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Juul Advertisement and its Large Appeal

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Advanced Visual Persuasion

Dr. Alexa Dare 435

Abstract

As electronic cigarettes have become more and more popular with people who are in college I became curious as to what kind of advertisements these companies were using and why they were appealing to a certain age demographic. Considering this this paper looks at Juul advertising and why it might be appealing to children. This is a current problem that the company is navigating as the product has become ever increasing popular to teens and is problematic in increasing children smoking. While the company claims it is marketing to when their advertisements are analyzed it can show how they may appeal to a much wider audience .

Introduction

The issue I am looking at is the advertisement of e cigarettes or vaping products encouraging children smoking. Since the rise of popularity of vaping devices children smoking and becoming addicted to nicotine has become a serious problem. Children smoking is an epidemic now in the united states and people are trying to figure out how to stop this problem including the government trying to regulate it. Some states have even now raised the age to

purchase these devices and all Tabaco products from 18 to 21. Oregon being one of these states say it was to help discourage children smoking “ Raising the age to purchase tobacco to 21 years old is an evidence-based strategy that will help reduce youth initiation of tobacco” (Oregon Health Authority). With this in mind I plan to look at the look at the advertisement of one of the most popular e cigarette device known as the Juul.

Juul has recently come under fire due to the fact that many people are upset about children smoking and using the product. According to an article in USA Today titled *Vaping company JUUL investigated by Massachusetts for allegedly marketing to minors* by Ryan Suppe talking about Juul’s investigation of advertising to minors the company could be in trouble. While there are ongoing investigations of the company being accused of marketing to minors and more government regulations “JUUL Labs' chief communication officer Matt David said in a statement that the company has never marketed to minors. Instead, word of mouth among adults is how the company's e-cigarette has become so popular” (Ryan suppe). This is interesting and while they say their advertisements are not meant for children I believe they can still be targeting them.

With this in mind The specific advertisement from Juul being looked at is from the company’s vaporize campaign advertisements like this one were shown in times square, online and sent out in emails. The advertisement shows a blond girl who looks to be about 20 and she is holding a Juul Showing off the e cigarette and it slim portable and stylish design. The girl is also smiling showing bright white teeth. She has red lipstick on and is wearing a black dress. Shel also has on a necklace with a small triangle penitent in the middle. The advertisement has

a bright yellow background and says click to buy your Juul and Juul pods direct In black text with a white background cut out and placed across the a little above the shoulder line of the girl holding on the Juul. On the left it shows four Juul pods each one being a different color red yellow blue and tan. With a textbox above and below that is grey with white text. The one on the top says buy Juul and the bottom says buy Juul pods. The advertisement as a whole has a happy uplifting feel that looks preppy and sunny with lots of light and color. This advertisement may be meant for adults but also can be appealing to children because of how friendly it is.

Purpose

The purpose of this visual analysis is to analyze a specific e cigarette advertisement for a product called the Juul. the article Adolescents' and Young Adults' Use and Perceptions of Pod-Based Electronic Cigarettes by Karma McKelvey, Mike Baiocchi, Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, states the Juul was released in 2015. With this in mind the Juul has taken off as one of the most popular vaping products on the market. From this the advertising of the Juul and other e cigarettes began to become more prevalent. Recently though there has been controversy over the advertisements though because of how many children there are smoking. The company claims the advertisements are towards adult but with analysis it seems as though they can appeal to all audiences especially children.

Conceptual Framework

When looking at images it is important to note that viewers are the ones that make the meaning but also it can be different than the producers intended meaning. Along with the actual image itself and the aesthetics that play into it. First looking at how viewers make the

meaning the Practices of Looking by Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright talks about how there are three things that go into production. These three elements are the producer, the viewers and their interpretations and then lastly the exhibition and viewing context.

It is important to note each one of these elements and the role they play when analyzing an image especially and advertisement. The viewer is everyone who sees an image. The viewer is typically the audience of multiple people who see an image. Not everyone who sees an image will have the same reaction to it and interpret it the same way. This is important because it means that while viewers are looked at as a collective group each individual can make their own meaning. Also people who all see the image together will talk about it and form a collective idea. Just as viewers of an advertisement in Times Square, New York might all react to an advertisement in a similar way because they are all seeing it together. Through people seeing an advertisement they can form a collective perspective of it and they might all be for or against the product or advertisement.

With the viewers making the meaning through viewing the image and interpreting it leaves it up to what the people think of the image for it to create meaning. The producer however may have had a different meaning in mind when creating the image. This can lead to a problem of how an image's meaning is made because of the contrast of the two ideas. The producer is typically looked at as one individual who worked to create an image and can have a specific intended meaning for the image. While they may have a specific intended meaning this is a myth "it is a myth that the author is the primary producer of the text's meaning" (Sturken, M. & Cartwright 57). So while producers aim to have a specific meaning the viewers are the ones that actually create the meaning.

With viewers creating the meaning lastly come the exhibition and context of how the image is viewed. This is important because it can change how viewers make the overall meaning of the image. So it is important to note how the viewers come to see an image where is the image displayed. Are viewers seeing the image in a museum a news article as an email or on a website. All of this plays into how the viewers make meaning and are important to note when analyzing the viewers meaning of an image.

With looking at a specific image it is important to note its artistic and aesthetic appeal. If it has high aesthetics then it is visually pleasing to the viewer. This can make an advertisement do well in the sense of selling product. It can also bring viewers back to looking at an image because it is appealing to look at. This adds meaning to the images because it so how viewer can make meaning out of an image because of its aesthetic can create a positive meaning even if the message itself is not positive.

Method

In order to analyze the artifact chosen a semiotic approach will be taken to fully show all the elements of the advertisement. With using a semiotic method tools of looking at all of the image's parts and messages it is conveying will be analyzed to find the image's meaning and conceptually how it appeals to multiple people. The first thing that comes into play when looking at the image is the idea of a sign. A sign being a signifier and a message to the viewer. In the artifact chosen there are multiple signs the first being the text itself of "click to buy you juul and juul pods direct". The next being the actual physical object of the juul in the woman's hand. This object is what the advertisement is trying to sell and is thus a sign as the product

being sold. Also in addition to these signs there is what kind of meaning does the advertisement make to the viewers. Just as the apple store is clean and invites play is a social meaning the colors and happiness of the artifact invites fun. Through looking at the signs and meaning of this artifact with a semiotic approach. The idea of what makes the advertisement appealing as well as why would it be made for adults but also appealing to children come in to play when analyzing this image. Through using the semiotic approach of looking at how the signs create meaning as well as how the advertisement has meaning made socially can be useful in looking how this specific advertisement appeals to a larger audience than it might be intended for as well as a different audience specifically children.

Analysis

Looking at the questions of what meanings are people making from the advertisement? As well as why does an advertisement intended for adults appeal to younger audiences with how viewers make meaning of the advertisement? Using the ideas of the viewers make the meaning the producer and the context in which the image is viewed as part of analyzing the image as well as the aesthetics to focus in on the signs. The key aspects of this image are the text itself, The product being the Juul, the ambiguous age of the girl, and the aesthetic bringing a happy fun feel.

The first sign to address in the image is the text that clearly reads “click to buy your Juul and Juul pod direct. This sign is clearly trying to get people to buy the product as describe by the text. Since it was an online advertisement it would be as easy to click and then buy the product. This adds ease of access to the viewer who is seeing the advertisement. This also goes along with the viewer making the meaning of the easy of access to use the device and its simplicity.

Also with the advertisement being interactive in the sense that the viewer must only click the link to get to the buying page makes it a direct way to get to buying the product while also feeling like interacting with the company. This advertisement may be geared to a certain audience but anyone with internet access could come across this advertisement. With the viewer being any person using a computer the advertisement is calling to the viewer to engage in the simple action of clicking to simply buy or learn about the product. With this sign it is inviting all people to participate with a simple click.

The next sign related to the text is the product its self being the juul. The juul is slim and black in the models hand. this shows it being sleek and portable. This also fits into the theme of the fact the it is easy to use just like how easy it is to click and buy it. Also fitting into the ease of access is the ease of use of the juul and how it can fit simply into ones hand just like the model. This allows the viewer to interpret it as a simple product to have a round and is something that can be taken everywhere easily and without a second thought. It also how the model is holding it makes it looks concealable so it's easy to but away or something to show of letting the viewer make their own meaning in this decision. With this in mind it gives viewers the option how to interpret the advertisement as a whole though it is an easy slim sleek product that looks fun to own like a new iPhone. Through this sign all viewers can make the earning that this is a product that is one they might like to own and is easy to do so keeping the idea of simplicity for everybody.

Along with the physical sign of the of the juul there is a more ambiguous sign is the girl. The girl looks to be about 20 but it seems to be ambiguous. She could be 30 or also look likes she could be a senior in high school. Through having her look young but also look like an adult

she can easily apply to multiple age groups. Also because of how easily relatable she makes it easy for people to connect to her and want to be like her. Also she looks like a hip, cool model and people want to emulate her. She is accessible to people of all ages because of how young she is appealing to a wide audience. Also often times television stars often play characters younger than their true age which also may be a part of her ambiguous age and being able to draw in all people. This creates the problem of is this adult product all right for kid and it seems as though how happy she is everyone should be using a Juul. Creating the problem of this device could or should be used by children and if they see this advertisement they can relate to her because she looks the age of someone in a show they might watch catered towards middle school kids. This is extremely important to note because it relates to a study done called *Myth and Photography in Advertising: A Semiotic Analysis* by Janis Teruggi Page. This study specifically looks at the problems ambiguity in advertising and why it might appeal on specific interesting thing it found was “experiments have found that consumers react positively to absurdity in ads” (Page pg106). This may be part of the reason as to why Juul would want the girls ages to be so ambiguous and be able to appeal to a wider market base.

Lastly the thing that makes image so accessible to all people including children is its overall aesthetic and fun feel. First of all this advertisement’s background color being a bright happy shade of yellow looking like sunshine evokes the feeling of fun. Also the colored squares on the right as well as the different colors of the Juul pods make it feel like a summer colorful advertisement similar to something of a beach ball and beach themed colors advertisement. This is different from cigarettes today that now have warring labels and keep advertising to a

minimum because of being afraid of scrutiny and getting in trouble. As the center for disease control states “The Comprehensive Smokeless Tobacco Health Education Act of 1986 (Public Law 99–252) required three rotating warning labels on smokeless tobacco packaging and advertisements: ,WARNING: This product may cause mouth cancer, WARNING: This product, may cause gum disease and tooth loss”(CDC).

WARNING: This product is not a safe alternative to cigarettes. With this aesthetic it make the advertisement seem playful and fun. The model smiling in the advertisement looks as though she is having a great time and has the largest smile shown off by her bright red lipstick. While claiming that the advertisement is meant for adults it seeming appealing to children because how fun and playful it is with the summer like party coloring aesthetics. It seems as though it looks similar to a target get ready for summer ad with the girl smiling and looking as though she is reaching to hand out the juul. This might give the impression of come on and party with me and this is your invitation click to buy your Juul today and be a part of this fun summer themed party.

Conclusion

In looking through the signs of the text, the Juul, the girls ambiguous age, and lastly the overall beach summer party aesthetic create a wide versatile advertisement that while appealing to young adults also captures the attention of children and teens. This is problematic because the idea of having an e cigarette advertisement appealing to children and have them wanting to buy the product and be a part of the cool crowd is problematic. With the

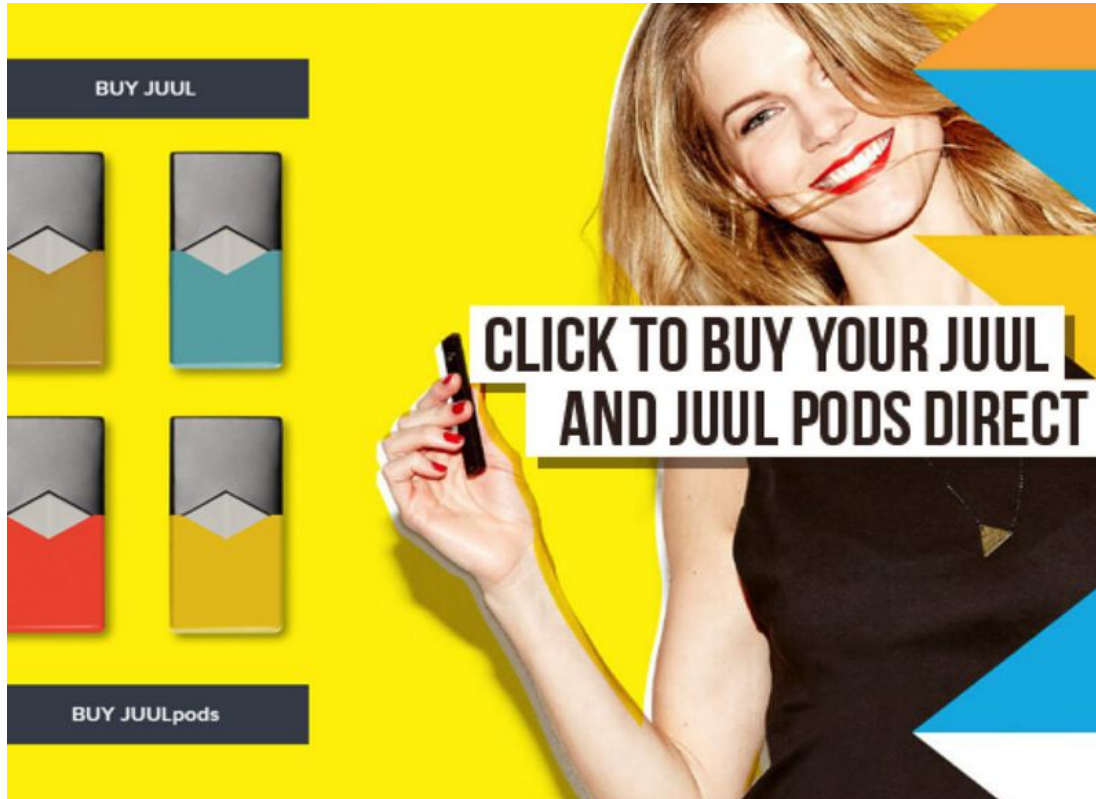
advertisement appealing to children it only promotes children smoking and becoming addicted to nicotine.

This is a continuing problem that the government in the sense that the FDA is trying to tackle this problem of children smoking. Typical cigarettes have not be advertised in the same way appealing to children of this generation and were vied a bad by this generation. Then with the online and social media advertisements of Juul promoting an e cigarette is bad along with including the flavor pods that are even more appealing to children.

With this being a problem there needs to be more research done on how to only advertise to adult for e-cigarettes. There also has to be ways that advertisements that can cause health problems need to have a warning label on their actual advertisements. Advertisements on television for drugs have tos say possible side effect which they typically read in a quick speed fashion butt never the less they are still said. This Juul advertisement and many others have no warning labels about the effects of smoking or how addictive nicotine can become for someone. Future research would need to include looking at making advertisement deter children and how this possible could be regulated. This way kids do not continue to become addicted to nicotine and smoking.

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