ABSTRACT

This project is an analysis of social media posts on a popular social media site, Instagram, related to alcohol from August 2018 through December 2018 and August 2019 through December 2019. Assessing the behaviors related to drinking on social media can help college communities create better interventions to reduce the occurrence of risky behaviors and improve health.

INTRODUCTION

Binge drinking is the most common, costly, and deadly pattern of excessive alcohol use in the United States (Sacks et al. 2010). This poses a huge public health concern, specifically when the issue is preventable. Binge or excessive drinking is not only an issue on a personal level; social factors can be attributed as well. Individuals are nested within their micro system (family, work, and school environments), which are nested in an even larger macrosystem. Macro level factors include marketing and policy changes related to alcohol. Macro level factors influence microsystem networks such as school attitudes and norms, which ultimately affect personal attitudes and behaviors (Sudhinaraset et al., 2016).

With the introduction of House Bill 389, which allows beer and wine sales at sporting events, there is concern that binge drinking could become a norm on East Carolina’s campus. This change in a macro level factor may impact student behaviors and the amount that individuals drink and post alcohol related images on social media.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this poster is to enable the reader to understand the scope of demographics behind what is being posted to social media related to alcohol use. This research addresses two main research questions: (1) Does the implementation of House Bill 389 (allowing beer and wine sales at on-campus sporting events) influence the rate of alcohol related posts on social media and the social context around drinking? (2) What is the general context of images posted to social media?

RESULTS

There were no significant differences between alcohol-related posts from 2018 to 2019 (t(5)= -0.11, p=0.914). A t-test also indicated a significant difference between means of alcohol posts and non-alcohol posts with account type (business or personal, with business accounts having higher means of alcohol posts). \((t(2) = 4.7, p < .009)\)

A chi-square test of independence showed that there was significant association between comments posted in 2018 and 2019 and account type, \(X^2(2, N = 256) = 10.39, p = .006\). There were more comments that were non-alcohol related with business accounts than with personal/individual accounts.

The majority of posts displayed alcohol in a positive light (99.2%). The findings indicate roughly 76% of posts occurred under a personal accounts. Additionally, of that 76%, 56% of posts came from individuals who identify as female. 85% of all alcohol pictured was identified as beer.

In 2018, 125 posts were related to alcohol out of 1591 total posts. In 2019, 131 posts were related to alcohol out of 1135 total posts.

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REFERENCES
