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An Examination of Methods Used in truth Campaign Advertisements

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An Examination of Methods Used in Campaign Advertisements

Monea Kerr | Dr. Sheila Webb | Journalism Senior Seminar Winter 2016

Research Question: What methods have anti-tobacco television advertisements, such as those of the truth® campaign, utilized in order to convince smokers to quit or non-smokers to never smoke?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY THE truth® CAMPAIGN?</th>
<th>METHOD AND THEORY</th>
<th>DOMAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique - born out of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement of 1998</td>
<td>Textual analysis of advertisements</td>
<td>The campaign targets 15- to 21-year olds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal interest: was disturbed by the commercials I would see on TV as a teen with a mother who smokes</td>
<td>Semiotic approach: signs create meaning - can be both intentional and unintended</td>
<td>17 advertisements examined – retrieved from YouTube</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS</th>
<th>DISCUSSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All of the ads examined had an education factor</td>
<td>Dramatic demonstration and audience reaction: at-home audiences can picture themselves in the situation or feel validated in their emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88% used dramatic demonstration and 65% included audience reaction</td>
<td>Education: a new fact for every advertisement To unveil true colors of Big Tobacco To promote education on health consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35% used vulgar humor</td>
<td>Activism – encourages youth to “enlist” War metaphor positions youth generation in a battle with Big Tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18% used fear and 12% used disgust</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12% used fun humor</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Domain**

- The campaign targets 15- to 21-year olds
- 17 advertisements examined – retrieved from YouTube
- One from each year: 2000 to 2016

**Discussion**

- Dramatic demonstration and audience reaction: at-home audiences can picture themselves in the situation or feel validated in their emotions
- Education: a new fact for every advertisement To unveil true colors of Big Tobacco To promote education on health consequences
- Activism – encourages youth to “enlist” War metaphor positions youth generation in a battle with Big Tobacco

**Conclusion**

- At the heart of any campaign is the ability to put together signs in a creative way in order for the message to be received effectively by audiences. Meaning is then created through social convention
- Limitations: finding advertisements and knowing what year they were from – citing YouTube
- Further research could conduct a comparison of another anti-tobacco campaign to the truth® campaign.
- A further study could conduct a focus group of high school and college students to analyze advertisements

**Methods Used in truth® Advertisements from 2000 to 2016 via Youtube**

**EDUCATION**

**AUDIENCE REACTION**

**VULGAR HUMOR**