



Annex: vignette study

Stigma and social norms

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Vignette

Tom is going out on a Saturday evening. Three friends are joining him to Voltage festival. While heading for the toilet, a researcher from the university asks him whether he's willing to participate in a study on illegal drugs and nightlife. Tom agrees and is asked to fill in a questionnaire about his drug use during the last 48 hours. His friends fill in the survey at the same time. The researcher gives Tom enough space and guarantees strict anonymity.

1. To what extent do participants fill in questionnaires about their drug use truthfully?
2. To what extent do stigma and social norms affect their answers?

- Two club nights, April – May 2019
- 70 participants → 68
- Male (Tom) and female (Kim) version
- Likert-scale 0 (not at all) – 7 (fully agree)

1. To what extend truthful?

41 participants: ≥ 5

Easier:

- Anonymity
- When friends also use illicit drugs

More difficult:

- Fear of punishment, judgement, being ashamed
- Confrontation with own drug use
- Being under the influence which affects the answers

2. Overreporting: “suppose Tom would overreport, what could be the reason?”

Descriptive norms?

41 participants: ≥ 4

“He feels part of a specific subgroup of partygoers. Drug use is common within this group of partygoers”

21 participants: ≥ 4

“He is worried his friends are reading his answers and he thinks they have a higher drug use.”

Counterculture?

44 participants: < 3

“He wants to revolt against the current drug policy by emphasizing his drug use.”

- Trying to be cool
- Mental problems, relation problems
- Peer pressure
- Being under the influence of drugs, lacking clear view

3. Underreporting: “suppose Tom would underreport, what could be the reason?”

Injunctive norm?

41 participants: ≥ 4

“He’s afraid of punishment.”

Self-stigma?

40 participants: ≥ 4

“He feels ashamed for his drug use.”

Public stigma?

42 participants: ≥ 4

“He wants to hide his drug use because he’s convinced that people/society condemn(s) drug use.”

- Fear of police, first aid, parents, girl-/boyfriend
- Afraid of judgement
- Minimize use
- Shame
- Not admitting for themselves
- Having personal problems
- Being under the influence of drugs, lacking a clear view

Conclusion

- Anonymity and being part of a specific group makes it easier to respond truthfully
- Social norms, self & public stigma could affect reliability (underreporting)
- Lack of clear view due to illicit drug consumption can affect reliability (under- and overreporting)

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