The Legalisation of Marijuana: An Analysis into the Economic Impacts on Colorado’s Economy – Will future states choose to follow such policies?

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Abstract
The purpose of this research is to identify from the example of Colorado, whether future states, most specifically Kansas, would choose to adopt similar policies in which marijuana would be legalised, and regulated similarly to alcohol. The adopted research methodology to be utilised will be that of a survey, which will be distributed through online formats using direct emails and social media in an attempt to target the entire population of Kansas, in an effort to collect their responses and views on the possibility of legalising marijuana within the state of Kansas. The key findings of this research are that 93.30% of the respondents were found to have been in favour of legalising marijuana, showing most importance to the tax revenues generated, impacts on crime and the impacts on youths as the factors most influential in their decisions, feeling that the change in legislation would bring forth a positive impact. Further findings of this research also identified certain segments within the population that were the most frequent marijuana users, showing males between the ages of 18-24 consumed more frequently than others. From this research, this project has shown to have added value to the area of policy change regarding the topic of marijuana, through identifying the key impacts and effects of legalised marijuana with the state of Colorado, therefore raising the awareness of the effect of such change in legislation, whilst collecting data and clearly identifying whether or not the state of Kansas would choose to follow such implementation.

Keywords
Legalisation of Marijuana, Colorado, Kansas, Economic Impacts, Policy Change

Introduction
Between the years of 1996-2015, there has been an increasing trend of US states reforming their state laws on the legality of marijuana, most specifically medical marijuana for medicinal use. As of to date, 23 US states legally enable the use of medical marijuana, including the District of Columbia (NCSL, 2015). Although, in states that have not adopted legalised medical marijuana policies, as well as US federal law, marijuana is still explicitly classed as an illegal illicit drug, carrying various penalties for the use, possession, sale and cultivation.

However, between the years of 2012-2014, historic measures have been established in which the state of Colorado became the “world's first legal, regulated and taxed marijuana market for adults” (Ferner, 2013). This came through the passing of “Amendment 64” on the 6th November 2012 (Ferner, 2012) that proposed the legalisation of the use, possession, growth and sale of marijuana of certain amounts for recreational purposes for persons over the age of 21, within the state of Colorado (Colorado.Gov, 2014). The agreement came through a majority vote in favour of legalisation, with 54.8% in favour (1,291,771) opposed to 45.1% (1,064,342) (The Denver Post, 2012). This proposed amendment was furthered on 28th May 2013 in which Gov. John Hickenlooper signed several historic bills therefore establishing the tax policies on the to-be-introduced regulated marijuana industry. This led to January the 1st 2014 where the first commercial marijuana dispensaries officially opened within the state of Colorado (The Economist, 2012).
Since the implementation of the new legislation within Colorado, various impacts on the economy have ensued, to where many residents within the US and other countries are unaware of the impacts of legalising and regulating marijuana. Therefore, the following part of this report will identify the key impacts incurred on the economy from legalising the recreational use of marijuana, following the example of Colorado, whereby using evidence from numerous literatures, it will enable this report to provide a critical analysis to tackle the current lack of understanding of the impacts. This in turn will stipulate a smooth transition into the adopted methodology section of this report, which will present the applied research methods of this report and the justifications for so. This will then lead to the conduction of the primary research, which will investigate into the outlined research aim and objectives highlighted in the methodology, this will be exemplified through the discussion of the results collected, and furthered by the conclusions drawn from the findings. In turn, the collected findings, combined with the discussions and conclusions drawn will attempt to meet such outlined expectations and ultimately establish the value of this report and how it adds significance to the area of study.

Literature Review

To begin, the purpose of this review will be to highlight the key theme of the legalisation of marijuana in the state of Colorado, and how the change in legislation has impacted various key areas within the economy. In doing so this literature review will attempt to raise the awareness of the impacts of legalising marijuana for future states, most specifically the state of Kansas, which will provide a smooth transition into the primary data collection part of this report.

Firstly, before examining the economic impacts incurred through the legalisation of marijuana within the state of Colorado, a brief comparison of some legislative and political factors can be observed between Colorado and Kansas. First and foremost, within the state of Kansas, which currently shares its borders with Colorado, marijuana is completely illegal under state law, stemming various penalties involving the substance, depending on the activity. For instance, first-time possessions of marijuana can consequence in a misdemeanor of incarceration of up to a year, carrying a maximum fine of $2,500, to where subsequent possession can lead to 3.5 years incarceration and a maximum fine of $10,000. Whereas the sale or distribution of marijuana carries magnitudes of a felony, resulting in 1-5 years incarceration and a maximum fine of $300,000, as the cultivation of 5 or more marijuana plants is a felony resulting in 12-17 years incarceration (NORML, 2015d). Although recently there have been notable changes concerning marijuana policy within the state of Kansas, as a recent policy reform has witnessed the penalties for possession of marijuana reduced within the city of Wichita. This new change in legislation, which was approved by 54% of the 37,000 voters, has now implemented more lenient consequences for first-time offenders in possession of marijuana, to where offenders will now be issued with a $50 fine within the city of Wichita, however there is still the possibility of state-law prosecution which carries the offenses outlined above (Lefler, 2015). However, contrasting within the state of Colorado, marijuana possession, sale, distribution and cultivation are now completely legal due to the newly regulated change in legalisation within Colorado.

The political differences to be observed are that, currently, Colorado is a ‘blue state’, in favour of the Democratic Party, to where a further 26 states are also under this authority. However Kansas is a ‘red state’ in favour of the Republican Party of where a further 23 states also follow (The Washington Post, 2012). Interestingly, of the 27 Democratic states, 20 states have legalised medical marijuana and 3 have legalised recreational marijuana, with 3 Republican states having legal medical marijuana with 1 state having legal recreational marijuana (USAToday, 2015).

Having set the scene between the comparison of marijuana state laws between Colorado and Kansas, this report can now delve into the most recognised impacts experienced by Colorado’s economy, since the introduction of the newly regulated marijuana industry.
**Taxation**

With the legalisation of recreational marijuana, the most notable area that has gained significant recognition is that of the witnessed fiscal implications, and through what effects have been experienced through the commercial regulated sales of marijuana. Firstly it can be observed that with passing of Amendment 64, an additional proposal, ‘Proposition AA’, was approved by voters in May 2013 with 65.2% in favour, to 34.7%, of imposing governmental taxes on marijuana (Ingold, 2013). This presented a totalled 27.9% tax rate on the sales of recreational marijuana, which was accumulated through a 15% excise tax on the average market rate, with a special 10% sales tax, whilst including the state's general 2.9% sales tax (The Economist, 2014; Colorado.Gov, 2014). With these taxes imposed, much of the following literature was focussed on the predictions of sales and tax revenue generated from commercial marijuana, however most notably Stiffler (2012) anticipated combined savings and tax generations of $60 million within the first calendar year, as $118 million was forecasted by (Hickenlooper & Colorado.Gov, 2014; Ingold, 2014) for the fiscal year of 2014-15.

Following these predictions, confirmation from Williams (2015), Ingraham (2015), NORML (2015) outlined that by the end of December 2014, the newly implemented and regulated marijuana industry had generated $700 million in both medical and recreational retail sales. The exact figure was approximately $699,198,805 according to (Baca, 2015), in which it was discovered that recreational marijuana sales accounted for $313.2 million, yielding around $44 million in tax revenue (Wyatt, 2015a; NORML, 2015; Pursell, 2015). Further analysis shows that the sales generated through commercial marijuana were 21% higher than the original $578 million estimate before the year began (Williams, 2015; Vekshin, 2013). Of that figure, $76 million of tax revenue was generated, which included “fees on the industry, plus pre-existing sales taxes on medical marijuana products” as the $44 million, which clearly fell short of previous estimates, represented only new taxes on recreational marijuana that were approved in May 2013 under Proposition AA (Wyatt, 2015a; Rep. Singer & Sen. Jahn. 2013).

With the accumulations falling short of the previous forecasts, the following literature highlights two factors that may have contributed to the outcome of tax revenue generated, the first being the differences in imposed tax between recreational and medical marijuana. As recreational marijuana was taxed at a rate of 27.9% and thus when compared to the 2.9% tax of medical marijuana a substantial gap in taxation is clearly underlined (The Economist, 2014; Colorado.Gov, 2014b). As state official’s anticipations of current medical marijuana users switching over to recreational for convenience clearly did not occur (Sutton, 2015). In essence, “regulators believe taxes are in some cases keeping people away from recreational pot” and that Colorado’s medical registry has been widely blamed for Colorado falling short of projected marijuana revenues in 2014 (Wyatt, 2015c).

Similarly, another contributing factor is that of the black market. As many residents are still purchasing marijuana through illegal markets mainly due to the high taxes imposed on retail sales. As Sutton (2015) indicates that “many people expected the black market to disappear with legalization, but it continues to thrive” and that during the first months that legalisation occurred, Colorado was losing revenue to the illegal market “where street prices were a fraction of store prices”. Furthermore, Lobosco (2014b) states that Colorado anticipated that more people would migrate from the black market to the legalised and regulated market, but adds that evidence from Marijuana Policy Group suggests that only 60% of residents seeking marijuana will purchase it through legal channels.

Nevertheless, current evidence to date suggests that retail marijuana tax receipts are expected to total $36.2 million, still showing a large discrepancy between the projections of $134 million by the end of June 2015 (Sutton, 2015; Mullis, 2014). However in light of this situation, Skyler McKinley, the state’s deputy director of marijuana policy defends the result of the $86 million discrepancy, stating that “it’s important to keep in mind that no one has ever created a legalized recreational market to the degree that we have,” continuing to add “we didn’t know what use patterns would be like, how people would buy marijuana, how much they would buy, and so on and so forth” (Sutton, 2015), whereas support from Hickenlooper & Colorado.Gov (2014) adds that the amounts estimated are based on several assumptions of a new industry, regarding various ‘economic and control
variables’ and that they “anticipate that these projections will change monthly as more data is collected and actual revenue could fall short of these projections”. However, evidence from Baca (2015) accentuates on the differences in speculations to actual accumulations, as within January 2014 only 30-40 recreational stores were open in Colorado generating $2.1 million in taxes and $14.7 million in sales, yet when compared to December 2014, it was found that 300 recreational stores were open with taxes and sales accumulating to $6.9 million and $35.1 million respectively.

Interestingly, findings from (Raghavan, 2014) calculated the potential tax revenues each state could generate within the US, where marijuana was still illegal. These estimations were compiled through data of (SAMHSA, 2013; NSDUH, 2013) [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration] which detailed the percentage of marijuana smokers ages 25 and over in each state, which was multiplied by the percentage of the population older than 25 to achieve the number of users in each state, this was then multiplied against the estimated marijuana market size of $14 billion (Miron, 2010). From this, data from (Drenkard & Borean, 2014) [Tax Foundation] was used to define each state’s local and state taxes, whilst adding the 15% excise tax based on the example from Colorado. From the evidence and calculations above, the results estimate that Kansas could generate a figure of $14,608,476 in tax revenue if recreational marijuana was legalised, however this figure is open to change from variables such as market changes and changes in tax (Raghavan, 2014).

State Spending
Having analysed a diverse range of literature concerning the speculation and actual accumulation of sales and tax revenue generated through the legalisation of marijuana, we can now progress into investigating the proposed areas that the state of Colorado would spend the generated tax on, for the benefit of the state’s residents. A key piece of literature from (Hickenlooper & Colorado.Gov, 2014) will take lead on the proposals of state spending.

To begin, of the totalled estimate of $134 million in combined tax revenues from both recreational and medical marijuana sales, $45.5 million will be allocated to youth marijuana prevention. Secondly, $40.4 million will be dedicated to substance abuse treatment programmes, whilst $12.4 million will be assigned to public health. The proposal adds that $3.2 million will be allotted to law enforcement and public safety efforts, with £1.8 million being used for a regulatory oversight and a final $0.2 million left for a state-wide co-ordination. (Hickenlooper & Colorado.Gov, 2014; Ingold, 2014; Smith, 2014; Associated Press, 2014).

Further information from the proposal of (Hickenlooper & Colorado.Gov, 2014) provides a deeper explanation into additional plans for state spending, of which some of the key areas will be highlighted. For instance, of the $11 million dedicated for the Department of Education, $5 million will be spent to address mental health and substance abuse prevention in public schools, of which grants will be provided to public schools in an attempt to increase the availability of school health professionals to aid and educate students concerning the use of marijuana. A further $5.8 million will be funded in an attempt to create a state-wide media campaign on marijuana use to educate Coloradans on the impact of marijuana. Additionally, $10 million will be funded to marijuana, prescription drug, and alcohol prevention for youth ages 12-20, which will provide “45 local communities with grants to implement evidence-based prevention programs for underage marijuana, alcohol, and prescription drug misuse” (Hickenlooper, Colorado.Gov, 2014). Furthermore, $1,875,000 will be allocated to The Department of Transportation to fund the newly developed “Drive High, Get a DUI” campaign, in which the movement attempts to target male recreational marijuana users aged between 18-34 who are more prone to binge risk and to combining marijuana and alcohol, in an attempt to reduce such outcomes.

Continuing on, evidence highlights that under the Proposition AA, the first $40 million earned in excise taxes every year will be dedicated to the Colorado Public School Capital Construction Assistance Fund that supports the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) programme (Downes, 2014; Coffman, 2013; (Stiffler, 2012; Hughes, 2015; Hickenlooper & Colorado.Gov, 2014). The purpose of such fund is to construct new facilities in order to “provide first class, 21st century, healthy, safe school grounds for Colorado’s students”(Stiffler, 2012), to which so far, $15.6 million has reportedly been accumulated and is set to increase to $108 million by the end
of the 2014-15 fiscal year (Ferner, 2015; Newell, 2015). To put perspective on this figure, Hernandez (2015) highlights the state collected $195,318 in taxes allotted for school construction capital, excluding marijuana tax revenues, however when including them, $2.3 million alone from marijuana taxes was generated in January 2014. Furthermore, of this state funding initiative, 372 new jobs have been created across Colorado with 217 of those jobs falling under the construction industry (Stiffler, 2012).

Also, with regards to state spending, literature from (Wyatt, 2015b; Wyatt, 2015d; Nitti, 2015; Eubanks, 2015) all discuss the possibility of tax rebates. As Nitti (2015) explains that in 1992 Colorado enacted a Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR), “which provides that if state and local tax revenue grows at a rate that exceeds the combined growth of the inflation rate and the population, the excess must be refunded back to the taxpayers”. Therefore depending on the total accumulation of 2014-15 fiscal year ending in June 2015, estimations of $7.63 could be received per adult in Colorado due to such tax generations from recreational marijuana (Wyatt, 2015b; Wyatt, 2015d).

Crime – Including Judicial Arrests and Savings

The second most notable area that has gained significant recognition in recent literature through the experienced impacts of the legalised and regulated marijuana industry, is that of crime. As originally, marijuana was classed as an illicit drug within the state of Colorado, to where the possession, consumption, cultivation, production, sale and transportation were all illegal (excluding medical marijuana) before the passing of Amendment 64. As it can be identified that before the change in legislation in 2012, between the years of 1986-2010, an average of 10,000 arrests were made each year within Colorado involving the possession of marijuana, of which between the years of 2001-2010 the ‘Average Yearly Arrest Rate for Marijuana Possession per 100,000 of Population’ was 229 (Marijuana Arrests, 2012; Way, 2013; Sullum, 2014; Sullum, 2012).

Moreover, evidence from Stiffler (2012) identifies ‘Colorado’s direct budget costs for enforcing marijuana prohibition’ for the 2011-12 fiscal year, to which the ‘Police Agency’ had a total spending of $82,676,491 in which $3,646,033 (4.41%) was used for enforcing marijuana prohibition. The total spending for the ‘Judicial Agency’ was $340,243,578 in which $23,817,050 (7%) was depleted for marijuana prohibition, whilst for the ‘Corrections Agency’ the total spending was $634,934,029 to where $12,698,681 (2%) accounted for prohibition enforcement. Therefore upon totalling the expenditure of all three areas, it can be witnessed that $40.1 million was exhausted on marijuana prohibition within Colorado in the 2011-12 fiscal year. In light of this evidence, Stiffler (2012) continues to add that $12 million in instant savings would occur through legalisation for the year following the change in legislation because of reduced criminal costs as well as how courts and prisons would adapt to fewer violators, to where “the annual savings (compared to a pre-legislation year’s budget) will rise toward the long run savings level of $40 million”. This is supported by Pacula & Sevigny (2014) who argue “legalization would generate savings in terms of reduced criminal justice costs and improve social welfare by eliminating criminal sanctions for minor marijuana offenses”.

Nevertheless, a large proportion of literature highlights that since the legalisation, crime rates have actually decreased with windfall savings. As literature from (Blako, 2015; Delmore, 2014, Denver.Gov, 2015; Ferner, 2014) identifies that within the first 6 months of 2014 after the legalisation and compared to the same period in 2013, homicides within Denver dropped by 24%, robberies were reduced by 3% and the rate of burglaries were down by 9.5%, showing an overall drop of 0.7% in violent crime and a reduction of 2% in properly crime, to where Ferner (2014) outlines that “crime is down by more than 11 percent from the same six-month period of 2013”. Moreover, evidence from Drug Policy Alliance (2015) discusses the reduction in crime a year after legalisation and two years after decriminalisation, stating that marijuana possession arrests had dropped by 84% since 2010 whilst adding that marijuana arrests costs around $300 to adjudicate, to which “it is reasonable to infer that the state is saving millions in adjudicatory costs for possession cases alone in 2014 compared to 2010”. Whereas literature from (MPP, 2015) finalises the reduction in Colorado’s crime, declaring that within Denver, “overall crime in 2014 fell 2.9% as compared to 2013, to where violent crime fell by 1.9%".
Interestingly, findings from (Miron, 2010) identifies that within Kansas, in 2008, arrests totalled to 73,904, to which 8,060 accounted for drug violations, to where 568 arrests were marijuana related, in regards to illegal manufacturing and sales. Continuing evidence states that of those 6,750 total arrests involving drug possession within Kansas, 4,364 were also marijuana related. Due to these arrests, Kansas as a state was spending $77 million in prohibiting marijuana activities for the year 2008 (Miron, 2010). Additionally, NORML (2015b) outlines the total arrests of possession and sales related to marijuana in Kansas, highlighting 6,276 arrests in 2009, 7,336 in 2010, 6,656 in 2011 and a figure of 6,095 in 2012. Whereas evidence from (Sloan, 2015; Perry, 2013) identify that of 2013, $42 million was spent on non-violent drug offenders of which stood at 1,724 offenders, of this, 60% were marijuana related, showing law enforcement expenditure of $25.2 million. These identifications clearly indicates that, potentially, mass savings in law enforcement expenditure and the possibility of reducing crime and arrests rates could achieved, if Kansas’s residents were to favour legalising marijuana, following the example of Colorado.

Public Health
Upon the legalisation of recreational marijuana, there has been a growing discussion into the effects and safety of the substance since its exposure since the change in legislation. As initially, research implies that a half of annual marijuana users are under the age of 26, whereas males account for 60% of the annual marijuana users (Gettman, 2005). However, with the recent change in legislation, there have been growing concerns over the increased consumption levels in other demographical areas. Therefore within this section of the report, an exploration into the health issues raised from the legalisation of marijuana will be conducted, such as a brief overview of the general impacts associated with consumption, the impacts on driving impairment/fatalities as well as the level of children/youth interaction and consumption, all specifically related to Colorado.

General Impacts
Since the increase in popularity of marijuana over the last two decades, much research has been focussed on the effects of consuming marijuana. However, with the recent legalisation in Colorado, further contemporary evidence has now been identified. As findings from a survey from (Colorado.Gov, 2015) for 2014, it is exposed that of 1,749 pregnant women surveyed, alarmingly 35.8% consumed marijuana during pregnancy and 13.7% whilst breastfeeding for medicinal purposes to ease symptoms such as “depression, anxiety, stress, pain, nausea, and vomiting”. Furthermore, topical findings from (CBSNews, 2015; Svrakie et al, 2012; Ingraham, 2014c; Colorado.Gov, 2015) expose warnings of marijuana consumption for pregnant women and the potential effects incurred on the unborn baby from the passing of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)[marijuana's primary active ingredient] through the placenta and breast milk. These findings highlight that offspring may be prone to cognitive impairment, low IQ, attention problems and the potential for a low birth weight, however the full effects of marijuana in relation to pregnancy are still not fully understood, therefore requiring further research. Additionally, further adverse health effects are identified with the consumption of marijuana, such as negative respiratory effects, acute psychotic symptoms during intoxication, and memory impairment (Colorado.Gov, 2015; Svrakie et al 2012). However evidence from (Ingraham, 2015c; Lachenmeier & Rehm, 2015) highlight the past overestimations of the risk associated with marijuana use when compared to other drugs, clearly outlining a considerable low risk when compared to other drugs such as tobacco, alcohol, or methamphetamine.

Driving Fatalities
According to Compton & Berning (2015), “In the United States, recent State actions to legalize the use of marijuana for medical and recreational use have further exacerbated concern over potential risks of driving impaired by marijuana”. Following this statement, efforts will be applied into understanding the impacts of legalisation on the levels of driving fatalities.

To start, having witnessed the commercialisation of medical marijuana in 2009, literature from the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (2014) (RMHIDTA) identifies from 2007 to 2012 overall traffic fatalities decreased by 14.8%, however showing operators involved in the fatalities testing positive for marijuana rose by almost 100%, from 7.04% in 2007 to 16.53% in 2012. Whereas as of 2014, 5,546 citations were issued for driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, to which, 674 (12.2%) involved marijuana.
(Ingold, 2015). Furthermore, evidence from (CDOT, 2015) states that since the commercialisation of medical marijuana in 2009, all of the following years have had the lowest fatalities in each month, all being lower than the average.

With regards to the evidence above, further literature highlights an emerging theme of alcohol being substituted for marijuana, as with the legalisation of marijuana in certain states, alcohol consumption has decreased, and with this, so has the driving fatalities (Anderson & Rees 2011; Sullum 2014b; Anderson & Rees, 2013). On one hand, literature argues “drivers who use marijuana are at a significantly lower risk for a crash than drivers who use alcohol” (Ingold, 2015b). Whereas similar evidence from (Hindrik et al 1993; NORML., 2015c) found that “THC’s adverse effects on driving performance appear relatively small”, and that previous studies strongly suggests that “alcohol encourages risky driving whereas THC encourages greater caution” through the users ability to compensate from its adverse effects whilst driving (Robbe, 1995).

Although on the other hand, literature from (Brady & Li, 2013; Colorado.Gov, 2015; Hartman & Huestis, 2013) argues against such statements, as Brady & Li (2013) highlight that their studies “indicate that non-alcohol drugs, particularly marijuana, are increasingly detected in fatally injured drivers”. Whereas results from Colorado.Gov (2015) outline that “substantial evidence indicates that the risk of motor vehicle crash doubles among drivers with recent marijuana use” and that a positive relationship was found between the associated THC [marijuana's primary active ingredient] blood level and the risk of motor vehicle crashes, to where it was found that “the higher the level of THC in blood, the higher the crash risk”.

**Impacts on Youth**

With the greater level of exposure that marijuana has gained since its legalisation within Colorado, there is a growing concern over its impact on children and young adolescents, especially since recreational marijuana has a greater reach than medical marijuana.

This concern is emphasised through the recent examples of young children coming into contact with marijuana related products. As evidence from (Parker, 2015; Downes, 2014; Sutton, 2015b) discuss the introduction of marijuana edibles. To where there were increases in cases where children were unintentionally consuming such products, due to the packaging and appearance. This was due to many edibles “resembling sugar snacks” and were described to inadvertently “look and taste like familiar sweets”(MacCoun & Mello, 2015) with no distinguishable labelling of the marijuana content (Sutton, 2015b). Furthermore, the problem with such edibles is the potency, which increases the chances of children overdosing (Parker, 2015). As evidence from (Ingold, 2014b; Healy, 2014) highlight that since the introduction of recreational marijuana edibles, there have been increasing cases of children admitted to hospital for consumption of such products, in which 9 cases have occurred so far within the ages of 3-7 years old, to where 7 cases were admitted to the hospitals critical-care unit, which is supported by dramatic evidence from (Colorado.Gov, 2015). According to (Ingold, 2014b), within 2014, 9 cases have occurred and is currently “on pace to more than double last year's total [of 8 cases]”. With these occurrences, new and stricter regulations have been imposed on the packaging of marijuana-infused edibles by health officials, in which the packaging must now be “stamped or marked to state potency, and that it is not for children”, with warnings to not consume too much marijuana (Wyatt, 2014e) and prohibits “adding marijuana to a product that is primarily marketed to children”(Sutton, 2015b).

Additionally, evidence from Colorado.Gov (2015) highlights the patterns in youth consumption within Colorado through the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS). As it was discovered of the 40,000 young adolescents surveyed (25,000 from high school, 15,000 from middle school) 37% of Colorado high school students reported, “ever use” and nearly 20% reported “past 30 day use”. Whereas consumption amongst middle school students was low with 5.1% reporting past “30 day use” and 8.8% having “ever use”, therefore finding “no statistically significant change in “ever use” and “past 30 day use” during the time period of 2005-2013”. However, Kuntz (2015) contrastingly highlights within the first few months of legalised recreational marijuana in 2014, Colorado “saw a jump in drug policy violations in the state’s public schools”, adding that the increase of violations came most notably from within middle schools. As evidence shows within middle schools, drug
violations rose by 24% for the school year ending in spring 2014, which lead to a “decade high” of 951 incidents. Kuntz (2015) continues to add “drug incidents reported by all public schools hit a decade-high last school year, rising 7.4 percent to 5,377 incidents”. Furthermore, building on the theme of youth consumption, various consequences of marijuana consumption from an early age are revealed by Gilman et al (2014) that suggests negative changes in emotion and motivation with abnormalities in the shape, density and volume of grey matter, where most of the brain tissue is located, as well as negative effects on cognitive abilities, learning and memory (Colorado.Gov, 2015). However, of these figures, efforts proposed in the state spending of Amendment 64 will attempt to tackle youth consumption through prevention schemes highlighted earlier in this report.

**Miscellaneous Impacts**

With the change in legislation, further impacts were experienced in various areas of Colorado’s economy. For instance, Colorado is a popular destination for tourists within the US, boasting numerous out-door activities, most notably its ski-resorts, which in 2013 attracted 12.6 million visitors generating $17.3 billion (Blevins, 2014; Blevins, 2014b). However, with the introduction of legalised marijuana at the beginning of 2014, during the period around April 20th where various festivals are held in Colorado, a 73% increase in hotel searches was found, showing a 37% increase in Denver alone, with a 25% increase year-over-year between January and March 2014 (Briggs, 2014; Klausner, 2014). Furthermore, observable evidence from (Light et al, 2014) found that amongst the 2,512 marijuana sale transactions during a typical week in March 2014, 1,117 of the transactions were represented by out-of-state visitors, accounting for 44% of sales, whereas in some counties, 90% of all retail sales would have been likely to be from out-of-state visitors. Further exploration shows that within the more touristic areas located in the mountains, where most tourists visit for skiing purposes, it was found that total marijuana receipts increased by 100%, also showing an increase in the metropolitan areas of 15% after January 1st 2014.

Additionally, some evidence also indicates that since the introduction of the newly legalised and regulated marijuana industry, there have been positive impacts on unemployment and local businesses. For example, the new industry is reported have to created 16,000 licensed jobs directly within and in relation to the marijuana industry, in areas such as construction, finance and judicial (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015; Frosch, 2015), of which 372 jobs have been created through the BEST programme mentioned earlier in the state spending section of this report. Furthermore, 341 recreational marijuana dispensaries are now operational, with 18 marijuana-testing facilities, 431 cultivation capacities and 107 product manufacturers, all having created jobs that had not previously been available (CDOR, 2015). Moreover, real estate has also reportedly soared with the introduction of the marijuana industry, to where vacancy rates have decreased from 8.6% to 5%, occupying 1.5 to 3 million square feet of commercially legalised property, in which specifically, Denver’s figure is at 3.1% and is the lowest in decades (Raabe, 2014), compared to areas such as Colorado Springs, with 12% vacancy, which imposed laws to refrain from commercial stores operating within the area (Higdon, 2014).

The legalisation of marijuana also was shown to have possibly impacted social values within and outside of Colorado, as from post-legalisation on October 7th 2014, same-sex marriage became legal within the state of Colorado, having originally been banned from 2006 by voters (Steffen, 2014). Also it was found that since the legalisation, 53% of voters opposed to 44% stated legalised marijuana “increases personal freedoms in a positive way,” to where a further 67% opposed to 30% believe legalised marijuana “has not eroded the moral fiber of people in Colorado” (Nicholson, 2014). The legalisation of marijuana within Colorado has also impacted social values of other resident’s in other states, to where Alaska, District of Columbia, Oregon and Washington have all passed initiatives to reform their marijuana laws (Barro, 2014), to where it has sparked intense debates over whether future federal marijuana laws should be changed (Ferner, 2015b).

**Literature Summary**

In summary, this review has provided concise and definitive evidence of the impacts incurred on Colorado’s economy, through the change in legislation that saw marijuana legalised and regulated commercially like alcohol. There have been numerous findings that provide a critical evaluation of the impacts experienced in...
various areas of Colorado’s economy, as an example for other states to observe, most notably Kansas, with the potential to follow such example of a change in marijuana legislation.

For instance much literature bared the fiscal benefits of such change in legislation, exhibiting the mass generations of tax revenue, and how the state proposed to devote such capital to youth prevention, substance abuse and public health schemes, as well as funding for law enforcement and education programmes, also providing estimates into the generations Kansas could receive, if it chose to regulate marijuana. Literature also presented findings of mass judicial savings and reductions in crime across the state of Colorado, following the legalisation of marijuana, whilst estimating the possible savings and reduction in crime levels for the state of Kansas, depending on the resident’s view on legalisation. Continuing evidence also exposed the recent findings of the negative health issues experienced with consuming marijuana, during and post pregnancy, outlining the effects on unborn offspring, and general impacts incurred during adult consumption. Further literature exposed how driving fatalities have decreased since legalisation, however exposing the growing count of marijuana positive drivers, showing a common phenomenon of alcohol being substituted for marijuana. Additional evidence also uncovered the health issues of marijuana-related products and how they have negatively impacted young children, whilst adding how youth consumption has increased in middle schools since the legalisation. With the change in legislation, positive effects have been witnessed on local businesses, most notably real estate, showing decreases in vacancies and mass escalations in demand for properties, this evidence also pointed out how the newly introduced marijuana industry has created a substantial amount of jobs within the state of Colorado. Furthermore, confirmation highlighted the impacts of the legalisation on tourism, showing an increase in out-of-state visitors and their increasing demand for marijuana, whilst presenting findings of the impacts on social values that have furthered other changes in legislation within and outside of Colorado.

Therefore, after having recognised the abundant impacts incurred through the legalisation of marijuana within Colorado, a gap within the research has been discovered in whether or not other states would choose to follow such change in legislation, with a specific focus on the state of Kansas which shares its borders with Colorado. Therefore the next chapter will discuss the methods to be adopted in collecting primary data from the residents of Kansas and their views on the nature of legalising marijuana within their state.

Research Methodology
The purpose of this methodology was to consider and justify the most appropriate research methods to be adopted, in the attempt of investigating the aim and objectives of this project derived from the previous literature review of this report. This section of the report highlights the philosophical approach assumed, the applied research methods, including the justifications for so and the potential limitations experienced within the conducted research.

Research Aim and Objectives
To begin, following the exposure of the research gap derived from the previous literature, the aim of this project, with the supporting objectives, can be outlined. The aim of this endeavour was to identify, from the impacts witnessed through the example of Colorado, whether or not future states would choose to adopt such policies in legalising marijuana, placing a specific emphasis on the state of Kansas. This aim would be achieved through the following three objectives;

- To collect data from Kansas’s residents on whether or not they would favour the possibility of legalising marijuana for recreational use, therefore commercially regulating it similarly to alcohol
- To identify the most important factors perceived by Kansas’s residents on deciding on whether or not to legalise marijuana in the state of Kansas
- To expose a specific segment of the population of Kansas that favour and disfavour the possibility of legalisation, derived from the demographics of the applied research methods
Research Philosophy
The assumed research philosophy of this study was that of positivism, which according to Gill & Johnson consists of “collecting data about an observable reality” whilst searching for regularities and casual relationships in the data “to create law-like generalisations like those produced by scientists” (2010). The adoption of this philosophy was due to the nature of the knowledge that this project was attempting to address. This was because the aim of investigating into whether or not the state of Kansas would choose to adopt such policies in legalising marijuana, like Colorado, is fairly objective, and seeks the broad truth of the general population of Kansas. Therefore this suggested an implementation of a quantitative positivist approach, as according to Saunders et al, quantitative research “examines relationships between variables, which are measured numerically and analysed using a range of statistical techniques” (2012). Of single quantitative research, a survey research strategy is commonly used through the practice of questionnaires or structured interviews, which are intended for exploratory and descriptive research (Saunders et al, 2012).

Research Strategy
Therefore for the primary data collection of this project, a survey strategy was adopted through the use of a questionnaire, compiled of concise and relevant questions with the intent of addressing the aim of the project. The questionnaire was created online through the use of Survey Monkey, an internet-based survey service provider, in which 10 specific questions were designed in an attempt to collect the opinions and views of Kansas’s residents on the topic of the legalisation of marijuana within Kansas in the form of quantitative data. The initial inquiries of the survey were formed of several demographical questions devised in an effort to pinpoint certain segments in the population, the following questions were then compiled across the broad area of legalisation, and the most important economical factors that could influence a respondents decision to favour or disfavour the legalisation of marijuana. These questions were designed with the anticipation that the findings would suggest a definitive pattern, or type of relationship amongst the results received, enabling the identification of a unique demographic segment and its stance on the legalisation of marijuana supported by the statistics of the survey. The justifications for basing the data collection through an online platform was due to the geographical location, as this method was the most appropriate and effective in gaining a large proportion of results from within another country.

The decision to select a quantitative research method through the use of a survey, opposed to the numerous qualitative approaches available, was justified through the following two factors. Firstly, with the use of qualitative approaches such as interviews, focus groups and participant observations, the intention is focused on the subjective meaning and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied through the common use of non-numerical data therefore placing a greater emphasis on the quality and depth of the data, than the quantity and broadness (Saunders et al, 2012). Therefore this factor contributed to the influence of the decision for a quantitative method, due to the fact that the objectives of this project could only be achieved through gaining a sizeable amount of responses from a large population. The second factor that instigated the selection for a quantitative method was due to the geographical location, as the research and project was being conducted from the UK, as the concentration of the research was focused on the state of Kansas within the United States. Therefore this produced restrictions to the qualitative approaches, such as time differences and reducing the sense of personal involvement or intimacy associated with qualitative approaches, such as interviews. This choice of research methods was further justified through literature from Saunders et al (2012), who states that when adopting survey strategies, through the use of questionnaires, it enables the “collection of standardised data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way, allowing easy comparison”, therefore supporting the need to attain high levels of responses from the population of Kansas. Moreover this approach enabled the suggestion of the possible reasons for particular relationships between variables, while being comparatively easy to explain and to understand, whereas providing a greater control over the research process (Saunders et al, 2012b).

Sampling Method
As mentioned earlier, the aim of this project was to identify whether or not the state of Kansas would favour the possibility of the legalisation of marijuana, therefore the population sample was focused on the entire state of
Kansas and its total population across all cities and towns. The sampling method that was utilised was that of non-probability (non-random) sampling as the sampling frame had been clearly and directly targeted through subjective judgment and the aim of this project, furthermore because of the geographical location of the researcher being located in the UK, with the population being located within US, it restricted the possibility of performing a random-probability sampling, as there was no direct interpersonal contact with the respondents (Saunders et al, 2009). Building on the applied non-random sampling method, the adopted sampling technique was that of snowballing. This technique was assumed on the basis that it was difficult in initially identifying members of the desired population (Saunders et al, 2009). Therefore upon making initial contact with an individual respondent, that respondent would then identify further respondents, who would then further the transition, hence the ‘snowballing effect’ (Saunders et al, 2009), in which the methods of distribution to attain respondents were through the use of direct emails and social media platforms. The advantages of snowballing were that it enabled the collection of large representatives, promoting a high response rate, which enabled the sample to be more representative, this is through respondents identifying other respondents in the snowballing effect, however the disadvantages associated with such technique were that it could be difficult to make initial contact, with the possibility of bias, as there is the tendency for respondents to identify additional respondents who share the same views and opinions (Saunders et al, 2009), which can result in a homogenous sample (Lee, 1993).

**Limitations**

However, upon devising the methodology to be adopted for this research process, some limitations and shortcomings were identified. For instance, the most notable limitation was through the platforms used to distribute the surveys, as using an online format such as social media posed the risk of bias for the sample frame. This was through how generally it is found that a younger population is more commonly active online, rather than an older generation, therefore presenting the risk of attaining only responses from a certain age. Furthermore, upon adopting the snowballing sampling technique, it reduced the level of control over the data collection process, as the emphasis was placed more on the respondent’s decision in identifying further respondents, which again may have been subject to bias. Therefore these limitations were overcome through attempting to gain a high-response rate to improve the validity of the data collected.

**Ethical Considerations**

Upon compiling the online survey to be distributed to residents within the state of Kansas, an ethical statement was produced in an effort to clearly inform the respondents of their role in the research process. This was demonstrated through considering the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents’ information, to where a statement was compiled at the front of the survey, outlining the purpose of the research, what the respondent’s results would be utilised for within the report, and how their responses would be completely anonymous and handled with a level of professionalism, to where the researcher could be contacted by email if any problems, or queries arose.

Therefore having defined the various methods to be utilised in the data collection process of this report, the findings and analysis of the data can now be presented.

**Results**

Upon distributing the online survey through the methods outlined in the methodology section of this report, a total of 448 responses were collected throughout the state of Kansas, which can now be analysed through the use of the derived research objectives.

**Data Analysis**

The type of data that will be analysed within this research process will be that of quantitative data, in which Tukey’s (1977) exploratory data analysis (EDA) approach will be assumed, seeing as the data will be presented through the use of diagrams to explore and understand the findings. Furthermore this analysis will be the most
effective through how it will enable the presentation of specific values, showing the highest and lowest values, whilst providing analysis of certain proportions and distributions found within the results (Saunders et al 2009). The data will also assume a categorical approach, seeing as the results can be organised into specific categories, whereas, in some cases, also adopting the use of numerical orders. Furthermore the data can be further sub-divided into the categories of both descriptive and numerical data, as in some cases a specific value or order must be utilised in the analysis of the findings, whereas in other cases a certain category can only be applied to the analysis without placing a numerical value on such results. This provides an understanding into dichotomous data which will be applied, as the identified variables of the research can be divided into categories, to where the data is simply analysed through the count of occurrences in each category (Saunders et al, 2009).

To begin, an overall broad view will be applied across the whole population of respondents collected, to which a more specific analysis will then be adopted throughout this section in an attempt to meet the objectives of this research

**Broad population**

The initial questions of the survey outlined some demographical categories to gain an insight into the particular segments of the population of the respondents received. It can be seen that of the 448 respondents, 71.7% (321) were males whereas the remaining 28.3% were female (127).

Following on, of these respondents, the use of age categories were then used, in which the most predominant population of respondents fell between the ages of 25-34 accounting for 45.1% (202), to where the second most populous age category was between the ages of 18-24 amounting to 38.4% (172). 11.4% (51) of the respondents were between the ages of 35-44, while 3.3% (15) of respondents were between the ages of 45-54; 1.3% (6) were between 55-64 and just 0.4% (2) of respondents were between the ages of 65-74. No responses were gained for ages over 75.

Analysis was conducted into the political viewpoints of the respondents within Kansas, which from evidence in the earlier literature review provides an indication that the political viewpoints of individuals are influential in a states’ decision to favour or disfavour the legalisation of marijuana. Of the 448 respondents, it was found that the most popular political selection was that of the ‘Democratic Party’, which accounted for 43.3% (194) of respondents. The second most favourable selection was that of a ‘None’ political stance which totalled 32.1% (144) of the total responses. 13.6% (61) of the responses elected ‘Other’ and only 10.9% (49) favoured the Republican Party (Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Representation of respondent’s political leanings](image-url)
The following results identify the population’s view on the acceptability of consuming marijuana, where of the 448 respondents 91.5% (410) felt that it was acceptable to consume marijuana compared to 8.5% (38) who argued that it was unacceptable. Building on these findings, a further question examined the consumption levels of marijuana for the respondents within Kansas, where it was found that 56.3% (252) of respondents do not consume marijuana. However, 13.4% (60) of respondents use it daily, with 9.2% (41) using it weekly and 8.5% (38) using it yearly, whereas ‘Monthly’ showed 7.4% (33) and finally 5.4% (24) of respondents stated ‘I’d rather not state’ (figure 2).

After analysing the demographics of the population surveyed, and outlining the views on the acceptability of consumption with the actual consumption levels, the next step was to identify the factors that the respondents felt would be most important in influencing their decision to favour or disfavour the legalisation of marijuana within the state of Kansas, therefore attempting to address the second objective of the project. Therefore in an effort to gain such insight, a question had been formulated providing a rating-scale consisting of ‘Very Important’ (1), ‘Important’ (2), ‘Neither Important or Unimportant’ (3), ‘Unimportant’ (4) and ‘Very Unimportant’ (5) on the various economical factors that could be impacted by the legalisation of marijuana, to where an average rating was provided to represent the average importance that the respondents shared. Therefore the lower the average, the more important the factor was valued, and the higher the average, the less important.

These factors were ‘Tax Revenues Generated – (To Fund State Spending)’ which scored the lowest weighted average of 1.64, therefore showing it had the highest importance, ‘Impacts on Crime – (Including Judicial, Arrest and Law Enforcement Expenditure)’ scored second with an average rating of 1.73, ‘Impacts on Youth’ ranked the third most important with an average weighting of 2.10. The factor of ‘Public Health Issues’ averaged a weighting of 2.16, whereas ‘Impacts on Driving’ averaged 2.35, ‘Impacts on Tourism’ scored 2.43, ‘Impacts on Local Businesses’ ranked seventh with a weighting of 2.44. ‘Impacts on Unemployment’ averaged 2.79,

![Figure 2: Distribution of marijuana usage among respondents](image-url)
leaving ‘Impacts on Social Values’ as the least important with the highest averaged weighting of 3.14 whilst having the most votes 102 (22.77%) for ‘Very Unimportant’ (figure 3).

![Figure 3: Likert scale responses showing importance of legalisation of marijuana on different factors](image)

The final two questions were focused primarily on the respondents’ view of the legalisation of marijuana within the state of Kansas. This was to gain insight into whether the residents of Kansas would vote in favour of legalising marijuana for it be regulated similarly to alcohol, therefore addressing the first objective and overall aim of the project. Therefore of the 448 respondents it was found that 93.3% (418) were in favour of legalising marijuana, to where the remaining 6.7% (30) were against legalising marijuana.
The final question followed on from the previous, in attempting to identify whether the respondents felt that if marijuana were to be legalised, whether it would have a positive, negative, both positive and negative or no effect on the states’ economy. Of these answers, 66.5% (298) of the respondents felt that the legalisation of marijuana would have a positive impact on the economy, whereas 3.1% (14) felt it would have a negative impact, furthermore 25.7% (115) of the respondents felt it would have both a positive and negative impact, with the final 4.7% (21) felt it would have no impact on the economy (figure 4).

![Figure 4: Respondent’s views on the impact of marijuana legalisation on the State economy?](image)

**Specific Analysis of Variables**

Having applied a broad analysis across the whole population received, a more specific focus can be adopted in an attempt to meet the research objective of identifying particular segments through the use of demographic (age & gender), lifestyle (political beliefs/values) and behavioural (usage/consumption rate) variables using triangulation and cross-tabulation. This will enable the investigation into the specific views of each segment in relation the possibility of legalising marijuana.

**Segments in Favour of Legalisation**

For instance, when narrowing down the results to viewing the specific respondents who voted in favour of legalising marijuana, it was found that of the 418 respondents, the most dominant age category was between the ages of 25-34 showing 46.2% (193), predominantly males, accounting for 72% (301), with most favourable political party the Democratic Party showing 45% (188) (figure 5). Furthering the analysis it was found that in terms of consumption levels of marijuana, 53.1% reported ‘I do not consume’ and that the most important factors in their decision to favour legalising was ‘Tax Revenues Generated – (For State Spending)’ carrying an average weighting of 1.54 followed by ‘Impacts on Crime – (Including Judicial, Arrest and Law Enforcement Expenditure) carrying a weighting of 1.71.

**Segments in Disapproved of Legalisation**

When observing the respondents who disapproved of the possibility of legalising marijuana within the state of Kansas, it can be seen that of the 30 respondents, the most predominant age was between the ages of 18-24 accounting for 36.7% (11), showing a dominant gender category of males with 66.7% (20), with an interesting finding that 33.3% (10) supported the Republican Party and 80% (24) felt that it was unacceptable to consume marijuana. Furthermore, the entire population (30) selected the option of ‘I do not consume’ when answering on their consumption levels of marijuana. The specific findings of this population also outlined that ‘Impacts on Youth’ and ‘Public Health Issues’ were the most important factors in the decision on whether or not to legalise marijuana, weighing in at 1.50 and 1.83 respectively, to where when responding on the impacts of legalising...
marijuana on economy of Kansas, 46.7% (14) of the respondents equally selected that the legalisation would have either a ‘negative’ impact or ‘both positive and negative’ impact.

![Political persuasions of Male respondents in the 25-34 age group.](image)

**Figure 5: Political persuasions of Male respondents in the 25-34 age group.**

**Demographic, Lifestyle and Behavioural Segments**

With a deeper analysis into the results collected from the population of Kansas, particular segments can be further identified through specifically showing a comparison between the differences in consumption levels, the differences in perceptions on the importance placed on the factors contributing to the decision to either favour or disfavour legalisation, and the variables of age and gender. For instance, when observing (figure 6) it can be seen that the highest consumption levels occurred between the ages of 18-24 for the categories of ‘Daily’, ‘Weekly’ and ‘Monthly’ frequencies of consumption, compared to that of other age categories.

![Comparison of age categories in the frequency of marijuana consumption](image)

**Figure 6: Comparison of age categories in the frequency of marijuana consumption**
Additional analysis also identifies that between male and female, it was found that, in almost all cases, across all respondents, the results presented that males consumed marijuana more frequently than that of females, (figure 7) throughout the consumption levels of ‘Daily’, ‘Weekly’ and ‘Yearly’. It was also, however, found that there were no gender differences in the factors that residents found to be of the most important in contributing to their decisions in favouring or disfavouring the legalisation of marijuana within Kansas; males and females agreed on the level of importance placed on each factor, showing no contrast of differences in perceptions.

When investigating into the lifestyle variable of political influence in comparison between the two largest political parties (Democratic & Republican), it was found that of the (243) respondents who supported these two parties, more respondents from the Democratic Party across the consumption levels of ‘Daily’, ‘Weekly’, ‘Monthly’ and ‘Yearly’ consumed marijuana more frequently than that of respondents from the Republican Party (figure 8).

![Figure 7: Gender comparison of marijuana consumption](image)

Furthermore, when following the theme of the political influence of the respondents, it can also be observed that when comparing the views on what impact the legalisation of marijuana would have on the state of Kansas, there is a clear theme that the respondents in favour of the Democratic Party predominately feel (138) that a ‘Positive’ impact would ensue, whereas the Republican Party tend towards ‘Both positive and negative’ impact (19), or a ‘Negative’ impact (9) compared to that of the Democratic Party (1) (figure 9).

Upon presenting the findings from the primary research, the following part of the report will now attempt to discuss such findings, whilst relating such results to the evidence highlighted within the earlier literature review.
Figure 8: Comparison of marijuana use across against the two main political parties

Figure 9: Comparison of perceived effect of marijuana legalisation against political affiliation
Discussion

To begin this section, a structure using the research objectives of this report will be utilised, in an attempt to present a logical discussion of the results and the relevance to the earlier literature in an effort to meet the aim of this report. This will be conducted through addressing each of the research objectives that were focused on collection of results from the residents of Kansas, in turn these findings can be related to the information exposed within the literature review which has focused on the impacts incurred on Colorado’s economy from the legalisation of marijuana. The comparison between the results from Kansas’s residents and the evidence from the literature review will enable a fluid discussion and will attempt to address the aim of whether Kansas would legalise the recreational use of marijuana.

Most Important Factors Perceived

With the objective, ‘to identify the most important factors perceived by Kansas’s residents on deciding on whether or not to legalise marijuana in the state of Kansas’, this section of the report can discuss the most important factors favoured from the analysis of the results, whilst relating them to the example of Colorado from the literature review. Firstly, it can be found that the first most highlighted and predominant factor was that of ‘Tax Revenues Generated’ showing 250 respondents (55.80%) voted for ‘Very Important’ whilst having the lowest weighted average of 1.64. This can be interestingly compared to that of the previous evidence discussed in the earlier literature review. As the most notable impact on Colorado’s economy was through the fiscal benefits brought about from the implementation of legalised recreational marijuana, to where evidence from Williams (2015), Ingraham (2015), NORML (2015) outlined the mass generations in sales and tax revenues received from the newly implemented and regulated marijuana industry within Colorado, showing total sales of $699,198,805 (Baca, 2015), in which it was discovered that recreational marijuana sales accounted for $313.2 million, yielding around $44 million in tax revenue according to (Wyatt, 2015a; NORML, 2015; Pursell, 2015). Therefore with Kansas’s residents placing the most importance on the tax generations through the legalisation of marijuana, evidence from (Raghavan, 2014) calculated the potential tax revenues that the state of Kansas could generate with legalising recreational marijuana, along with predictions from (Drenkard & Borean, 2014) estimated that Kansas could generate $14,608,476 in tax revenue.

The second most important factor that the residents of Kansas felt were most important in influencing their decision to legalise marijuana was that of ‘Impacts on Crime’ in which 215 (47.99%) of the respondents voted this as ‘Very Important’ with the second lowest average weighting of 1.73. Therefore upon observing the evidence highlighted in the literature review, this factor was also outlined to be the second most recognised impact on Colorado’s economy, showing that post legalisation, overall crime had decreased, showing reductions in offenses such as homicides, robberies, property crime and also showing a dramatic decrease in the amount of marijuana possession arrests (Fern, 2014). Furthermore, with the legalisation of marijuana, windfall savings had also been witnessed through how marijuana possession had been legalised, therefore reducing the number of arrests and law enforcement expenditure to be depleted on prohibition. Again, this significant impact on crime and the savings incurred from such change in legislation can be related to the possible legalisation of marijuana within Kansas. As Miron (2010) highlighted the large proportions of arrests related to marijuana within the state of Kansas, therefore it was predicted that if Kansas were to legalise marijuana, there would be the potential to reduce law enforcement expenditure by $77 million, which is what the state of Kansas currently dedicates to the prohibition of marijuana. Further evidence from Sloan (2015) and Perry (2013) highlighted that the majority (60%) of non-violent drug offenders were marijuana related showing a direct enforcement cost of $25.2 million, again showing the amount of savings that could be retained if marijuana were to be legalised.

Additionally, from the results, it was also found that Kansas’s residents found that ‘Impacts on Youth’ was the third most important factor in their decision to favour or disfavour legalising marijuana showing. As from previous literature from Kuntz (2015) it was highlighted that since the change in recreational marijuana legislation within Colorado, there has been an increased surge in the consumption levels of marijuana found amongst youths, more so in the area of middle school. Furthermore the increasing trend of children hospitalisations within Colorado since the introduction of marijuana edibles outlined by Parker (2015), Downes
(2014) and Sutton (2015b) clearly highlight an alarming issue amongst youths with the recent change in legalisation, therefore raising a risk of legalisation in the eyes of Kansas’s residents.

**Favour or Disfavour the Legalisation of Marijuana**

Of the totalled 448 respondents collected across the state of Kansas, it was clear that a key theme had emerged that was able to meet the objective of this report on whether Kansas’s residents would favour or disfavour the legalisation of marijuana. From the results it was clearly highlighted that of the entire population received (448), 418 (93.30%) voted in favour of legalising marijuana opposed to the 30 (6.70%) respondents who voted in disfavour of legalising and regulating marijuana. These findings are interesting when compared to the 2012 ballot initiative results presented by (The Denver Post, 2012) for ‘Amendment 64’ in Colorado, in which 54.8% (1,291,771) of Colorado voters approved the legalisation of marijuana opposed to 45.1% (1,064,342) that voted against such policy changes, showing that both states have considerable differences in opinion on the matter of legalising marijuana showing a 38.5% difference between in votes in favour of legalising marijuana between Kansas and Colorado.

From the results, a specific segment can be defined that can be used as a representative sample of the population in favour of legalisation, this segment consist of males, aged between 25-34 of the Democratic Party that do not consume marijuana, that place the most importance on the tax revenues generated and the impacts on crime through the legalisation of marijuana.

Interestingly, earlier evidence from The Washington Post (2012) identifies Kansas as a predominantly Republican favouring state, however evidence from the data collection process suggests differently, implying that of the 418 respondents who favoured in legalising marijuana, 188 (44.98%) were in favour of the Democratic Party compared to the 39 (9.33%) in favour of the Republican Party. This finding can be related to the discussions of USA Today (2015) in which it was highlighted that of the 27 Democratic states, 20 states have legalised medical marijuana and 3 have legalised recreational marijuana, compared to 3 Republican states having legal medical marijuana with 1 state having legal recreational marijuana, suggesting, of the example of more Democratic states opting to legalise both medical and recreational marijuana, Kansas could possible follow suit with majority of its population being in favour of the Democratic Party. However when comparing the population that favoured the legalisation of marijuana within Kansas to the population that disfavoured such decision, it was recognised that population in disfavour were predominately under the influence of the Republican Party, which agrees with the earlier literature from The Washington Post (2012). This enables the recognition of a specific segment that represents the population in disfavour of legalising marijuana, which consists of males, between the ages of 18-24, of the Republican Party that feel that marijuana is unacceptable to consume and therefore choosing to not consume themselves, whilst placing the greatest of importance on the impacts on youths and impacts on public health.

**Specific Segments of the Population**

With a deeper analysis into the results received from the respondents of Kansas, a specific segment of Kansas’s population can be identified in terms of consumption levels of marijuana. As from the earlier literature review, evidence from Gettman (2005) outlined that half of annual marijuana users are under the age of 26, to which this is clearly exemplified through the results collected from Kansas, showing that individuals aged between 18-24 consisted of having the largest amount of votes for the most frequent use of marijuana compared to that of the other age categories. Furthermore Gettman (2005) states that males account for 60% of the annual marijuana users, this again is supported by data collected from Kansas, showing that in every frequency of consumption, male votes implied that they consumed marijuana on a more frequent basis than that of females.

**Conclusion**

This report has successfully presented a debate concerning the legalisation of recreational marijuana, in which by exposing the impacts incurred through such change in legislation, has helped to raise the awareness when focusing on the most recent example of Colorado, that was discussed in the literature review chapter of this report. Upon the observation of the previous literature, a critical approach was adopted in order to present a
balanced argument on both the positive and negative impacts experienced of legalising marijuana when looking into the example of Colorado. The review highlighted the most notable impacts such as the fiscal benefits of regulating marijuana, which saw a surge in increased tax revenues generated for state spending, to the impacts on crime with reported reductions in marijuana arrests and mass savings for law enforcement. Furthermore, the change in legislation witnessed increases in the levels of youth consumption whilst raising the concerns over the health issues experienced through adult consumption of marijuana. The review continued to expose the impacts on unemployment, in which supporting evidence outlined the increase in job creation through the introduction of the newly implemented marijuana industry. It also sustained to highlight the impacts on local businesses showing the increasing demand for real estate and property development, whilst outlining the increased rate of tourism since the introduction of a legalised marijuana market and how the change in legislation has had knock-on effects on other policy changes in terms of social values.

In doing so, a gap in the research was identified, on whether or not future states, most notably Kansas, would choose to follow the example of Colorado in legalising and therefore regulating marijuana, similarly to alcohol. This enabled the development of the research objectives of this report, which were outlined in an effort to help meet the aim of this project. Therefore from conduction of the primary research process, which aimed to collect data from the residents of Kansas on whether or not they would favour the legislation of marijuana, it also enabled the identification of the research objective on the most important factors the residents felt would influence their decision following the example and factors witnessed in Colorado, which enabled a clear link between the primary research’s results and the factors outlined in the literature review. In this comparison, it was found that the residents of Kansas felt that the most important factors in influencing their decision on whether or not to legalise marijuana, was that of the tax revenues generated to fund state spending, the impacts on crime including judicial, arrests and law enforcing savings and finally the impacts on youths. Interestingly, these three factors were the most influential and most notable impacts that had occurred in Colorado since the introduction of the marijuana industry.

Further analysis from the results was also able to meet the objective of identifying what segments of the population were in favour and disfavour of legalising marijuana. This analysis identified that the segment most in favour of legalising marijuana were that of males aged between 25-34, most in favour with the Democratic Party who did not consume marijuana, and felt that the important factors in their decisions were that of the impacts of tax revenues generated and the impacts on crime, which happened to be the most positive impacts incurred in Colorado’s example. The segment most in disfavour of legalising marijuana were that of males aged between 18-24 who favoured the Republican Party and also do not consume marijuana, whose most important factors were that of impacts on youths and impacts on public health, which were of the most negative impacts experienced in the example of Colorado. With the findings having identified two of the research objectives, analysis across the broad population (448) was able to meet the third research objective and aim of the whole project, in identifying whether or not the residents of Kansas would favour the legalisation of marijuana within the state. The results clearly showed that 93.30% (418) of the 448 respondents were in favour of legalising marijuana within the state of Kansas, showing that the most important factors in their decisions were that of the tax revenues generated, impacts on crime and the impacts on youths.

However, although the aim and objectives of this project were thoroughly achieved, it must be noted that some limitations had been experienced that can be outlined in an effort to provide recommendations for future research within this field. As prior predictions from the research methodology section of this report highlighted the limitations in using an online research approach, through how younger populates are more active online than compared to older populations, meaning this research strategy attracted more younger respondents than elders, which slightly hindered the validity. Furthermore, more specific demographical questions could have been utilised to more effectively underpin certain segments within the population, such as questions attempting to identify the town or city the respondents were located within the state of Kansas. However to overcome such limitations, this research process aimed to achieve a high response rate in order to be more valid and reliable to promote a more representative population.
Therefore to conclude, this report has successfully identified the impacts incurred on an economy through the legalisation of marijuana. Furthermore, it has also identified that the population of Kansas are clearly in favour of supporting such changes in legislation within the state, feeling the most notable impacts experienced in the example of Colorado are also the most important in the eyes of the residents of Kansas. Therefore the final comments to conclude this report are that it still remains to be seen whether Kansas will choose to adopt such policies in legalising marijuana in the future, even with the concluding results suggesting a majority in favour of legalisation. Although with various states having already reformed their laws on marijuana since the change in legislation in Colorado, it is clearly evident that this historic policy change will continue to influence changes not only within the US, but also across the rest of the world.

References


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