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Part I: Energy Drinks

Before the rise of the energy drink, students had the option of coffee or taking naps throughout the day. Over the past decade, energy drinks have increased abundantly, becoming not only a normal but a staple in people's lives. As they have gained popularity, energy drinks have also earned a multitude of stipulations regarding health issues as well as performance benefits in our day-to-day lives.

The first energy drink was introduced in Japan in the early 1960s. The market continued to expand over the next few decades with the introduction of other brands, like Red Bull, which targeted a wider audience. In the 1990s, Red Bull made its way to the United States, and by the early 2000's new brands, like Monster and Rockstar, were becoming increasingly popular among young adults and college students.

Due to a combination of factors, energy drinks advertise their ability to provide a quick energy boost, as well as marketing for a better lifestyle and performance. Some people might think that this is just a mindset to cover a serious addiction.

As a society, we have become dependent on the use of energy drinks as a stimulant to get through our days. In the study "Energy Drinks" conducted by the National Library of Medicine, 496 college students in the United States were rselected at random, and it explains, "...67 percent of the respondents consumed energy drinks to prevent falling asleep, 65 percent to increase energy, and 54 percent consumed the beverage to mix it with alcohol" (Ishak et al.). The study

also showed, “[E]nergy drinks can also have a negative effect on sleep, which may be modulated by caffeine. A study of 197 high school students found that 95 percent of participants reported recent caffeine use. Mixed users of caffeine and soda reported early morning awakening and daytime sleepiness compared to the low caffeine group” (Ishak et al.). As humans, our “have to do it all” nature makes us eager to fill our plates with anything and everything we possibly can. This sensation of fullness and purpose gives us a feeling of belonging. As we continue to pile things into our agendas, we get burnt out—this is where the energy drink comes in. It is a lifesaver for those of us who run on little sleep, packed days, and high social interaction.

Studies also show that the brain's cognitive function reacts positively to energy drinks, and it can even reduce mental fatigue. However, they are also shown to react negatively to those with mental health issues. This will be a continuous problem in the future, as our society has become a fire pit of hate and bitterness.

Over 60% of the world drinks an energy drink daily. They seem to be what is keeping the world rotating; however, we become dependent on them, causing us to become dysfunctional without them. Honestly, this could be seen as either progress or regression. While some might see it as problematic that we are contingent on a drink to supplement energy for us, others may see it as a step forward for society, as it creates an outlet for us to gain extra energy and push to fight through our hard days.

Part II: Prohibition and Speakeasies

In the early 1900's the United States ratified the 18th Amendment and passed the Volstead Act. This initiated the start of the Prohibition Era. This era was a culmination of the Temperance Movement, which aimed to reduce social problems that were associated with the consumption of alcohol. This ultimately led to widespread crime and illegal activity.

Men and women all over the nation risked their reputations and even faced jail time just to have a sip of alcohol. They would sneak around town to secret, hidden bars, known as “speakeasies.” Here, they would socialize by listening to music, dancing, and enjoying live entertainment. People from all walks of life participated in these secret affairs. It was such a big deal that there were secret passwords and codes required to gain entry to the different bars.

The start of this phenomenon had an extreme impact on society and opened up a whole new plethora of possibilities, which still affect the world today. In the article “Goodnight Moonshine” by John Slack, it exudes, “[N]onetheless, despite the relative shortness of Prohibition, its effect on American society was substantial such as innovations in tactics for special interest groups, a shift in the cultural significance of drinking, and adding to the discussion of the federal and state governments’ role in the citizens’ lives.” This era instilled a shift in the way America functioned. For instance, crime rates rose, creating a platform for the crimes committed today, and thus leading to changes in law enforcement and policing. Not only did Prohibition affect the law, but it also affected the economy. The government lost significant tax revenue from alcohol sales, and on top of that, Prohibition cost millions of dollars to enforce. Culturally, this era symbolized the clash between traditional values and modern lifestyles. It helped to change attitudes towards government control over personal choices, and also created a sense of freedom and personality through lifestyle choices that were considered “wild” or “unorthodox.”

Overall, this era helped to develop society through ambitious self-expression and being able to make decisions for yourself. Laws were made, which was a progression; however, as a society, the sneaky nature of the speakeasies also ingrained a type of slyness in us, making it our anatomy to want to break the rules and sneak around the law.

Part III: Research Journey

For my research paper, I researched energy drinks and how they affect society. I picked this because, as an avid energy drink consumer, I wanted to see how it impacted society as a whole. I also really enjoy learning about the brain and how it functions, so when we started discussing this unit, I immediately thought of energy drinks.

For this process, I just searched Google Scholar for “the effects of energy drinks on society,” and I read through a few of the articles provided. I also did some research in some online books and just on Google in general to double-check my facts. The research part of the assignment wasn’t what took me long; it was trying to organize my thoughts and apply them to the prompt.

The article “Energy Drinks” by the National Library of Medicine explains the history and background information of the rise of energy drinks. Then, proceeds to explain the methodology of energy drinks and how they affect the brain. The next section talks about tests and experiments that were conducted and the percentages and outcomes they received from them. This section goes into details about mental illness, cognitive function, mood, decision-making, etc. Lastly, it goes into the discussion and conclusion about how the correlation between the brain and energy drinks varies depending on the type of situation.

I don’t have any specific questions. I do, however, think that seeing more statistics and experiments about the way energy drinks affect mental illness or certain cognitive functions would be very interesting. Overall, I enjoyed researching this topic, but it isn’t stopping my energy drink consumption any time soon.

Works Cited

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