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**Cool on Snapchat, not done on Instagram? A study about emerging adults’ motives for the sharing of alcohol posts on different social media platforms.**

**Abstract**

The use of social networking sites (SNS) became a widespread behavior among emerging adults in recent years (Auxier & Anderson, 2022). The continuous access to SNS has significantly changed the ways of identity construction as social media provide emerging adults with the opportunity to create desirable identities, including drinking identities (Ridout et al., 2012). In addition, the use of alcohol seems to be a prevalent risk factor since it can pave the way for developing addictive behaviours with the influence of social media for emerging adults who often share alcohol references portraying fun drinking events on their social media platforms (Brown & Murphy, 2018; Geusens & Vranken, 2021). Previous studies have examined emerging adults’ motivations for posting alcohol-related content on SNS, however, most research has focused on Facebook or SNS in general, thereby neglecting other and more popular platforms for the portrayal of alcohol. Therefore, building on Uses and Gratifications theory and the previous literature by Hendriks et al. (2017), this research understood what motivations do emerging adults have while posting different alcohol posts on different SNS. Moreover, the research also discovered the motivations behind emerging adults to go on social media while being drunk. To examine these motivations, go-along interviews were conducted in Belgium with 20 emerging adults who were between the ages 21-and 26 (*M= 22.85,* SD= 1.68). *Go-along* methodology was used since it was relevant to go through the platforms that were significant for emerging adults to find more relevant information about their alcohol posts (Niland et al., 2014). Exploring these motivations will, in turn, add significant information about emerging adults’ motivations to post alcohol content on different SNS and will also give insights into emerging adults’ drinking portrayals on social media environments.

**Keywords:** Young adults, Alcohol Posts, Social Networking Sites, Social Media, Emerging Adults

**Introduction**

The World Health Organization (2018) global report states that alcohol consumption is one of the leading risk factors for people's health worldwide since it directly impacts many health-related problems, such as infectious diseases (HIV, Hepatitis, Tuberculosis), non-communicable diseases, mental health problems, and poisoning. In all WHO regions, the prevalence of Heavy Episodic Drinking (HED) peaked between the ages of 20 and 24 in 2018 (WHO, 2018). Thus, among emerging adults, which is proposed as the age period between 18-25 where the population sees themselves as neither adolescents nor adults, the use of alcohol seems to be a prevalent risk factor (Brown & Murphy, 2018). This can be possibly explained by university years commonly being a detachment process from home. Throughout these years alcohol drinking acts becomes a significant vehicle to form and develop peer relationships during university years (Brown & Murphy, 2018). Research from Brown and Murphy (2020), for example, showed that pre-university drinking was prevalent amongst the participants where a majority of them drank at least occasionally before starting their studies, and a significant amount of students mentioned that the alcohol amount they consumed increased significantly on arrival.

Research done by Auxier and Anderson (2022) shows that another widespread behavior among emerging adults is the use of SNS. For instance, data shows that adults under 30 years of age stand out for their use of social media, where 76% of the participants reported using Instagram, 75% reported using Snapchat, and only 55% reported using TikTok (Auxier & Anderson, 2022).

The continuous access to SNS has significantly changed the ways of identity construction as social media provide emerging adults with the opportunity to create desirable identities, including drinking identities (Ridout et al., 2012). Geusens and Vranken (2021), for example, mentioned in their study that college students often shared alcohol references that are portraying fun drinking events on their social media platforms. These references, in turn, seem to play a role in the actual drinking behavior of emerging adults.

Although previous studies have examined emerging adults’ motivations for posting alcohol- related content on SNS, most research has focused on Facebook or SNS in general, thereby neglecting other and more popular platforms for the portrayal of alcohol. For example, Boyle et al. (2017) showed that both Instagram and Snapchat are used for posting alcohol-related content. However, Instagram is mainly used to depict glamorized portrayals of alcohol, whereas Snapchat is used to reveal the negative outcomes of alcohol consumption (Boyle et al., 2017). Given that both platforms are used to portray different types of alcohol posts, it is conceivable to expect that motivations for sharing alcohol posts might also differ across platforms. Therefore, the research will try to understand what motivations do emerging adults have while posting different alcohol posts on different SNS. To examine these motivations, go-along interviews will be conducted since it will be relevant to go through platforms that are significant for emerging adults to find more relevant information about their alcohol posts (Niland et al., 2014). Understanding these topics regarding emerging adults will in turn expand the literature by understanding why young adults use different social media platforms to post alcohol-related content and give detailed insights about their motivations to consume alcohol which will further expand the literature.

**Literature Review**

*Alcohol Use in Emerging Adulthood*

Young adults have been globally identified as heavy drinkers (Curtis et al., 2018). Primarily, university students are in the risk group of having alcohol-related problems and excessive drinking habits because alcohol is a crucial component of identity exploration (Ridout et al., 2012). For example, studying at university most of the time means leaving home for the first time and thus creating autonomy for the individual, which might end up in significant alcohol consumption to facilitate new friendships and join peer groups (Hebden et al., 2015). Research from Brown and Murphy (2018), for example, showed that the main concern of young adults before coming to university is about making relationships and being accepted by their peers during their years at university thus alcohol stood as a significant facilitator tool to initiate such relationships which encourage drinking behaviors among young adults. Moreover, as mentioned in the research done by Kuntsche and Müller (2011), the most significant motivations for young people to consume alcohol are social motives such as having a toast together with peers and having more fun at a party. This is worrisome as the use of alcohol has been linked to severe health problems and harms among emerging adults, such as hangovers, sexual violence, fights, vandalism, driving while intoxicated, and disruption of studying and sleep (Clapp et al., 2000).

*SNS Use in Emerging Adults* Another essential behavior among emerging adults seems to be the use of social networking sites (SNS) (Tzavela & Mavromati, 2013). SNS gained significant popularity among young adults’ social practices as they spend most of their time communicating with others in these online settings (Tzavela & Mavromati, 2013). According to Brailovskaia et al. (2020), there were five different motivations to use social media which are (1) the search for information and inspiration, (2) the necessity to pass time, (3) the need to escape from negative emotions, (4) the search for positive emotions and, (5) the search for social interaction. Another important motivation seems to be the need for self-presentation which contributes to overcoming shyness and satisfies the need for social belonging (Brailovskaia et al., 2020). Additionally, to illustrate, previous research found that 96% of Facebook profiles contained alcohol posts (Beullens & Schepers, 2013).

*SNS Use and Alcohol Posts* According to Egan and Moreno (2011), these references clearly contain labeled alcohol content, such as the profile owner holding a beer or a bottle of alcohol. In addition, text references related to alcohol also seemed to appear. This would include a status update by the profile owner stating they were drunk, hungover, or consuming alcohol (Egan & Moreno, 2011). However, not all alcohol references circulating online are the same as the research done by Boyle et al. (2017) indicated that alcohol content differs depending on the SNS. They, for instance, found that alcohol references differ between the platforms Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. Throughout their study, Facebook was consistently depicted as the least favorite platform to post alcohol-related content. Instagram, in turn, was considered to be the destination that contains alcohol references that glamorize college drinking, and Snapchat appeared to be a platform used to display the negative consequences of alcohol misuse (Hendriks et al., 2017). This differentiation of alcohol references among platforms might be explained by the unique features of each platform. For instance, Instagram is considered to be a photo-sharing platform that focuses on beautiful images and attractive photographic filters, which might facilitate the sharing of glamorized alcohol references (Boyle et al., 2017). Whereas Snapchat is a platform in which posts can be played only once and disappear in a few seconds and is considered to be a platform that was used between the friends with closer ties thus, creating a medium where references containing negative consequences of alcohol misuse can be shared more easily (Choi & Sung, 2018).

*The Role of Alcohol Posts in Emerging Adults’ Alcohol Use* Although posts containing alcohol references might seem innocent, these portrayals on SNS are not without consequences, as research shows that both exposure to as well as the posting of these pictures can increase emerging adults’ actual alcohol use and engagement in problematic drinking (Moreono et al. 2012). A study done by Geusens and Beullens (2017) found that sharing alcohol references on SNS predicted binge drinking habits in the following year. The explanation for these findings are grounded in the self-generated media effects hypothesis, which states that individuals can internalize their online self-representation (Geusens & Beullens, 2017). More specifically, a media effects model which tries to explain why some individuals are more susceptible to media effects than others, how and why media influences those individuals, and how media effects can be enhanced or counteracted (Valkenburg & Peter, 2019). As follows, they confirmed the speculations that alcohol references on SNS may be an indicator of alcohol consumption which in turn might further guide their future drinking. Thus, in line with the self-generated media effects theory, presenting oneself as someone who enjoys alcohol on social media persuades them that they are indeed that person, which enhances their relationship with alcohol and binge drinking (Geusens and Beullens, 2017).

There were also alcohol posts that were regretted by the young adults. In their study, Geusens and Vranken (2021) first, found that it was not only the content shared which has been shared drunk that was regretted by the participants, moreover, alcohol content which has been shared when sober was also sometimes regretted by the participants. The participants also stated that alcohol references that do not depict drunkness, or inappropriate content may be regretted if the audience misperceives it since emerging adults highly value the image they convey to the audience who follows their accounts (Geusens and Vranken, 2021). Second, it is not only the content itself regretted by the emerging adults but also the platform-specific features. For instance, snaps can create regret when users cannot remember what they have sent to others (Geusens and Vranken, 2021). Thus, building on this study, it is evident that alcohol posts on social media may affect emerging adults’ alcohol use and self-behavior.

*Motives for Sharing Alcohol-Related Content*

Given that the sharing of alcohol posts can increase emerging adults’ actual alcohol use, it is essential to examine why they share these pictures online to reduce their possible visibility. In order to have a clear look at the motives for sharing content online, we will first need to explain the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory (Katz et al., 1973). This theory claims that people use media in order to satisfy some wants and needs. Moreover, the theory asserts that the media audience is an active role player who has control over their media consumption (Katz et al., 1973). Thus, the theory explains how individuals seek out special communication tools among other ones to satisfy their needs. Whiting and Williams (2013), tried to apply the U&G theory to social media platforms. They sought to find out the reasons why social media users use and like specific platforms. Their findings from in-depth interviews provided 10 themes that indicate how and why individuals utilize SNS. These themes were: social interaction, information seeking, pass-time, entertainment, relaxation, expression of opinions, communicatory utility, convenience utility, information sharing, and seeking surveillance and knowledge about others (Whiting & Williams, 2013). According to Whiting and Williams (2013) motives such as social interaction and information-seeking appeared as the most relevant ones for the use of social media platforms. Hendriks et al. (2017) have been one of the first to study motives for sharing and not sharing alcohol-related content. They focused on four motives in specific, namely entertainment motives such as to show that they were present at a fun event, the post is fun, to share a positive feeling with others, and to entertain themselves, and others. information motives for sharing alcohol references which is to show every experience, share personal information, and provide information about alcohol, social motives for sharing alcohol references, in which the individuals try to show that they are social people, try to stay socially connect with others, and get attention from their peers, and identification motives (Hendriks et al. 2017). The study found that young people post alcohol-related content on social media primarily for entertainment motives (Hendriks et al. 2017). Apart from the study of Hendriks et al. (2017), Thompson and Romo (2016) also studied motives for sharing alcohol posts on SNS. They found that espousing an alcohol identity was a strong motivation to post alcohol content on SNS. Their results showed that adhering to social norms, the need for belonging, and peer pressure were also found as motivations to post alcohol references on SNS. Individuals who were concerned about fitting into a group would rely on these references on social platforms (Thompson & Romo, 2016).

*Contributions of the Current Study*

Although previous research has brought forward interesting results, most research studying alcohol posts on SNS has mainly focused on the motivations to post alcohol references on Facebook or SNS in general (Hendriks et al. 2017; Thompson & Romo, 2016). Currently, there are many missing gaps in the literature about other platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat. Still, Boyle et al. (2017) already indicated how Instagram and Snapchat differ from each other in terms of sharing alcohol posts. More specifically, Instagram's focus on beautiful images and photography filters, makes it a suitable medium to share content that glamorizes alcohol use, whereas Snapchat's more privacy-oriented features, such as snaps that disappear in seconds, make the medium more suitable for depicting the adverse outcomes of alcohol use (Boyle et al., 2016). However, there is still little research on why young adults use different social media platforms to post different alcohol content. Thus, building on U&G theory and the literature by Hendriks et al. (2017), this research will examine whether emerging adults have different motivations for sharing alcohol-related content across different platforms. This, in turn, will provide insight into emerging adult's motivations to engage with different SNS to share alcohol-related content.

Rq: What are the motivations behind sharing different alcohol content on specific platforms?

**3. Methods**

*Participants* The final sample comprised 20 emerging adults between the ages of 21-and 26 (*M= 22.85, SD= 1.68*), and among them, 11 were women, 8 were men, and only one participant did not specify gender. Further, among the participants, most of them were students, with 19 of them currently studying while only 1 participant was currently employed. 13 of the participants declared themselves as not being religious, 5 reported as Christian, 1 declared as Muslim, and 3 had faith in other religions.

In addition, the researcher was a male master's student approximately 3 years older than the youngest and 2 years younger than the oldest participant, which possibly brought up a peer relationship with the participants that encouraged them to speak more comfortably or vice versa. Both the interviewer and the participants were native or fluent English speakers, which eased the process of the interviews.

*Data Collection  
 Go-along interviews. Q*ualitative go-along interviews were conducted throughout the research. As mentioned in the study by Vanherle and colleagues (2021), go-along interviews are derived from the ethnographic walk along research method where the participants are interviewed while walking through places significant to themselves. Given that most of the young adults that participated in the study manage their social lives through social media platforms, it was essential to go along with them through their SNS profiles while conducting the interviews. As follows, going through emerging adults’ SNS profiles ensured that this research is in line with the actual practices of young adults, in this case sharing alcohol references on their social media platforms. Since alcohol posts are sometimes shared unconsciously by young adults, go-along interviews were also helpful to find out the unnoticed details while posting them (Hendriks et al., 2017).

*Procedure.* Qualitative go-along interviews were conducted with emerging adults currently living in Belgium via Zoom or in person. The sampling technique was non-probability snowball sampling, which allowed the researcher to reach out to a specific population via the other participants' connections through various social media platforms (Browne, 2005). In line with Malterud et al. (2015), study, participants were recruited if they consumed alcohol, shared, and were exposed to alcohol-related content on their social media platforms. The interviews took place from March 2022 to April 2022. Before participating in the interview participants needed to fill in an online intake survey through Qualtrics about their demographics, alcohol usage, and social media behaviors. After filling in the survey, the participants were interviewed at a place of their preference (e.g., Study room, Zoom, their residences). The interviews took between 10- and 27 minutes (*M= 16.82, SD= 4.34*). Audio recording equipment was used for the interviews held offline, and for the online interviews held via Zoom, the session was recorded. Otherwise, screenshots of the most relevant posts, namely alcohol posts were screenshot by the interviewer.

Participants were first asked some introductory questions about their social media usage throughout the interviews. Then in line with Niland et al. (2014)’s approach, interviewees were asked to go through their social media profiles while being asked questions from a pre-made topic list based on the previous literature from Vanherle et al. (2021), Hendriks et al. (2017), Niland et al. (2014), and Boyle et al. (2018). On their profiles, participants were asked to show alcohol-related posts that they or their peers shared on different SNS profiles such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and WhatsApp. While going through the profiles, questions were asked to stimulate discussions regarding these posts and their platform usage. Moreover, a printed-out sheet to determine the motivations to post alcohol content on social media was given to the participants from the study by Hendriks et al. (2017) to initiate the discussions. Finally, the interviewer thanked the participants, and the session was finished.

*Analysis* The analytical process of the study was based on the study of Vanherle et al. (2021). As follows, the interviews were conducted in English and transcribed non-verbatim using a topic list to guide the process. To provide anonymity, all participants were numerically ordered, taking into account their interview order. To analyze the data, the inductive thematic analysis approach of Braun and Clarke (2006) was used. Throughout the coding process, NVIVO coding program was used. In line with the thematic analysis, Line by line coding was performed where codes were combined through overarching themes. First, throughout the open coding process, initial codes and concepts were created within the interviews. Second, during axial coding 8 sub-categories were created where at the end the most significant themes were found and defined as ‘’social media engagement of the participants’’, ‘’social dimension of drinking’’, ’’alcohol posts on social media’’, and ‘’going on social media while being drunk’’.

In addition, the alcohol post typology from Hendriks et al. (2018) was used to put alcohol posts in categories such as pictures focusing on alcohol posts, and pictures with alcohol in the background, drinking game pictures, drunk pictures, and advertisements. this, in turn, made it possible to link posts with the perceptions of the participants.

**Results**

*Descriptive Statistics*

The intake survey which was given prior to the interviews showed that all of the participants were alcohol drinkers with 70% of them drinking 2-3 times a week, 20% drinking 2-4 times in a month, 5% of the participants drinking more than 4 times a week, and finally, 5% drinking less than once in a month. In addition, on a day when they go out for a drink, 45% of the participants drink 3 to 4 glasses, 20% drink 5 to 6 glasses, 20% drink 1 to 2 glasses of alcohol, and 15% of the participants drink between 7-9 standard glasses of alcohol.

With regard to social media use, the participants of the study mostly used the platforms Whatsapp and Instagram, where 95% used WhatsApp several times a day and 65% used Instagram several times a day. Along with these two platforms, 25% used Facebook several ties a day, whereas Tiktok and Snapchat were the least used platforms with only 10% of the participants using them several times a day. In terms of sharing and encountering alcohol-related content, Instagram came up as the most relevant platform among the participants.

*Prevalence of Alcohol-related Content* Throughout the interviews, many of the participants mentioned they shared alcohol posts regularly, especially on the weekends*.* From the findings, it was evident that Covid-19 had played a role in the prevalence of alcohol posts on social media. As mentioned by participants, before Covid-19 came up there was an abundance of alcohol content on social media such as posts from nightclubs, fraternity parties and etc. However, with the Covid-19 pandemic, these posts started to be viewed in lesser amounts since the majority of the nightclubs and parties were dismantled throughout Europe and the world. Participants also mentioned they started to drink significantly fewer amounts of alcohol after the Covid-19 outbreak.

**Participant 4:** *I think it’s… if you go, I don’t, I don't know if I really have it archived anymore. But like, before COVID When I was 18, right. I think I probably posted a lot more, I was going out a lot more. Whenever I went to a frat party, I'd probably post a photo or a video of playing beer pong, or just like hanging out with friends on the dance floor, like all of that. And then COVID hit, and obviously, I started drinking less, because I wasn't drinking.*

*(Male, aged 20 years)*

During the talks regarding their thoughts about alcohol posts, participants mentioned that they feel fine when people drink alcohol and post about it on social media. Most participants had no negative opinions about seeing someone drinking or sharing alcohol content on social media platforms since most of their peers do the same thing regularly. For the participants, it seemed like an indicator of having fun and enjoying the moment that they were in.

*Content of Alcohol Posts.* From our findings, we understood that the alcohol post which was present stood in line with Hendriks et al. (2018)’s six types of alcohol posts and descriptions. This typology of alcohol posts included posts containing alcohol in the background, focusing on alcohol, drunk posts, drinking games, and commercial posts; In this particular study, many alcohol posts had people holding a beer or beer in the background at a bar or at a place where people gathered together for their social activities. At the same time, some posts were not focusing on alcohol, but people in the picture just happened to be holding some beers because of the situation.

*Motivations to (not) Share (drunk) Alcohol Posts* After taking a look at the printed out motivations to share alcohol posts on social media from the study of Hendriks et al. (2017) different motivations came up from the participants regarding posting alcohol content on SNS. These motivations were in line with the study of Hendriks et al. (2017) and showed that participants think of alcohol posts as a tool to show that they were present at a fun event, to share positive feelings with others, and to show that they are social people. entertainment and social motives thus came up as two significant motive to share alcohol content on social media. However, participants also had some specific motivations for not sharing alcohol posts. For example, participants would not put alcohol-related content on their feed since they thought that posts containing alcohol content were not aesthetically pleasing enough to be on their feed. Moreover, they thought the pictures they share with alcohol or while being drunk might embarrass them in the future. Participants also wanted to enjoy the moment during the activities that involved alcohol in it which meant not engaging with social media during these moments.

**Participant 2:** *It doesn't have to be alcohol-related, but some posts. Yeah, I'm here. I'm so happy. But I feel that when you're really enjoying the time you're not posting it...*

*(Female, aged 22 years)*

*Motivations to Post Alcohol Content on Different Platforms* There were several social media platforms that were mentioned by the participants used for sharing alcohol content. However, Instagram also stood as the platform which is mostly used for sharing alcohol posts. There were a couple of functionalities that were mentioned by the participants that made Instagram a suitable place for alcohol posts: First, the participants mentioned the specific functionalities of Instagram which made posting easier compared to other platforms that the participants mentioned. The feature to tag a friend in stories and posts made the social interactions significantly more engaging. Moreover, the possibility to add a location to stories was also considered as an important feature that provided followers to know where the participants were, providing good opportunities to gather with friends and peers. As follows, the reply feature that Instagram allows for stories made the platform much more engaging and kept conversations going with friends, and the privacy that the platform provides with close friends, and the private account feature was an important factor for young adults to use Instagram since they would be able to determine who is viewing the content they post on their social media platforms. Here, the differentiation between alcohol posts on stories and alcohol posts on the feed seemed to be important. Emerging adults mentioned that alcohol posts would be much more prevalent on stories compared to posts on feeds. This was mainly because the participants considered alcohol posts not as aesthetically pleasing as other posts they put on their feed and they carry special attention to how their feed looks like. Secondly, they would not want to associate themselves with alcohol thus stories provide them a really good opportunity to show what they are up to for a short time since the story disappears after 24 hours.

**Participant 12:** *Well, I think the reason is that the story is gone. In the next day, well as a picture, you can, you can delete it manually, of course. But the purpose is to stay on your feed. And I think the feed something that people try to, like, optimize or something like, really show the nice pictures of them. And, and often, if you go out and people take pictures of you, those are not the prettiest pictures out there. So I think that's why.*

*(Male, aged 22 years)*

Finally, a second motivation to use Instagram to post alcohol content was peer pressure. Participants admit that they are using Instagram because a majority of their peers and friends are active users and other platforms are not used as much amongst the sample age group. When looking at the specific motives for sharing alcohol by Hendriks et al. (2017), the entertainment motives also seemed to be popular for sharing alcohol on Instagram. In specific, Instagram appeared as a means to satisfy their entertainment needs and show that they are having a good social life. Most participants used Instagram for having fun and to enjoy scrolling through various content that appears on their feed which made it a perfect platform to post alcohol content.

*Motivations for not Sharing Alcohol Content on Snapchat*

Snapchat appeared to be another platform that was prevalently used by the participants but not to share alcohol content. Participants were mainly using the platform to contact an individual or a group and not posting on Snapchat stories. It is claimed that Snapchat was a much more casual platform compared to Instagram and other platforms that were used to post alcohol-related content. The streak system on the platforms appeared as an important motivation to maintain ongoing conversations and engage with the platform.

**Participant 4:** *Versus when I'm using Snapchat, it is more, it's either habitual and the idea of like the streak system, or it's maintaining ongoing conversation, but Instagram is more of like, for consuming media. Versus, to me, Snapchat is a lot more of a chatter.*

*(Male, aged 20 years)*

Participants did not prefer to share alcohol content. This was mainly because participants were mentioning that Snapchat became significantly less popular among young adults, and not many people are engaging with the platform since Instagram provides all the available options on Snapchat in a more user-friendly manner. This proves that Instagram became a better alternative to Snapchat throughout time and is much more prevalent amongst young adults who are using social media.

*Motivations to share Alcohol Content on Whatsapp*

Whatsapp became the last platform that participants used for sharing alcohol content. WhatsApp, in its essence, appeared as a platform to have direct messaging with other users, so many of the participants did not consider it a social media platform. However, it was also a suitable place for sharing alcohol content because of the group chats. Throughout the interviews, we understood there are many group chats on the platform where groups are created from the former events that involved alcohol, such as drinking game parties etc. Thus, such groups had profile pictures involving alcohol content, most probably the group members sitting on a table that also contains alcohol, and messages containing alcohol references. Moreover, group chats appeared as a private place for participants where they can act freely since they are familiar with the group members which made sharing alcohol content more comfortable.

**Participant 2**: *Okay. And actually, the name of the group is about a beer also. So, um, I think because most of the activities we do here involve drinking, even if it's just like, okay, because we are going out all the time. And a lot of them even when we are doing some trips, even these one day trip, like we just stop for a moment and drink something. So it's really easy to make a photo then because we're like, all seated together. But I don't know.*

*(Female, aged 22 years)*

*Platforms that Participants did not use to share alcohol*

There were two platforms where participants had motivation for neither to post alcohol content nor to use it. Facebook appeared as the first of these platforms. For young adults, Facebook was considered a platform for older people, and it significantly lost its popularity. Many of the emerging adults mentioned that their parents or grandparents would be using Facebook, and it's not cool to post content on the platform anymore. In terms of alcohol posts, the platform was not a comfortable medium for sharing alcohol references since their relatives might encounter these posts which might end up in an embarrassing situation at the end. As follows, many Facebook users mentioned that they use the platform for job inquiries and for the faculty groups of their university thus thinking that sharing alcohol content would not be suitable.

**Participant 3:** *So like, Why share it on Facebook? Because right now, like, for example, Facebook users are kind of like older. Okay? Not like the younger ones. But like, young people mostly use Instagram at the moment.*

(Female, aged 24 years)

Finally, TikTok was a platform for the participants to satisfy their entertainment needs and to have fun however emerging adults neither preferred to post alcohol content nor did they encounter such content on TikTok. Since, it was considered a platform to consume media, but not to post media. Moreover, the context of entertainment was pretty different compared to Instagram. On TikTok, participants did not have any social interactions with their friends, but they were just watching videos of their personal interests, such as cooking recipes, sports, workouts, etc. It was also mentioned that the regulations on TikTok were much more strict compared to other platforms, which made it a hassle to post alcohol content.

**Discussion**

Building on the Uses and Gratifications Theory, the current study adds to the literature in a way that it explores the prevalence of alcohol posts on emerging adults SNS. The research continues by defining the motivations why emerging adults use different social media platforms to share different types of alcohol related content. This information also enhances our knowledge about why emerging adults use different social media platforms in the first place delivering significant information about their social media interaction.

First, the participants mentioned that they share alcohol regularly since when they are out or having fun with peers, most of the time they are in an environment where alcohol consumption takes place making it in some sense inevitable to discard alcohol posts. They also mentioned that they do not feel any negative emotions towards friends who share alcohol related content since majority of the emerging adults does the same thing.

However, besides the environmental constraints in line with Hendriks et al. (2017) study emerging adults share alcohol posts because of three main motivations: (1) to show that they were present at a fun event, (2) to share positive feelings with others, (3) and to show that they are social and popular among their peers. Still, there were some participants mentioned that they would not engage in sharing alcohol posts since alcohol posts are not aesthetically pleasing enough. The research also found that there were different motivations for using different social media platforms.

Throughout the study, Instagram stood as the platform that participants used the most to share alcohol posts since it was a platform that satisfied the entertainment needs of the participants, and was considered the platform which was the most convenient to use. Many emerging adults used Instagram for their social networking activities, creating peer pressure to use the platform and to share alcohol-related content. In contrast, Snapchat, despite being used as a platform to communicate with peers thanks to the streak system that maintained ongoing conversations. It did not stand as a platform that was used to post alcohol content. Also, in line with Boyle et al. (2017)’s study, emerging adults did not engage with the platform Facebook to share alcohol posts. Interestingly, WhatsApp also stood as a platform commonly used to share alcohol posts through group chats since it allowed participants to share alcohol posts only within their inner circle. This was significant since WhatsApp was not mentioned in the previous studies as a destination to share alcohol posts.

Risky drinking behaviors can always be considered as an hassle both for parents and for the individual during the emerging adulthood. If not controlled it can lead to consequences such as mental health problems, poisoning, sexual violence, vandalism, etc. (Clapp et al., 2000). This research will be significant to give data about the relationship between alcohol and emerging adults which may be useful for understanding them get necessary precautions to avoid negative outcomes of alcohol misuse.

There were four main limitations throughout the research. Throughout the research process, go-along interviews were effective since they provided extensive knowledge regarding participants’ social media behavior. However, some participants felt hesitant to reveal their social media posts since they thought of them as private property. This situation might be a possible factor that caused bias in the research results since the participants would be feeling hesitant to share all of their information with the interviewer which might end up providing unclear results. Moreover, there was only one person coding the interviews throughout the analysis process which might have created an inter-rater reliability bias.

Although the participants were from different nationalities they were all students of the same university and possibly had similar backgrounds thus, it might be essential to practice the study throughout different contexts since different cultural backgrounds might appear with different results. It was also prevalent that other age groups such as adolescents also engage in posting alcohol content on SNS thus it might be significant to put other age groups in the sample to find out generational differences in posting alcohol content on social media. These might be some interesting areas for further research.

**Conclusion**

The research provides significant information on how young adults’ motivations differ while sharing alcohol posts on social media depending on the platform they engage with since every platform addresses different needs among the users. Research also put insights into emerging adults drinking habits and their perception of alcohol in terms of a tool for social interaction.

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