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Why Psychedelics?

A Comparison of Psychoactive Drug Use Purposes

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My Areas of Interest

Cognitive Neuroscience

Consciousness Research

Altered States of Consciousness

Dreaming, Hypnosis, Meditation, ...

Hallucinations

Psychoactive Drugs

Stimulants, Depressants, ...

Hallucinogens

Dissociatives, Deliriants, ...

Psychedelics

Entheogens

**LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, DMT, LSA, ...
salvinorin-A (*Salvia divinorum*)**

Contents

I. Psychoactive Drugs (preliminary data)

- Drug use purposes

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- Influence on life quality and spirituality

III. Psychedelics (theoretical study)

- Drug instrumentalization & categorization

IV. Bio-psycho-socio-spiritual framework

- Theories, models, and human needs

I. Psychoactive Drugs

Psychoactive Drug Use

- complex phenomenon: many drugs & use patterns
- social discourses mostly disregard voices of users
- attention targeted at problematic drug use
- large percentage of drug users are non-problematic
- non-problematic drug use is understudied
- Let's study drug use purposes!

Participants and Methods

- online questionnaire
- recruited with snowball method from multiple sources
- purposive sampling in target group:
Hungarian Psychedelic Community (www.daath.hu)
- 667 adequately completed web forms
- exclusion criteria: problematic drug use
- 589 non-problematic users
- 3 psychological instruments:
coping (PICI), purpose in life (PIL), spirituality (ISS)

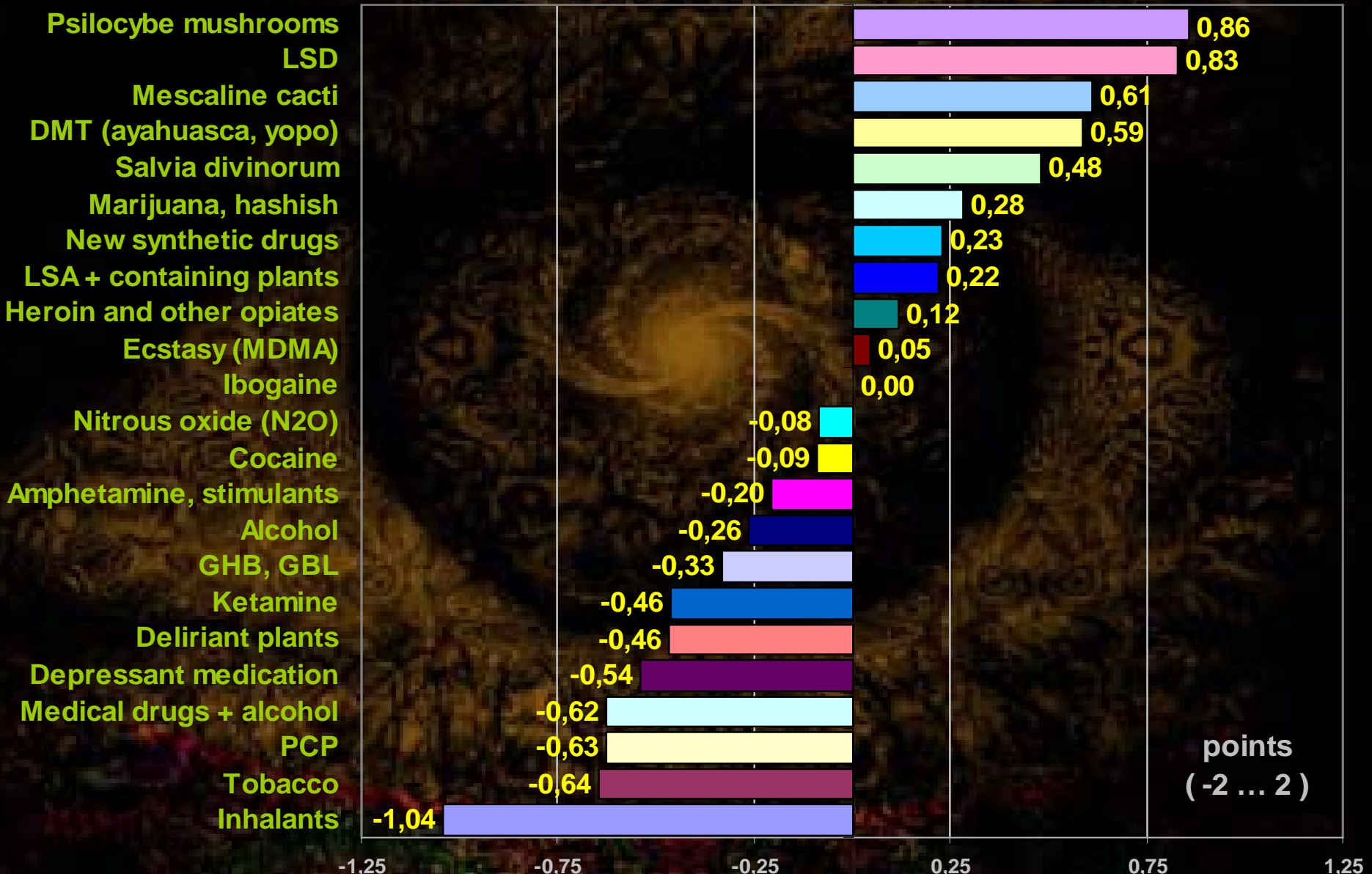
Drug Types with Categorization

Depressants		Alcohol					
		Inhalants					
		Sleep medication, tranquilizers, anxiolytics (<i>without a diagnosis or prescription</i>)					
		Medical drugs and alcohol combined					
		Heroin and other opiates					
		GHB, GBL					
Stimulants		Tobacco					
		Ecstasy (MDMA)					
		Amphetamine and other stimulants					
		Cocaine					
Hallucinogens		Deliriants					
		Jimson weed, angel's trumpet, henbane etc.					
		Dissociatives					
		Ketamine					
		Nitrous oxide (N ₂ O)					
		PCP					
		Psychedelics		Minor			
						Marijuana, hashish	
						New synthetic drugs (2C-B, 5-MeO-DMT etc.)	
				Ibogaine			
Major				LSD			
				Psilocybe mushrooms			
		Mescaline cacti					
		Salvia divinorum					
		DMT (ayahuasca, yopo etc.)					
		LSA (morning glory, HBWR etc.)					
(fictional drug)		Relevin					

Drug Use Purposes

RELSPI	Religious or spiritual practices
S-KNOW	Self-knowledge and self-inspection
S-MEDI	Self-medication
MOOD	Enhancing mood
BORED	Avoiding boredom and hopelessness
DEFIC	Offsetting a deficiency
SOCIAL	Increasing social contact
SENS	Increasing sensation and pleasure
ART	Stimulating artistic creativity/performance
PHYS	Enhancing physical power
REBEL	Rebellion or alternative lifestyle
IDENT	Building personal identity and drawing attention
MEMBER	Expressing membership in a group
CURIO	Out of curiosity

Drug Influence on Life Quality



II. Psychedelics (practical)

Móró, L., Simon, K., Bárd, I., & Rácz, J. (2011). Voice of the Psychonauts: Coping, Life Purpose, and Spirituality in Psychedelic Drug Users. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 43(3), 188–198.

Study Goals

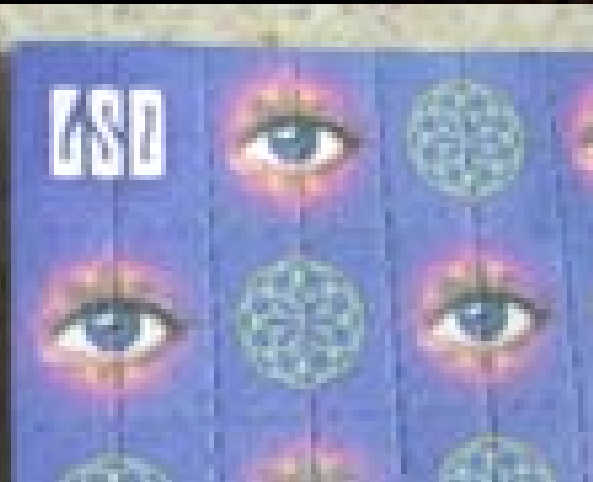
- To study psychopharmacological self-enhancement by assessing a non-problematic drug user group
- Comparing:
 - 1) autognostic use of psychedelic drugs („PSY”)
 - 2) other uses of other drugs („C1”)
 - 3) no drug use („C2”)
- Initial work hypothesis:

Differences in life meaningfulness and coping characteristics

Autognostic psychedelic drug use associated with

 - enhancements of life quality
 - a higher level of spirituality

Major Psychedelics



LSD



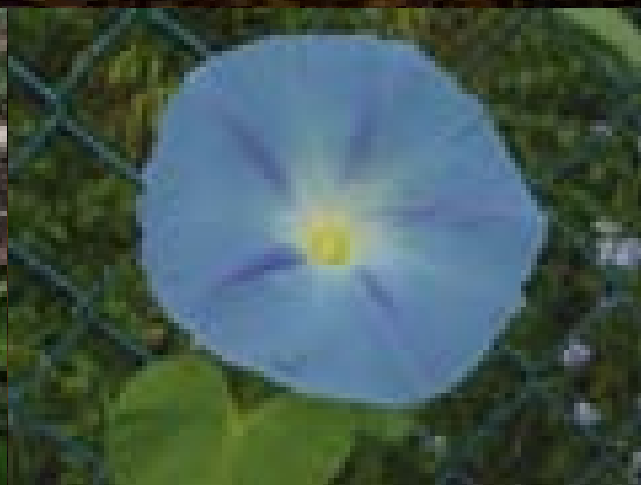
psilocybin



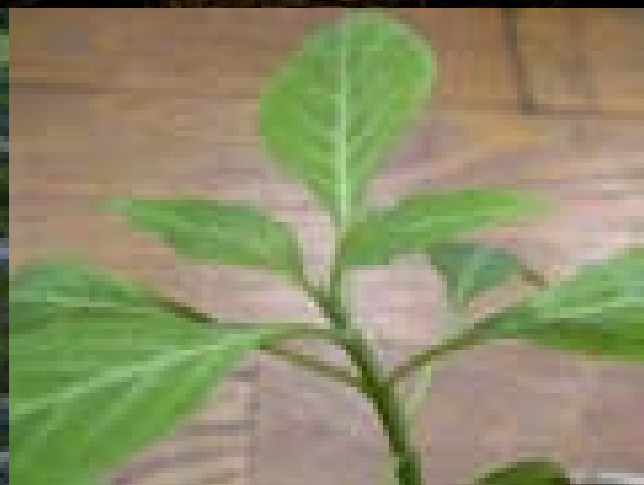
mescaline



DMT



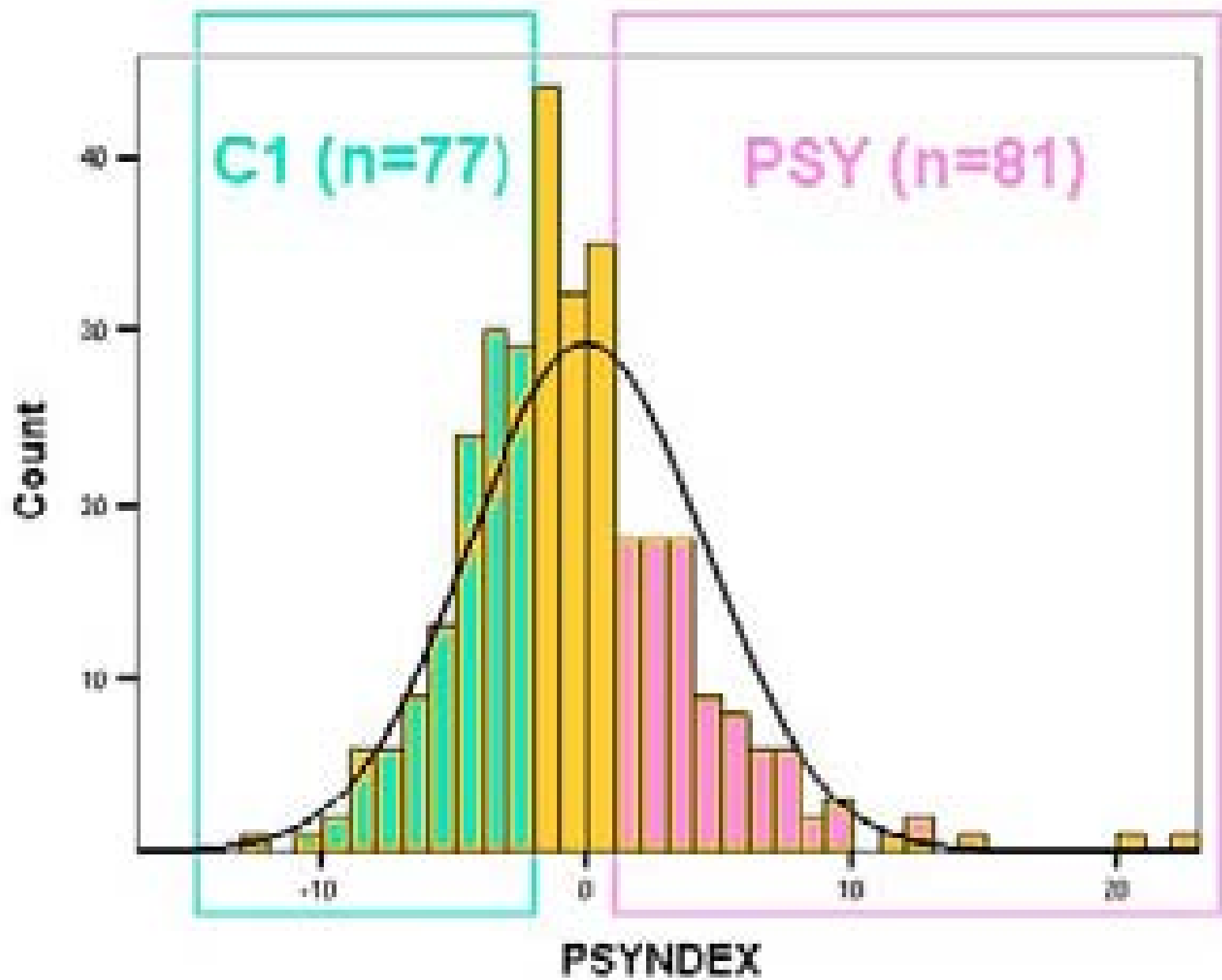
LSA



salvinorin-A

PSYNDEX score (“psychedelic index”)

- calculated for 277 non-problematic drug users
- drug use parameters:
 - (1) number of psychedelic drugs
 - (2) autognostic drug use purposes
 - (3) importance and effects of the experience
- obtained distribution range (-12 to 23)
- separated into roughly equally sized groups:
 - high-scoring (PSYNDEX > 1) -> target group (“PSY”)
 - low-scoring (PSYNDEX < -2) -> control group (“C1”)



Results

- PSY group substance use less problematic than C1
- PSYINDEX – PICI: weak correlation ($r = .137$, $p < .009$) only if problematic drug users included
- PSYINDEX – ISS: correlation ($r = .339$, $p < .001$)
- ISS in matched groups: PSY > C1, C2
- # of psychedelic drugs: positive correlation with ISS

III. Psychedelics (theoretical)

Móro, L., & Noreika, V. (2011). Sacramental and spiritual use of hallucinogenic drugs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 34(6), 319–320.

Journal:
Behavioral and Brain Sciences
(2011 Impact Factor: 25.056)

Innovative format:

(1)
***Target
Article***

(2)
***Open Peer
Commentary***

(3)
***Authors'
Response***

(1) – Target Article:

Müller & Schumann (2011)

Drugs as instruments – A new framework for nonaddictive psychoactive drug use

Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 34(6), 293–310.

Abstract: Most people who are regular consumers of psychoactive drugs are not drug addicts, nor will they ever become addicts. In neurobiological theories, non-addictive drug consumption is acknowledged only as a “necessary” prerequisite for addiction, but not as a stable and widespread behavior in its own right. This target article proposes a new neurobiological framework theory for non-addictive psychoactive drug consumption, introducing the concept of “drug instrumentalization”. [...]

Proximate mechanisms of psychoactive drug use

(by Müller & Schumann)

1. Improved social interaction.
2. Facilitated sexual behavior.
3. Improved cognitive performance and counteracting fatigue.
4. Facilitated recovery from and coping with psychological stress.
5. Self-medication for mental problems.
6. Sensory curiosity – Expanded perception horizon.
7. Euphoria, hedonia, and high.
8. Improved physical appearance and attractiveness.

6. Sensory curiosity – Expanded perception horizon.

(by Müller & Schumann)

„[...] Drugs that humans consume primarily for their sensory perception changing properties, such as hallucinogens”

- mescaline, psilocybin, LSD**
- phencyclidine, ketamine, GHB**
- cannabis**

„[...] coincident activation of previously unrelated representations that are then interlinked”

(2) – Open Peer Commentary:

Móro & Noreika (2011)

**Sacramental and spiritual use
of hallucinogenic drugs**

Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 34(6), 319–320.

Abstract: Arguably, the religious use of hallucinogenic drugs stems from a human search of metaphysical insight, rather than from a direct need for cognitive, emotional, social, physical, or sexual improvement. Therefore, the sacramental and spiritual intake of hallucinogenic drugs goes so much beyond other biopsychosocial functions that it deserves its own category in the drug instrumentalization list.

Sacramental and spiritual use of hallucinogenic drugs

(by Móró & Noreika)

Induces unique kinds of subjective experiences with a rich phenomenology

Results in increased apperception, dissolution of ego boundaries, feelings of unity and insight, presence of or encounters with nonhuman entities or beings

Appears as independent from one's own mind

Motivated by gaining metaphysical insight

Originates from a "higher" need for mystical experiences

Supported by vast amount of archeological evidence and historical documentation


(3) – Authors' Response:

Müller & Schumann (2011)

To use or not to use: Expanding the view on non-addictive psychoactive drug consumption and its implications

Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 34(6), 328–347.

„Móró & Noreika argued that in particular sacramental and spiritual drug intake, which is famously associated with psychedelic drugs, may go far beyond a simple expansion of the perception horizon. We fully agree with this suggestion and add this as ninth instrumentalization goal to the list as:
Facilitating spiritual and religious activities.”



IV. Bio-Psycho-Socio-Spiritual framework

Theories and Models

Maslow (1943) Theory of human motivation

Antonovsky (1961) Salutogenesis model

Frankl (1963) Search for ultimate meaning

Engel (1977) Biopsychosocial model of health

Bishop (2009) Biopsychosociospiritual medicine

Human Needs

Maslow (1943) A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review* 50, 370–396.

Self-transcendence

Self-actualization

Aesthetic

Cognitive

Esteem

Love

Safety

Physiological

≈

Spiritual

Socio

Psycho

Bio

Why Psychedelics?

Spiritual

Mystical experiences

?

Self-transcendence

Socio

Entheogenic churches

Noesis

Psycho

Creativity

Psychotherapy

Consciousness research

Bio

Altered states

Autognosis

Cluster headaches

Addiction therapy

Self-medication

...

Summary

Psychedelics:

- used for autognostic purposes
- has positive effect on life quality
- associated with a higher level of spirituality
- facilitate spiritual and religious activities
- do higher functions in a multi-level framework

...are the most extraordinary!

**Thank you
for your
attention!**

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