

The use of Netnography in research on the psychology of vulnerable groups: The case of a podcast about alcohol use disorder

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Abstract: Alcohol use disorder is a widespread public health problem that affects millions of people worldwide and has social, economic, and cultural repercussions. However, difficulties in reaching vulnerable groups make research on such public health issues challenging. While digital media has the potential to be a powerful tool in the detection, prevention, and treatment of various mental disorders, there are limited studies that specifically address user comments in this context. This study uses a netnographic approach to analyze listeners' comments on Andrew Huberman's podcast episode "What Alcohol Does to Your Body, Brain & Health" on the "Huberman Lab" YouTube channel. With nearly 7 million views and more than 11,000 comments, this podcast is significant. By analyzing the 1,200 most engaged comments, the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses of the listeners were revealed. This research fills a gap in the literature by providing an understanding of the potential of digital media to contribute to public health issues.

Keywords: Alcohol Addiction, Alcohol Use Disorder, Alcohol, Netnography, Podcast.

1. Introduction

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is a widespread public health problem that seriously affects the quality of life of millions of people worldwide [1]. Alcohol use is a type of addiction that causes almost 3 million deaths annually worldwide and stands out with its economic, social, and cultural costs [2]. The main symptoms of AUD include uncontrolled alcohol use, intense substance seeking, and physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms [3, 4]. These symptoms cause significant disruptions in people's social, professional, and personal lives. For example, a 2022 study found that in the US, individuals with AUD missed more than 232 million workdays per year and that the total number of workdays lost by AUD workers accounted for 14.1% of the total number [5].

Social support is vital in the fight against addiction. Research shows that having social support reduces the risk of addiction and has a positive effect on the addiction treatment process [6]. Psycho-social factors such as traumatic events and inadequate social support also play a significant role in the development and severity of AUD [7]. Comforting elements of the social environment, such as the support of family and friends, can act as an important buffer in the prevention and treatment of addiction. AUD is closely related to the individual's internal psychological processes [8].

Recent research on social media shows that these platforms have become a significant tool for issues related to physical health and well-being. It is seen that health-related communities provide morale and support to each other by sharing experiences, they strengthen social bonds. Digital media can create a

solidarity network in solving alcohol-related problems by enabling individuals to interact with others if they are guided on proper use [9-11].

The first official use of media for educational purposes was initiated by “The National Committee on Education by Radio [12]” established in the USA in 1941. This committee aimed to educate adults through radio broadcasts [12]. With the proliferation of digital media, it has become accessible to a vast audience. The flexible and accessible nature of podcasts has come to the forefront as an effective method to increase learning motivation, encourage participation, and engage students [13]. In particular, podcasts have been recognized as an innovative tool for addiction prevention and awareness-raising activities, as they provide individuals with the opportunity to learn voluntarily.

Considering these technological conveniences and developments, Huberman [14] podcast episode “What Alcohol Does to Your Body, Brain & Health” reached 6.9 million views [14] and went viral. The comments made on the podcast episode on the YouTube platform stand out as an important source that allows us to understand the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions of the audiences. These comments may reveal functions such as raising awareness about alcohol addiction, motivating, building solidarity, encouraging behavioral change, and developing empathy.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the comments on Huberman’s podcast episode “What Alcohol Does to Your Body, Brain & Health” on YouTube through a netnographic approach. Especially in studies on alcohol consumption and addiction, it is argued that qualitative methods are more convenient and more suitable for understanding the complexity of the subject [15]. Although studies on the effects of digital media content on public health and addiction are increasing, research on podcast content and its effects on audiences about a serious problem such as alcohol addiction is limited. This study aims to fill this gap and contribute to a better understanding of the effects of digital media on addiction awareness and behavior change.

2. Material and Methods

In this study, netnography method was used to virtually observe and analyze the comments of the podcast. Netnography, introduced to the literature by Kozinets and Gretzel [16] is an ethnography-based qualitative method carried out in new communication environments, particularly in social media and social networks Kozinets and Gretzel [16]. In other words, netnography is a method where the reactions/experiences in the interaction process in social networks can be monitored ethnographically. With netnography, texts such as “writing, photography, video and audio” can be evaluated in fields such as “social sciences, media and cultural studies, anthropology, education, nursing, travel and tourism” [17]. Netnography makes it possible to find communities and topics, narrow data down, manage large digital datasets, analyze digitally contextualized data, and address contentious online ethical issues qualitatively and interpretatively [16, 18].

2.1. Sample of the Study

The sample of this study is the most engaged comments of podcast titled “What Alcohol Does to Your Body, Brain, & Health” released by an American neuroscientist and podcaster Prof. Dr. Huberman [19] on the Huberman Lab YouTube channel. Aired on August 22nd, 2022, on YouTube, the podcast is 121 minutes long and consists of 29 segments. The first reason for sampling this podcast is that it has received approximately 7 million views (6,972,695 Accessed September 25th, 2024). Second, this podcast received a very high number of comments (11,442). The top 100 most popular comments on the podcast received 2 thousand 15 responses and were liked 29 thousand 324 times. The final reason is that the podcast is added “some post-DUI courses and in college and high school level Human Health curriculum” [19]. It is seen in the comments that the podcast was accessed from at least 15 different countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, England, Greece, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Scotland, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United States). This dimension alone shows the international impact of the podcast.

2.2. Research Questions

The study designed to answer these two research questions:

RQ1. What are the definitions used by listeners in comments on alcohol use and what is the general framework?

RQ2. In the comments, what are the points that users highlight about the process of alcohol use?

2.3. Obtaining and Processing the Research Data

In the study, the podcast comments were closely monitored for 2 years via “digital observation,” one of the main points of the netnography method. At the end the “most popular” 1200 comments on the podcast (approximately 10% of the total number of comments) were subjected to analysis. The study data, which was processed between July 20th and September 20th, 2024, was first transferred to a Word document to minimize data loss. The 1200 comments received in the Word document were classified based on the categories defined in the qualitative data analysis program called NVivo, which were finalized after being pre-tested. Thus, sample YouTube comments belonging to each category and the frequency values were obtained in a systematic way. The categories that were thought to best reflect the observations and the basic design of the study and sample comments belonging to these categories were tabulated and used. In order to ensure that the analyzed comments were not generated by a bot, we paid close attention to the interaction elements of the comments such as “likes and replies.”

3. Findings and Comments

The findings of the study are presented in two sections. In the first part, “the definition of alcohol users and alcohol use, the basic dimensions of the process of alcohol use and the types of emotions emphasized in the comments” were presented. In the second part, “the prominent themes in the comments, the dynamics associated with alcohol use and the functions emphasized in the comments” were examined.

3.1. Definitions of Alcohol Use

According to the findings, people who use alcohol defined themselves at very low frequency (only 1 out of every 12 comments) but in very clear words. People who use alcohol are mostly defined as “Alcoholic” (f=67). Along with the definition of alcoholic, definitions such as “Heavy Drinker” (f=9) and “Regular Drinker” (f=3) are also remarkable. These definitions can be interpreted as an important clue in terms of showing that people who use alcohol are aware of the degree of their addiction at the beginning of the process. In other definitions, alcohol users were generally subjectivized as “Social Drinker (f=11), Hangover (f=7), Occasional Drinker (f=2) and Happy Drinker (f=1).” The emphasis on alcohol consumption as a beverage of pleasure rather than addiction is made visible.

Table 1.
Definitions of alcohol use.

Definitions	Sample YouTube Comments	Frequency Value
Alcoholism	I'm the one that has had a couple of decades dealing with my own alcoholism which derailed my success academically and professionally.	f=62
	I'm 4 months in recovery from alcoholism.	
	I have alcoholism in my family. I've had blackouts in the past.	
Addiction	Addiction is a nightmare, but I've finally seen some light.	f=29
	It's a slippery slope, I never thought partying in my 20s would lead to a major addiction in my 30s.	
	My heart goes out to all the people struggling with addiction.	
	I started drinking at the age of 15 and got addicted for over 13years.	
Problem	I had a drinking problem for over a decade.	f=22
	The problem is that drinking is seen as an act of freedom, and to suggest not drinking might be seen as further imprisonment of individual freedom.	
	Dude, your changing lives. I did not realize I had a drinking problem until I watched your podcast.	
Anxiety	About 4 years of regular drinking, I was diagnosed with anxiety and clinical depression.	f=17
	There's so much acceptance around drinking that makes it difficult to control especially when already dealing with anxiety/depression and stresses.	
	Binge drank once a week, depressed and anxiety up in the air for a week later.	
Poison	I will never drink alcohol again! Pure poison.	f=15
	I feel like Andrew wants to scream out that alcohol is a poison, and it is insane to drink it.	
	Yes, it's like injecting poison into your body.	
	Alcohol is literally poison.	
Disease	I realized that drinking alcohol is a disease!	f= 14
	My family dies from alcoholism, alcohol related diseases (fatty liver, diabetes, etc) or from diabetes/diabetic related diseases like heart diseases.	
	This disease is destroyed my life.	
Death	My mum died from being an alcoholic in April this year.	f=13
	Watched a family member die the slow death.	
	I'm almost 12 hours in right now! I must stop it's killing me!	
Dangerous	Alcohol is dangerous.	f=12
	There is a movement and awareness from this podcast alone about alcohol and the dangers of it.	
	Interesting! It is a dangerous spot to be in, having to drink early to cure the hangover.	
Edginess	I'm not sure, but that "edginess" just creates itself again and again and I find myself doing the same chronic drinking behaviour which just disrupts all my clarity.	f=10
Disposal	Alcohol has destroyed so much in me and in my life for so long.	f=8
	Alcohol has destroyed my business and private life. No compensation!	
Terrifying	I'm no longer a daily drinker because of this. That's terrifying!	f=6
	Annoying problems have arisen for instant gratification.	
Total		f=208

As seen in Table 1, "Alcoholism" is the most frequently used term to describe the process of alcohol use. Along with alcoholism, "Addiction and Problem" are the other terms most frequently used to describe alcohol use. As in Table 1, commenters are aware of the alcohol addiction of the person they are commenting on (even if the comment is about themselves). On the other hand, as can be seen in the other definitions in Table 1, alcohol use was associated with entirely negative concepts. It is possible to say that alcohol use is defined in terms of "a cause of anxiety/feeding anxiety; a poison that should be banned; a cause of death, danger and destruction for human life."

Table 2.
Key dimensions during and after alcohol withdrawal.

Basic Dimensions	Sample YouTube Comments	Frequency Value
Feeling Good	I completely quit alcohol and am feeling much better.	f=62
	Best decision so far! I feel great, I look great and my anxiety has been pretty much non-existent nowadays!	
	Day 28 with no alcohol after 11 years of drinking beer every night after work and I can't imagine feeling any better than this	
Life-Chanigng	Been sober for 4 years, not a single drop, not a single craving for it. It's been the best decision I've ever made for all areas of my life.	f=52
	This video is a game changer for me.	
	This podcast has changed my life, Andrew. 2 more weeks will be a year of sobriety.	
	The most amazing change is that my anxiety and insomnia just disappeared.	
Recover One's Health	Sober life can be boring as shit at times, but my health and sanity are back.	f=40
	I'd also be interested in knowing how the body recovers after stopping/decreasing alcohol consumption.	
	This knowledge may satisfy people like me who have recovered and are curious about this subject.	
Lifesaving	You may have just saved my life man. Thank you so much.	f=24
	Dr Hubermann you just saved my life with this one	
	You are quite literally a life saver.	
	This video will save many people's lives.	
	So much life wasted. I wish I had never started.	
Total		f=178

Among the main dimensions during and after the process of quitting alcohol, "Feeling Good" comes first. Along with feeling good, the "Life Changing" dimension of quitting alcohol was also made visible in the comments. In addition, it was found that quitting alcohol was also addressed with dimensions such as "Regaining Health" and "Saving Life." Commenters evaluate quitting alcohol in terms of "being healthy and saving the rest of their lives" (in a positive mood).

Commenters associated quitting alcohol and/or the process of quitting alcohol with the feeling of "happiness" (f=56) the most. There are also comments indicating that the podcast was a "Motivational Tool" (f=46) for them in the process of deciding to quit alcohol. The comment texts that are "proud" (f=32) of themselves and other people who quit alcohol are also remarkable. Of course, along with the positive emotions of "Happiness, Motivation and Pride" in the process of quitting alcohol, there are also negative emotions in the process of quitting alcohol. "Sadness (f=30), Anger (f=30), Regret (f=18) and Fear (f=18)" towards the people who consumed alcohol (themselves, their family or friends) were also identified as the prominent negative emotions in the comments.

3.2. Topics, Dynamics and Functions

The prominent themes in the comments (Table 3), the dynamics associated with alcohol use (Table 4) and the functions of the comments (Table 5) were categorized in detail and the frequency values of the categorized elements were also given.

Table 3.
Main topics in comments.

Topics	Sample YouTube Comments	Frequency Value
Acknowledgements to Content Producer	Thank you for putting in the work.	f=132
	Thank you for this thorough and thought-provoking episode on alcohol.	
	This is extremely insightful. Thank you!	
	Everything is explained in detail. Thank you, sir.	
	Not until my mom recommended me to psilocybin mushrooms treatment. Psilocybin treatment saved my life honestly. 8 years totally clean. Never thought I would be.	f=64
	All my doctor wanted to do was put me on ssri. I refused. I quit drinking for a time being, started eating better, and took inositol twice a day and it changed everything. I feel 100 percent better.	
	I stopped drinking beer thinking it would be good for my liver.	
Harm of Alcohol Use	Any years of having sleep issues, depression, stomach problems, anxiety, a terrible threshold for stress, impulse control, etc.	f=55
	Depression, anxiety, mood swings, no sex drive, no motivation, no enjoyment in my passions, weight gain and now hypogonadism that's probably irreversible.	
	Sometimes I feel tired after a drink or two,	
	Yea interesting bone health is most important. 30 yrs got bone cancer.	
Video Content Request on a Different Subject	Can you do a session on the effects of marijuana as well?	f=52
	Can you do a podcast on Tinnitus?	
	Can you please do a whole series about illicit drugs, or recommend one?	
	Can you discuss dihydromyricetin, please?	
Evaluations of People Who Do Not Drink Alcohol	I've managed to make it to 23 years old without ever consuming a single drop of alcohol - this podcast has more than validated my decision.	f=33
	I do not drink. Ever. My late husband did. It absolutely contributed to his death.	
	I'm not a drinker; it's just never felt good to me feeling dizzy and disrupting my sleep after just one drink.	
	I had an ex-boyfriend many years ago who was struggling with alcohol addiction.	
	my mum died from being an alcoholic in April this year.	
	My father died from cirrhosis of the liver due to	
	being an alcoholic for fifty years.	
Benefits of Quitting/Reducing Alcohol	I stopped drinking a year ago and I have never had such clarity of mind. sleep has improved. Less anxiety and more energy.	f=30
	I've been sobering for 4.5 years now. The day I quit boozing my blood pressure, weight, and cholesterol were awful.	
	Sober for 35 years this February. Now I see why I still had impulsiveness, anxiety, and insomnia for years after my last drink.	
	Day 28 with no alcohol after 11 years of drinking beer every night after work and I can't imagine feeling any better than this.	
Reasons for Alcohol Use	I started at 30 years old after a divorce and an ankle fracture.	f=17
	Had quit for 2 years, then my mom died from breast cancer, so I drank for a year after that, and it's now been 15 days since my last drink.	
	I started drinking after college and became an alcoholic after I was discharged from the military.	
	My stepfather pressured me into drinking when I was 16.	
	More and more of my friends are quitting alcohol completely for various reasons. Sad thing is that sometimes at the party, the wedding is hard to be the one who doesn't drink.	
Detailing Alcohol Use	I drink 10 to 12 a day every day for the last 5 years I guess I'm done.	f=17
	12 drinks a week? That's easy to do; it is equal to 7-8 craft beers, or 4 craft beers and 4 or 5 shots of bourbon!	

	I drink 4 oz of whiskey every night before dinner.	
Thinking Alcohol Use is Harmless	There's a myth that alcohol is essential for socializing or happiness.	f=13
	I absolutely love drinking! Everything is more fun with a drink.	
	We live in a society deeply ingrained with alcohol culture,	
	I enjoy little drink.	
	I feel energized by a couple drinks.	
Total		f=412

Table 4.

Key dynamics in the comments.

Basic Dynamics	Sample YouTube Comments	Frequency Value
Physiological	Alcohol puts me to sleep.	f=92
	I am planning to listen to this episode over and over until it is absorbed by my brain on the subconscious level.	
	For some hours of pleasure, we literally spend money to make our body suffer the next day in the form of nausea, vomiting, headache, fluid loss, loss of appetite.	
	I have hypertension and have noticed that when I don't drink at all I have no blood pressure spikes.	
	My poor brain. I've really done it a number.	
Sociological	To abstain from alcohol is to practically be an outcast in many of these social situations and seen as being rude or negative.	f=60
	I hate how ingrained alcohol is into society. I don't drink (only because it makes me feel lousy), and I feel like I have to keep it a secret to avoid being judged by people. There's a lot of cultural pressure to drink alcohol.	
	This discussion could have benefited from a discussion of some of the ways to reduce inhibitions and decrease anxiety about socialization without alcohol.	
	So, starting at 15, it being highly normalized in my family of heavy drinkers and being surrounded by normalization in my society.	
Religious	That's why Islam said it's HARAM 1440 years ago.	f=35
	I'm totally subed in bro love the real information may the lord Jesus Christ protect you and family.	
	I just thank God I am not a drinker!	
	I drink alcohol and enjoy it very much for lord said this wine is my blood.	
	God prohibited alcohol for a reason Alhamdulillah for Islam.	
Psychologically	I've been drinking to deal with extreme stress and just to numb myself.	f=21
	I suffered severe depression and mental disorder.	
	Best decision I ever made. If you're thinking about it, just spoil yourself.	
Economic	4 cans a night for over 20 years.... the money and time I've wasted.	f=2
	You forgot to mention the Tax money that was lost during prohibition.	
Total		f=210

Table 5.
Key functions of comments.

Basic Functions	Sample YouTube Comments	Frequency Value
Educate-Information	I'd love high school science teachers to show this in class.	f=126
	This should be taught in every highschool across the country and world.	
	It's unbelievable that this depth of information is available for free on youtube.	
	Such an important conversation about alcohol.	
	Very valuable information.	
	Excellent information.	
Raising Awareness	Great information. Very helpful.	f=42
	Andrew. Your podcast is a wonderful public service. One of the best and most important podcasts for sure.	
	A million thanks for another eye-opening teaching.	
Suggestion	This was eye opening.	f=29
	My advice for younger viewers that are dabbling in drinking, think twice.	
	Listen to this man young peeps! Spare your liver & mental health.	
	The best way to stop drinking alcohol is to never drink alcohol.	
	Alcohol should be illegal!	
Empathizing	Don't eat sugar or drink coffee... it is so easy... just stop because it is a choice.	f=27
	My heart goes out to all the people struggling with addiction.	
	Interesting comment section.	
Inspire	It's very important to find a conversation club with people like me!	f=25
	Trying to take back control of my life and hope this video helps me as well	
	What this video has done for me is indescribable.	
Reminder	For inspiring me and thx so much for genuinely caring!	f=21
	Wow. I remember the stressor that ramped up my drinking. Been an issue ever since.	
	It is very interesting that people that use alcohol can remember the days, years that they are not drinking anymore.	
Solidarity- Building Togetherness	I remembered that I just had to give up alcohol.	f=16
	Starting the sober journey myself! You guys aren't alone.	
	Good luck everyone!	
	Wish me luck guys.	
Motivating	We need to talk about how alcohol is nothing but a hard legal drug, should be banned worldwide.	f=16
	This podcast was a great motivator for me to reconsider the impact of alcohol.	
	You are amazing Andrew, you give me such motivation living the Sober toxin free life,	
Stability	I'm motivated by those who are here to quit alcohol!	f=11
	I will never drink alcohol again.	
	Quit booze 5 years ago, the best decision of my life.	
Abnormality	I almost completely stopped drinking one year ago.	f=3
	I never understood how we got to a place where alcohol has become so normalized.	
Persuasion	The hardest part is to realize that sober life is not normal.	f=3
	This podcast has convinced me to never drink alcohol, period.	
Total	I will work up the courage to watch the entire thing.	f=319

One of the most prominent themes was expressions related “gratitude” towards the content producer. It is seen that commenters requested content on different topics and demanded answers to the questions. Some people make evaluations even though they do not use alcohol. They congratulate themselves after watching the podcast and reinforce their non-use attitude. The comments emphasize the physiological, sociological, and psychological benefits of quitting/reducing alcohol use. According to the findings, it was determined that the commenters started drinking alcohol at a very young age, especially for reasons stemming from friends and family. There were also comments stating that alcohol use is harmless. Some comments emphasized the psychological and social benefits of alcohol use.

Among the basic dynamics mentioned in Table 4, “Physiological” evaluations are the most prominent. A bunch of physiological disorders such as “headache, blood pressure, body health” were mentioned. The second main dynamic most frequently mentioned by the commenters is “Sociological” statements. One of the most remarkable findings in the basic dynamics section of the comments is related to the evaluations made in the “Religious” dimension. Some religions are known to prohibit alcohol use, so some people seek help from their God to quit drinking. The findings suggest that economics is not the primary dynamic in the process of alcohol use and/or abstinence.

In the comments, the “Educational/Informative” function is most prominent. Along with the educational-informative dimension, “Raising Awareness” and providing “Suggestions” on the process of alcohol use were found to be other important functions. Users stated that the podcast content raised awareness about alcohol use and gave suggestions to each other. Different functions that come to the fore in the comments such as “Empathizing, Inspiring, Reminding, Building Togetherness, Motivating.” There are also comments expressing their determination to quit alcohol and underline the need to abnormalize alcohol use.

3.3. The Time Element Used in Comments and The Relation of Comments to Podcasts

The time element in the comments and the relationship between the comments and the podcast contain remarkable findings. Accordingly, the relationship between the comments and the podcast is presented in Table 6 and the time element used in the comments is presented in Table 7.

Table 6.

Relation of comments to podcasts.

	Sample YouTube Comments	Frequency Value
Direct	29:05 fiber would also slow down the absorption of alcohol.	f=421
	11:20 actual talk begins.	
	25:01 does anyone know where he gets this from?	
	I learned 2 things during this episode. #1 “People drown, they die as a consequence of doing that” #2 I have brain damage	
Indirect	Im 28 and been struggling with alcohol for 11 years.	f=779
	At first, I was counting the days, now It just became a normal thing.	
	I was a weekend binge drinker throughout my 20s. I'd eat healthily, workout during the week, then Friday would roll around and I'd down a half bottle of liquor just to pregame the evening.	
Total		f=1200

Table 7.

Time is used in comments.

Time	Sample YouTube Comments	Frequency Value
Time to Start Drinking	I started drinking at the age of 15 and got addicted for over 13years.	f=82
	I've been drinking since I was 17.	
	I started drinking alcohol since my teenage.	
Time to Stop Drinking	Day 3. No alcohol.	f=340
	1 month sober today.	
	1.5 years sober.	
	I'm 15 months sober.	
	I'm 620 days sober.	
	18 years now without a drink.	
Total		f=422

One of the most important findings of this study is that most of the comments are indirectly related to the podcast content. In other words, the people who watched/assumed to have watched the podcast did not primarily include the podcast creator's posts in their comments. Instead, the commenters made their “own life stories” visible in the processes of alcohol use or reduction/cessation of alcohol use. At this point, the podcast whose comments were analyzed was important as a starting point for the

commenters. After this starting point, “life patterns in which people express their own experiences and observations” about alcohol use came to the fore in the comments. Of course, this evaluation does not mean that the comments were completely independent of the podcast content. At this point, the comments developed within the framework of the themes of the podcast, but the commenters mostly found a place for themselves in the digital conversation club (comments) by telling their own lives.

Among the most prominent points in the comments is “Time.” Those who commented especially mentioned the day they quit drinking alcohol. This finding shows that the number of days without alcohol can be considered as an important motivational factor in the process of quitting alcohol use. Within the scope of the study, the minimum duration of quitting alcohol use was 1 day, and the maximum duration was 18 years. On the other hand, there were also individuals who indicated the time they started drinking alcohol. At this point, it is seen that people started drinking alcohol at a very young age (15, 17 years old).

4. Results and Discussion

This study examined the impact of digital media, especially podcasts, on AUD using a netnographic approach. By analyzing comments on Andrew Huberman’s podcast “What Alcohol Does to Your Body, Brain & Health” the effects of the podcast on listeners’ attitudes, and behaviors related to alcohol use were revealed. According to the findings, alcohol users were mostly defined with the term “alcoholic,” and the process of alcohol use was mostly defined with the term “alcoholism.” While the most prominent dimension during and after the process of alcohol use was “feeling good,” the most common emotion due to quitting alcohol was “happiness.” These findings, which are the answer to the first research question of the study, can be evaluated as people are conscious about themselves and the process of alcohol use. In the comments, the topic of “acknowledgments to the content producer” ranked first and was mostly evaluated within the framework of “physiological” dynamics. In addition, the function of “educating/informing” is most visible in the comments.

According to these findings, which are also the answer to the second research question stated within the scope of the research, there is a high level of gratitude to Andrew Huberman. In the comments, the connection of alcohol use/alcohol cessation with physiological conditions such as “headache, heart attack, weight loss, blood pressure and/or insomnia” was made visible, and the educational and informative role of the podcast content was frequently emphasized. It was found that the comments were mostly in an “indirect” relationship with the podcast. This finding includes the sharing of personal experiences and observations that become evident in the comments in parallel with the podcast content.

In the findings, it was also found that the comments were mostly in an “indirect” relationship with the podcast. This finding includes the sharing of personal experiences and observations that become evident in the comments in parallel with the podcast content. Emphasizing the time to stop using alcohol is also included in the results of the study.

The data of this study consists of the 1200 most popular comments determined by YouTube in line with its own algorithm (based on the number of responses and likes). Therefore, it can be stated as a limitation of this study that comments with low number of responses and/or likes were not analyzed.

In conclusion, this study fills an important gap in literature by providing an in-depth understanding of the role of digital media in public health interventions and in issues such as addiction, the psychological conditions of which are difficult to investigate. In future research, similar netnographic studies on different digital platforms and various psychological factors will further enrich the knowledge in this field.

Author Contributions:

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection and analysis were performed by Bahar URHAN, Fırat ATA, Tuba LİVBERBER and Begüm Birsen ARSLAN ÇELİK. The first draft of the manuscript was written by Bahar URHAN, Fırat ATA, Tuba LİVBERBER, and Begüm Birsen ARSLAN ÇELİK and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved of the final manuscript.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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