



Beyond the Likes: Youth, Alcohol, and the Power of User-Generated Content

Matthew Dunn, Jack Delmenico, Alessandro Crocetti, Benjamin Riordan, Dan Anderson-Luxford, Kathryn Backholer, Jennifer Browne, Jingda Du, Zhen He, Charlotte Johnston, Emmanuel Kuntsche, Nichole Lister, Florentine Martino, Jennifer Merrill, Peter Miller, Erin Santamaria, Damian Scarf, Megan Strowger, Rose Marie Ward, Taylor Winter

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Alcohol Promotion via User-Generated Content on Instagram and TikTok: A Content Analysis

Presenter: A/Prof Matthew Dunn

Authors: Dr Alessandro Crocetti, Dr Nichole Lister, Dr Florentine Martino, A/Prof Jennifer Browne, Prof Kathryn Backholer, Prof Peter Miller, and A/Prof Matthew Dunn





Aims

- 1) What are the reach and engagement metrics of the collected alcohol UGC?
- 2) What is the prevalence of marketing disclosures and indicators of undisclosed alcohol promotion in UGC?
- 3) How is alcohol depicted in UGC on Instagram and TikTok, with regard to sentiment, user experiences and product placement?





Method

- UGC from Instagram and TikTok focusing on major alcohol tags and hashtags over a 7-year period
 - Brand search tags on Instagram (TikTok does not allow alcohol brand accounts)
 - Hashtag searches on Instagram and TikTok
- Identified most popular types of alcohol among young people & market share rankings for top 8 RTDs/spirits and top 4 beer brands in Australia
- Posts limited to between January 2017 and January 2024; most originated between 2023-24
- Data on reach/engagement; post type/source/prominence; nature/sentiment





Results – Reach and Engagement

- 1,848 posts collected (1,148 on Insta; 700 on TT)
- Number of followers of brand accounts on Insta ranged from 5,507 (@gordonsginau) to 529,000 (@johnniewalker)
- Number of hashtag followers on Insta ranged from 1000 (#vbbeer) to ~85.8 million (#beer)
- Number of hashtag followers on TT ranged from 47 (#vbbeer) to 11.9 million (#gin)
- TT videos received a median of 57,900 views, 318 likes, and 36 shares





Results – Type, Source, Prominence of Posts

- What type of accounts did posts come from?
 - 37% influencers (what we deemed to be influencers)
 - 40% individual/personal
 - 23% business
- 5% identified as sponsorship/paid posts as indicated by a label or hashtag
- 10% identified as potential undisclosed marketing (e.g., heavy product placement, history/nature of the account, etc)
- 51% of posts had alcohol as the main focus of the post; 21% had alcohol visible in the foreground
- 3% of Insta posts liked by alcohol brands; 3% both liked and commented on by an alcohol brand





Results – Nature and Sentiment of UGC

- 64% of posts included branded alcohol products; 30% only included branding (e.g., logos)
- 3% of posts were alcohol brand engagement (e.g., hashtag challenges)
- 78% of posts had pro brand sentiment (2% negative sentiment)
- 53% of posts showed positive experiences of drinking; 19% showed camaraderie
- 13% of posts showed humour
- 2% of posts showed negative experiences related to alcohol use
- 2% contained well-known celebrities and 1% contained well-known sportspeople





Summary

- UGC overwhelmingly portraying a pro-brand sentiment
- More undisclosed marketing than disclosed marketing
- Intoxication and binge drinking portrayed as positive/humorous

- What does this all mean?
 - Let's discuss...





Thank you

m.dunn@deakin.edu.au

The full paper is available and free to
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