The Impact of Social Media on Social Behaviors and Alcohol Consumption

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Abstract

This research project examines the subliminal effects that alcohol consumption may or may not have on a person’s technology-based social behaviors. If the effect of alcohol consumption alters social behaviors, then a logical question is whether and how these behaviors are expressed through social media. Sub-areas of inquiry include alcohol’s effect on mood, alcohol-based interactions on social media and the impact of alcohol on an individual’s use of different social media platforms. The main objective of this research is to obtain a clearer understanding of the extent to which alcohol consumption and advertisement impact social media interactions. If correlations can be found, then a further step is to examine alcohol consumption interactions and advertising-based interactions and their influence in the activities of other social media users and the content of their posts. The research will examine social media content created about consuming alcohol through the use of keyword analysis. It will focus specifically on data that can be gleaned from Facebook and Twitter postings. The frequency of social media content creation when under the influence of alcohol will be compared with content creation during periods of sobriety. The research will discern whether there is a noticeable change in content subject matter, attitude and/or tone when alcohol is being consumed. It will also determine whether there is a correlation between social media advertisements related to alcohol, and if so, whether the followers of those advertisements increase their own alcohol-related user content and whether this then increases alcohol consumption. Technology such as social media has significantly reduced the time and distance between communication channels and users. This research project examines technology-based social behaviors to discern whether user content on social media can be collected and analyzed to cultivate additional sales within the alcohol industry.

Research Questions

• How are users talking about alcohol on social media?
• Does drinking contribute to social media usage?
• Does seeing alcohol on social media contribute to alcohol consumption?
• What kind of behaviors does alcohol bring out on social media?

Background

With the vast expansion of social networking through the use of social networking systems (SNS), it is only natural for society to evaluate the impactful possibilities for correlating behaviors. As our societies grows closer to one another through the advancements in technology, many researches are finding commonalities associated through behavior analysis. Some of this analysis is not just being done from mean of education but also for the purpose of capital gain. In a publicized world, it is only nature to ponder whether the business one is conducting on a daily bases is that of a socially responsible nature. Question such as how much advertisement of a particular product is too much and how do companies target the appropriate audience, are just a few that initiated the interest in this research topic.

Objectives

The purpose of this research was to establish best practices related to advertising of alcohol company products through the use of social media networks. Many companies have been utilizing social media as a form of inexpensive marketing for almost a decade. To quote the Alcohol and Alcoholism journalist James Nicholls “it is ‘critically important that we understand the dimensions and implications of [this] new market-ing paradigm’ (Nicholls, 2012). ” As the world tries to grow with technology advancements, many areas of business have struggled to keep up with the immersive nature of the global market. Social media seems to advance past the historical confines of advertisement reach. It has created distinctive boundaries between unidirectional advertising messages, consumer interaction, and a wide variety of social activities. With increased corporate investment by companies to tap into this market, comes an increased responsibility to be informed (Nicholls, 2012).

Methods

This far extensive literature review has been conducted through the use of the search engine Google Scholarly Articles and research resources provided through IUPUI library website. Such research has lead me to some extremely reputable sources of information including the US National Library of Medicine through the National Institutes of Health, Oxford Journals through the Oxford University Press, the Journal of Medical Internet Research, the Health Program of the European Union, and the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. The following search terms along with their derivatives are used: social media, alcohol, alcohol impacts, addiction, commodity, social behaviors, social media impacts, social media advertisement, alcohol advertisement, and content. Studies that are being utilized contain inclusive data, made reference to the correlation of the main objectives, discussed personality traits associated with the objectives, emphasize statistical trends related to objectives, and demonstrate discussion on or related to objects. There are 14 literature sources being used, the majority touching on one or multiple objectives.

Results

As evident in everyday society social media is not going anywhere anytime soon. Social networking is a global phenomenon that is only rising in terms of how societies communicate. In one study it was found the out of one third of social networks, ten percent of their time online was on social networking systems (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Related to this rise in social network usage, alcohol companies have refocused their marketing efforts. This influx of social media driven alcohol company advertisement, has also demonstrated shifts in the regulatory standards of advertising socially responsible. Many of these regulations now cover digital communication (Nicholls, 2012). A Swiss foreign study showed that users in the higher percentage of usage, namely adolescents, are found to have a correlation to social approval and alcoholic beverage consumption (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011).

Conclusions

The landscape for alcohol beverage marketing strategies has changed. The evidence against influential marketing of alcohol having an increased impact on consumption is on the rise. The key to researching this subject topic is to gain knowledge in the area of if and how to influence brand loyalty through socially influential marketing without routinizing the consumption of alcohol.

The goal of the final analysis is to ultimately shed some light on refining business strategies through increased subject knowledge. It will also aid in answering the who, what, where, why, and how of advertising alcoholic products via SNS. Keeping in mind the purpose of creating a conclusive bases for forming an appropriate strategy within the realm of social networking. It will also be used to examine whether or not client utilization of social media alcohol advertisement really can be beneficial while maintaining social responsibility.

Bibliography