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Women's Appraisals of Drinking Memes and Alcohol Consumption Since COVID-19

Background

- Alcohol sales, usage, and alcohol-related illnesses and deaths have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic
- Women took on increased care work, emotional labor, and remote learning (among mothers), while disproportionately employed in high-stress essential occupations and service jobs
- Memes about drinking alcohol to cope with pandemic-related stress emerged and thrived among women during this time
- Previous studies have not examined the relationship between pandemic-related drinking memes and women's alcohol consumption

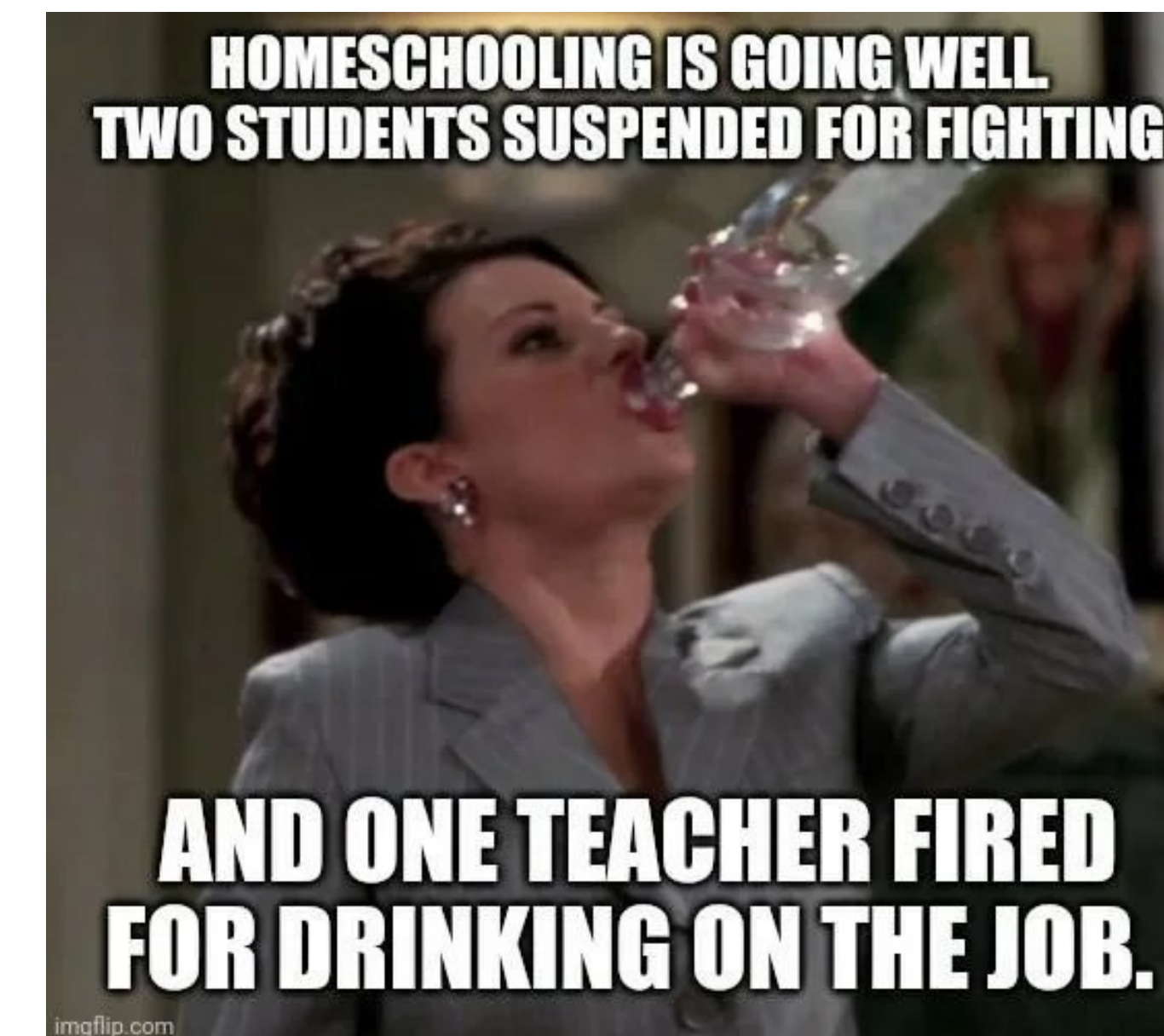
Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Role Strain Theory (difficulty meeting role demands) suggests that motherhood is associated with more positive appraisals of COVID-19 drinking memes.

Hypothesis 2: Social Proof Theory (perceptions of peers' behavior reinforces one's own) suggests that women who have more positive appraisals of COVID-19 drinking memes have higher odds of increased drinking since COVID-19

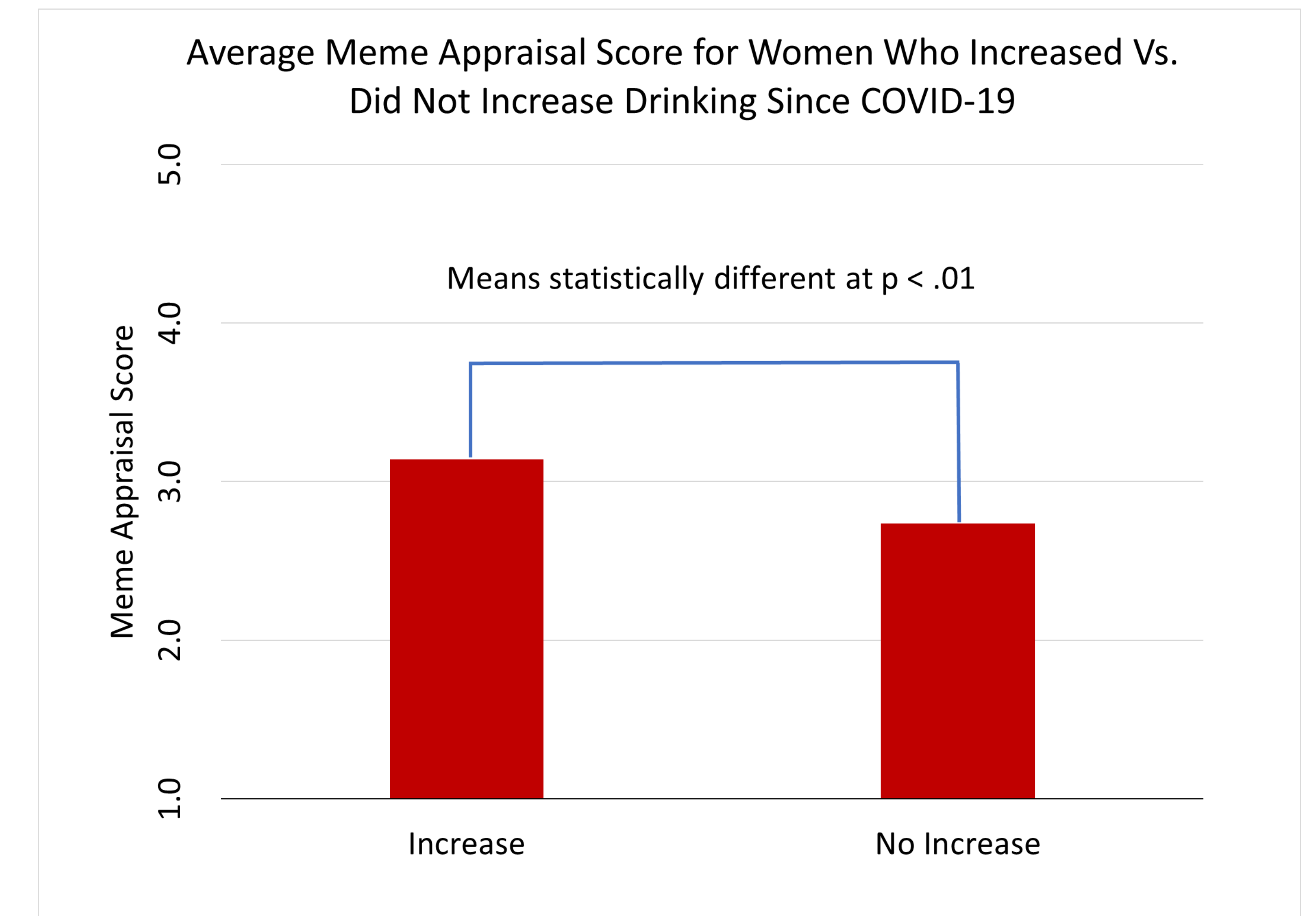
Data and Methods

- **Data:** Online survey of 528 women age 25 and older in June, 2020
- **Sample:** Convenience sample recruited primarily through social media; skewed toward white, college-educated, women from Midwest
- **Variables:** average meme appraisal score (1-10); increased alcohol consumption since COVID-19 (vs. stayed same/decreased); presence of children age <25 in the household; sociodemographic characteristics



Summary of Findings

- Older women, women with a graduate degree, retired women, and those who were not working had more negative appraisals of the drinking memes
- Higher income women and women with children <25 in the household had more positive appraisals (the effect of children was explained by women's age, education, and relationship status)
- More positive appraisals of the memes were associated with greater odds of women having increased their drinking since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic



Conclusion

- Alcohol consumption has increased among women since the COVID-19 pandemic, as have alcohol-related illness and death
- Memes about women using alcohol to cope with stress proliferated on social media
- Women's appraisals of COVID-19 drinking memes varied by their sociodemographic characteristics; more positive appraisals were associated with increased alcohol consumption
- It is important to continue to examine the effect of social media on women's drinking in periods of crisis and other contexts

Key References

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