

Perceptions of alcohol advertising content by vulnerable populations: Is industry self-regulation necessary and sufficient?

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Alcohol and vulnerability

Adolescents

Women of childbearing age

Minority

Sensation seeking

Ethanol dependence

Early onset of drinking

Family history of alcoholism

Research literature on alcohol advertisements

- Younger adolescents were more inclined to perceive underage users or intended users of alcohol (Slater et al., 1996).
- Alcohol advertisements delivered with humor and youth-oriented music appeal to underage drinkers (Waiters et al., 2001).
- College students rated actors in some beer ads to be excessive drinkers, and their perceptions were related to alcohol expectancies and alcohol dependence severity (Proctor et al., 2005).

Alcohol industry self-regulations (US Beer Code)

- Brewers strongly oppose inappropriate consumption of their products.
- Advertising should portray beer in a responsible manner.
- Alcohol advertising is intended for adults of legal purchase age.

Social perception and ad contents

- Modeling behaviors (i.e., perceived # of drinks, excessive drinking, illegal activities, losing control, risk taking)
- Appeal and differential appeal (i.e., celebrities, cartoons, Santa Claus, use of humor)
- Age identification
- Positive functions (i.e., association with success in social, personal and health issues)

Study design

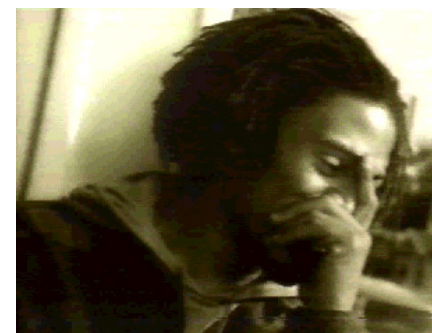
- College students and community residents (N=327):
 - 1) viewed 5 alcohol advertisements (4 video ads and 1 print ad);
 - 2) evaluated each ad using a standardized content rating scale;
 - 3) provided information on drinking patterns and personality variables.

Alcohol advertisements (1 & 2)

Laundromat foam party (Smirnoff Ice malt beverage)



After college (Colt 45 malt liquor)



Alcohol advertisements (3 & 4)

Poolroom party (Smirnoff Ice malt beverage)



Noise complaint (Sam Adams light beer)



Alcohol advertisements (5)



**4:05 AM: WE GET PAST
OUR 6th DOORMAN OF
THE EVENING.**

SEE WHERE IT TAKES
YOU

Data analysis

- Repeated measures ANOVA (GLM in SAS)
 - Between-subject main effect
- Logistic regression - dichotomized dependent variables

Results (F-statistics)

	Excessive drinking	Perceive drinks (#)	Ad appeal	Character appeal	Perceived age	Positive function (i)	Positive function (ii)
Gender	10.92	0.13	0.1	0.06	10.98	1.6	4.64
Minority status	1.31	1.36	0.5	3.25	2.81	0.47	0.1
Age<21	0.1	1.81	3.4	0.94	0.98	0.07	0.08
Early onset	5.2	14.22	34.73	25.71	0.31	7.92	3.06
Audit (positive)	8.95	12.97	34.93	15.09	2.67	13.94	10.44
30 day AQF	7.47	5.09	8.27	5.94	1.3	3.97	2.77
Binge frequency	7.66	12.77	1.89	1.68	4.13	2.49	2.53
Ethanol dependence	2.24	11.84	26.83	12.39	2.54	2.71	0.33
Sen. Seeking	2.3	2.38	22.67	25.01	1.69	1.3	3.01

Findings: Behavioral modeling

- Drinkers who have early onset age, high ethanol dependence, positive AUDIT score, and frequent binges tend to perceive greater number of drinks consumed by the characters.
- However, they are less likely to perceive the drinking scenes depicted in the ads to be “excessive”.

Findings: Appeal of ads and characters

- Male viewers perceive female actresses to be more attractive; black viewers rate black characters as more appealing.
- Drinkers who have high Ethanol dependence, early onset age, positive AUDIT score, and sensation seeking tendencies are more likely to perceive both the ads and the characters as more appealing.

Findings: Age identification

- Female viewers tend to perceive the characters to be younger than do male viewers.

Findings: Positive functions of alcohol

- Female viewers are more likely to perceive an association between alcohol consumption and success in social, personal or physical health issues.
- Abstainers or light drinkers are more likely to perceive an association between drinking and success in social, personal or health issues.

Summary

- Viewers' individual difference vulnerability factors affect perceptions of alcohol ad content, which may have potential impact on deviant behaviors.

Implications

- Is self-regulation necessary and sufficient?
- Code revision based on the perspective of protecting vulnerable populations
- Expert review system

Current work: Delphi study

- Experts (N=150) and ordinary viewers (N=150)
- Cross-over design
- Urn randomization
- Web-based Delphi study

Where to participate:

www.commed.uchc.edu/delphi/interest.htm

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