



## Alcohol and Marijuana Use and Intentions Among Adolescents: The Role of the Reasoned Action Approach and Positive Future Orientation

**Purpose** The purpose of this study was to: 1) examine the relationship between school environment and peer influence and past 30-day alcohol and marijuana use, and 2) explore whether the school environment and peers influenced alcohol and marijuana use through its effect on future orientation and perceptions of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use, among a sample of high school students.

**Background** Previous research indicates perceptions of AOD use are associated with adolescent substance use behavior. However, there is a dearth of research on the affect of contextual factors (*e.g.*, school environment) and positive assets (*e.g.*, future orientation) on adolescents' intention and use of substances.

**Methods** Data were collected from 392, ninth- through 12th-grade U.S. students. In the fall 2014, the voluntary survey was administered by trained staff and included questions related to future orientation (*i.e.*, individuals' thoughts and feelings about their future), substance use, and perceptions of peer AOD acceptability (injunctive norms) and use (descriptive norms).

### Key Findings

- School environment and positive peer behavior were associated with a positive future orientation, and future orientation influenced AOD use perceptions, intentions, and behaviors.
- Positive peer behavior and school environment were associated with alcohol and marijuana use through their effect on future orientation, injunctive norms, and positive AOD expectancies.
- Negative peer behavior was associated with alcohol use through its effect on descriptive and injunctive norms, and positive AOD expectancies.
- Negative peer influence was associated with marijuana use through its effect on norms, positive AOD expectancies, and perceived control over AOD use.

### Implications

These findings suggest positive future orientation may play a key role in the prevention of alcohol and other drug use among adolescents.

Substance use prevention programs should consider including content that engages youth in activities that promote envisioning and planning for the future, and presents strategies for overcoming potential obstacles (*e.g.*, alcohol and drug use).

### Citation

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