Title:
Exploring alcohol content on social media sites run by student-led sports and social clubs at the University of Nottingham.

Name: Roberto Loza

Date of submission: Monday, 15th August 2016

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<tr>
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<td>I confirm that all relevant ethical approval and other agreements required to carry out the work submitted for my dissertation were obtained, and that the work was carried out as agreed.</td>
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Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my research supervisors, Dr Manpreet Bains and Amy Fuller. Their massive support and experience helped immensely to understand more about qualitative research and to develop a great work.

Special thanks, to my parents and brother. Their unconditional support was greatly appreciated and necessary.
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Abstract

Exploring alcohol content on social media sites run by student-led sports and social clubs at the University of Nottingham.

Background
Alcohol consumption has been regarded as a major public health concern, especially for young individuals. Alcohol advertisement is prevalent in social media and is also considered as a way to encourage social interaction. Little is known about alcohol content in social media pages led by university clubs and the nature of it.

Aim
To investigate the occurrences and nature of alcohol-related imagery and text presented on Facebook pages run by student-led sports and social clubs at the University of Nottingham (UoN).

Methodology
A qualitative content analysis was utilised to record occurrences of alcohol in 51 Facebook pages of the social and sports clubs of the UoN. Thematic analysis was then applied to explore the nature of the occurrences.
Results

In total 618 references to alcohol were recorded. Three main themes were identified: Types of events, purpose of alcoholic-events and alcohol promotions. Each theme described the nature of drinking among university students.

Conclusions

Alcohol content is a common occurrence in Facebook groups run by societies and sports clubs. Alcohol-related events were regularly mentioned on the Facebook pages. Socialisation and celebration could be linked to alcohol consumption for university students. Societies might hold a degree of partnership with venues that serve alcohol.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Alcohol and Public Health

Excessive alcohol intake is regarded as a major concern for public health. In 2014, there were 8,697 alcohol-related deaths reported in the United Kingdom (UK), which meant an age-standardised rate of 14.3 deaths per 100,000 population (1). Thus, exposing a rise from 2013, where 8,416 deaths were related to alcohol with an age-standardised rate of 14.0 deaths per 100,000 population (2).

The cost of alcohol misuse to the National Health Service (NHS) is estimated at £3.5 billion per year (3), and the investment for the treatment of alcohol-related conditions is around 3% of the NHS annual budget (4). The cost of alcohol-related harms for the UK is £21 billion annually (3, 4).

The UK measures alcoholic drinks in units; a unit corresponds to approximately 8g or 10ml of pure alcohol (5, 6). Previous standardised guidelines considered low-risk or sensible drinking as intake that did not exceed 21 units per week for men and 14 units per week for women (5). However, the NHS has recently reviewed and altered the UK drinking guidelines. These new standards state sensible drinking or low-risk drinking as alcohol consumption that does not surpass 14 units per week for both men and women (7). Concerning binge drinking, the guideline states that men consuming eight or more
units of alcohol in one drinking session are engaging in binge drinking, whereas for women, it is six units per drinking session (8). Furthermore, surpassing five to seven units per drinking session accelerates the risk of injury and accidents (7).

Alcohol misuse is related to diverse health issues (7). The risk of liver disease increases 13 times in people who drink at high levels (9). Alcohol consumption is also related to different types of cancer. An intake of 10g (approximately one unit in UK standards) of pure alcohol per day increases the relative risk of breast cancer by 7%, while a consumption of 50g (approximately five units in UK standards) enhances the likelihood of colorectal cancer by 10-20% (10). A study in young people found that heavy drinking sessions are associated with higher systolic blood pressure (SBP) (11). Comparing non-binge drinkers with regular binge drinkers, monthly binge drinkers had a 2.46 mm Hg higher in SBP than non-binge drinkers; moreover, non-binge drinkers showed 4.03 mm Hg lower than weekly binge drinkers. (11).

In a study conducted in the UK which assessed road accidents fatalities and their causes, 20% of fatal traffic accidents were linked to drivers being over the legal limit of blood alcohol levels, furthermore over a quarter of these accidents were caused by drivers under 30 years of age (12).

A UK study assessed the adverse effects of a variety of drugs. It took into account damage to the user and harms to the community and considered aspects such as crime
(by measuring at which extent drug use increased delinquency volume), family adversities (relationship between addiction and family breakdown, emotional and family wellbeing), economical-cost (direct economic cost to the country) and community mortality (13). Alcohol was regarded as the most harmful drug in general and as the drug most damaging to the community (13). The Crime Survey for England and Wales 2012-13 showed that 49% of all violent crimes are related to alcohol use, this is the case in over two-thirds (69%) of stranger violence and over a third (38%) of domestic violence incidents (14). Individuals who engage in heavy drinking as early as 18 years old are much more likely to be convicted of a crime in their adulthood than those people who do not participate in heavy drinking (15).

In 2012, according to data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Great Britain, 27% of young people aged between 16 to 24 years were more likely to engage in at least one heavy drinking episode per week in relation to any other age group (16).

1.2 Drinking prevalence in the UK

In the UK, around nine million adults drink at levels that would be considered risky for their health (9). An estimated 1.6 million of adults may have some degree of dependence on alcohol (9). Of these individuals, around 250,000 might exhibit a moderate or severe dependency (9).
In Britain, the quantity of pure ethanol sold per adult increased from 9.53 litres in 1986/87 to a peak of 11.78 litres in 2004/05, before dropping to 10.7 litres in 2008/09; this approximates to 20.5 units per week for everyone over the age of 15 (17). It was estimated that in the UK, the total alcohol consumption accounts for 9.4 litres per head for those aged 15 years and older and 7.7 litres per head on average throughout the entire population in 2013 (18).

Young people tend to drink more heavily per session than any other age groups; some young individuals were exceeding eight units for men and six units for women on a single session (19). It is noteworthy, that the amount of young people drinking at least twice the recommended number of units in a session at least once a week, fell from 32% to 22% for men and 27% to 18% for women between 2005 and 2011; it is still a considerable proportion of people that engage in binge drinking (20).

**1.3 Alcohol consumption amongst university students**

A systematic review studied drinking among UK university students (21). It included 18 studies that measured alcohol consumption in UK universities over a period of 25 years. Over 50% of males across most studies were drinking above the recommended sensible drinking guidelines per week. Furthermore, the results suggested that male university students were twice as likely to exceed recommended sensible drinking quantities per week when compared to men in the general population. Moreover, approximately one in two males were involved in such behaviour. Female students reported being three
times more likely to exceed sensible drinking guidelines than their general population counterparts (21). Nevertheless, most of the studies considered sensible drinking with a standard of 14 units for women and 21 units for men per week; had the studies applied the new drinking guidelines there is room to hypothesise that the percentage of heavy drinkers could have been greater, especially for male participants.

Although recent data have shown a reduction in binge drinking among young people aged 16 to 24 years (from approximately 29% in 2005 to 18% in 2013) (22), there is still evidence demonstrating that binge drinking is a regular activity amongst university students. A study conducted at ten different universities across the UK found 31% of men and 24% of women reported engaging in binge drinking (23). A systematic review conducted in the UK and Ireland from 2002 to 2014 reported similar findings. Particularly, one of the studies included in the review found that 70% of students were binge drinking in a given past week. Another study noted that 85% of students exceeded binge-drinking limits in a typical week. (24).

Drinking among young people could be linked to several social and health consequences. For instance, one study reported 17% of males and 5% of females had disregarded obligations due to drinking (21). Moreover, 19% of men and 10% of females declared they had been assaulted as a consequence of alcohol misuse (25). While another research reported that 8.5% of male students and 3.5% of female students had damaged friendships through drinking (26).
There could be a link between heavy and binge drinking and poor decision-making, especially in university students. These include involvements in physical conflict, use of illegal drugs, unplanned sexual acts and unwanted pregnancy (21, 27). Furthermore, students’ academic activities could be compromised as well, e.g. students with heavy drinking tendencies have reported finding it hard to concentrate, moreover, arriving late to lectures or missing them could also be an issue related to heavy drinking (27).

1.4 Drinking and Social Activity

In university students, the social interaction could be considered a factor for drinking or that involves drinking (27, 28). For instances, young people have considered alcohol as a bonding mechanism between their peers (28). Drinking could also be recognised as a coping mechanism for social anxiety and to overcome shyness (28). Furthermore, avoiding alcohol could be seen as an abnormal behaviour in British culture (28). Therefore, some abstainers encounter social pressure to drink alcohol. Thus some individuals might use certain strategies to remain an abstainer, e.g. some may rely on excuses and different techniques to deceive their peers into thinking they are drinking (29).

Drinking could also be considered as a way for individuals to express themselves. In a study evaluating the reason why young British people engage in drinking during
holidays, it was found that alcohol was used as a way to escape the banality of daily life and, in the process, create memorable moments (30).

1.5 Social media and alcohol

Social media sites are among the most visited web pages amongst young people (31). In the UK, major alcohol brands have a strong presence on social media such as Facebook and Twitter (32); these brands are keen on encouraging interaction between the users of said websites and their social media web pages (32).

Alcohol brands utilise different strategies to accomplish interaction with their users; for example, promotional videos, that encourage people to comment and the use of the "like" or "share" button on Facebook are amongst the most common approaches. Moreover, brands have previously encouraged followers who attended particular social events to post pictures of themselves using a dedicated hashtag (33). Consequently, excessive alcohol consumption has been positively linked to advertising on social media. In a 2012 study conducted in 2 universities, researchers explored the relationship between alcohol behaviours and the use of general and alcohol-related social media sites. They found that a higher alcohol consumption could be related to higher student engagement with these types of websites (34). However, there was not enough evidence to establish whether high alcohol consumption was caused by viewing such adverts, or vice versa.
1.6 Previous studies

Previous research in the UK has focused on alcohol content in other types of media. A study in the UK aimed to identify the depiction of media in the harms related to alcohol consumption during the enforcement of an alcohol price unit law (35). The researchers applied a qualitative content analysis in a variety of newspapers across the UK and Scotland (35). The latter study found that newspapers depicted alcohol-related harms to others as an unaffordable and increasing problem in the UK. Newspapers framed a connection between drinking and violence and crime, which then was linked to antisocial behaviour. Furthermore, newspapers also depicted concerns around drinking behaviours in young people; these results suggested that harms to others in relation with young people drinking behaviours have been more apparent. Moreover, it was also found that young people are more prone to harm from others’ alcohol consumption (35). Thus, studying the reasons and settings on which young people drink alcohol is necessary.

Another study measured alcohol content in UK films (36); it utilised a content analysis in several UK films to record tobacco and alcohol occurrences in them. The films selected for the study were considered as a commercial success, and most of the films were suitable for young audiences (36). Researchers found that between 1989 and 2011, 65% of films depicted at least one tobacco reference, while 86% of films referenced alcohol in some manner. It was also remarkable that alcohol content in movies did not change over time, and a significant decline of alcohol content in films was not found (36).
Although, this study presented a robust dataset of alcohol content in an appealing media for young people such as films; it did not consider a more qualitative approach to it and lacked a deeper insight into the nature of these occurrences in the media.

Another research focused on alcohol and tobacco content in UK’s on-demand TV shows (37). This research utilised a qualitative content analysis in a sample of five Uk’s top viewed prime time TV shows. The aim of the study was to explore occurrences of tobacco and alcohol in mainstream television (37). The study found that alcohol content was three times more common that tobacco references in the reviewed TV programmes reviewed. It was also clear that alcohol depiction was more normalised in everyday life than smoking, i.e., smoking was framed as deviant or taboo. Alcohol content was also purposefully placed in almost every social situation (37). This research not only quantified alcohol content in a type of media but also explored the nature of it. However, the research just considered TV programmes rather than another type of media.

Alcohol content in social media websites has not been explored in the UK. There has not been a study that aimed to measure the quantity of alcohol references in social media web-pages or attempted to explain the nature of it. Therefore, there is a gap in research regarding alcohol and social media in the UK. Furthermore, since young people mainly use social media (31), it would be appropriate to explore alcohol content in social media in a university setting.
1.7 Aim and objectives

Aim

To investigate the occurrences and nature of alcohol-related imagery and text presented on Facebook pages of sports and social clubs at the University of Nottingham (UoN).

Objectives

- To determine the occurrence of alcohol-related content on Facebook groups run by student-led social and sports clubs of UoN.
- To identify the frequency of social events which are related to alcohol.
- To explore the nature of the alcohol-related content.
2. METHODS

2.1. Study design:

The present study followed a qualitative content analysis approach (38). By considering the nature of the data, a summative approach to content analysis was applied. This method begins by quantifying and identifying words, images or text, with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of words or content. Afterwards, a latent content analysis has to be applied, which is more interpretative in terms of exploring the meaning of the content collected (38).

2.2. Data source:

Data was collected via "Facebook" (39). This website allows users to share information, written posts, pictures, create events and connect with other people. Facebook also has the option to create a personal group that allows users to communicate with a specific cohort. Facebook defined groups as: “Groups are dedicated spaces where you can share updates, photos or documents and message other group members.” (39)

Facebook a number of can either be public or private. Public groups are open to the general population. Thus, all the information concerning posts, pictures and events are visible and accessible without the obligation to be a member of the society. In contrast, private groups restrict admission to the general public and allow sharing information just among their official members only. To become an official member, the user must
send a request to the group administrators; afterwards, the administrator must authorised and accepted the request. Users that successfully join the group will be able to watch the different material and content on its dedicated Facebook walls (which is the place where all the information of the groups is posted).

2.3. Sample

The Students’ Union (SU) of a University in the East Midlands, UK authorised the use of the content presented on their student-led societies and sports clubs Facebook groups (Appendix 1.). The SU website (40) was the main source to identify every sports clubs and societies available at the University. In total 283 clubs were identified. Of these, 215 were social clubs, and 68 were sports-related clubs.

In the SU website, societies were divided into seven categories, plus a separate category for sports clubs (40) (Table 1.). These categories would be constructed upon shared characteristic among the societies (Table 1.). Also, societies that would share common purposes (Faith, Volunteer or Equity), interests (Hobbies, Music and Dance or Sports) or bases (Course and career based) would be designated into a specific category (Table 1.).

In total, 179 private and 104 public Facebook groups were identified across the entire social and sports clubs categories. For this research only public groups were considered since the access to these groups was not compromised by the privacy settings that private groups pose. Furthermore, a stratified random sampling was applied to the
public groups using Stata 14 resulting in the selection of a sample of 50% of the entire public groups. This sampling method was appropriate since stratified random sampling is based on the division of data that shared common features into categories or strata. Finally, a sample then would be selected in each strata (41). Thus, 51 public Facebook groups were randomly selected for inclusion in the analysis (Table 1.).

The timeframe chosen to gather data from the sample was from September 21st, 2015 to June 17th, 2016. This timeframe was selected since the academic year for the university runs during these dates.
Table 1: Number of societies/sports clubs with their Facebook accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society Category</th>
<th>Number of societies</th>
<th>Number of private accounts</th>
<th>Number of public accounts</th>
<th>Sample of the public accounts (50%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course based and career soc.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity and Diversity and others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faiths, Thoughts, Belief</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International and Cultural</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Dance</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, Campaigning</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports clubs</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Procedure

It was necessary to achieve a familiarisation with the Facebook groups and the content presented in them. To accomplish an appropriate familiarisation with the data, a small sample of 5 Facebook groups were chosen from each category. At this stage, each group was reviewed one time. The researcher approached the data without any previous set-up framework. Thus alcohol occurrences would be identified and quantified according to what the data suggested. Any explicit and implicit reference to alcohol or drinking would be quantified as an occurrence. In this sense, alcohol references were mostly
presented as part of social events, written posts and on pictures which depicted drinking.

When coding social events, it was necessary to include every kind of event and not only events that would feature alcohol. These deemed appropriate since there were a great variety of social gatherings; thus it was important to observe if there would be any non-alcoholic events.

After the identification of relevant alcohol content, the occurrences were grouped according to a degree of similarity. As a result, five initial codes and nine sub-level codes were identified. These codes then were subjected to further reviewing by supervisors.

2.5 Analysis

The initial codes were applied to the rest of the data. After reviewing the data, it was necessary to redefine and amend codes accordingly, since further occurrences shared certain similarities to other codes. As a result, three main themes and seven sub-themes were identified across the data (Table 2.). Consequently, a coding sheet (Appendix 2) was constructed. The coding sheets considered several aspects, such as:

- “Date of the occurrence” referring to the date on which the occurrence was posted
- “Type of occurrence” depending on whether the occurrence was a text or image.
• “Quote/description” if text, then the section related to alcohol or drinking would be transcribed. In the case of an image, the picture would be described.

• “Source” in this section the web-page link of the occurrence would be recorded.

• “Theme” the occurrence would be recorded accordingly.

• “Sub-theme” further qualification of the occurrence.

• “Nro. of Mentions” referring to the times an occurrence was mention in the group.

• “Level of drinking” depending on whether drinking was explicit or implicit.

(Section exclusive to the theme “Alcohol in events”).

Each Facebook group was reviewed four times. All the data were organised in an Excel spreadsheet.

**Table 2: Summary of themes and sub-themes.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alcohol in events</td>
<td>1.1 Primary alcohol-based event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Secondary alcohol -based event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Other social events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Purpose of Alcoholic-events</td>
<td>2.1 Special occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Supporting charities/causes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Alcohol promotion</td>
<td>3.1 Alcohol deals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Engagement of group administrator with alcohol-related content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. RESULTS

A total of 618 alcohol-related occurrences were identified among the Facebook groups, which represented three main themes: *Alcohol in events, Purpose of Alcoholic-events and Alcohol promotions*. Each theme is discussed below with appropriate examples. To ensure anonymity, Facebook group names associated with particular societies have been replaced by the category that they represent (e.g. Course based and career soc) and a number assigned to the group (e.g 1). Names of venues and people referred to on groups’ pages have also been anonymised throughout.

3.1. Types of events

Different types of events were promoted via the groups’ Facebook pages, and these were held throughout the academic year. Most were social gatherings that had a clear drinking connotation associated with the event, while others mentioned drinking as a secondary activity. In contrast, several events did not mention alcohol in any way and were also held in venues that did not offer alcohol. Lastly, few events did not specify drinking. However there were no non-alcoholic connotations attached to them either. Therefore, four sub-themes that represented the different types of events promoted via groups’ Facebook pages were generated: "Primary alcohol-based event", “Secondary alcohol-based event”, “Alcohol-free event” and “Other social events”. Table 3. depicts the number of occurrences related to each of these subthemes.
Table 3: Number of occurrences of the theme “Types of events” and its sub-theme.

| Category                        | Types of events (Nr. Occurrences) |  |  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|  |  |
|                                 | Primary alcohol-based event | Secondary alcohol-based event | Other social events |
| Course based and career soc.    | 62 | 10 | 78 |
| Equity and Diversity and others | 12 | 1  | 23 |
| Faiths, Thoughts, Belief        | 5  | 5  | 53 |
| Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles  | 67 | 29 | 57 |
| International and Cultural      | 24 | 10 | 32 |
| Music and Dance                 | 21 | 29 | 32 |
| Volunteering, Campaigning       | 9  | 3  | 51 |
| Sports clubs                    | 39 | 10 | 68 |
| Total                           | 239| 97 | 469|

3.1.1 Primary alcohol-based events

There were instances in which alcohol was the main focus of an event, or it is hard to establish a as one of the principal activities. To consider an event as primary alcohol-based one, references to alcohol and drinking had to be stated in the description or title of the event (pre-drinks, drinking encouragement, type of alcoholic beverage). Furthermore, if the event itself had a strong emphasis on alcohol consumption and the main nature of the event was drinking (bar-crawl, pub quiz, parties) then it would be included in this sub-theme.
This sub-theme was also coded depending on the level of drinking (explicit or implicit). Explicit drinking was defined when alcohol consumption was clearly stated in the description of the event; for example some events would announce pre-drinks (the act of drinking alcohol before a social event) as part of their description “And here at [Name of the society] soc HQ we think it would be a great idea if we all go together to show everyone how it’s done! We will have a meet up / pre-drinks beforehand as well.” (Music and Dance 2), other events would state terms such as related to drinking such as “getting drunk” or other type of slang “Get drunk, get dressed up, be [Name of society]+” (Event inviting members to bar crawl, Equity and Diversity 1) or would refer to drinking specific alcoholic beverages.

"This week [Society's name] will be teaching you how to make two delicious cocktails using TEQUILA. These will be: Margarita & Paloma. After a brief demonstration, on how to make each cocktail, you will be able to go behind the bar and make it your own!” (Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 7)

Implicit drinking was considered when alcohol consumption was not specified, but it could be assumed by the context in which the event was developed. Events that were held in venues where alcohol is provided or where drinking usually occurs (bars, clubs, pubs) were considered as events with an implicit drinking connotation (Unless the description of the event indicated otherwise) "Get on board the Biochem Soc Noah's Ark to Ocean in your wildest animal fancy dress." (Course based and career soc 9)
Table 4. shows the occurrences of explicit and implicit drinking respectively.

Table 4: Number of explicit and implicit drinking occurrences in “Primary Alcohol-based events”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary alcohol-based events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit Drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course based and career soc.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity and Diversity and others</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faiths, Thoughts, Belief</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International and Cultural</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Dance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, Campaigning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports clubs</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 239 primary alcohol-based event occurrences (Table 3.), 112 events stated drinking explicitly, and 127 mentioned it implicitly (Table 4.). “Hobbies, Interests and Lifestyles societies” societies had the highest amount of these events (n=67), followed by the “Course-based societies” group (n=62), while the lowest occurrences were found in the "Volunteering and Campaigning" (n=9) and "Faiths, Thoughts and Beliefs” (n=5) societies. Events would be mentioned or promoted more than one time in several cases. In total “Primary alcohol-based events“ were mentioned 415 times.

Several events mentioned alcohol or drinking as the main focus or as one of the principal activities, mainly including bar-crawls, pub-quizzes and parties. Amongst these social gatherings, the most common were parties (n=78). In several cases, parties stated drinking explicitly “Shake off the exam blues with Tuesday night madness with some
(nationality reference) love. Pre-drinks at (accommodation) common room from 8:30 pm onwards" (International and Cultural 1). Bar-crawls were the second most common events (n=40), “Let us take you on the ultimate night out in [city in East Midlands] where we will visit numerous bars and attend an exclusive after party,” (Course based and career soc 4.). Pub quizzes (n=29) were another type of events that included drinking as main activity "What's up [reference to society members] In a couple weeks’ time we're teaming up with the guys from [city] '[magazine name]' for an evening of music themed, pub-quizzin' splendor. (and beer)” (Music and Dance 8).

The language used to describe events primarily focused on alcohol was often positive, “It's just £1 to participate so come join us for drink and a laugh - can’t wait to see you all there!” (In context to a pub-quiz. Course based and career soc 10) and openly promoted drinking "Drinking is encouraged but don't tell anyone I said that..." (In context to a film screening hosted by Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 1). In some instances drinking was regarded as part of the entertainment, i.e. being part of a game, "It’s a bar crawl where each bar is a 'hole' and each one has a certain drink that you have to finish within a set amount of time - the 'par' - there will be scoresheets and everything!” (Music and Dance 2) or associated with amusement "It's just £1 to participate so come join us for drink and a laugh - can’t wait to see you all there!” (In regards to a pub-quiz hosted by Course based and career soc 10). The use of emoticons and emojis was also common in the language utilised to describe events. Emojis are pictures or images used to communicate an emotion through a text message “Think that the weekend is going to fly by too
quickly? Extend it by buying a ticket to our pub quiz on Monday [beer emoji] Tickets must be bought online in advance, so get yours now!" (Course based and career soc 1).

A few societies had alcohol drinks and their crafting as their main objective; thus most of their events focused on making and consuming alcoholic beverages. For instance, one society organised weekly social events focused on teaching members techniques and recipes to make cocktails. Alcohol was referred to several times in relation to the same event, "The spirit of choice for this week is RUM, which will be used to create two delicious cocktails: Piña Colada & Mojito (summers not over yet!)." (Hobbies, Interests and Lifestyles, 7). Moreover, another society from the same group focused on the craft of beer brewing and thus trips were organised to several pubs and bars to taste the beverage. "Thursday we will be hosting a tasting of 5 carefully selected bottled beers. For just £4 you will get a third of a bottle (just under a third of a pint) of each beer, so that’s about a pint and a half! " (Hobbies, Interests and Lifestyles 12).

3.1.2 Secondary alcohol - based events

In contrast to events that appeared to be primarily focused on alcohol, there were instances in which drinking was mentioned as a lesser activity. For this sub-theme, events with a secondary focus on drinking were chosen with specific criteria. If the events mentioned drinking after the completion of another primary activity, then the event was included in this sub-theme.
Alcohol mentions could be explicit by referencing drinking directly or implicit by referencing a place where alcohol would be provided but not necessarily stated that drinking took place (Table 5.).

**Table 5: Number of explicit and implicit drinking occurrences in “Secondary Alcohol-based events”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course based and career soc.</th>
<th>Explicit Drinking</th>
<th>Implicit Drinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equity and Diversity and others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faiths, Thoughts, Belief</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International and Cultural</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Dance</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, Campaigning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports clubs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Events with secondary drinking accounted for 97 occurrences in total (Table 3.). Among these events 44 referred to alcohol explicitly, whilst 75 mentioned drinking implicitly (Table 5.). “Hobbies, Interests and Lifestyles” and “Music and Dance” societies (Table 3.) accounted for most of the occurrences (n=29). The lowest occurrences were found in the "Equity and Diversity and others" (n=1) and “Volunteering, Campaigning” (n=3) societies. In total, “Secondary alcohol - based events” were mentioned 169 times across all Facebook groups.

When some of these events were being promoted, alcohol consumption was not stated explicitly in either the title of the events or their descriptions "we're hoping to go to
[Pub’s name] afterwards also just for a bit of chit chat, feel free to come along." (Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 2). One could assume that drinking took place and in some cases, the likelihood of consuming alcohol at the event was suggested, though it was not the primary focus of the event. "We'll be in C11 [university building] this time, starting at 7pm as usual. Be sure to join us afterwards for a bit of discussion, a few drinks and whatever else we get up to!" (film screening hosted by Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 1).

In contrast, some events did state drinking more explicitly, "Sorry for the late notice on this one but this Thursday we will be holding some campaign training :) ...after the session we will head down to [Pub’s name] for some dinner, drink and a chat." (Volunteering, Campaigning 1), but still followed the pattern of drinking as a secondary activity.

For instances, film screenings are social events, which generally do not have a strong alcohol connotation, however in some instances there were implicit suggestions that drinking would take place following the movie, thus, making drinking a secondary activity. "After each screening we'll be setting course for the [Pub’s name] in the Students Union for a bit of discussion and a few drinks." (Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 1). Other events where drinking took place after another activity were: workshops "We are doing our Christmas Social at [Pub’s name] after the workshop - no obligation to come to both but would be nice to see all of you there! For those of you who only wants to go to the social: this starts at 6.15 :)! Can't wait !! xoxo" (Volunteering, Campaigning 4), jam session "This is the next [society’s name] society session down [Pub’s name], so
come on down with or without an instrument and have yourself a wonderful evening of chatting, drinking and the long into the night.” (Music and Dance 1), and sports events:

“On December 5th, the University of [City] [Sports club’s name] will be hosting the Art of War 2015. We are inviting clubs from across England to compete, regular interclub rules apply. The event will be held in [Club’s name], featuring around 20 fights, weapons demonstrations, and STUDENT PRICED DRINKS!” (Sports clubs 2)

The language used to promote these events was positive, “We're watching the match on Saturday @ [Pub’s name], kick off 4pm so we'll be there from 3.30ish lots of Welshy love xxxxx” (International and Cultural 5) and also encouraging in terms of socialization between people of the society “This Thursday from 5-7pm come down to the CD Library in the [University building’s name] basement (along the corridor from [Pub’s name]) for free food and drink, 3 free CD rentals and to chat and meet people.” (Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 8)

3.1.3 Other social events

Some events were difficult to consider as alcohol-based events or as events without drinking. These types of events would not have a clear drinking connotation attached to them. Alcohol consumption would not be mentioned as a primary or secondary activity. Furthermore, drinking would not be mentioned in an explicit or implicit level. Only few
events would be clearly described as non-alcoholic. For this sub-theme 469 events were found (Table 3.). The “Course based and career soc” societies accounted for most of them (n=78), followed closely by the “Sports clubs” societies (n=68). In contrast, the lowest occurrences were found in the “Equity and Diversity and others” (n=23) and “International and Culture” (32) societies. “Other social events” were mentioned 677 times across all the societies.

Few events would be clearly depicted as non-alcoholic. "[Name of society]'s Non-Alcoholic Social: LASER [Name of venue]! In the light of the new [Film’s name] film [Name of society] invites members to join the committee in a game of [Name of venue]." (Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 7). A society highlighted that non-alcoholic drinks would be served in one of their events "Come check us out at the IMS sports fair and try one of the delicious sports themed mocktails (cocktails without alcohol)!" (Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 7). However, it is important to remark that these events were not common across the societies. Occurrences for these events were generally scarce (n=4).

Trips were other type of events that were included in this sub-theme “Coach trip to Manchester for a scene crawl! Meet us at [Building] to get on the coach. Tickets sold out but we’re looking to get a bigger bus so that we can take more people ” (Equity and Diversity and others 1). The description of this type of events did not mention drinking at in any level; however, they were not explicitly portrayed as non-alcoholic either.
Thus, these events could not be considered as alcohol-based events, since it did not fit with the selection criteria for those sub-themes.

Some events were held to introduce the society to new members; these events were called "meet and greets" and they were usually part of the fresher's fair and offered snacks "...we'll be at the freshers fair from 10-4 in the hub tomorrow! Come and see us for some French/German snacks," (Course based and career soc 3) or any other incentives, "We've got the bike ready to go and we've got some goodies too! Come say hi to us in the tent next to [University building’s name]". (Course based and career soc 8). Societies also hosted general meetings; the purpose of them was to elect the society’s new committee for the next academic year "We will be holding our AGM the coming Tuesday after sign up. We will be electing the new committee and go through what we have done in the past year." (Sports clubs 6). However, it is unclear if alcohol consumption took place before, during or after these types of gatherings.

Other types of events included workshops, debates and conferences. Specifically, workshops provided students with the opportunity to enhance certain skills:

“For just £2, come join an incredible workshop for the members of LBSS with the amazing [Name of person] & [Name of person] from LTP! Your Salsa TCs have been working hard to make this suitable for all levels - so come and experience a new form of salsa in the 1 hour class.” (Music and Dance 4)
Meanwhile debates helped the societies to address certain relevant topics:

"On Wednesday 10th February, [Society’s name] are teaming up with [Society’s name] for a very special panel discussion! Featuring members of each society, this panel will answer to questions proposed by you! A great chance for a discussion of important issues and the gathering of viewpoints." (Faiths, Thoughts, Belief 1)

Lastly, conferences similarly to workshops, involved meetings for students to learn about different matters. "Syria + Refugees = Threat to UK?" (Volunteering, Campaigning 2).

The latter events did specify drinking as an activity, however they were not clearly stated as non-alcoholic events either. Thus, It is unknown if drinking took place or not.

**drinking Purpose of alcoholic-events**

The purpose of the events that involved drinking was varied. Generally there were two main purposes: celebrating particular holidays or dates and helping charities or causes. Therefore, two sub-themes were identified: "Special occasions" and "Supporting charities/causes". Table 6. depicts the occurrences of the theme and subthemes.
Table 6: Number of occurrences of the theme “Purpose of alcoholic-events” and its sub-theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of alcoholic-events (Nr. Occurrences)</th>
<th>Special occasions</th>
<th>Supporting charities/causes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course based and career soc.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity and Diversity and others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faiths, Thoughts, Belief</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International and Cultural</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Dance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, Campaigning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports clubs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.1. Special occasions

Some societies would hold drinking sessions or drink alcohol with other members to commemorate holidays or to celebrate the start or the end of the term. This sub-theme was focused on the identification of occurrences where drinking was motivated by the nature of special dates. Occurrences for this sub-theme were selected based on the purpose of drinking in a festive or celebratory context, considering alcohol as a way to celebrate.
In regards to this sub-theme, 61 occurrences related to alcohol consumption on special occasions (Table 6.). “International and Cultural” (n=14) and “Course based and career” (n=12) societies were amongst the groups with the most occurrences. The “Volunteering and Campaigning” (n=1) societies showed the lowest count.

Societies exposed drinking in reference to celebrating different holidays. Christmas and Halloween accounted for several drinking occurrences across the data. A lot of Christmas parties were held in clubs and had a clear connection to alcohol "We're now selling tickets for our Christmas social at [Name of the event]! (Course based and career soc 1)", "The Christmas house party is tonight at 8.30pm at [Address] and as said before we'll serve delicious rice pudding and mulled wine" (International and Cultural 4). Other societies had Christmas dinners in pubs, offering signature drinks to celebrate the holidays. "Join us at [Name of Pub] for a night of classy cocktails and canapés to celebrate Christmas and the end of a fabulous first term!" (Music and Dance 2). In regards to Halloween, results were similar, however, drinking and drinking to get drunk appeared to be more explicit. "HALLOWEEN BAR CRAWL TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW !!!!" (Course based and career soc, 4), "Get drunk, get dressed up, be [Name of society]+ " (Event inviting members to bar crawl, Equity and Diversity 1). There were other types of holidays as well; these were relevant to the culture of the society, e.g. Mardi Grass “[Society’s name] invite you to get silly (in context to get drunk) with us and celebrate Mardi Gras. Red Bar for some great drinks deals before on to CRISIS!" (Course based and career soc 1). Saint Patrick's Day was also celebrated with drinking. "Let's make this
last session a great end to the term and celebrate the traditional Irish combination of music and drinking!" (Music and Dance 1). There were celebrations around the end of the year that involved drinking as well "So [Name of a member], [Name of a member] and I are going to celebrate new years here in [City] tonight in true [society’s name] fashion... by getting very very drunk if anyone else is around and is not doing anything, then you should definitely join us" (Sports clubs 2)

Drinking was also involved to celebrate a new academic year "For our first event of the new year we'd like to welcome [members of the society] old and new, and anyone with an interest in campaigning (or cakes and cocktails) for an evening of Cocktails, Cake and Campaigns." (Volunteering, Campaigning No.1), or to celebrate the end of the term or exams "Anyone wishing to celebrate the end of exams, we are currently drinking at [Name of venue] before going to [Club’s name] for 10" (Sports clubs 2)

3.2.2. Supporting charities/causes

Drinking also appeared to occur in support of a charity or important causes. In some instances, events would be held with clear reference to alcohol; however, the underlining focus was to help charities.

Occurrences for this sub-theme were low (Table 6.) (n=20). However, all but one group of societies showed at least one of these. "Volunteering and Campaigning" (n=5) was the society with most mentions of drinking to support causes or charities.
In the sense of helping charities, there were a few instances where events had a drinking connotation to help its cause. "Admission £2 (further donations encouraged!) -- all will go directly to the UNHCR." (In context to a social event to raise funds. The event is a pubquiz, held by Volunteering, Campaigning 2). Other types of events were being held in clubs, and all the funds would be used to help a particular cause. "[East Midlands University’s name] [Society’s name] International Society is excited to announce the return of our biggest fundraising event, Jamnesty! Join us to kick start the new semester with a night of live music, dance and more..." (Social event to raise funds hosted by Volunteering, Campaigning No.2)

3.3. Alcohol promotion

The promotion of alcohol across the university society was another pattern found across the data. In regards of promotion to drinking, society members would have different offers to encourage alcohol consumption. Furthermore, it was clear that society leaders would promote drinking with different posts. Thus, 2 sub-themes were derived from this theme: “Alcohol deals” and “Engagement of group administrator with alcohol related content.”

3.3.1 Alcohol deals

Alcohol-related deals or offers were commonly presented by the societies. Several societies would give the opportunity to members to buy alcohol at a more inexpensive rate or in larger quantities for a better price. They would also at times reward drinking with prizes and otherwise. For this theme, any language that
promoted drinking by making it less expensive or by providing attractive deals was considered an occurrence. If alcohol was being provided as a reward or a prize for a competition then it was also included in this theme.

Table 7: Number of occurrences of the sub-theme “Alcohol deals”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course based and career soc.</th>
<th>32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equity and Diversity and others</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faiths, Thoughts, Belief</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International and Cultural</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Dance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, Campaigning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports clubs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 58 alcohol promotions (Table 7.). The “Course based and career soc.” had the highest occurrences (n=32), whereas the “Volunteering, Campaigning” had the least (n=1).

Societies often gave their members the opportunity to obtain less expensive or free drinks. In some instances, buying an alcoholic beverage would give the consumer the chance to get another drink for free "Your social secs have organised an amazing bar crawl including a free shot in each bar (with the first drink)" (Sports Club 1), "Phunk'd is back again on THURSDAY 19th NOVEMBER with NTU [Society's name]...get a FREE SHOT!" (International and Cultural 2). In other cases, alcoholic beverages would be
discounted for society members, "If you still need persuading, don’t forget Real Ale members get 10p off a pint at the Boat! " (Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 12)

A few societies also offered alcoholic rewards. In some instances, the prize for winning a competition would be alcohol, "we will have a fantasy football league this year and a small, probably alcoholic prize will be on offer!" (Course based and career soc 3), "THE WINNING TEAM WILL RECEIVE A CRATE OF BEER OR A BOTTLE OF SPIRITS (COURTESY OF RAGLAN ROAD)!" (Competition held by International and Cultural 5)

3.3.2. Engagement of group administrator with alcohol related content.

Senior members of the societies often appeared to promote drinking on the group's Facebook page. Table 8. depicts the number of occurrences, by category.

Table 8: Number of occurrences of the sub-theme “Engagement of group administrator with alcohol related content.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement of group administrator with alcohol related content.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course based and career soc.</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity and Diversity and others</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faiths, Thoughts, Belief</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International and Cultural</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Dance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, Campaigning</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports clubs</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the engagement of administrators in relation to alcohol or drinking promotion (Table 8.), 143 posts by members were found. The “Course based and career soc” societies exposed the highest number of occurrences (n=55), followed then by “International and Cultural” societies (n=8). While, "Volunteering, Campaigning” showed the lowest number of occurrences (n=4) related to alcohol engagement by senior members.

Senior members referred to alcohol in different manners. In some instances, the administrator of the website would encourage drinking if the members of the society obliged with a request "On a side note if anyone arrives in a tux with an American football I will personally award them a beer." (In the context of a post of one of the admins of the website, Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 1). Members would also explicitly refer to getting drunk or even drink to the point of being regretful. "The weather outside is s***, but with highsoc tonight, you'll be inside with us getting drunk, listening to ****'s questionable playlists. Festive." (Posted by a member of the society Hobbies, Interests, Lifestyles 8), "Dress to impress! Drink to regret! Dance for a bit of bouncy bouncy!!" (Posted by a senior member of the society International and Cultural 1). Other members would use their position of webpage administrator to remind other members about their alcohol-based events. "A reminder that tomorrow is our bar crawl to Pressure Nottingham with punksoc." (Hobbies, Interests 8), "Good afternoon everyone :) Don't forget to come along to our pub social at [Pub's name], [City}
neighbourhood] at 8 tonight follow by our very first karaoke session at [Karaoke venue],

[City neighbourhood] at half 9." (Posted by an admin in the group of Sports clubs 9)
4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Summary of main findings

The present research showed a significant amount of alcohol-related content on societies’ Facebook pages, 618 alcohol-related occurrences were found. Events related to drinking were held regularly across the academic year, 336 events related to alcohol were identified. In most cases, drinking-related activities were mentioned explicitly and were considered as the primary activity being conveyed through posts. Primary alcohol-based events were three times as more common than secondary alcohol-based ones. These events that did not feature explicit or implicit alcohol occurrences or drinking as an activity main activity were labelled as "Other type of events". Consider these social gatherings as non-alcoholic would not be appropriate since it is unclear if drinking happened at any stage of the event. Throughout the sample, just four events were clearly stated as non-alcoholic.

There were two main purposes of drinking: Celebration of holidays or special occasions and the support of a cause. In total, 61 occurrences related to drinking and celebrations were found. Drinking as a way for backing charities was less common with 20 occurrences; however, it is important to remark that supporting these causes might be considered as a justification for alcohol consumption.

Alcohol was promoted among the societies. In total, 58 alcohol-related deals were found across the groups; these occurrences would be linked to alcoholic offers presented by the society. Group administrators also appeared to actively post
content related to alcohol, occurrences related to administrators and alcohol were found 143 times. People with administration rights would post content encouraging social interaction with drinking.

The language used to describe drinking was positive; no negative connotation regarding alcohol use or drunkenness was found throughout all the societies.

4.2 Strengths and Limitations

This is the first study to conduct a content analysis of university sports clubs’ and societies’ Facebook pages in the UK. The results of this qualitative content analysis are representative of all the societies and sports clubs of this East Midlands University, showing an insight of the nature of alcohol content in the academic community. Two experts in qualitative work supervised the codification and the identification of themes, offering a sense of validation to the results and making them more accurate.

Some limitations were encountered during the current research. A proportion of societies Facebook web-pages presented restricted access to the public. There was the possibility that some societies had a private group aside from the public one, which could have resulted in some missing occurrences. However, as it was mentioned before, the sample of Facebook group was large enough to be representative of the whole study population.
4.3 Nature of drinking

Considering the vast amount of alcohol related posts and the promotion of alcoholic events, it could be assumed that young people enjoy drinking. This desirability to drink could be embedded within the cultural norms of university life and as a way to enhance cheerfulness. This phenomenon can be corroborated by other studies. A study found that university students considered alcohol as a way of self-expression and enhancing positive memorabilia (30). An observational study held in the Netherlands reported that higher drinking levels in university students were related to positive expectancies (drinking makes me happy, enjoyable) and arousal (drinking makes me impulsive, energetic) (42). Furthermore, another study reported young people would describe drinking as something normal (28). It was also worth noting, that recommendations of responsible drinking were not found in any event description or post by the societies. It seems leaders of the societies did not consider necessary to promote responsible drinking among their members, supposedly because drinking is normalised.

Social bonding is also another factor to be considered. Certain studies have reported alcohol as a vehicle to overcome shyness and to enhance socially responsiveness (28, 43). A study found that focal groups that were provided with an alcoholic beverage had a better bonding experience, in contrast to those groups that were served a placebo (43). The results of this research support these latter statements. In several occasions, leaders of the societies featured alcohol as a main activity; some of these events were held with the purpose for new members of the society to
be introduced to the rest of the members. One could assume that societies considered drinking as an activity that facilitates social interaction between people and as way to encourage social interaction.

Other studies have stated that depending on the social context, such as being with friends or co-workers, drinking could be regarded as more acceptable (44). Therefore, it is plausible that the society members in charge of their respective Facebook pages and their social calendar did not regard drinking as something rare, rather as a social norm. Accordingly, this might be the reason of the vast amount of primary and secondary alcohol-based events. There is the possibility that some members of the society would feel excluded if they would abstain to drink. In fact, in one study, abstainers reported feeling excluded from the group when not taking part in drinking (28). Perhaps that is the reason behind some societies holding non-alcoholic events. However, it is important to remark that most societies did not hold specific non-alcoholic events regularly since across all the data gathered just four events were described as such. Some events could be assumed as non-alcoholic. However, it is difficult to consider them as completely alcohol-free events.

Another finding is related to the alcohol deals offered by the societies. Data suggested that societies held some degree of partnership with some venues that provided alcohol. Alcohol branding and advertisement is regularly presented in social media (32). Advertisement of alcohol and sponsorship is common in other types of media as well (45, 46). It seems that alcohol advertisement could be related
to the events held by the society. Considering the special offers aimed to their members, it seems that venues that provide alcohol could be sponsoring some events at some level or at least held a degree of partnership with the societies. However, it was difficult to establish a robust relationship between the venues and the societies, considering the limitations of the data. This is something that should be further investigated. Future research could consider the relationship these two players hold and how they mutually benefit from each other.

**4.4 Implications for public health**

Considering the vast amount of young people that drinks in the UK (19), drinking is a recurrent public health issue. It is clear that tailored interventions are needed if it is wanted to decrease the amount of young people drinking.

Based on the observation of this study, campaigns to decrease the prevalence of alcohol consumption among university students has to take into account the social context in which drinking is presented.

Drinking seems to be a social activity. Thus, it is important to address messages regarding drinking culture. It is of particular importance that stakeholders and leaders of the societies acknowledge the vast quantity of alcohol-related events that are being promoted. It would be an adequate recommendation to feature warnings about excessive drinking in the description of alcoholic events.
4.5 Future research

Further research and studies should analyse more in deep the relationship between societies and venues that provide alcohol. This could be examined by interviews with the leaders of the society. It is important to understand that the results of this study could be useful as a base to undertake further research related to alcohol and university students. It could be useful to gather a sample of students and start questioning them about the social interaction aspect of alcohol in their university student life.
5. CONCLUSION

- Alcohol based events are promoted and mentioned several times in the university Facebook groups.

- Drinking is portrayed by the societies as something regular in the context of social gatherings. Thus it could be implied that the nature of drinking and consumption of alcohol is embedded in the culture.

- All the language utilised to describe alcohol was positive. No negative language or warnings for excessive drinking was found in the data.

- In a certain level, drinking occurrences were related to holiday celebrations and charity support.

- Promotions and deals regarding alcohol are common in the societies Facebook pages. Societies might hold partnerships with different venues that provide alcohol.

- No references to consequences of alcohol misuse were found in this sample.
6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- It would be beneficial to work with the leaders of each society and sports clubs, to incorporate warnings and consequences of excessive drinking in the promotions of their events.

- Future studies should focus on assessing the relationship between societies and venues that provide alcohol. As well as the role of alcohol as a social mediator.

- It would be positive that the student union leaders actively engage in establishing policies against the massive promotion of alcohol-related events.
APPENDIX 1: Letter of ethical Approval from SU

2/11/2016

Sent: 15 December 2015 11:48
To: Sarah Melville <Sarah.Melville@nottingham.ac.uk>
Subject: MPH student project

Hi Sarah

For the purpose of ethics, please could you confirm that the Students’ Union are supportive of the following project

Exploring alcohol content on social media sites run by university sport and social clubs

Kind regards
Amy

Amy Fuller | PhD Student, University of Nottingham
B125, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health
Clinical Sciences Building
Nottingham City Hospital, NG5 1PB
Phone: 0115 823 1350

UKCTAS
UK Centre for Tobacco & Alcohol Studies
Hi Amy

We have no reservations about the master’s project you mention. We don’t control the pages, so we’ll be unable to add you to them, but no problem with your masters student pursuing this.

Many thanks

Sarah

Dr. Sarah Melville
Customer Insight Manager.
University of Nottingham Students’ Union, Portland Building, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD
sarah.melville@nottingham.ac.uk, T: 0115 84 68755
Web: www.su.nottingham.ac.uk, Twitter: @UoNSU, Facebook: UofNSU

Students’ Union
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM
Hi Roberto

Please find below approval on you project from the Students’ Union. You can attach this to your ethics applicat when you submit it.

Kind regards
Amy
# APPENDIX 2: Coding Sheet

<table>
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