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Claremont McKenna College

The Psychology Behind the Marketing of Alcohol and Tobacco:
How We Convince People to Do Things That Are Bad For Them

submitted to

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by

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for

Senior Thesis

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Abstract

The marketing tactics of the alcohol and tobacco industry are inextricably linked through the psychological basis upon which these companies target their customers. Through the principles of reciprocity, social proof, scarcity, commitment and consistency, unity, and authority featured in Robert Cialdini's book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (2021). The principle of reciprocity explains how companies get customers to buy in, social proof explains our dependence on our peers' validation, and scarcity explains why we want what we can't have. The principles of commitment and consistency explain how companies garner long-term customers that see themselves as an extension of a brand, unity explains a customer's need for community, and authority explains the influence of someone with power. These principles, along with psychological theories such as the Mere Exposure Effect, Evaluative Conditioning, the Situated Inference Model of Priming, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and Social Learning Theory, explain why alcohol and tobacco ads are so effective and the mechanisms of how they became so pervasive. This thesis explores the psychology behind marketing tools such as celebrity endorsements, sponsorships and ad placements, ad campaigns, and brand activations that convince customers to invest into a brand from a young age and continue as a loyal customer for a lifetime.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCING THEORIES RELEVANT TO ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO MARKETING

When considering alcohol and tobacco marketing, there are many lenses to evaluate the psychology behind persuasion. Some of the methods of persuasion are based on facets of Robert Cialdini's book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, such as the principles of reciprocity, liking, social proof, scarcity, commitment and consistency, unity, and authority. The principle of reciprocity relies on people's inherently reciprocal nature – if a company is to give something for free or at a seemingly reduced position, social norms are built such that the consumer reciprocates, and in some instances, reciprocates to an even greater degree than originally warranted. The principle of liking predicates on a positive outlook on the product or company being presented, or liking who presents the product, that being a celebrity, or your friends or family. Social proof posits that you are more inclined to participate when there is proof that the product or brand is socially acceptable. The scarcity principle implies that people will want something more if they are made aware that the item is scarce or that they are going to lose out on an opportunity. Commitment and consistency highlight the consumer's need for congruency - to engage with a product, they need to see it as consistent with their current values and goals, or consistent with their aspirations. The commitment principle strengthens a customer's engagement with a brand by forcing them to make public commitments to friends and family or on social media, holding them accountable to that specific brand. The unity principle establishes that a brand can unify under a common purpose, such as through ambassadorship, and a common through-line is an effective way to engage a consumer. Finally, the authority principle stipulates that any message coming

from a figure with authority, such as a doctor or a professor, or even an actor that plays a doctor or professor, will carry more weight than from a random person. These principles, along with the psychological theories of the Mere Exposure Effect, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Evaluative Conditioning, the Situated Inference Model of Priming, and Social Learning Theory, help inform the reasons why tobacco and alcohol marketing are so effective in capturing the masses.

In his book *Influence, The Psychology of Persuasion*, Cialdini discusses the idea of reciprocity that is commonly used in marketing in the sin industries. Cultural Anthropologists Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox (1989) have coined the idea of a “web of indebtedness,” which refers to the idea that we are constantly doing favors for one another and have created an interdependent society. Sociologist Alvin Gouldner (1960) claims that all societies are bound by such an indebtedness, and that the reciprocity effect runs quite deep. In a study conducted by Steve J. Martin and Helen Mankin (2020), the researchers wanted to examine the impact of the reciprocity effect and giving in McDonald’s across Brazil and Colombia. In half of the locations, children that came with adults received a balloon as they exited the restaurant, and half of the children received balloons as they entered the restaurant. The result of this study showed that the group that was given a balloon on the way in increased their bill by 25 percent, including a 20 percent increase in coffee, an item not intended for children, implying that the giving of a balloon also positively influenced the adult, not only the child. Given this reciprocity effect, Cialdini found that after accepting a gift from a business, customers were more likely to purchase other items and be more agreeable to other gifts they would have otherwise not considered (Cialdini, 2021, p. 32).

Gifts unrelated to the product at hand have been shown to be effective, but the idea of free samples is a commonly known and enjoyed tactic to get customers on the hook for a new product. In a study conducted in a Southern California candy shop (Lammers, 1991), half of the participants were given a piece of candy upon entry to the candy shop, and the other half were not given anything at all. The results of this study showed that customers that received the piece of candy upon entry were 42% more likely to make a purchase. An expected outcome would be that the participants would buy more of the candy that they sampled, however, the outcome was that they bought more types of other candy, calling in the reciprocity effect because they felt like they had to purchase something in exchange for the free candy. This kicks in the elusive “societal obligation to receive” such that social norms dictate that it is rude to refuse things that are free or that are offered.

One of the ways in which the reciprocity rule is prevalent in marketing is through unequal reciprocity, or an uninvited favor which triggers deeper indebtedness than if someone did something that we had asked for. According to Cialdini, “the [reciprocity] rule was established to promote the development of reciprocal relationships between individuals so that one person could *initiate* such a relationship without the fear of loss. If the rule is to serve that purpose, then an uninvited first favor must have the ability to create an obligation” (Cialdini, 2021, p. 45). The reciprocity rule implies that an action must be repaid with a similar or equal action. Someone can choose to repay a favor with an even bigger favor to make the person on the receiving end now feel like they are in debt to the person repaying the favor in the first place, creating an exploitative effect

where the original favor giver is now in debt. Additionally, we feel uncomfortable when we are beholden to someone, further amplifying the need to repay a debt.

Another powerful influence tactic employed by advertisers is the liking effect, which predicated on the idea that you are more open to a message if it is coming from someone or something you like or are familiar with. Common exploits of the liking principle include celebrity endorsements, social media campaigns involving original content published for friends to see, as well as word-of-mouth advertising. Frequently, celebrities will use this liking effect to spur popularity towards products that they've created, especially in the alcohol market. Movie stars such as George Clooney with *Casamigos* Tequila and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson's *Teremana* Tequila, as well as Martha Stewart's *19 Crimes* wine line or star rapper Nicki Minaj's *MYX* Moscato. Because of their popularity unrelated to alcohol, consumers will flock to buy the product because it is associated with a celebrity that they like.

This sort of transference of feelings from one stimulus to another is pervasive even in products not created by the celebrities themselves. In order to test the strength of the liking effect, Canadian psychologists created a study based on the presentation of a concept by a widely liked individual. In this study, the researchers led people to believe that actor George Clooney had made positive comments about a pro-evolutionary book. George Clooney's endorsement of the message led participants to become much more accepting of the message regardless of the participants' age, sex, or degree of religiousness (Arnocky et al., 2018). To confirm their initial findings and make sure that this effect could be spread to other celebrities, the study was replicated with popular actress Emma Watson. Researchers confirmed the power of the celebrity, which shows

that the conflation of a message with a widely-liked individual will result in a stronger belief in the original message.

Celebrities are not the only successful wielders of the liking effect, in fact, a more powerful tool than approval from your favorite celebrity is approval from your friends or peers. In fact, according to Cialdini, social bonds are twice as likely to determine purchases in comparison preference for the product itself. Many companies operate using this “endless chain” effect to get people to tell their friends about a product or service. According to Cialdini, the Shaklee Corporation, which sells a variety of nutritional products, uses referrals, or the “endless chain” as a sales technique: once someone admits that they like a product, the salespeople press them for names of their friends who might also enjoy the product. Because of the liking effect, when these salespeople follow up on a lead and mention the name of the referral, there is a feeling of obligation to both the friend and the salesperson to respond positively. The “endless chain” also has statistical support - a Nielsen Company report (Beard, 2012) showed that 92 percent of consumers “trust the product recommendations from someone they know, which is far more than any other source and 22 percent higher than the next highest source, online reviews” (Cialdini, 2021, p.79).

Much like the positive perception of a celebrity, the positive perception of people you know in general is availed through the “halo effect” - if you like the person presenting the information, you tend to place a so-called “halo” on them. Part of this halo is that they are less likely to be perceived as giving false information or doing harm upon the person placing the halo on them. One of the most common ways the halo effect avails itself is through aligning attractive people with a product, which places a halo onto the

attractive person when they represent a brand, and therefore transfers the positivity onto the brand or product itself. Putting someone on a pedestal when presenting information about a product is not the only way that social connection pervades marketing - the similarity effect may also influence the way that people interact with certain products. For example, relatability to a character in an ad or the positioning of a product helps consumers see themselves in the brand identity of the company and therefore like the product more. Even further, people are more likely to purchase a product if its brand name shares the same initial letters as the person purchasing (Brendl et al., 2005).

Related to the liking effect, we tend to crave the social acceptance of our actions by our peers, especially when buying new products, so labels such as “selling out” or “most popular” seek to satisfy that craving. Cialdini’s principle of Social Proof claims that we perceive an action as correct depending on the degree to which we see others performing the same action. In fact, the more often we see others doing something, we determine it as being more feasible for ourselves. Hence, we rely on social proof pillars that are easily available - online product reviews and customer testimonials are shortcuts to make sure that we don’t have to go out of our way to figure out if a product is good or not when buying it. When companies employ “average person testimonials” or even have people that look like your “average Joe or Jane” in their commercial, we are more likely to be convinced that the product is for us because we see ourselves or our peers in the commercial. This idea of social proof is why social media marketing is exceptionally powerful - if we find that one of our friends or people we are following approves of a product, we see ourselves in their shoes and are influenced by the fact that someone else approves of the product in mind.

The scarcity effect also plays to the idea that we want what everyone else has - or we want it before it runs out. Loss aversion plays a very powerful role in marketing and sales - for example, the idea of a “limited edition” item produces the scarcity effect - you are more inclined to purchase the item before it is gone forever. Moreover, people are more driven by the prospect of losing something than they are of actually gaining something, hence appeals such as “get it before it’s gone” or “just a few left!” which both play to the idea of loss aversion and the scarcity effect. In Cialdini’s book, he references a case study done by Bookings.com, a popular online booking site for hotel rooms and vacations. When Bookings.com began adding the availability of hotel rooms to the information section on their website, their rate of bookings shot up astronomically, to the point where they thought that there was a technological error that overestimated purchases (Thomke & Beyersdorfer, 2018). However, this was no error - the scarcity effect was working in full force, making Bookings.com customers feel like if they didn’t take the opportunity to purchase now, they would miss the boat altogether. Cialdini references these ideas as the limited-number and the limited-time appeals, which occur in most marketing and sales settings when trying to capitalize on impulse purchases or making a sale in general.

Another aspect of the scarcity principle is the idea of psychological reactance, as coined by Jack Brehm (1993), which describes the innate response to a loss in control. The idea of reactance stems from the fact that people seemingly “rebel” against the fact that they cannot have something - a lack of control - and therefore work much harder to obtain that item. Even further, when we cannot have something, we begin to assign positive traits to it to justify our effort in obtaining the item. Social proof and scarcity

work together to manipulate people to want an item or experience because others have it, and using both principles places a time constraint on the consumer so that the consumer will want it more and purchase more of it when the time comes.

Cialdini's principles of commitment and consistency are based on the idea of brand consistency and seeing yourself within a brand as well as committing to that brand through various actions. For example, in a Michelob Ultra ad, the company advertises an athlete that drinks Michelob Ultra, therefore asking the question of their consumers - can you drink Michelob Ultra and be a high-performance athlete? Because Michelob wants people who see themselves even as mildly athletic to buy into their product, they want them to say yes, and see themselves as both people who exercise and people who drink Michelob Ultra. Michelob is not targeting just the high-performance athlete that is featured in the ad, but also the people who may aspire to become athletic or are more recreationally active, effectively capturing a large group of Michelob's demographic. The more consistent the advertisement is with the person consuming the media, the more effective the ad is in getting that person to buy a product.

In terms of commitment, companies in general would like you to buy their product once and to continue buying it for the foreseeable future. Even further, they would like you to tell your friends that you like the product and make a public commitment to that brand. Moreover, brands don't just want you to make a commitment to the public, they want you to make a commitment of your time to them. This is why sweepstakes are so effective - not only have they worked out a way for a customer to make a commitment to a brand, but also factor in the unequal reciprocity effect that may ultimately force the hand of brand loyalty so long as there is a demand for that product in

that consumer's basket of goods. The public commitment to a brand is widely seen through social media platforms, and commenting on a brand's page or reposting their posts have become popular ways for people to enter contests. This type of public commitment has been shown to create even more loyal customers than just making a commitment in private, because posting it on social media implicitly makes that brand or product a part of a personal brand associated with the account. The social media component also plays into social proof, as many people will flock to a product because they see one of their friends post about it, or because they were tagged in a post for a sweepstakes.

Reliant on the previous principles of influence is the idea of unity, which entails bringing people together around a common goal. One of the ways in which this is achieved is through ambassadorship, popular on college campuses and on social media. The idea of an ambassadorship is for everyone to know an ambassador and then take their word for the quality of a brand or of a product. The foundation of ambassadorship hinges on social proof - people are more inclined to say yes to someone they know is one of them. For example, in a group of fifth graders with one girl scout who is selling cookies, the rest of her class is more inclined to buy aforementioned girl scout cookies from their fifth grader rather than a different fifth grader at another school. This also applies when referencing products like alcohol - if you know someone who is working for a brand, you recognize that they have probably done the due diligence for that product and are more inclined to buy it because it was endorsed by a friend. Furthermore, brand ambassadors especially on college campuses are empowered to give away free product, throw events, and showcase their commitment to the brand online. The idea of co-creation where

ambassadors, or even celebrities working with a brand creates more buy-in not only when advertising the co-created product but also more ownership from the consumer, given the fact that this is no longer just the brand, but the liking effect transfers the positive emotion from the co-creator to the new product as well. In many cases, getting friends to buy something from their friend, the brand ambassador, is not seen as an active purchase of a product rather than something done simply to help a friend, referencing the reciprocity effect and the web of indebtedness.

In addition to Cialdini's principles of reciprocity, liking, social proof, scarcity, commitment and consistency, and unity, there are a few other psychological theories relevant to the world of alcohol and tobacco. For example, the "exposure approach" is a marketing tactic used far and wide and is based on the mere exposure effect and the repeated exposure fact, making it so that ads from specific companies are unavoidable. First explored by German psychologist Gustav Fechner at the end of the 19th century and expanded upon by American social psychologist Robert Zajonc in the late 1960s, the mere exposure effect posits that the more we see something, the more we like it. When applied to marketing, increased and repeated exposure to an ad is connected to higher liking, hence why ads transcend the TV screen to the phone screen to the billboard on the freeway.

One of the goals of marketing is to generalize liking from a specific product to an entire asset class - for example, if you enjoy hard cider, marketers and salespeople want to generalize your liking to the rest of the beer market or to all alcohol in general. The more exposed you become to one subsection of the overall asset class, the more likely you are to become exposed to the rest of the asset class and begin to foray into other

related products. The way that this exposure is positioned is far from accidental - using misattribution in the Situated Inference Model of Priming (Loersch & Payne, 2014), incidental exposure to certain stimuli, in this case ads, makes it easier to access in memory and more difficult to discern whether or not something we thought about was an original thought or something that we saw in an ad. The Situated Inference Model of Priming is the reason why many people do not recognize that they have been influenced by an ad - because they are misattributing where the content came from originally, these ads are much more pervasive in getting the customer to interact with a brand or a product.

The psychological theory of evaluative conditioning (Martin & Levey, 1978) is closely related to Cialdini's principle of liking - evaluative conditioning proposes the idea that people will automatically like a product more when it is presented with someone, or even *something* that they already like. Even mood has been shown to "rub off" in ads - according to an article by Jackson and Bartholow (2020), if the actors in an ad are "happy," the evaluative conditioning helps the consumer view the product or brand as associated with happiness.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1969), also impacts the way that we perceive alcohol and tobacco marketing - Social Learning Theory discusses the way that we learn from each other to determine social norms, or what is acceptable or unacceptable in society. In conjunction with the mere exposure effect, Social Learning Theory helps companies change the norms regarding drinking and smoking - by showing an ad featuring binge drinking, for example, and exposing an audience to it multiple times, the effect of binge drinking becomes more and more socially acceptable.

These psychological tactics all work in tandem with the Elaboration Likelihood Model coined by Cacioppo and Petty (1986), which focuses on the salience of the ideas presented. They theorize that ideas are either presented through the central route of persuasion with direct appeals to the viewer and direct feelings of persuasion, or the peripheral route of persuasion, which posits that something will be salient because of ancillary factors such as attractive models or adrenaline-inducing activities featured in the advertising rather than direct appeals.

Because of these various principles of influence as well as other relevant social psychology theories, alcohol and tobacco companies have found ways in which to manipulate consumers without their knowledge and succeed at convincing them to buy, use, and associate with their various products.

SECTION TWO: APPLYING SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY TO ALCOHOL MARKETING

In a study conducted by Kristina M. Jackson and Bruce D. Bartholow (2020) titled *Psychological Processes Underlying Effects of Alcohol Marketing on Youth Drinking*, Bartholow and Jackson discuss the ways in which alcohol companies use psychology to get underage drinkers to pay attention to their ads. Underage drinkers form a very important market for alcohol companies because they benefit from the extra consumer base of underage drinking as well as the widespread familiarity of the alcohol market of the aforementioned youth when they are actually legally able to drink. If the underage “shadow market” is not able to buy alcohol for themselves, they are familiar enough to point it out to someone buying it for them, or have pre-existing knowledge of

market offerings prior to entering the market itself. According to Jackson and Bartholow, alcohol companies are intent on providing content that is appealing to youth, especially in companies where the target demographic is skewed younger, such as most beers, seltzers, or flavored alcohol beverages. The alcohol industry is a self-regulated industry, therefore regulation may sometimes be loosely applied or simply take time and bureaucratic means to enforce, and implies that many “between the lines” regulations are not actioned on before they’ve made an impact on the intended audience. This relaxed form of regulation implies that companies are more or less at their leisure to target underage drinkers and can easily spin off marketing towards teenagers to marketing to the slightly older 21-year-old, since youthful appeals tend to work for both audiences.

In recent years, the way that many come across advertisements has shifted from television to social media - a shift which advertisers have followed eagerly. Jackson and Bartholow cite an example from 2012 from Corona Lite: Corona Lite asked people to “like” their Facebook page, which would then lead users to an external app which would allow the user to upload a photo that would be featured on a billboard in Times Square in New York (Fitzsimmons, 2010). Self-generated user content is even harder to regulate than television ads, and therefore much more pervasive within the alcohol marketing landscape. This Corona Lite ad plays directly into the idea of social proof on two fronts, firstly showing a user’s Facebook “friends” that they interacted with the Corona Lite page, and secondly, photos of many people show up on the Corona Lite billboard, indicating that there is a group large enough that enjoy the product; large enough to influence others to participate in both uploading their photo and buying the product.

This idea of social proof can also be generalized to other brands of beer, according to Jackson and Bartholow: “frequent exposure to advertisements for various beer brands is likely to produce more favorable evaluations of beer as a general product class, beyond any specific brand” (Jackson and Bartholow, 2020), meaning that if one beer brand gets you on the hook for their product, you are also more likely to develop interest or familiarity of beer brands across the board. Jackson and Bartholow also mention a study conducted by Rindfleisch and Inman in 1998 confirmed the hypothesis that a preference for better known brands reflects a need to conform to social norms and do what others are doing, much like Cialdini’s principle of social proof.

Ad campaigns founded on the precipice of social proof are not limited to signage or social media: popular vodka and mixed drink brand Smirnoff was awarded by the International Association of Promotional Marketing and the Cannes International Advertising Awards for their campaign, Smirnoff Half Day Off. In this campaign, run in New Zealand, Smirnoff encouraged people to leave work at noon and to head to a participating bar to enjoy a Smirnoff drink. Participants could enter to win \$25 towards their bar tab; as a qualifier for entering the \$25 tab, each participant had to enter the names of three friends who would then receive a personalized message encouraging them to enter for a \$25 bar tab. According to an article by Sally Caswel (2008)¹, this ad campaign had a 75% referral rate. This ad campaign is an incredible amalgamation of some of the strongest principles of persuasion in social psychology: it involves social proof, personalization, and unequal reciprocity.

The social proof is in the pudding - the virality of this campaign was based on the fact that in order to win a \$25 bar tab, you had to invite three friends, which sent the

message that firstly you were going to miss half a day of work, and the implication of the campaign meant that it was very clear that many others would also be missing a day of work. The widespread effect of this campaign made it socially acceptable to miss half a day of work and instead spend it drinking (which to anyone outside of this campaign seems quite socially unacceptable). In line with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the more socially acceptable something seems, the more likely people are to participate. Furthermore, the personalization of the ad through referrals incentivises faster reciprocity, given the fact that the person referred has now perceived that the originator made the time and effort to think of them, they must now also participate (Cialdini, 2021). When someone is referred, they now feel that they must reciprocate not only to the originator, but also to the company itself for offering the \$25 coupon. Most people who participated in the Half Day Off ended up spending much over the \$25 coupon amount, with bar attendance increasing 14% in comparison to the previous December as a result of the ad, with some bars recording an over 130% uptick in sales in comparison to other Friday nights (Smirnoff - Best in the World, 2003), showing the power of unequal reciprocation as well as the strength of the liking effect and indebtedness to a friend.

Smirnoff is a fantastic example of a brand playing to its demographic and relying on persuasive concepts such as the reciprocity effect and customization, but, a more indirect way to persuade customers to buy is through evaluative conditioning and sponsorships. Evaluative conditioning plays a very important role in presenting advertisements - "[t]his practice is used in numerous ways, ranging from simple co-occurrence (e.g. ensuring that a new product is placed next to one that consumers already favor) to corporate sponsorships of events (e.g. concerts) to celebrity endorsements"

(Jackson and Bartholow, 2020). In the case of corporate sponsorship of sporting events, alcohol marketing accounts for at least 20% of all sports sponsorship (Zehrouni et al., 2019), supported by data that shows that brand recall is better when branding has been visible for a long time in instances like a 20-year sponsorship of an arena or a team, and when the consumer sees the brand frequently. It is also clear that brands can have a vast effect on consumers without doing much more than putting up signage in high-traffic areas - research shows that there is a similar effect on consumers from high-exposure unattended advertisements as there are from high-exposure intentional ads such as brand activations or social media posts (Zehrouni et al., 2019). Furthermore, unattended advertising such as banners or stadium signage has been shown to be more effective in producing sales because of the association with strong emotions and cognitions due to the incidental nature of the location where both a sport and an advertisement are co-occurring.

Sponsorships also take advantage of the peripheral route of processing and the implicit nature of the mere exposure effect where advertisers can expose consumers to their product or brand multiple times in one setting without taking up a consumer's cognitive load. Especially when advertisements did not detract attention from other surroundings and blended into the background, evaluative conditioning implicitly forced sports fans to associate a brand, such as Heineken who is known to sponsor many sporting events internationally, with the event or with the arena, usually in a positive light (Zehrouni et al., 2019). In addition to appealing to legal drinkers in venues such as sports arenas, alcohol advertisers also have the advantage of creating strong brand recognition with younger audiences, especially kids and teens who come to sporting events with

parents or others of legal drinking age. Studies have shown that the longer someone has been exposed to a brand especially from a young age, the more likely they are to initiate drinking alcohol at a younger age and develop strong social identities linked to drinking alcohol, including buying alcohol merchandise. Since young adults have wavering self-concept until their late teen years and into early twenties, it is exceptionally easy to target young people and make alcohol a part of their personality through the mere exposure effect and evaluative conditioning.

Celebrity and influencer endorsement is also a very popular marketing tool to influence people to interact with a brand. Through a mix of the liking effect and evaluative conditioning, brands understand the importance of a celebrity's standalone social currency and what that can do to raise brand awareness or sales for a product. Studies have shown that putting celebrities at the forefront of an ad can improve brand recall, especially when the brand and product fit with the celebrity's platform and make sense for them to promote (Belanche et al., 2021). One of the frames in which celebrity endorsement is frequently evaluated through is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo in 1986. The ELM proposes that there are two different routes to persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route features direct emotional appeals and arguments and asks viewers to process arguments thoughtfully. The peripheral route to persuasion focuses on indirect appeals such as positive music, popular presenters of a message, or attractive actors.

Celebrity endorsements play to the liking effect - much like customers are much more persuaded by the recommendation of a friend than someone at random, celebrities have the same power over a consumer. A recommendation at the behest of a celebrity that

you are familiar with is much more effective than a recommendation of an unfamiliar endorser. By using evaluative conditioning, companies combine the neutral stimulus of their product with the (theoretically) positive stimulus of a celebrity in order to transfer the meaning of the celebrity onto the product. However, this can backfire when an individual has a negative view of a certain celebrity, or when a celebrity's PR turns sour while the ad is live. Where the evaluative conditioning once placed a product in a positive light due to association with a certain celebrity, the product or brand is now cast in a negative light due to the evaluative conditioning principle.

One of the manifestations of celebrity endorsement and evaluative conditioning in the alcohol industry is celebrities taking advantage of their own liking and credibility through creating their own products. Celebrities such as Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, George Clooney, and Kendall Jenner have capitalized off of their success outside of the alcohol industry and have chosen to venture into the world of tequila. George Clooney's tequila brand Casamigos, for example was sold to alcohol giant Diageo for nearly \$1 billion in 2017 - even though Clooney owned the brand for four years from 2013-2017, Casamigos is still implicitly associated with Clooney, especially since he is still featured on their website and on most marketing materials produced by the company. Moreover, the tie between Clooney and Casamigos strengthens when considering their marketing slogan "[b]rought to you by those who drink it," furthering the idea that those who buy and drink Casamigos are "just like" George Clooney or can have a piece of his lifestyle. Other than the prominent feature of Clooney in the majority of their ads, Casamigos does not employ other influencers in promoting their products; because of Clooney, Casamigos seems to sell itself.

One of the most interesting factors of celebrity alcohol brands is that it is inherently not limited one a singular age group - Kendall Jenner and 818 Tequila may appeal to older Gen Z and young Millennials because of their association with the Kardashian-Jenners' reality TV show, whereas Guy Fieri and Sammy Hagar's Santo Tequila Reposado may appeal to Gen X, and Ryan Reynolds's Aviation Gin to older Millennials. Moreover, it seems like the taste of these celebrity-owned alcohols simply does not matter, in most instances people don't buy or drink celebrity alcohols because they taste good, but because we want to feel closer to the celebrity of our choice.

A significant aspect of what makes alcohol marketing so effective is the idea of consistency, or self-categorization theory. According to the self-categorization theory, we strive to categorize ourselves into groups with others based on our identities - advertisers use this to their benefit by creating ads that specifically identify to a core group, such as being an athlete, an adventurer, or a college student. In an ad done by Michelob Ultra, the ad featured a man dressed in business attire finishing a meeting, and then running down the stairs and out to meet a woman dressed in athletic attire, at which point he also transforms into athletic attire as they run together down the street. Later in the ad, the same pair are featured being handed two bottles of Michelob Ultra as the ad comes to a close. The point of this ad is to align three identities - people working a corporate job, athletes/runners, and people that enjoy beer. By targeting these three categories, they indirectly align their product with working out or running and bring congruency to the idea that you can be both a beer drinker (more specifically a Michelob drinker) and an athlete at the same time, two ideas that are usually held in opposition of each other in practical terms.

Self-categorization also plays a role when exploring the types of media that people consume and how alcohol companies can target consumers through media archetypes, such as people who watch late night cable, reality shows, or sitcoms. A study by Borzekowski et al (2015) sorted young viewers into four categories: Heavy Mainstream Media Viewers, Celebrity Watchers, Late Night Cable Viewers, and General Audience. The researchers were curious to find if there were any patterns among this group and their alcohol consumption with regards to what type of media they consumed. According to the Message Interpretation Model, young people are exposed to messages about alcohol from the media that they consume, and combine it with emotions and logic to understand the messages (Austin et al., 2006).

The consumption of media with significant amounts of portrayed drinking or alcohol advertisement is a predictor of drinking initiation and binge drinking, therefore understanding the preferences of these four clusters can provide indicators for what effects consuming different types of media has on alcohol initiation and consumption. In the 2015 study, Borzekowski et al. determined that the highest rate of alcohol consumption was in the Heavy Mainstream Media Users cluster, with 64.9% of participants consuming alcohol. Those in the Heavy Mainstream Media Users cluster were those that watched TV shows such as broadcast crime like *Law and Order* and *CSI*, and read magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *People*. Late Night Cable Viewers who read magazines like *Rolling Stone* and watch shows like *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* had a consumption rate of 60.8%; Celebrity Watchers read *Cosmopolitan*, *People*, and *US Weekly* and watched *CSI* and *King of*

Queens and had a consumption rate of 61.9%; the General Audience cluster represented the majority of the participants surveyed and had a consumption rate of 48.4%.

While general alcohol brand awareness did not vary between groups, awareness varied by cluster for seven brands out of sixteen that participants were surveyed on: Absolut, Smirnoff Ice, Bacardi, Captain Morgan, Seagram's and Heineken, indicating that there was a marketing effect associated with those specific brands related to the media that the participants consumed. According to the Message Interpretation Model, in order for these messages to stick, the participants would have needed to see the messaging often enough and have thought about it thoroughly in order to recall it during the study (Borzekowski et al, 2015).

In terms of the incidence of a particular ad, companies like Smirnoff, for example, are no strangers to marketing to young people through television. The Center for Alcohol Marketing and Youth reported that in 2002, Smirnoff placed over 1500 advertisements on youth-specific television channels. Alcohol marketing is very clearly intertwined with the type of media that various groups consume, and quite incidentally, promotion of alcohol through movies, TV shows, or social media has shown to be a strong predictor for alcohol initiation. Because alcohol is seen to be socially acceptable on most fronts - given its endorsement from celebrities, content creators, and in some instances, close friends - drinking alcohol is seen as "the cool thing to do" and can easily motivate someone to drink more or switch to a different product type once the initiation barrier has been broken.

The marketing tactics between the alcohol and tobacco industries have always looked familiar, yet after the purchase of Miller Beer by popular tobacco brand Phillip

Morris, the overlap between the two industries' marketing ploys became much more obvious. By introducing the beer market to the strategies used by behemoths such as Phillip Morris, beer companies, and by extension all other alcohol companies began to use the tobacco "blueprint" for marketing to target younger and younger audiences.

SECTION THREE: APPLYING SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY TO TOBACCO MARKETING

While the alcohol industry is bound by the restrictions of marketing rules and regulations, one industry that may be even more regulated than alcohol is the tobacco industry. Previous to international calls for regulation on tobacco marketing, companies like Marlboro, Phillip Morris, RJ Reynolds, and Camel were at the forefront of every single athletic function, television and print ad, and in the pockets of millions internationally. Not only were they taking advantage of every single open ad space possible, they were using deceptive tactics to circumvent the admission that smoking was not good for you. During lawsuits in the mid-to-late 1990s, tobacco companies were forced to publish marketing documentation that showed the ways in which tobacco companies and their third-party advertising firms manipulated the public and pushed the age of smoking initiation lower and lower. Through similar tactics to the alcohol industry such as manipulation of the mere exposure effect, Social Learning Theory, central and peripheral processing as well as evaluative conditioning, tobacco companies continue to push against regulations with these tactics, while e-cigarettes follow suit to the predatory advertising measures taken twenty years ago in the tobacco industry.

It is important to acknowledge how tobacco marketing has changed in recent years due to a shift in tobacco regulations, specifically in the context of print and televised media. The regulations on tobacco marketing have evolved since the ban on cigarette advertisements on TV and radio went into place in 1971. In 1998, the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) was created as a result of civil lawsuits brought by 46 different US states, as well as the District of Columbia and five other territories against major tobacco companies in the United States. The MSA imposed restrictions on billboards, paid brand product placement, cartoons, tobacco brand sponsorships of sporting events and concerts, and predatory advertising that targeted youth under the age of 18 (Truth Initiative, 2017). A 2006 court case, *US vs Phillip Morris et al*, a lawsuit against tobacco magnate Phillip Morris decided that many large US cigarette companies had violated federal racketeering laws by falsely claiming that “light” and “low tar” cigarettes were healthier than regular cigarettes even when the tobacco companies knew explicitly that they were not; federal courts prohibited future use of such language in advertising. In 2009, the Family Smoking Prevention and Control Act granted the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the ability to regulate the tobacco industry wherein the FDA is now able to regulate some of the tobacco industry’s marketing, restricted the sale of tobacco in stores to face-to-face transactions, and expanded the limitations of brand sponsorship and branding on non-tobacco related items such as clothing (Truth Initiative, 2017) In addition, certain counties and localities have banned promotions and discounts on tobacco such that it becomes a higher barrier to entry for people to buy and smoke cigarettes. While the United States has done much to stave off the prevalence of Big Tobacco in everyday appearances, many countries internationally have largely

unregulated tobacco markets, and the e-cigarette/vape market still remains largely unregulated, even in the United States.

Tobacco companies can use the authority effect to influence consumers through subject matter experts in the media who have spoken about and continue to speak about e-cigarettes being a healthy alternative to cigarettes, just as “light” and “low tar” cigarettes were introduced as a healthier alternative to generic cigarettes before e-cigarettes were introduced. While the credibility of e-cigarettes as a healthier alternative has been disproven many times over (Editorial, 2015; Skerry et al., 2018; Brose et al., 2019), including in the 2006 case of *United States v Phillip Morris*, the lasting impact of such advertising has made e-cigarettes a valued alternative to cigarettes.

Prior to the MSA of 1999, one of the biggest marketing avenues for tobacco companies was through event sponsorship ranging from sporting events to parties in bars and nightclubs. In an archival study, researchers explored documents made public by litigation in the 1980s and 90s documenting advertising strategies used by various large tobacco firms. According to Sepe et al. (2002), RJ Reynolds (manufacturer of brands such as Newports, Pall Mall, and Camel) began using field marketing tactics which would “reinforce Camel’s masculine psychological image within the context of programs which are lifestyle oriented” by using peer-to-peer influence tactics to associate nightclub lifestyle with smoking. These types of field marketing tactics play to Cliadini’s liking effect and reciprocity effect - if a brand representative can befriend someone, the customer is more likely to trust the opinion of a brand representative. If a customer feels that a brand representative has given the information not widely available, typically in the form of an opinion about the product, or even a favor, the customer is far more likely to

interact with the product and spend money in return for the favor or the advice. Usually, these favors would be free samples of cigarettes, branded clothing and accessories, or other keepsakes.

A 1989 campaign by Camel called “Smooth Moves” wanted to capture customer participation through band or talent competitions, activations with comedy clubs, motorsport races, beaches, or winter resorts. In a memorandum between RJ Reynolds executives, Camel entertainment during 1989’s spring break in Florida was described as “cool:” “[a]s you entered the club smokers received cigarettes, lighters, Camel t-shirts and a key which you brought over to the camel tent for a chance to win a car. Once inside the club the classy Smooth Character girl, dressed in bright blue, sang and danced” (Sepe et al., 2002). Through these tactics, brands like Camel could make people feel like they were among attractive people, harnessing the halo effect; since it was so crowded, the concept of social proof was also engaged; reciprocity was also engaged through the giving away of free merchandise, free samples, and the opportunity to even win a free car. These types of tactics were incredibly popular in the late 1980s, with Brown and Williamson’s bar promotions training manual featuring similar brand activations in the form of dance contests and cigarette distribution. Phillip Morris also created events focused on sometimes racy games and cigarette sampling (Sepe et al., 2002).

Most of these strategies are focused on evaluative conditioning - in associating the fun environment of bars and nightclubs with the opportunity to have free things as well as the sometimes sexual or attractive nature of the advertising, each of these companies were sending the message that smoking would make consumers more fun, more affluent, and more attractive or sexually desirable.

One of the most powerful examples of evaluative conditioning in the tobacco marketing world was in Formula One, until 2006 when Formula One banned tobacco advertising from all aspects of its business. According to a 2018 New York Times article, “for decades, Formula One was synonymous with tobacco. Not only was the sport awash with money from cigarette companies, but the cars’ liveries were also reflections of their sponsors, from the red and white Marlboro McLarens to the black and gold of the John Player Special Lotus” (Walker, 2018). Big tobacco’s sponsorship of these teams meant that they could take advantage of both central and peripheral routes of processing as well as the liking effect - Formula One is one of the fastest-moving sports around the world, and by association through evaluative conditioning, when a McLaren did well, so did Marlboro. Companies such as Marlboro, British American Tobacco, and Philip Morris International benefitted from their logo being plastered on every news broadcast, every team uniform, and their cars, which played directly to the peripheral route of processing. If these winning teams were associated with the various tobacco brands, then the people who smoked them were also associated with the thrill and with the win. Former marketing director of the McLaren Formula One team during the 2001-2006 era James Bower was quoted saying “you did see some brands (...) pushing harder into lifestyle and pushing harder into what we now recognize as the deeper activation levels, as opposed to just slam Marlboro on the side of the car, throw a few parties, entertain some B2B trade retailers and call it a day” in reference to the tobacco marketing shakeout before the change in Formula One’s marketing regulations.

Because tobacco companies were being pushed out of their main advertising avenues beginning in the early 1990s until a near complete advertising ban in the mid-to-

late 2000s, tobacco companies had to get creative with the one avenue for marketing that they were allowed to engage in: point of sale marketing. Point of Sale (POS) marketing is advertising targeted to the consumer when they are in an establishment looking to buy something - usually advertisements directly on or around the store, the counter where transactions occur, or on the outside of buildings such as convenience stores or gas stations. According to Robinson et al., tobacco companies have invested nearly 85% of their \$9 billion budget in POS marketing and promotional material just in 2012 (Robinson et al., 2016).

POS marketing typically encourages impulse purchases and places the advertising content front and center such that those entering the place of sale cannot escape viewing the advertisements. Moreover, tobacco companies incentivize retailers to place their adverts in store windows and in high-traffic areas through contractual agreements who receive financial incentives in return for placement around the store and utilizing counter space; in California, 85% of stores have marketing material within four feet of the counter. Across the United States, 85% of tobacco shelving displays and 93% of general tobacco displays are within arm's reach of the counter (Truth Initiative, 2017).

The tobacco industry has historically been under fire for targeting young people, especially children in their marketing, a subject of frequent lawsuits before predatory marketing was regulated by the FDA. However, one of the ways in which tobacco companies use the mere exposure effect to target young children is by placing ads at the eye level of children. According to a California study, almost 25% of stores had cigarette advertising placed near displays of candy, and almost half of the stores had cigarette marketing at or below three feet from the floor, the average height of a child (US

Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). Inherently, by placing advertisements at the eye level of a child, perhaps one that is not yet familiar with the social norms regarding smoking cigarettes, the child develops familiarity and brand acknowledgement with the ad and the product, especially when placed next to a generally positive stimulus such as candy.

Product branding in POS marketing uses the central and peripheral routes of processing as well as self-categorization theory to target a consumer. Each advertisement can target a specific group or many groups based on the idea that the appeals made in the advertisement will make the target see the product as a part of their identity or lifestyle, or that the product is aspirational for the lifestyle they want to achieve. In addition to direct appeals to the consumer, they are also targeted through price promotions which uses Cialdini's reciprocity effect to get consumers to feel indebted to a company, therefore stalling any attempts at quitting smoking, and potentially incentivising customers to move from a cheaper "lighter" cigarette to "premium" or "full-flavor" brands (Robinson et al., 2018).

The salience of POS marketing is drawn out through direct measures (exposed cigarettes in a display case) or indirect measures through visual smoking cues, concomitant with other appeals such as price promotions or attractive messaging. This combination has proven to be incredibly effective in pumping up the salience of the messaging, given that studies have found that simply *noticing* POS marketing is associated with higher smoking initiation among younger people (MacKintosh et al., 2012). Research has also shown that schools that have smoke shops or convenience stores with highly available cigarette POS marketing have higher rates of smoking initiation,

evidence of the mere exposure effect (Truth Initiative, 2017). In some instances, POS marketing seeks to overwhelm the consumer such that they only have the cognitive capacity to pay attention to the most salient pieces of information presented (Lang, 2000; Raz & Buhle, 2006). POS marketing has also been shown to increase memorability, especially among youth: non-smoking adolescents showed better recall of specific ads when displays of the cigarette packs themselves were also present; the displays of the cigarettes also decreased the adolescents' willingness to remain smoke-free.

While tobacco marketing has been heavily regulated for upwards of fifteen years, an important and significantly less regulated market taking up similar marketing ploys is the e-cigarette market. While the FDA has extended regulations to e-cigarettes in the form of age restrictions, health warnings on packages, and a ban on free samples, there are still no advertising restraints on the e-cigarette market. The e-cigarette market was originally brought up as a healthier alternative to cigarettes, or a crutch method to help people quit smoking, yet e-cigarettes have proven to be just as addictive and e-cigarettes' health claims have been debunked multiple times over. E-cigarettes, or "vapes" have also been astonishingly powerful at introducing young people to nicotine and creating addiction meant to last a lifetime through their various marketing ploys. In fact, an article by de Andrade et al. (2013) noted that media coverage in the UK and Scotland between 2007 and 2012 often focused on the e-cigarette industry's circumvention of regulations and their idealization through association with various celebrities (de Andrade et al., 2013). In further evidence that the e-cigarette market is a new dog with the same tricks, e-cigarette company E-Lite's sponsorship of the British Superbike Championship in 2013 was "reminiscent of the iconic branding which was famously associated with motorsport

throughout the 1980s” (in reference to Marlboro and Formula One) with one of the executives of E-Lite noting that they are “delighted to be (...) partnering with a sport that has been synonymous with tobacco sponsorship [as a] way of raising awareness that smoking has been reinvented” (de Andrade et al., 2013).

In contrast to traditional cigarette companies, e-cigarette companies have pretty much every advertising tool at their disposal: they are able to harness the power of social media, sponsorships, POS marketing, and celebrity endorsement. Because e-cigarettes and vapes have become so popular among young adults, especially in their early twenties, celebrities are seen vaping at a much more regular rate, providing free advertising to e-cigarette companies. Much like in the case of alcohol advertising, celebrity endorsement and social media work hand in hand through evaluative conditioning of a positive outlook of a celebrity transferring to a product as well as Bandura’s Social Learning Theory that posits that we learn through observation of those around us. Exposure to social media is one of the purest examples of Social Learning Theory because social media reinforces and sets up new norms and rules for society to live by, hence making it one of the most powerful tools for marketing.

The tobacco industry thrives off of familiarity and usually engages the peripheral route of processing to incentivise new buyers and strengthen the hold on existing customers. According to Cialdini and Goldstien (2002), the tobacco industry gets customers to buy their products through reciprocation, consensus, liking, consistency, scarcity, and authority. In an article by Mouhamad Bigwanto about the promotion of tobacco products in Indonesia, he references Cialdini’s effect of authority, which is a psychological “shortcut” used in marketing to make people believe that when something

comes from an authority figure, it is more credible. As such, some stores selling tobacco products in Indonesia are called “Dr. Vapor,” implicitly associating a doctor with a tobacco store, making the products being sold there look as if they are less harmful or potentially healthier (Bigwanto, 2022).

Even though much of tobacco marketing has been curbed by the implementation of regulation, tobacco companies have found incredible loopholes to engage customers at any age (and height) through POS marketing tactics, and have demonstrated that their marketing tactics are too powerful in convincing people to smoke. The tangential market of e-cigarettes is now taking advantage of these storied marketing tactics in order to get people to buy e-cigarettes since they are not constrained by the regulations of the tobacco market.

DISCUSSION

In many ways, there is significant overlap between the approaches used by both the alcohol and the tobacco industry. Inherently, both industries benefit from marketing to young people because the earlier someone is exposed to these products, the more likely they are to buy these products at an earlier age and solidify habits that support the longevity of these products. The mere exposure effect and evaluative conditioning work in tandem to introduce people to new and alluring products and reel them in using celebrities or influencers with whom they already have a positive association. Cialdini’s effects of scarcity and social proof convince customers in stores and online that their only opportunity to buy is *now* and that their purchases are sanctioned through Bandura’s Social Learning Theory. The principle of unity drives customers towards community

within their purchasing habits, and the principle of authority may mislead them into granting credibility to wishful advertising. Advertisers take advantage of consumers' peripheral and central routes of processing by targeting the masses consciously with appeals and subconsciously through the halo effect.

Although most of these marketing tactics are psychologically grounded and there is a plethora of information supporting their power in persuading customers to buy, the question remains whether or not it is ethical for companies to target underage drinkers or smokers. Many articles have discussed the public health ramifications of underage drinking and smoking, and the problem is significantly better than it was before any sort of regulation was put in place. However, there is still yet to be evidence that the sacrifice of public health is worth the multibillion dollar profits reaped from the under-21 year old market.

While there are inherently regulations in place to steer companies away from advertising to young people, future research could include the impact of incidental advertising wherein those outside of the target demographics are still seeing and being exposed to ads. Moreover, future research could ask if there is an effect on underage drinking or smoking when young people are not exposed to alcohol, tobacco, or e-cigarette advertising. Future implications of this literature review could include a systemic evaluation of how the tobacco and alcohol industries influence each other and potential future regulations on both industries to further prevent underage drinking and smoking.

As for decreasing the receptivity of young people to alcohol and tobacco marketing, one of the ways in which susceptibility can be prevented is by increasing

media literacy and awareness, an idea originally mentioned in Chang, et al. (2014).

Increasing media literacy would mean that people of all ages would have an easier time telling what is an ad and what isn't, and would be more adept at sifting through third-party messages from influencers asking consumers to buy a product. This way, it would be much harder for consumers to be influenced because they are aware of exactly *how* they are being influenced and can make a conscious decision on if they would like to participate or not.

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