

The role of personality in the onset of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use during adolescence

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ABSTRACT

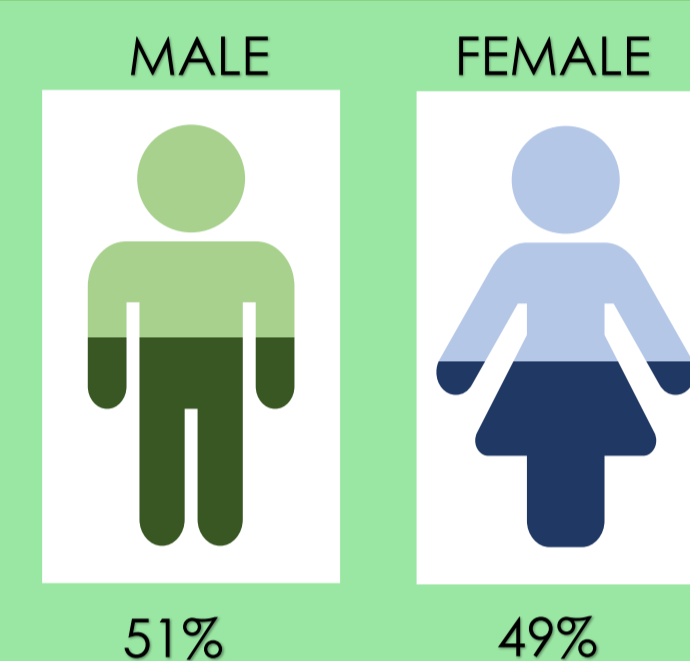
Some studies have shown that personality, specifically low conscientiousness (C), low agreeableness (A) and extraversion (E), are involved in substance use. The purpose of this study is to determine which five-factor model personality characteristics are related to alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use and study this relationship in detail during the transition from early adolescence to adolescence. 866 students from IES Bovalar participated in this study answering the questionnaires JSNEO-S and CODIS. The Pearson correlation analyses showed that extraversion was associated with alcohol and tobacco mainly at 14-15 years probably because at these ages substance consumption is highly recreational and social. Low agreeableness and low conscientiousness, whom predispose antinormative behavior, are related to early substance use. Finally, cannabis use is related to extraversion and low agreeableness mainly at 14-15 years. This would indicate that cannabis has a social and recreational component, but at the same time, its consumption is still considered antinormative and transgressive.

INTRODUCTION

The use of drugs in adolescents causes social, personal and health problems (Goldman, Oroszi & Ducci, 2005). The prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use among Secondary Education students aged 14 to 18 years are 78.9%, 38.4% and 29.1% respectively, and the age of onset of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis consumption is 14, 14.1 and 14.8 years respectively (ESTUDES, 2016). In addition, the consumption of substances in adolescents promotes dating violence (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kim, 2012), school failure (Duarte, Escario, & Molina, 2006; ESTUDES, 2016) or traffic accidents (ESTUDES, 2016), among other risk behaviors. There are multiple biological, psychological and social factors that interrelate in the onset, development and drugs misuse. Within the psychological ones we will focus on the personality. The five-factor model of personality becomes very popular because it explains a good part of the personality variance from making descriptions of individuals that show these five factors (McCrae & Costa, 1997). The personality characteristics associated with the use of drugs in adolescence are low conscientiousness (C), low agreeableness (A) and extraversion (E) (Ibáñez, Ruipérez, Villa, Moya, & Ortet, 2008; Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Rooke, & Schutte, 2007). The aims of this study are (a) to determine which five-factor model personality characteristics are related to alcohol, cannabis and tobacco use and (b) to study this relationship in detail in the period from preadolescence to early adolescence.

METHOD**PARTICIPANTS**

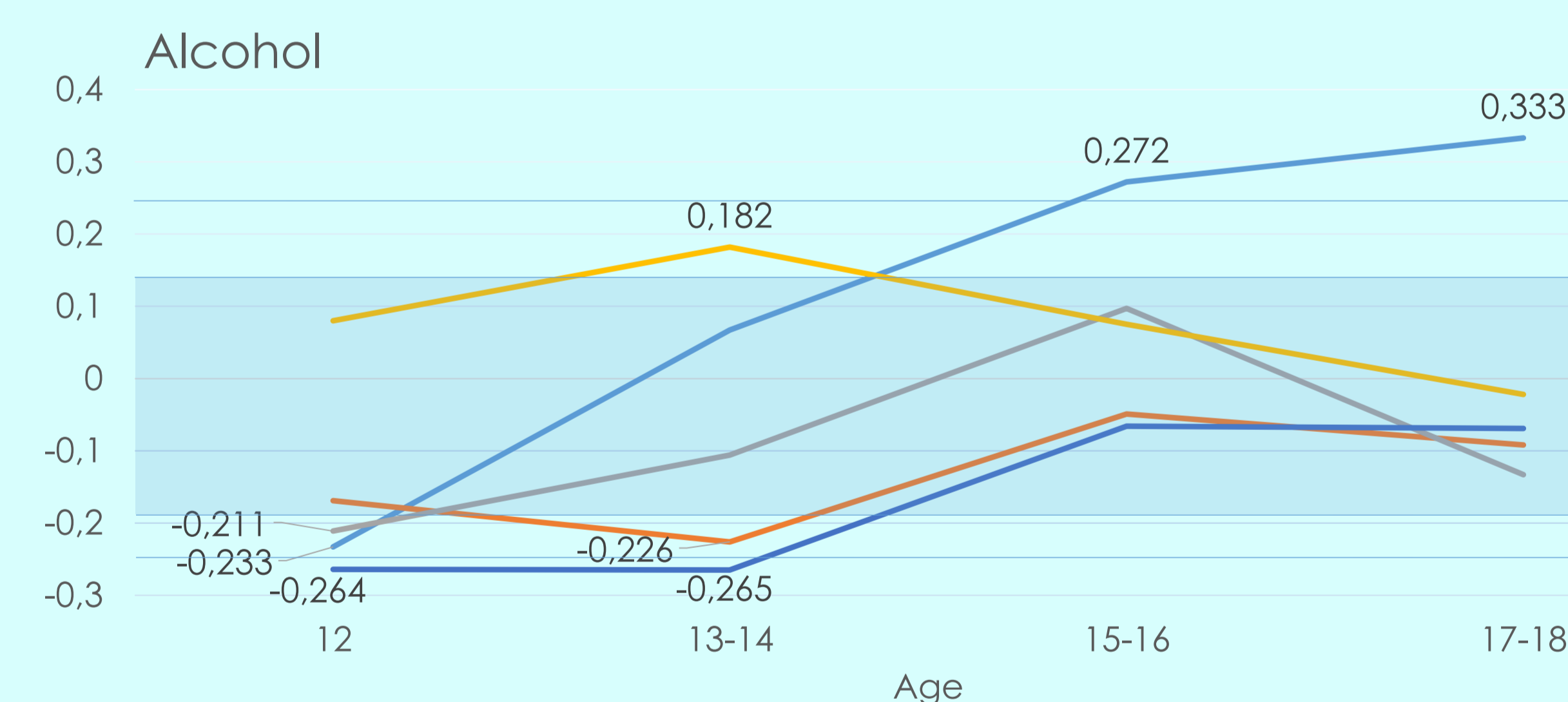
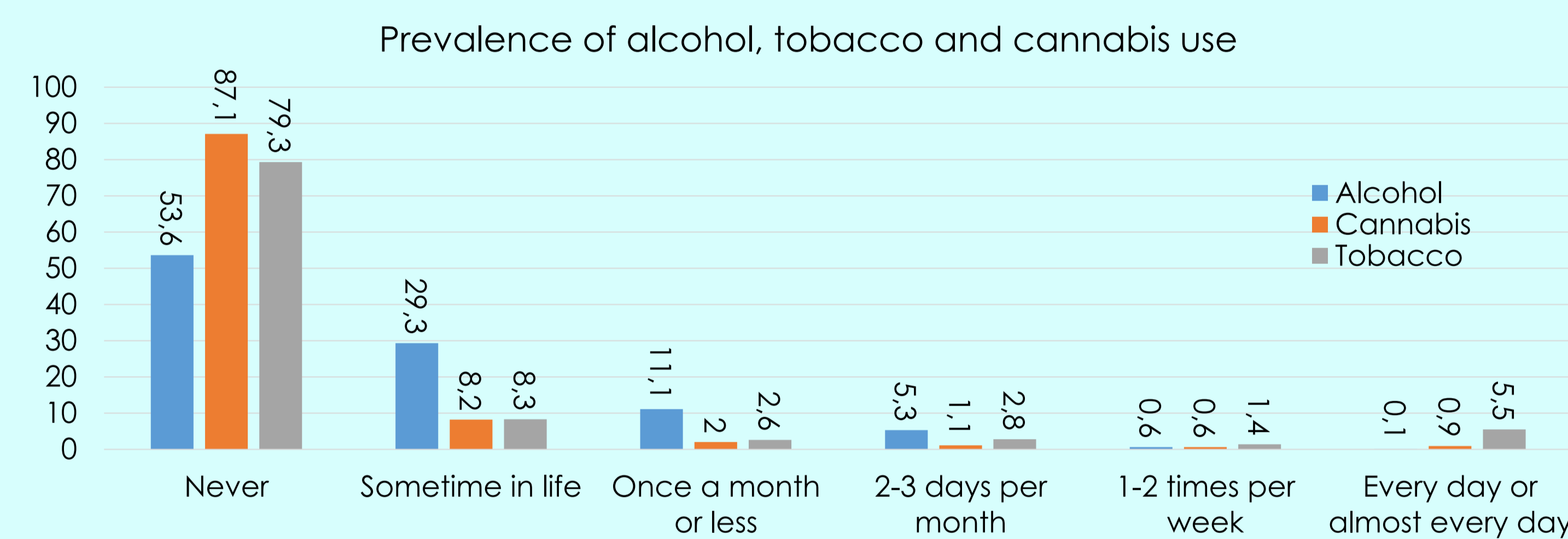
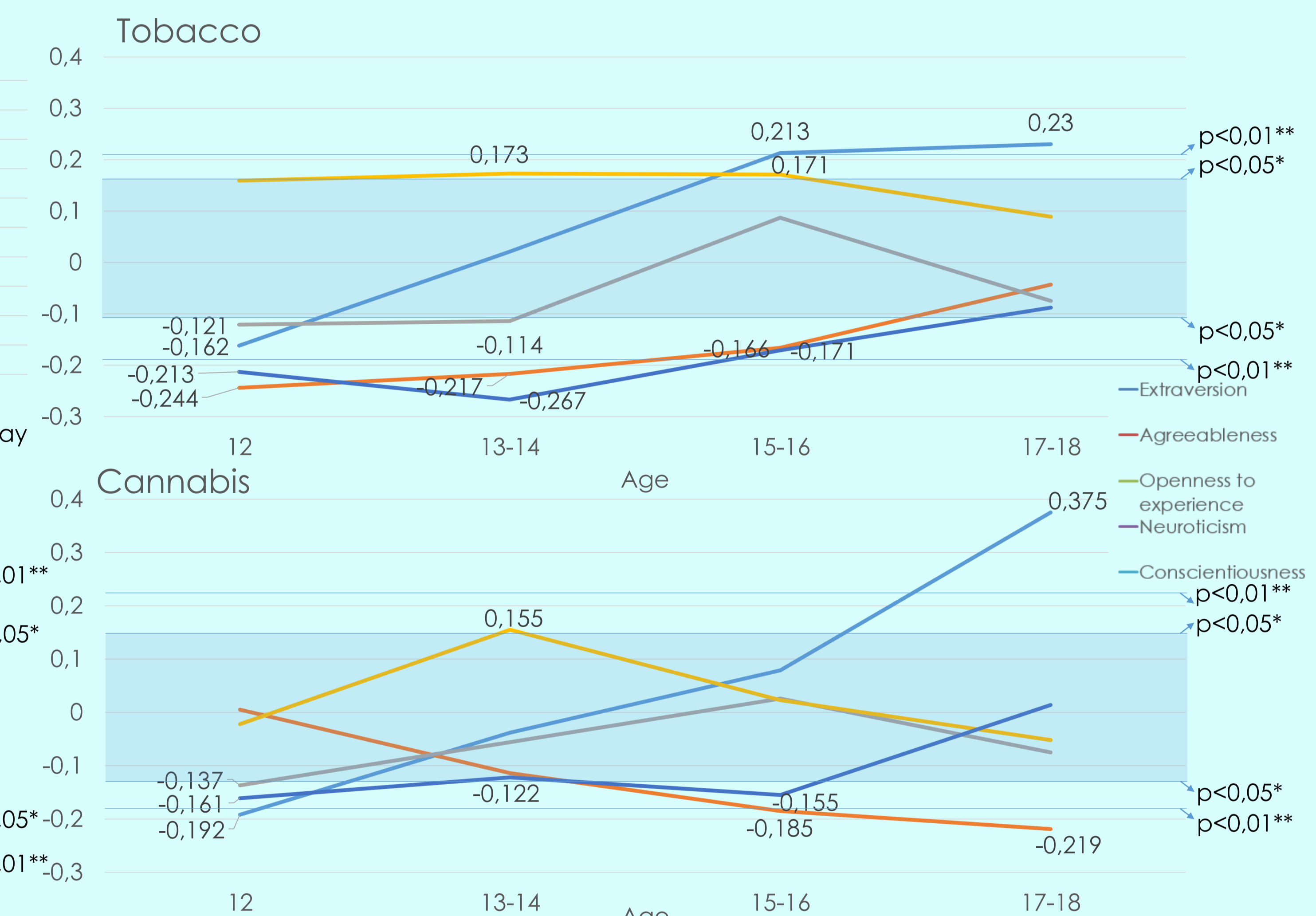
The sample consists of 866 students of the IES Bovalar of Castellón. The age range varies between 12 and 18 years of age with an average of 14.37 (SD = 1,589).

**MATERIALS**

- Junior Spanish Neo-Short, JSNEO-S (Ortet, Escrivá, Ibáñez, Moya, Villa, & Mezquita, 2010) It assesses the five basic dimensions of personality in young people and their respective facets
- Cannabis and Other Drugs Intake Scale, CODIS

PROCEDURE

The questionnaires have been administered in three consecutive sessions. In order to participate in the experiment we gave the students a consent form that had to be signed by the parents so that they could perform the tests. We took the tests to those who gave the informed consent. The test confidentiality was explained to the students in the first class. This consisted of treating the data anonymously and collectively. The first page that contains the names was removed. It was explained how to answer in each session, for instance, choosing the option they think is the most appropriate among a total of five options. At all times the doubts they had were resolved. As an incentive, we explained in the first session and we gave to all participants in the last session a notebook and a pen from the UJI. In addition, a batch of material from the UJI was raffled in each class. This is part of a wider investigation in which I carried out together with the IDAP group and with other TFGs and researchers, so I only collected part of the sample and passed part of the data.

RESULTS**DESCRIPTIVE****CORRELATION****DISCUSSION**

The current study examines in detail the evolution of the role of personality characteristics in different substances use at different ages. In early adolescence extraversion (E) seems to take a more protective factor, whereas extraversion becomes more and more relevant at 14-15 years in alcohol and tobacco, that is, at the age when the consumption of these substances is more usual. This would suggest that consumption at these ages is a social activity widely accepted, for recreational purposes and in a social context, such as parties and binge drinking. On the other hand, low agreeableness and low conscientiousness, seems relevant in the very early onset of alcohol and tobacco use. That is, those personality dimensions predisposing to more antinormative behaviors are those associated with behaviors that are perceived as more antinormative, that is, early consumption of alcohol and tobacco. From 14 years for alcohol and 15 for tobacco, agreeableness and conscientiousness cease to be a risk factors. Finally, cannabis use is associated with extraversion from 16 years, probably because the habitual use of cannabis is later than that of alcohol and tobacco. In addition, low agreeableness is associated with cannabis use from 14-15 years. This would suggest that cannabis has a certain social and recreational component, but in turn, its consumption is still considered a more antinormative and transgressive consumption than alcohol and tobacco. To sum up, extraversion acts similar in all three drugs. Low agreeableness and low conscientiousness are related to precocious use of alcohol and tobacco, and with cannabis use. Present results may be important in the development of personalized and more efficient prevention programs for early substances use. There is evidence that intervention programs focused on personality are more effective to prevent the onset and escalation of substance misuse in high-risk adolescents (Conrod, Castellanos-Ryan & Strang, 2010).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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