when they have the slightest suspicion. This suspicion is often sparked by a well tucked in shirt, a pen in hand and a low hair cut with a hairy moustache to match. The aforementioned characteristics are interpreted as elements of law enforcements.

During the observation process, pictures and sometimes videos of scenes were taken. Attention was paid particularly to events as they unfolded, the setting, and collected demographic (e.g., age, gender, education, profession) of participants, their mannerisms and behaviour. These activities and events were observed and recorded to discover what the users did and with whom and whether there were any commonalities between trends and patterns of behaviour. Attention was also paid to what the participants said; the words they used; accounts and explanations they gave to their behaviour, and the personal and social meanings and the attitudes and beliefs that were revealed through their talk. The observations were coupled with constant interactions with the participants and the researcher asked for the clarification of certain happenings that were not immediately understood.

3.5.2   *Focus Group Discussion*

Focus group discussions provide rich, detailed and high set of data from participants on their experiences, feelings and ideas in a social context (Cameron, 2005). The focus groups involve gathering people into groups, creating environmental conditions for more spontaneous expression of each one, and facilitating the interaction of everybody (Freitas, Oliveira & Jenkins, 1998). Moreover, Denscombe (2007, p.115), opines that "focus group consists of a small group of people, usually between six and nine in number, who are brought together by a trained moderator (the researcher) to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings and ideas about a topic." Focus group discussions give the avenue for people in marginalized positions to also partake in the discussion hence providing divergent views (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). More so, a focus group discussion provides "a more natural environment than that of individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others just as they are in real life" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p.11).

In accordance with these assertions, focus group discussions were employed because they   gave a wider reach to seek divergent views from participants on the research questions at the same time (Masadeh, 2012). More so, it provided the opportunity to have an in-depth knowledge and insight into their experiences and ideas about the phenomenon under study(Ryan, Gandha, Culbertson, & Carson, 2014): their motivation for using cannabis and the identity construction processes. Through the focus group discussions, the researcher was able to identify the participants' understanding and experiences of the issues and the reasons behind certain patterns of their identities.

From the above submission, it could be justified that the various data collection methods were adopted to collect first-hand information about the

experiences of the participants and about how they have constructed and negotiated their individual identities around cannabis consumption. Interviews allowed participants to respond freely in their own words to the questions asked to obtain viable information that could not be observed during the participant observation. Although some of the interviews were done on the field during the participant observation, most of them happened outside the field at different times and at different locations. This was because, often, participants were always in a hurry to leave because of their different class schedules. Moreover, the environment often was not conducive for effective conversations and interactions because of how rowdy it becomes after the joint is lit: anxiety and panic reactions are the most commonly noted negative acute effects of marijuana intoxication (Crippa et al., 2009).

3.5.3 Interviews

Interview is "a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meanings of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, p. 174). The interviews for this study took place face-to-face and were of an in-depth, unstructured fashion to explore the participants' experiences.

The interviews were particularly designed in order to get in-depth information about how the cannabis consumption impacted the undergraduate student-users identity negotiation processes. In view of this, the design of the interview questions was garnered around the three stages, thus: establishing the context of the participant's experience; the construction of the experience; and reflection on meaning which the experience holds (Hellman, 2016). Significantly, all the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Informed consent was explained and obtained at the beginning of the interview.

The responses from the interviews served the opportunity to ascertain the rationalisation behind the undergraduate students-users of cannabis identity negotiation performances observed. This is because the interviews allowed the participants to respond freely in their own words to the questions asked. Moreover the unstructured interviews were useful in a study of this nature to obtain viable information that could not be observed during the participant observation.

Also, the interviews were conducted in an informal way. This allowed the participants to speak in languages that they understood. Good rapport was established with the participants so they felt relaxed in responding to the questions. The research participants of the study were asked questions which unravelled responses pertaining to their way of life through their habitual cannabis consumption. Again, the gestures, physical expressions, and the other physical postures were all duly recorded during the interviews. In furtherance, at the conclusion of each interview, the possibility of a follow-up interview (if needed) to clarify responses was discussed with the participants until they understood and agreed to consent. This is because, "interviews enable respondents to speak as they would and also express their own thoughts and feelings" (Berg, 2007, p. 96).

The interviews were conducted both on the field and outside the field. Face-to-face format was used for all the interviews. All the interviews lasted between five (5) to twelve (12) minutes. For flexibility and the sake of proficient articulation of facts, all the interviews were conducted in English and Asante Twi, and pidgin intermittently. English and Twi were used because all respondents were either eloquent in one of the languages or in some cases both. Sometimes, the interview sessions had to be paused for a while because the respondents had to take several long puffs of their already lit 'joints'. With regards to the translation of the interviews from

particularly Twi to the official English language, I consulted a colleague in the department of linguistic, post graduate student, who has a degree in BA. Akan to do the translation of the languages by playing and listening to the recorded interviews.

Attention was paid to their mannerisms, reactions and gestures during the interview. Reponses from these interviews were recorded in order to highlight the major claims inherent in the interview. The use of electronic devices for recording was first interpreted as dubious by the participants but their confidentiality was shall be protected. Also, they were assured that no part of the data collected shall be used for anything else apart from academic purpose. The questions asked were free of ambiguities and gave room for participants to also bring on new ideas. Participants had the free will to seek clarifications on questions that were not properly understood and further explanations were given. The interviews were in two forms, that is, the planned interviews and the unplanned interviews.

The setting for interviews was a confidential environment where students felt safe sharing without distraction. Interviews were audio recorded for later transcription and analysis. To ensure accuracy, participants were provided with an electronic copy of their transcribed interview and asked to verify correctness, clarify any discrepancies, and further remark on the inquiry.

3.6   Data Analysis

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002, pp. 210-211,), "data analysis is the process of labelling and breaking down raw data and reconstituting them in patterns, themes, concepts and propositions." In line with this, the data analysis was done in order to draw patterns and themes from the data collected. In a detailed manner, issues were identified and described. In-depth and direct quotations were used to support the detailed descriptions and discussions of the research questions. This was done in order

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to have a wider perspective, description and understanding of what had been observed (Flick, 2013). The field notes and interviews transcripts were read to identify descriptive issues. All that was recorded was transcribed so as to get the interview transcript. This was done by continuously playing the tapes back and forth, while listening, to get exactly the responses given by the respondents during the interview session.

According to Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes data set in (rich) detail" (p. 6). Data collected for this research was organised into themes. The inductive type of thematic data analysis where by the researcher does not try to fit the data into any form of preconceived analysis or pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clark, 2006) for this research.

3.7   Ethical Issues

Halai (2006) opines that, "sound research is a moral and ethical endeavour and should be concerned with ensuring that the interests of those participating in a study are not harmed as a result of research being done" (p.5). It is for this reason that the study was conducted on five main ethical principles namely; beneficence and reciprocity, informed and voluntary consent, confidentiality and anonymity (Halai, 2006). Therefore, only participants who agreed to the study were interviewed. The respondents were well informed about the purpose of the study conducted and were all ideally respected throughout the entire research process. Moreover, the consent of all respondents was sought before all recordings began. The researcher did not in any way knowingly misrepresent or attempt to alter participant's responses. For confidentiality, all issues that were discussed were kept highly confidential except

those that needed to be in the known. With regards to anonymity, the names of the respondents were not in any way disclosed.

3.8   Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (2000) contend that trustworthiness of a research study is very important for ensuring its credibility. Therefore, Anney (2014) recommends that qualitative researchers in their method of inquiry should employ the trustworthiness criteria of credibility, transferability (external validity), dependability (internal validity) and confirmability as given by Lincoln and Guba (2000). In accordance with this, the study adopted participant observation, interviews and focus group discussions as data collection methods for triangulation purpose which corresponds to Riemer (2008)'s argument that to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, ethnographers must use multiple data source and methods of data collection. The description of the phenomena under study was given as purported by (Geertz, 1973) in Daymon and Holloway (2011). Also, themes from the analysis were developed based on the codes that were generated.

3.9   Summary

The chapter focused on the procedures and processes that were employed to collect data for the research. The research adopted a qualitative approach anchored on phenomenological design to identify the performances student users display at the various smoking areas identified, as well as the kinds of identities that the undergraduate student users construct and how those identities are negotiated around their cannabis consumption. Multiple data collection methods including participant observation, interviews and focus group and how they were used to collect the data from the field have been explained. Also, rationalisation was given for each choice of method used. The issues of confidentiality, anonymity, beneficence and reciprocity,

informed and voluntary consent and how they were ensured in carrying out the study have been explained. In sum, the chapter explicates research approach, research design, sampling technique and size, data collection method, method of data analysis, ethical issues and trustworthiness.

CHAPTERFOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the data collected from the thirty participants recruited for the study to identify the various mechanisms and performances they displayed during their cannabis smoking sessions in order to clarify and understand the various kinds of identities that they construct and how they negotiate those identities around their cannabis consumption. This chapter presents detailed discussions of findings from the data collected through thorough methods of participant observation, interviews and focus group discussions on the identity negotiation processes of undergraduate student users of cannabis in the University of Education, Winneba. For easy analysis and interpretations, the data derived from the study was simplified into several thematic units. Consequently, each theme was thoroughly described and critically examined using the symbolic interactionism theory, the social cognitive theory and the identity negotiation theory, in addition to the literature reviewed in the chapter two of this same thesis. In furtherance, for the sake of anonymity and confidentiality, each informant was represented with alphanumeric codes such as "Informant 1" rather than their actual and/or their official names.

4.1   Demographics

The demographics of the informants were ascertained for familiarisation and also to validate the observations that had been done. The demographics covered sex, age range, educational level, ethnic affiliation and professional background.

Table 1

Demographics

AGE		GENDER	LEVEL		ETHNICITY		JOB STATUS
50 and above	7	5 Females	Final year	7	Akan	21	9 Employed
30-40 years	4		Third year	19	Ga	3	
20-29 years	13	25 Males	Second year	-	Northerner	4	21 Unemployed
18 and below	6		First year	4	Ewe	2	

Figure 1: A table to show the demographics of the research participants.

Out of the thirty informants, five were females whereas the remainder (25) were males. Seven of the research participants were fifty years and /or above, four were between the ages of thirty and forty years, thirteen were between twenty and twenty-nine years of age, while the remainder six were eighteen years old. Also, nineteen of the research participants were in level 300, seven students of the participants were in their final year, whereas the remaining four undergraduate students were first year

students. Moreover, twenty-one participants were Akan, three were Ga, four were Northerners and two were Ewe. Finally, nine of the informants were employed whereas the reminder was unemployed in their capacity as students.

The demographics point out that though the figures under the various demographical categories vary, the informants that participated in the research study cut across all the categories: sex, age, educational level and ethnic affiliation. The demographics also indicated that though the age range of the informants cut cross, most of them fell within the ages of twenty and forty. This is supported by Hall et al., (1994) assertion that, perhaps one of the most important findings is that, the global future will probably become more cannabis tolerant because most of the cannabis consumers have much younger populations than the global non-users population.

4.2.   Motivations for which the undergraduate students of UEW use cannabis

The first objective of the study was to investigate what motivates undergraduate students of UEW to use cannabis. Data collected from the interview and focus group discussions revealed a number of factors that motivate the student users to consume cannabis. In responding to the question of identifying the various motivations for which the undergraduate students use cannabis, four main themes were developed. These were ease of access, socialization, music and music clips, and self-efficacy.

4.2.1   Ease of access

Ease of access is discussed in this context as the freedom of the student users of cannabis to express and make decisions in a particular space and time with due regards to the state of mind, availability and distance. In this regards, one key performance that was observed during this study and the one which was constantly carried out by most of the users was that almost all the undergraduate students who

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patronised the site walk to the place. This invariably drew attention to the issue of proximity, distance and presence. Although some of the users confided in me that they owned their own private vehicles, yet they would rather walk than be seen driving to the site.This made me curious to find out more onhow ease of access as a motivation influences their decision to consume cannabis in the university. In an attempt to find out the reason behind that, this was what an informant had to say:

> ...where I'm from you have to go to the ghetto to go and buy the stuff yourself. That one is risky. Masa, police can arrest you at anytime. Look, sometimes they even dress as customers. But here, the pusher has delivery service, so I usually call him and he meets me with the quantity demanded. Man can never be careful, you know... *(FGD1, informant 1)*

To clarify further on the issue of ease of access as a motivation for smoking weed among the undergraduate student users of cannabis in the University of Education, Winneba, this is what some of the student users articulated:

> ...Out of sight out of mind. You know, I was wee smoker but I quit before I came to the university. Then I became acquainted with this room mate who was an avid smoker: he has graduated. We used to cook and eat together but he will always insist to smoke before we ate. He even sometimes smoked in the room, especially at dawn. He made it too difficult abstain when the thing is everywhere in the room. I believe it is my association with him that made me relapse...*(FGD1, Informant, 4)*

Another informant also opined that,

> ...Yours' like mine, except that I did not smoke at all. I was particularly wary of...of my parents caution that weed would make me…errmm… crazy. Yet I

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came to the university and then along this path that I pass to lectures always these guys are there smoking wee. They look normal and happy. Every day when I greet to pass, one of them would invite me to smoke. My familiarity with them influenced my decision to oblige and by so doing smoked weed for the first time…*(FGD1, Informant 6)*

The rationalisation for the submission above is given that, elements such as social roles, traditional structures, rules, laws, purposes, etc. provide raw material to the individuals for forming definitions (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). This is because symbolic interactionism emphasizes inner experiences as being capable of observation, because we can report and communicate our private experiences and feelings to others using significant symbols. Inarguably, all of the identified smoking zones (sites) are quite close to each of the university's three campuses: the North Campus, the Central Campus and the South Campus.

4.2.2   *Socialization*

Another motivation that factored into the reasons why the undergraduate students of UEW used and consumed cannabis was the process of socialization. Socialization is therefore operationalised in the context of this research to mean the various processes and performances through which the users spend their leisure time in order to reduce some of the dissonance associated with academic and classroom pressures.

In this regards, it was observed that whereas some of the users were in a world of their own, some others were quick about their business at grounds. To illustrate further, whilst some of the users sat and took long puffs at their already lit rolled marijuana, others only bought the commodity and then hurriedly went on their way.

In order to gain some more clarity on the matter, it was explained to me that even though the users could be present at the site at the same time, they however operated at different class schedules. That is, the users may be at the same class or level at the same time but they invariably have different teaching timetables that they each respond to. One user's lecture time would be a free lecture period for some others. So, those who are reluctant to leave the venue hurriedly are probably enjoying their recess. This explanation prompted me to enquire if there were other options other than smoking cannabis that they are aware of (especially when they know the laws and implications governing the consumption of it) so that the alternatives can be substituted for their smoking habits. But more importantly, I wanted to examine how peer influence and group association could be identified as a motivation factor for consuming cannabis in the University of Education, Winneba. Regarding this matter, this was what another user declared:

> ... Sometimes I go to the ghetto not necessarily to smoke. Sometimes I only come here to socialize. You know... meet new friends and catch new vibes...*(Informant, 1)*

On this same question, another responder informed that,

> ...I refuse to say peer influence because the person in question wasn't actually a peer. He was way older than me except that we both were registered to the same liberal course. He once invited me to his birthday party at his place. It was there and then that I was first aroused to consume weed. I couldn't believe my eyes when I recognized the number of students who actually smoked weed...*(FGD3, Informant, 3)*

Meanwhile, cannabis is noted to be less addictive, cheap and has comparatively less withdrawal problems than other psychoactive substances hence its preferred use to other drugs by patrons (Adu-Gyamfi & Brenya, 2010). Drug Report of 2015 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime stated that 21.5 % Ghanaians, aged 15 to 64, smoked marijuana or used another cannabis product in 2014 (UNODC, 2014). In recent times Ghanaian alcoholic beverage sellers have experimented with lacing alcoholic beverages with psychoactive substances like cannabis (Adu-Gyamfi & Brenya, 2014).

Furthermore, while smoking the cannabis, the users would engage themselves in conversations. Communication creates certain attitudes, that is, the readiness to act in a particular way and the formation of images of conduct that are appropriate to the situation, plans of action thereby, creating a common attitude in both the symbol user and symbol hearer. This also makes the individual's control of his or her own conduct possible. These conversations usually varied in topics, discussion and length. For instance, any of the users could broach a topic on any general or even personal issues and then the remainder would share their own opinions accordingly. This is because most individual acts are a part of more complex, socially coordinated activities involving several people (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009).

The most significant performance that was gathered with regards to the reasons why the undergraduate students of UEW are motivated to consume cannabis is the art of cannabis smoking. Cannabis smoking is a skill that some of the users want to be better at than others. Some users smoke for unusually longer hours because they want to increase their level of tolerance of the THC inherent in the cannabis. It was not uncommon, therefore, to overhear one claim to the other that he can exhaust the whole day while smoking marijuana. This banter would excite another to make an

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even bolder claim with regards to the marijuana consumption. In this regards, some other users become more agitated to smoke longer and act usual like their counterparts.

On my fifth visit to the south beach ghetto, it was in the late afternoon (about 3:30pm) when one of the users came to the site in the company of three others. They had not smoked for more than twenty minutes when he offered to leave because he felt intoxicated already. The others disagreed and insisted that he should stay a while longer to enjoy the "high" and so, he gave in to his friends request and stayed with them. Interestingly, the same guy who had previously requested to leave now asked for the marijuana to be passed so that he could smoke some more. At that same time while he stayed, the other persons gave him lessons on how to hold the inhaled cannabis smoke for longer moments before he exhaled. The guy agreed and continued to do so for the rest of the time that they were at the site. Immediately after their smoking session I promptly requested to have an interview with him regarding his motivation for using marijuana. This is what he had to say,

> ...Birds of a feather flock together, they say. See, even when I did not smoke people still tagged me as a wee smoker because I'm friends with them (pointing to his friends). So I decided to smoke in order to conform to the group. Besides I'm among friends, what is the worst that can happen?...
>
> *(Informant, 2)*

The rationalisation for this excerpt is supported by Carter and Fuller (2015) when they opined that interaction occurs within a particular social and cultural context in which physical and social objects (persons), as well as situations, must be defined or categorized based on individual meanings (Carter & Fuller, 2015). This sort of human conduct is always situated. In other words, all human acts, along with the

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expectations and interpretations on which they are based, are rooted in the cognition of the situations, which they are part (Hewitt, 2002). This is because according to Carter and Fuller (2015), symbolic interactionists shift their attention to the interpretation of subjective viewpoints and how individuals make sense of their world from their unique perspective (Carter & Fuller, 2015).

4.2.3 *Music and music clips*

Music was identified as another prominent factor that motivates undergraduate students of UEW to consume cannabis. Society is confronted with tremendous amounts of music each day and with current technological enhancements, we are able to control the types of music we often listen to. Music along with the process of listening to the music was another important performance that was observed from the users. Essentially, in all of my visits to the sites there was not a day that none of the users did not play music. Usually the pusher man who has already been identified as the gatekeeper plays the music on his mobile phone or from a music box. However, some of the users come with their own music and play it through their own ear phones. In my quest to gain some clarity on the phenomenon this was what an informant had to share,

> ...Often, many of these hit songs are filled with scenes of people smoking weed and making merry. I used to understand that the society frowns upon wee smoking but these same artites are celebrities and role models in the society. This invariably betrays the opinion that weed is bad....*(Informant, 2).*

The rationalisation for this is given by Sticle&Tewkbury (2015) when they opined that the ability to fine-tune the type and frequency of music has powerful impacts on one's life. Conspicuously, there were times when some of the users

brought their personal music boxes to the site. In such circumstances, the pusher man switches his machine off and then permits that any of the users could play the music from his/her music box. When this happens, those users who had previously inserted their earphones unplug their pods and then listen to the music in the background, while at the same time smoking their cannabis. It is pertinent to note that the type of music that was usually played on either site was secular music. The genre of music ranged from the local hip life, rap music and often times reggae music. A music genre refers to a grouping of popular music, which shares similar qualities (e.g. musical style, content, and message) Sticle & Tewkbury (2015). It was therefore crucial to examine how music and the act of listening to music actually influence the student users into cannabis consumption. In this regards this is what one user averred:

> ...I prefer to listen to music at my leisure time. In fact before my admission I only used to listen to blues and hiplife. In our second year, at our hostel, I got introduced to dancehall music through another tenant who usually played loud dancehall music from his sound system. The lyrics of these music were usually filled with how marijuana soothes and relaxes the body and mind. This ultimately led me to smoking weed...*(FGD2, Informant 3).*

Another user consented to this assertion by supporting that:

> ...Personally I am influenced to smoke weed because my favourite artiste professes to smoke weed. I hope to be a reggae artiste when I graduate from school. I therefore learn so much from the godfather of reggae music, Bob Marley, including his fondness for smoking wee...*(FGD 2, Informant 4).*

This insinuation is supported by Sticle&Tewkbury (2015) when they avow that each genre serve as the primary life goals identified which may influence an

individual's behaviour either negatively or positively. I therefore asked a follow up question to know the particular genre of music that she prefers to listen to while smoking marijuana. She confided in me that she prefers rap music to the others. This notion is rationalised by Rebollo-Gil &Moras, (2012) when they avow that it is vital to understand that music not only influences societal behaviour, but is influenced by society. Society in this context is not a structure but rather a continuing process where agency and indeterminateness of action is emphasized (Collins, 1994). Therefore, the lyrical content of music does not occur within a social vacuum, rather is influenced by those who create it. This is because music is a medium of human social expression (Sticle & Tewkbury, 2015).

Meanwhile, according to Sticle & Tewkbury (2015), by listening to music individuals identify life goals and the acceptable means for achieving those goals. Moreover, individuals act base on the meanings objects have for them (Carter & Fuller, 2015). Therefore understanding what the primary messages are in music is important as music shapes identities, filters worldviews, provides reinforcement to norms, values and ideologies and indicates societal norms of those who create it (Sticle&Tewkbury, 2015). In Furtherance, Sticle&Tewkbury (2015) opines that a person's preferred music genre functions to identify life goals and signal the acceptable means of achieving those goals for the listener.

4.2.4 *Self-efficacy*

Self-efficacy with regards to the focus of this research is defined as the 'can do' believe. That is the belief of the users in their own efforts to have their academic and social responsibilities done with regards to their statuses as undergraduate students of the UEW. Now, it was important to interrogate this declaration into details because self-efficacy beliefs determine how people motivate themselves, feel, think,

and behave. The university environment is meant for persons who do not usually need motivation-enhancing instruction. Itwas therefore stimulating to clarify even further on how academic self-efficacy could be a motivating factor for consuming cannabis among the undergraduate students of UEW in order to graduate successfully while enrolled in the university. This is because a strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. In this regards some undergraduate students confided in me that they consume cannabis in order to boost their morale and self-efficacy. To this end, focus, time and efforts were directed to monitoring and recording the various length of times at which the users exhausted in smoking one wrap of marijuana. This is because it was significant to ascertain if they merely smoked the cannabis to pass time or they smoked with the aim that it will influence their capacities to fulfill a particular task or they smoked to manage their emotions. It was then appropriately discussed and planned with the pusherman to record and time the users while they smoked. It was necessary to consult the pusherman before the process of recording could commence because of his role as the gatekeeper of the field. Moreover, it was important not to make him or any of the users feel awkward and suspicious when they noticed that their smoking sessions were being timed. It also was pertinent to time the smoking periods because the time spent on the smoking grounds inarguably affects their academic self-efficacy (think, act, feel motivate themselves.). So, observations were done from a position whereby the majority of the users could be monitored.

Daymon and Halloway (2014) contend that the sampling technique guides the researcher to gain a rich and detailed data about the phenomenon understudy. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) are of the same opinion when they emphasized that qualitative researchers use a selection strategy that limits their choices on whom to observe. With

due regards to these dispositions, it was decided to target one user rather than all of them, and then consecutively time that identified user from the instance when he or she enters the site until the time that participant would leave. This was necessary because Bandura (1994) contends that students approach threatening situations with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression. With this in mind, it was recorded in the notepad the particular time that that social actor ventured into the site as well as, the times that he or she would start smoking and the exact time that he or she would stop. This process of observation was repeated for the seven days.

At the end of the seventh day, the data recorded revealed that each of the users that were observed spent more than forty-five minutes on a single wrap of marijuana. In order to gain more understanding on the phenomenon, it was useful to discuss this experience with my focus groups in order to clarify whether, indeed, marijuana consumption enhances their efforts to be productive. This is because people with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided (Bandura, 1994).

It was more preferable to use the focus group discussions rather than the use of personal interviews to interrogate this phenomenon because focus groups provided an open and supportive environment in which participants discussed their experiences in-depth on often quite sensitive issues (Wilkinson, 1998). This contention by Wilkinson (1998) is further expounded by Frith (2002) when he declared that focus group discussions can actually be a useful exploratory tool to start looking at under-researched areas, because they do not require any prior empirical knowledge about the issue under discussion. Therefore at our set meetings time, the participants were

encouraged to recount to me some of the purposes that their cannabis consumption serves in their capacity as undergraduate students of the UEW.

In response to this question, this is what some participants answered,

> ...Me... I smoke because it takes my mind off the pressure around me. Sometimes I feel sad or unhappy about something... maybe my test result. But after smoking marijuana I become happy again.In fact, it gives you the needed appetite to eat well. I used to take blood tonic in order to eat well now all I need is one roll and then I'm good to go...*(FGD2, Informant 3).*

Another participant concurred with this concern when he further elaborated that,

> ... Yes... yes... it is true. The thing gives you confidence. I usually take it before my class presentations in order to remove the shyness and all acts of nervousness. It gives me the feeling that I'm on top of the world. Besides when I'm high I don't care about your criticism. I hardly see you at all...*(FGD2, Informant 4).*

The justification for this question is rationalised that understanding social behaviour requires an interpretive perspective that examines how behaviour is changing, unpredictable, and unique to each and every social encounter (Carter & Fuller, 2015). The rationalisation for the above excerpts, therefore, is that, people rely partly on their somatic and emotional states in judging their capabilities. For instance, it is supposed that marijuana allows the user to 'escape' from his or her reality and fills an otherwise devoid person with a sense of completeness (Henderson & Boyd, 1992). They therefore tend to interpret their stress reactions and tension as signs of vulnerability to poor performance (Bandura, 1994). Moreover, emotional experience requires self-objectification as much as any other forms of human experience (Hewitt,

2002). Meanwhile Bandura (1994) advocates that, another effective way of modifying self-beliefs of efficacy is to reduce people's stress reactions and alter their negative emotional proclivities and misinterpretations of their physical states. In other words, positive mood enhances perceived self-efficacy.

In order to understand human behaviours, it is necessary to understand definitions, meaning and processes formed by humans first. Elements such as social roles, traditional structures, rules, laws, purposes, etc. provide raw material to the individuals for forming definitions (Aksan, Kisal, Aydin & Demirbuken, 2009). This is because, "the meaning of things directs action" (O'Shaughnessy, 1992, p. 158). Truth is, therefore, not absolute, but is always relative to the needs and interests of the users. It is in the knowledge of these submissions that the data collated in response to the research question one for this study was analyzed in order to get each participant's unique perspective on the various motivations for which the undergraduate students of UEW use cannabis. The analysis of the finding is given in the sense that each individual's act does not consist merely of what may be observed by others, but also entails an internal process of control in which the individual directs conduct toward some goal or object (Hewitt, 2002).

4.3   The Kinds of Identities Undergraduate Student Users of Cannabis in UEW Construct

Identity negotiation refers to "an individual's multifaceted identities of cultural, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation, professional, family/relational role, and personal image(s) based on self-reflection and other-categorization social construction processes" (Ting toomey, 2015, p.1). Individuals have identities either consciously or subconsciously. This means that the kinds of

identity or identities they make salient depends on the particular situation they are in (Huang, 2011).

Butler (1990) supports this claim with the assumption that identity is not something that one 'has', but rather something that one 'does', or 'performs' and recreates through concrete exchanges, discourses and interactions between human beings. Satisfactory identity negotiation outcomes include the feeling of being understood, respected, and affirmatively valued (Ting-toomey, 2015). Importantly, Burke and Stets (2009) elucidate that we take on many identities over the course of a lifetime, and at any point in time we have many identities that could be activated. These identities are simultaneously individual, social and communal and they are not static but rather an ongoing and emerging process.

Hecht and Choi (2012) in furtherance aver that individuals internalize social interactions, relationships, and a sense of self into identities through communication and in turn these identities are expressed or enacted through communication. It is for these reasons that this study sought to identify the kinds of identities that the undergraduate student users of cannabis create through their cannabis consumption in UEW. Consequently, the data revealed that the users constructed and presented themselves in multiple identities including their *personal, gender and social identities.*

4.3.1 *Personal Identities*

The personal identity is the self-concept of a person. It basically has to do with the more unique characteristics people associate themselves with and it is assimilated through family interactions. It was observed that the users, constantly, through their performances presented their real sense of self. For example, they communicated their feelings, ideas, values, beliefs through their conversations and other forms of

interactions. Regularly, the users in introducing themselves would first mention their names and other personal features which incorporate who they are. Pertinently the users also talked of other characteristics they possessed and this was eminent in my conversations with them as well as in the performances of their activities most especially during their cannabis smoking sessions.Furthermore, there were acute observations on their persons that distinguished them from the non-users. For instance, the student users are noted to have drowsy red eyes that persist for several hours after the smoking sessions, dark brown teeth and lower lip as well as burnt fingertips; especially the tips of the thumb and the index finger. Furthermore, the users are used to responding to peculiar nicknames that are borne out from their imitation of their various social models. For this reason names like "Rasta", "Shatta", "Akata-ni", "Bad-man" were commonly sounded and responded to by many of the cannabis users.

Interestingly, even though each of the users had made the personal decision to go to the site individually yet, they would be seen going incognito. That is, the users would rather take a secluded desire path that manoeuvres through some weeds than take the more appropriate path for fear of being seen when heading to the site. According to the users, they assume society presume that the site is a safe haven for criminals and social deviants, no matter their statuses, even as students of the university. It was therefore prudent that each protected their own identities in their own small ways. When this was probed further, this was what one social actor had to share,

> ....The society does not like the "thing" I can't comprehend why. Come to think of it, morality is a social construct. I mean what we think is good and those that we think are bad are decisions made by people like me. How are

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they supposed to think for me? Who at all made it possible to indict a man for consuming nature? It's just daylight robbery! Imagine, the same people who condemn 'wee' are those same persons who think it's their business to decide what arm to eat with and which hand to wipe shit. It's just not right. It's just like telling me from your house what vegetable to use for my soup when we do not even eat from the same bowl...*(FGD1, Informant, 7).*

The extract demonstrates that the informant was telling a story of who she is in relation to her own shared beliefs of what she is made of. The rationalisation for this is given that, "identity-support strategies such as mindful listening and dialogue, shared empowerment and alliance formation strategies, and constructive identity validation and empathetic inclusion behaviours are some productive identity interaction moves that can promote quality intergroup and interpersonal relationship satisfaction outcome" (Ting-toomey, 2015, p. 6).

With regards to this, it is worthy of note that the users communicated their own concepts of self. It is therefore evident that the users presented their personal identity (Smith &Henry, 1996). Just as the extracts illustrate, the personal identity of the usersprovided an understanding of how the individuals defined themselves in general as well as in particular situations.

4.3.2 *Gender Identity*

Gender identities and gender relations are critical aspects of culture because they shape and they influence the way our daily lives are lived in the family and in the social environment. Whereas sex is biologically given, gender is socially constructed and expressed. Through the participants' daily activities and interactions at the various sites, the study revealed that the users performed their gender roles and in

essence affirmed their gender identity. That is, they acted in ways that were in harmony with societal prescriptions of what is expected by men and women based on their biological make up.

For instance, at some points the undergraduate male student users of cannabis were observed to have exhibited some sort of masculine tendencies by being strong, emotionally controlled and bold. For example, it was observed in one instance when one male user said to another, who was a female, that smoking cannabis was not a lady's business. He further vilified his female counterpart that the marijuana intoxication will get her horny so she should be ready to get laid thereafter. On this note, it is pertinent to clarify that cannabis smoking, as observed from the users, can be categorized as a male domineering pleasure. For instance, interestingly, it was observed that no matter the presence of female undergraduate smokers on the site, visitors at the site usually referred to the users as "brothers" in all of their greetings. Furthermore, it was recorded that the male undergraduate student consumers of cannabis casually brought their girlfriends along, however there was not an instance whereby any of the female users brought their boyfriends to the smoking zones. Furthermore, whereas their male undergraduate counterparts usually frequented the venue in the company of other males, the female undergraduate smokers on the other hand were regularly recorded coming into the field with other users of the opposite sex.

This scenario is in line with Sullins (2006) indication that males are said to be socialized into secular ideals of aggressiveness and accomplishment whiles females are socialised into the more religiously compatible ideals of nurturance and conflict resolution. It is against this backdrop that the users continuously conformed to the prescriptions and projected a certain kind of identity known as their gender identity.

This is because gender is a social inequality which creates the idea that there are two opposed sexes, male and female, characterised by the different characteristics which are labelled as masculine and feminine (Woodhead, 2007). Moreover, gender is embedded in every aspect of daily interactions because society constructs and determines the attitude and behaviour of people based on their biological make up and it is actively being created, maintained, and amended in specific situations (Berkowitz, 2006).

Meanwhile, according to Ajrouch (2004) "gender is not relegated to a corner, impinging on a small area of social experience; it structures the entire social gamut, from interpersonal relationships to the relationships people have with institutions" (p. 373); therefore, going contrary to these prescriptions call for a set of punishments. For instance, usually a man who acts feminine is labelled as *barima-besia* meaning 'man woman' while a woman who also acts contrary is also labelled *obaadenden* or *obaa-barima* which literally means 'strong woman'. And so, in Ghana, Cross-gender play is frowned on (Adinkrah, 2004).

It is for these reasons that although there are many female undergraduate users of cannabis, they however are not forthright with their identities as cannabis consumers because that description departs from their gender identity and gender roles. Because, within the Ghanaian traditional context, boys are supposed to exhibit masculine tendencies by being assertive, active, economically strong, vociferous, dominating, emotionless, bold, fearful, tough and daring (Adinkrah, 2004). Furthermore, Bagheri (2012) elucidated that the typical beliefs about gender are that women are physically weaker than men and are equipped to be nurturers and primary caretakers of children.

4.3.3   Social Identity

Social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their membership with a social group. Family and friendship as social groups played a very vital role in the lives of the users. Each of the users had one way or the other visited either of the smoking sites with either a relative or a friend. Nonetheless, those who came there alone sought some form of companionship and therefore, also built a kind of rapport with the other users whom they were in closer range with or usually sat beside. In their performances however, the users ensured that their relationship with the people they had come with was known. For instance, in such circumstances they either sat at one place as a family or as friends, had conversations together, played together and more importantly shared their lit marijuana rolls together.

Also it is important to indicate that whereas each of the sites that have earlier been clarified are prevalent cannabis smoking spots for the undergraduate students of UEW, there were several times that tobacco smokers intermingled with the cannabis smokers on the site. Again, while there were few of the users that smoked both tobacco and cannabis, most of the users only smoked cannabis. With regards to this, when the smoking sessions begin those who smoke the cannabis plus the tobacco usually sat apart from the other participants who smoke only cannabis. This is because the users of marijuana perceive themselves to be "enlightened" and open-minded. In the quest to examine this observation further, this is what one of the informants had to share,

> ...those guys are Babylons! They are still enslaved, you know. Why should you get addicted to nicotine while smoking weed? Nonsense! I don't want any of them near me. Dem even rep for the box top sey e dey murder but still boys no dey hear. Ah well... (he shrugged his shoulders)*(Informant, 2).*

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This translates,

> ...tobacco smokers are disgusting! They need to open their eyes to the facts. Why would you risk getting addicted to tobacco smoking when it is cannabis you enjoy smoking. It is even written on the tobacco packet that it is injurious but these guys simply ignore the caution. Ah well.... *(FGD,1Informant, 5).*

This finding could be rationalised in line with Ann (2013) when she opined that identity is intertwined with and contingent upon one's place in a world filled with other people (Ann, 2013). It is for this same reason that Ting-Toomey asserts that, "by understanding the role of identity negotiation more in depth in the context of intercultural communication competence, individuals can learn to monitor communication process and its outcomes more mindfully and, hopefully, with identity attunement" (Ting-toomey, 2015, p.2).

The submission above is further discussed in consonance with the assertion by Smith & Henry (1996) who indicated that when people encounter other group members, to this end, a process of identity negotiation ensues in which each group member carefully observes cues to the identities of the other group members and then makes inferences about the characteristics of each target. To continue in the same vein, Ting-toomey (2015) elucidates that the core dynamics of people's group membership identities which include cultural and ethnic memberships are formed via symbolic communication with others.

Moreover, another important component of the identity negotiation process is self-verification, as manifested in the efforts of the users to bring perceivers to see them as they see themselves (Swann, 1999). Self-views provide people with a crucial source of coherence and an invaluable means of defining their existence, organizing experience, predicting future events, and guiding social interaction (Smith & Henry,

1996). It was with regards to this, that Tropp and Wright (2001) found that people who identified with a group were more inclined to include that group in a visual representation of the self.

4.4   How undergraduate students in UEW negotiate their identities through their cannabis consumption

Data collected revealed that the users negotiated their identities using diverse strategies such a fashion, unity and entertainment to negotiate their identities. These strategies are discussed with reference to social interaction and cognitive theories. Social interactions play an important role in an individual's well-being by helping understand ourselves, others and the environment around us. But more importantly, Jenkins, Hall & Raeside (2018) postulate that the identification of a suitable theoretical framework is a key question to address when designing research studies that draw upon a range of disciplines. They argue further that such a framework needs to be applicable to the main themes of the study, and also offer the flexibility to cope with the inherent interdisciplinary aspects of the project themes. It is for these reasons that the social cognitive theory was employed to answer the third research question of this study: how the users negotiate their identities.

Bandura's (1998) theory emphasizes the continuous reciprocal interaction between the factors of individuals' behaviour (cognitive) and environmental influences in understanding social cognitive learning process. Therefore, learning in this theory is more aimed at observational learning (Luluk, Achmad, Mintari & Achmad, 2017). According to Bandura, social learning occurs from continuous interaction among three major components, namely behavioural, cognitive and environmental influences. A change in one of the components affects the other two which causes subsequent changes in other components (Bandura, 1998).

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4.4.1   Mode of adornment

It was observed that most of the users adorned themselves in objects that had been decorated and designed with symbols of cannabis. For instance, it was observed that most of the users adorned themselves in apparels like clothes, socks and handkerchiefs that have been decorated and designed with symbols of cannabis. Moreover, they often diffuse strong scented perfumes on their bodies and in their clothes in order to mask the scent of the cannabis smoke after smoking cannabis. Moreover, because the users often go to the ghetto incognito, they usually take desire paths that rub tree leaves on their hairs to leave the hair unkempt. So they often carry combs and small hair brushes in their pockets to keep their hairs clean again. Often, they use big and colourful handkerchiefs to brush the marijuana ash that is likely to stain their clothes while smoking.

It was revealed that the users portrayed themselves in this kind of identity because they wanted to integrate themselves in the environment in which they found themselves. This is because the purpose of the fashion design is not only the pursuit of fashion and aesthetic. It is a multi-disciplinary comprehensive design which develops forward to meeting people's psychological and physiological needs (Yue & Chunyan, 2014). Therefore, the strategy adopted by the users with regards to their sense of fashion often hinged on their class schedule and their teaching time tables. For instance, it was observed that the users usually don the cannabis paraphernalia at times when they did not have lectures. At such times, they leave their hairs unkempt and usually sagged their trousers and/or shorts below their waists. On the other side, even though they would still wear cannabis paraphernalia, the users who had immediate lectures after their smoking sessions usually had tamed impressions. That

is, there are little of the cannabis symbols to be seen on them. Often, they remove their upper garments in order to prevent their shirts to stink from the cannabis smoke. Furthermore, according to some of my informants, because the site is usually made up of a lot of people with diverse academic and social backgrounds; and it is also characterized with their unique style of dressing, it was pertinent that the users adopted different acts of adornment as a strategy for negotiating their own identities. Therefore, these clothing usually ranged from socks, wrist bands, t-shirts, necklaces, handkerchiefs, watches and phone covers. In order to ascertain this fact, it was more important, therefore, to resort to engagements with my informants in a discourse to interrogate their motives for choosing such fashion trends and to ascertain if those clothing styles had social consequences. The extracts below are some excerpts of the discussions that were held with my participants regarding the phenomenon:

...Weed is a symbol of freedom! I am free. Look, because... because they can't colonise us again they try to make us hate our own. Why do they still produce cigarette if marijuana is bad? I am a Rasta man. No Babylon... no mental enslavement...*(FGD5, Informant 6).*

Cognition can be defined as a process of learning and understanding by sensing, experiencing and thinking to produce some meaningful action. Cognitive processes, on the other hand, involve active collection of information, processing it into a form meaningful to us and retaining (storing) it for future use (Baddeley, 2007). From the above submissions, it can be appreciated that informants were communicating their thoughts and their feelings pertaining to cannabis consumption. Haruna (2016) contends that, there is probably no other sphere of human activity being important to such an extent in which values and lifestyles are reflected more than they are in the clothes that we choose to wear. Meanwhile, Douglass (2004) also

affirms that those body adornments have the power to speak of values, beliefs, status and achievements. This finding was substantiated in my study when the users were observed to have held a strong sense of belief in what they wore. This was often due to the fact that to be identified as a cannabis consumer it was imperative that at least a user adorned herself or himself in cannabis symbols. Acknowledging these instances, fashion is invariably identified as one major strategy the undergraduate students consumers of cannabis adopt to negotiate their multifaceted identities in the UEW.

Moreover, adorning themselves in the cannabis paraphernalia gave the users a strong sense of identity and also conspicuously made them recognisable as cannabis consumers. This is due to the fact that, the process of identity negotiation involves when we speak, our non-verbal gestures, whom we are with and it also includes the feeling of being accepted and the tendency of feeling judged and misunderstood (Alexander, 2011). Moreover, Swann (1996) is of the conviction that people may negotiate their identities in order to establish them in ways that will increase the probability of coherence. Meanwhile, Douglass (2004) elucidates that the body adornment is linked to a person's identity, view of self and how that person is viewed by others.

4.4.2   Unity and Imitation

Another significant observation and a relevant finding regarding this study is the belief of loyalty, love and togetherness among the various users. This identity is consciously assimilated from Rastafarianism. Although each of the users had their own religions, they believed and referred to themselves as 'Rastas.' On this note, they usually preferred to play and listen to reggae music it did not matter the gender, age, class and the economic backgrounds of the individual users, there was always a firm belief amongst them that they were "brothers" from different mothers who have

become bonded through their cannabis consumption. Regarding this matter, it was realised that, to become a "brother" has to do with the user's ability to wrap her/his cannabis into a roll. By virtue of this, any of the users who could not wrap their own roll could easily approach the pusherman or any of the users and she/he would duly oblige. Usually the cannabis is sold in varying quantities at different prices, but the sold package is not already wrapped into a roll. The act of wrapping cannabis into a roll is an art that is consciously, observed, learned and imitated by the undergraduate cannabis consumers.

Rastafari emerged in the 1930s in Jamaica. Rastafari is a religion which was inspired by African religious traditions, mixed with elements of Christianity and Caribbean innovations (Edmonds, 2003). The work of Marcus Garvey and his organisation, the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), form a source of scriptural inspiration to Rastafari (Price, 2009). Garvey advocated a back-to-Africa movement. His spiritual mission was fighting against the social and economic oppression of black people in Jamaica and worldwide. A movement formed around him, which he organised into the UNIA in 1914. His work promulgates Pan-Africanism, a worldwide fraternity of black people, with Africa as the united self-sufficient black nation (Garvey, 1967). Rastas refer to God as 'Jah', which is a shortened form of the biblical 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah'. However, Jah is also present in all people. This concept is invoked through the phrase 'I and I' (Price, 2009). It was for this reason that the users believed that they were all equal through their cannabis consumption and their mimicking of Rastafarianism.

Meanwhile, in order to wrap cannabis into a roll, there is a thin paper that has already been inserted in the marijuana package. That thin paper is usually either brown or white but it was observed that the users preferred the brown rolling paper to

the white rolling paper because the brown rolling paper is considered durable, and it was also bigger in size than the white rolling paper.

Now to continue to wrap the marijuana into a roll, the content (cannabis) is spread unevenly on either colour of the rolling papers. The cannabis is spread unevenly on the rolling paper so that the end of the roll which is inserted in the mouth when smoking becomes thin and pointed in order to be handled properly. This is because the narrow tip is grasped between the middle finger and the index finger when smoking the marijuana roll. To continue with, there is a horizontal sticky patch at the top of the rolling paper. This part of the paper is meant to be salivated so that the sticky patch may glue to hold the marijuana when it is being wrapped. The process is disgusting and unhygienic mainly because it involves putting saliva on the thumb and on the pointing fingers in order to wet the sticky patch properly. Meanwhile, it is pertinent to appreciate this unwholesome behaviour in the sense that, in all of visits to the sites it was not for once observed that any of the users washed the saliva off his/her hands, nor even proceeded to use a hand sanitizer after the wrapping process. However, it was observed that, they would only wait for the saliva to dry and then they would light the marijuana roll to smoke.

Also, the mode of communicating was another keen observation and notable finding regarding this study. This is because the users of cannabis communicate in ways that are quite different and unusual to the normal communication processes of "ordinary" and non-user communication styles. This difference in the communication acts can be realised in their fashion style, gestures and language. For example, it is exclusive to the cannabis consumers to tap their clenched fists as a sign of greeting rather than shake hands like it is customarily appropriate. Meanwhile, common names and words are usually subverted to give them different connotations in the world of

the cannabis to suit their own reality. For instance, words like, "scratch," "stuff," "plug" are used to refer to, "source of flame," "cannabis," and "the cannabis seller," respectively.

Interestingly, the ability to wrap the cannabis package is an art that is generally cherished and appreciated among all of the users. There were several instances when it was observed that one marijuana roll was compared to another to verify which was wrapped better. According to the participants, the ability to wrap a beautiful roll of cannabis is proof of how long that person has been a cannabis consumer. Long-time smokers are upheld in high esteem among the users and usually some of such long time smokers recount their ordeals with families and their own personal experiences with cannabis smoking to the younger users.

It is crucial to describe and discuss the importance of the wrapping process because there are three underlying assumptions in the social cognitive learning theory, according to Surya (2014). First, individuals learn to imitate what is in their environment, especially the behaviours that are displayed by models. Second, there is a close relationship between the individual and his/her environment therefore, learning occurs through linkage between the behaviour, the individual (cognitive), and the environment. Third, the outcome of learning behaviour forms visual and verbal codes which are manifested in everyday behaviour (Surya, 2014). This is justified in the contention by Yang & Hsiang (2001) when they contended that models can also be considered through the appeal presented by interpersonal models. Hence, a model that has interested quality will be sought, but a less fun model will be ignored or denied.

Meanwhile, to rationalise the submissions above, Jenkins, Hall & Raeside (2018) avers that the extent to which one emulates the behaviour of a role model is imitation.

They discuss further that, for imitation to happen there must be a perceived personal relationship and a direct observation of the role model's behaviour. This is because the social cognitive theory from which this theme is discussed is a psychologically derived theory that explains how individuals within social systems enact multiple human processes, including the acquisition and adoption of information and knowledge (Jenkins, Hall, Raeside, 2018).

4.4.3   Entertainment

Entertainment has to do with the users involvement in all pleasurable social activities that go on at the smoking venue. Pleasure or entertainment is another keen observation that regards how the undergraduate students in UEW negotiate their identities around their cannabis consumption. For most of the times that observations were on going at the sites, it was found that most of the users were usually about pleasure and the hope of entertainment; it was a pleasure to be among the users who are all identified to be undergraduate student users of cannabis.

The entertainment has to do with the users' ability to be involved in all the social activities (smoking, teasing, socialising, etc.) that happen in the particular smoking venue. This realization was observed through the way the users used to blow the inhaled marijuana smoke. For instance, it observed that most of the users were enthusiastic about the blown smoke. For instance, they would sit and watch in awe as the cannabis smoke diffused from their lips into the atmosphere. This is worthy of note, too, because the ability to retain the inhaled cannabis smoke for a while longer before puffing it out is a security concern for the users. This is because the users are all aware of the legality of the law concerning marijuana consumption in the country, Ghana. So they are always on the lookout for pretenders who may come among them

and then begin to inform on them to the relevant authorities about their deviant behaviours.

Definitions refer to the attitudes and values individuals have in regard to the morality of the law in general or an understanding of wrongfulness. This attitude may change depending on the situation or have different strengths at different points in time (Sellers et al., 2005). In this regards, 'pretenders' may refer to first time smokers and the other users who could not tolerate the effects of the cannabis smoke and therefore exhale it quickly after they have huffed the marijuana joint.

Differential association refers to the influence the definitions have on another's conduct. However, the impact of the differential associations varies depending on frequency, duration and intensity of the relationship whereas differential reinforcement refers to either the cost or the reward associated with a particular behaviour (Sellers et al., 2005).

Furthermore, many of the users brought their phones and other electronic gadgets and then proceeded to make use of them while they smoked. Apart from music, it observed that most of the users played games like soccer and notably "Weed Firm 2" on their electronic devices while the others only watched video clips from the screens of such computers. Interestingly, with the proliferation of computers coupled with the advancement of the internet, most of the users played the same games from different devices in the multiplayer modes.

In the multiplayer mode, a social actor could connect to another on the spot via the internet and then play competitive games like soccer and other action games online at the same time. This option encourages other users who initially came to the venue only to smoke to explore their options and thereby bring their own devices in order to partake in the entertainments. It must be noted, however, that the learning

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process by imitation of the modeled behaviour will be affected by several factors. For instance, the model that has compatibility with individuals will be more likely to be imitated (Hillman, 2016).

This contention by Hillman was justified in my findings that, persons who had phones that were compatible for such games quickly sought partners to play with. Moreover, the models can give more prestige for individuals who emulate their behaviour (Hillman, 2016). On this note, partners in the same games were observed to hang around each other. In the occasions when one came before the other, the former, in this regards, will ask the others present of the whereabouts of his/her counterpart.

4.5   Summary

This chapter captured the findings and analysis of the research questions for the study. The data collected on the three research questions were critically described, explained and analysed using the theories of symbolic interactionism, the identity negotiation theory and the social cognitive theory. The first research question which sought to identify the kinds of identities that are created by the undergraduate student users of cannabis in the UEW revealed four main themes: ease of access, socialisation, music and self-efficacy. Research question two (2) had three themes, namely personal identity, gender identity and social identity. Research question three (3) on the other hand had three themes. They are: fashion, unity and entertainment.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0   Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of the research, draws conclusions and makes recommendations on the importance of taking issues of the non-medical use of prescription stimulants among undergraduate students into consideration and to also enable tertiary students and higher education management to acknowledge the impact of cannabis consumption on the overall collegiate experience. Also, the chapter captures limitations of the study as well as areas for further research.

5.1   Main Findings

In answering the first research question which sought to identify the performances that the undergraduate users of cannabis display, as well as their motivations for cannabis consumption in the UEW, four main themes emerged: ease of access, socialization, music and self-efficacy. The data revealed that these motivations had symbolic meanings and that these meanings may alter depending on the context and the environment within which the phenomenon is established. Moreover, it was established that the users acted symbolically and that the meanings of the purposes of their behaviours may be misconstrued because the users acted in different ways because of their dread of being ridiculed and stigmatized by the society (non-users) and also to refrain themselves from accruing some kind of punitive sanctions. This is because the core dynamics of people's group membership identities and personal identities are formed via symbolic communication with others. Therefore, the core dynamics of people's group membership identities and personal

identities (e.g., unique attributes) are formed via symbolic communication with others (Ting-toomey, 2015).

Research question two probed the kinds of identities that the undergraduate student users of cannabis create around cannabis consumption in the UEW. It was ascertained that the users constructed multiple identities including, personal identity, gender identity and social identity. Also it was revealed that these multifaceted identities were ascertained through social interactions and other performances that occurred in their natural setting. This finding invariably buttresses Ting-toomey's insinuation when she opined that the identity negotiation theory posits that human beings in all cultures desire positive identity affirmation in a variety of communication situations (Ting-toomey, 2015).

Also, the findings of this research revealed that the users negotiated their identities using diverse strategies. This, too, supports the notion that individuals tend to experience identity emotional security in a culturally familiar environment and experience identity emotional vulnerability in a culturally unfamiliar environment (Ting-toomey, 2015). This goes to confirm the contention that when people find themselves in an unfamiliar cultural context they experience vulnerability and discomfort. Because of that, they would devise means through which they can negotiate their identities (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). Therefore the users adopted: fashion, unity and entertainment as strategies that will aide them to negotiate their identities.

Drawing from the symbolic interactionism theory, the identity negotiation theory and the social cognitive theory, it was concluded that the users performed and behaved in ways that characterized the context and the environment within which they

performed. Meanwhile, through their performances, the users also constructed and enacted multiple identities throughout the duration of this study.

5.2   Conclusion

Human conduct is always situated. In other words, all human acts along with the expectations and interpretations on which they are based are rooted in the cognition of the situations which they are part (Hewitt, 2002). This is because meanings are continuously created and recreated through interpreting processes during interaction with others (Carter & Fuller, 2015). It is for this reason that the identity negotiation processes of undergraduate student users of cannabis in the UEW was thoroughly analysed to ascertain the motivations for which the participants consumed cannabis as well as to discuss the kinds of identities that emerge out of their cannabis consumption. On an even deeper detail, the various strategies that the users employed to negotiate their identities around cannabis consumption was further interrogated. This is because, by taking self into account, as a factor in the situation, the individual is better able to control his or her own acts and better able to anticipate the outcomes of alternative acts (Hewitt, 2002)**.**

5.3   Limitations

Apart from the participants who had already agreed to consent to the study, often, the other users felt unusually uneasy when they perceive the researcher recording vis-a-vis the observation of their performances, and tend to be reclusive. In times like this, pusherman some of the participants present explain to them the purpose of the researcher's presence at the spot; at which time they humorously request for incentives in the form of snacks and refreshments.

The users are cumbersome and suspicious of any unusual visitor who may be deemed as from the law enforcement: this include recording on phones and writing in notepads. Furthermore, getting the participants to agree to do the interviews was another bane to the research that initially. For instance, the thought of them being recorded made them uncomfortable. They were promised to be given a copy of their transcribed interviews.

Moreover, due to the tendency of the participants to be carried away once the THC takes effect, coupled with the background noise, the natural setting was sometimes not convenient enough. Some of the interviews were conducted outside the premises. In order to get genuine responses, some of the interviews were conducted on phone at moments when the participants were not intoxicated.

5.4   Suggestion for Further Studies

For further studies, a follow up work can be carried out taking into consideration two higher education institutions: a senior high school and a teacher training college in order to ascertain the kinds of identities they construct and how they negotiate those identities around cannabis consumption. A similar work can also be replicated in a religious based higher education institution. Future researches can also examine the perspectives of non-users regarding cannabis consumption and assess how their perceptions influence the identity negotiation processes of cannabis users in a tertiary institution.

Research can also be done taking a critical look at how society, definitions and stigmatization come to play in the negotiation of identities by individual, vis-a-vis cannabis consumption in a corporate organisation.

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5.5   Recommendations

Based on the discussions and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made. It has been established that socialisation is a motivation for cannabis consumption among the undergraduate students in UEW. In view of this, the Junior Common Room should be properly maintained and well-furnished to attract the interest of the undergraduate students to spend their free time on healthy hobbies in there, rather for them to exhaust their leisure at the smoking avenues that impinges on their capacities to be successful students. Meanwhile, the Student Representative Council (SRC) should be regularly sponsored to enroll co-curricular interventions that will help the undergraduate students to reduce some of the stress which mainly comes with consistent academic works.

Moreover, the police and the campus security must be appropriately informed on the deviant behaviours that happen at the various identified smoking havens involving these undergraduate students. Furthermore, random official inspections can be made routine to further check the smoking canker among the undergraduate students.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONS GUIDE FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

1. Please introduce yourself including your sex, educational and professional background.

2. When did you first visit the smoking spot?

3. What influenced your visit to the smoking spot?

4. Would you still frequent the smoking site if you had to pay transport fare to commute?

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

1. How do you present yourself at the smoking avenue?

2. Do you like to be approached after smoking cannabis?

3. Do you feel regret after you have smoked cannabis?

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

1. What would be the alternative hobby if you cannot smoke cannabis during your leisure?

2. What the other forms of behaviour you have assimilated from the other users apart from smoking?

3. Do you have plans to quit cannabis smoking?