

Dominant Cultural Cannabis Norms

Matt Reid, Ph.D.

Widener University, USA

Abstract

This descriptive study seeks to evaluate dominant cultural sentiments surrounding cannabis norms using the popular subreddit “Am I The Asshole?” (AITA). Existing studies on cannabis norms and user etiquette are based on samples of subcultural insiders, but how does the larger dominant culture define appropriate and inappropriate uses of the drug? With over 14 million members, AITA is a large public forum for conflict resolution where users debate cultural norms and moral codes. Using thematic content analysis, the current study analyzed 547 posts pertaining to cannabis from the AITA subreddit, and the top three replies for each post were also collected to evaluate consensus among the final judgments offered. Prominent themes include debates about using cannabis around family members, doing daily activities while high, disputes between neighbors over the smell of cannabis, conflicts between partners over cannabis use, the ethics of narcing on cannabis users, and many others. Broad consensus was evident in some thematic categories, such as that it is always wrong to drive while under the influence of cannabis, but there was a lack of consensus in other categories, such as whether or not it is acceptable to use cannabis in a setting where children are present.

Keywords: cannabis; content analysis; etiquette; norms; reddit