

The Theory of Triadic Influence, Media Literacy, Adolescents and Alcohol Advertising in Lagos State

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Abstract

This paper notes that the development of drinking behaviour throughout ones adolescent stage is certainly a dynamic process. Part of the process is affected by different levels and nature of influences. The paper also notes that these different influences do not occur independently but, instead, frequently cluster together and interact with one another in developmentally dependent ways. However, it suffices to state that since most alcohol drinkers pick up the habit as adolescents and drawn to it, in part, by advertisements featuring attractive models in playful poses, or cool movie characters whose mystique is enhanced by the fact that they drink; alcohol advertising, especially in the broadcast media, represents the single greatest source of alcohol education for consumers. Thus, youths who are at increased risk for becoming substance users are often the heaviest viewers. These youths take media depictions of attitudes and behaviours as indicators of societal norms. In other words, mass media “sell” lifestyles, not just products, (Flay, 2005). The likely consequences of this finding on adolescents drinking intention is that in the absence of media literacy and perceived behavioural control, more adolescents may likely intend to drink.

Keywords: Theory of Triadic Influence, Alcohol Advertising, Drinking Behaviour, Alcohol Education, Media Literacy, Adolescents

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