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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?

WHY THE truth® CAMPAIGN?

- Unique - born out of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement of 1998
- Personal interest: was disturbed by the commercials I would see on TV as a teen with a mother who smokes

METHOD AND THEORY

- **Textual analysis** of advertisements
- **Semiotic approach:** signs create meaning - can be both intentional and unintended

DOMAIN

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

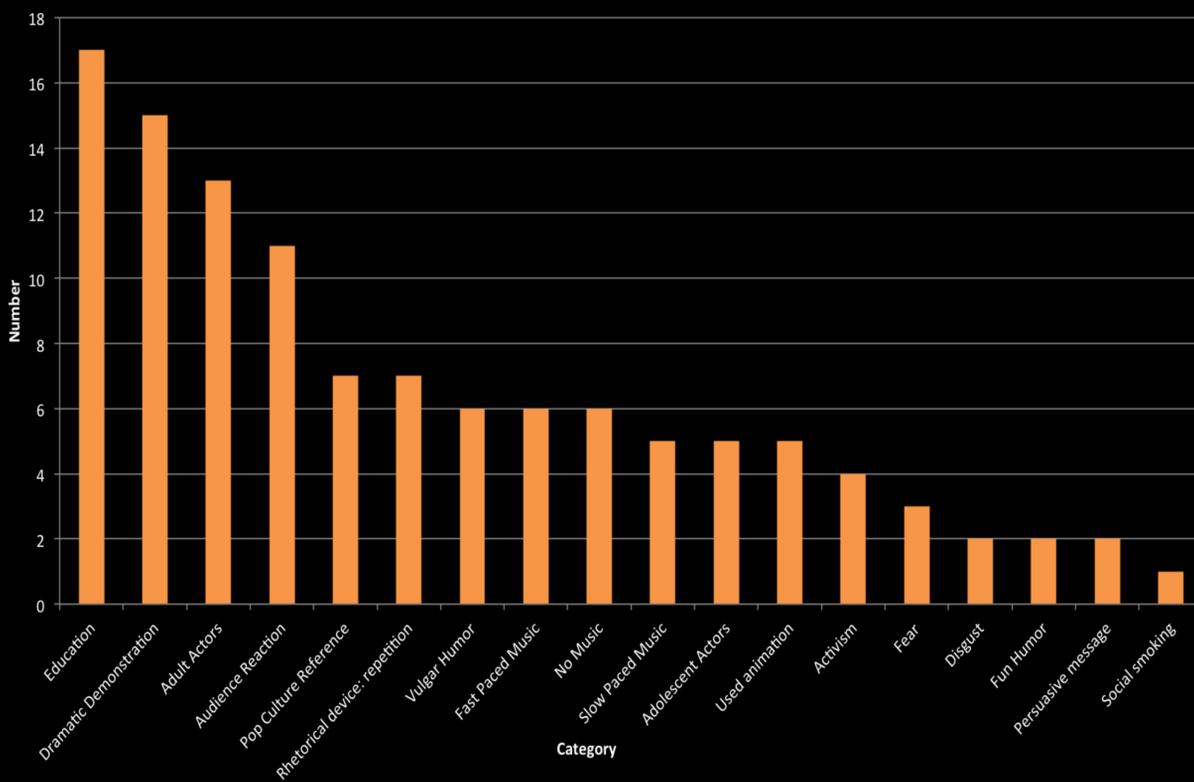
SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

- All of the ads examined had an education factor
- 88% used dramatic demonstration and 65% included audience reaction
- 35% used vulgar humor
- 18% used fear and 12% used disgust
- 12% used fun humor

DISCUSSION

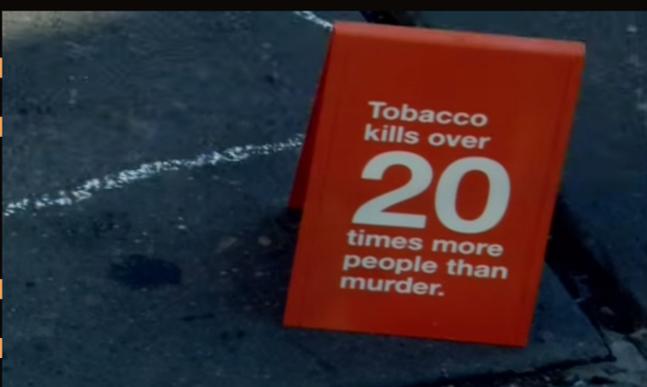
- **Dramatic demonstration and audience reaction:** at-home audiences can picture themselves in the situation or feel validated in their emotions
- **Education:** a new fact for every advertisement
To unveil true colors of Big Tobacco
To promote education on health consequences
- **Activism -** encourages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

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



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



EDUCATION



AUDIENCE REACTION



VULGAR HUMOR