

Language Use in Adverts as a Tool of Construction of Perception on Alcohol Use among Secondary School Students in Eldoret Municipality

Claris Kasamba

The University of Kabianga
Kenya

Kenneth Odhiambo

The University of Kabianga
Kenya

Peter M. Matu

Technical University of Kenya
Kenya

Abstract

This paper examines language use in adverts as a tool of construction of perception on alcohol use among secondary school students in Eldoret municipality. The paper also discusses how alcohol related information is portrayed on television and how these messages persuade the youth to engage in the use of alcohol products. This study is based on Albert Bandura's theory of social learning that discusses learning behaviour by direct experience or observation and diffusion of innovation theory of how ideas and forms of behaviour are spread in a population. The target population for this study was young people aged between 14-17 years who were in school. A sample size of 200 was arrived at through simple random and purposive sampling. To obtain data, a structured questionnaire was administered to the youth. Observation was used mainly for programmes and advertisements that portray alcohol messages. The results indicate that young people consider alcohol adverts to be attractive and captivating especially in their early teens. Furthermore, young people in school are more vulnerable to being influenced by advertisements. Though young people are exposed to alcohol messages not all are swayed into drinking.

Keywords: Language use, adverts, alcohol, perception

1. Introduction

In harmony with history, alcohol is the oldest known drug of dependence. Going by the biblical recorded history, alcohol existed during Noah's time (Genesis 9:21). It is as old as human civilization and has been brewed and consumed in various parts of the world. In the traditional African societies alcohol was used to grace various occasions. According to Burnette and Gerald (1995) among the Nandi, for example, no ceremony could be effected without *Maiyek* (local beer). It is however important to note that in the traditional African societies there were social norms that determined who was to partake of the social substances. Presently, there is a change in drug use that has departed from the traditional way. Consequently, there is little restriction on who is allowed to consume alcohol or use certain drugs. Many young people are increasingly engaging in the use of alcohol.

Martin (1998) is of the view that while many factors among them parents and peers influence underage persons to start drinking, there is reason to believe that advertising also plays a role. Language use in advertising, and marketing have a significant impact by influencing the attitudes of parents, peers and helping to create an environment that promotes underage drinking partly because of access by the young people to electronic and print media at a young age. Austin and Nach-Ferguson (1995) in a similar study of 7-12 year old children found that liking alcohol advertisements was positively related to experimentation with alcohol. Other studies have found that television viewing was related to the initiation of drinking among 10-14 year olds over an 18 month period. (Robinson, Chen and Killen 1998). Following the liberalization of the media industry in Kenya, many media houses have been set up. Their programs and services are also received countrywide. Television has special characteristics that make it appealing.

In addition to sound, television has movement, vision and colour hence it appeals to the eye. Television has visual, psychological and sociological effect on the individual and especially on the youth. This paper seeks to establish how language use and television adverts of alcohol contribute to alcohol use among the youth.

2.0 Effects of Mass Media on Society

Mass media sets the trend for society since mass media is an effective way of determining what the society will be concerned about now and in the near future (Mc Quail, 1983). This is as a result of the fact that language use in mass media highlights problems and concerns for the society. Language use in Mass media influences values, attitudes, lifestyle and taste. Advertising, principally brand-name advertising, seems predicted on the notion that the public will attach higher status to products that have been brought to their attention by the media (Mc Donald, 1992). Mass media also has impact on behaviour. Television and product manufacturers use advertising to make a person aware of the availability of products.

Jefkins (1994) views advertising as presenting the most persuasive possible message to the right people for the product or service at the lowest possible cost. Advertising is a powerful tool that announces the availability and location of products. It makes people aware about the products so that people adopt to the product and buy it. Advertising is thus a particular form of discourse where only the best side of a case is put forward so that the virtues of the topic are presented, to the relative neglect of the rest. This advocacy style sits rather uneasily with more balanced modes of presentation that are found in education and certain areas of the mass media.

Nath, (1986) supports this view and states that effective advertising is concerned with the effects of the campaign on its audience. It creates aspirations and then promises and rewards.

Advertising can influence the criteria we use when we make up our minds e.g. buying a car ceases to be a systematic evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of a particular make or model. It becomes the selection of a particular lifestyle that fits with our conception of who we are and what we would like to own.

Advertising depicts alcohol drinking as the perfect type of pleasure. It is exquisite and leaves one unsatisfied. In Nath's (1986) view advertising is based on a paradox. Pleasure and vanity, insecurity and dissatisfaction; it is not just about a product but also about an idea. According to Pollay:

“One of the factors which are too little appreciated by casual observers of advertising is the fact that the potential customer is attracted to an advertisement by the idea in it. An idea which promises an answer to the problem he is consciously aware of in his own mind” (Pollay, 1986)

If advertising merely sold products, it would cause less critical concern than it does. But it also sells images, dreams, and ideal ways of life. It sells then reinforces time and again those values of consumerism (Watson and Hill, 1985). According to Galbraith (1985) advertising is considered by many as a dangerous mode of brainwashing. The advertisement's central function is to create desires that did not exist or rather anxieties which respond to the advertisement by going out and buying the advertised products. Advertising describes the world of commonplace goods and services with the language of human relationships. Many commercials also emphasize certain lifestyles that characterize users of that brand; it imbues brands with personality and simultaneously defines the personality of the people who buy them. This is often portrayed as sharing with fellow users of the same brand. (Jefkins, 1994; Arens and Boree, 1994). This indicates the images created by advertising concerning the habit and not the brand is extremely important (Arens and Boree, 1994). The situations projected in advertising associate taking of alcohol with confidence, assurance, satisfaction, themes of elegance and adventure are also brought about.

3.0 Psychological Advantages of Electronic Media Advertisements

Advertisements affect the audience in a more subtle way than they realize. Pollay (1986) posits that, advertising rhetoric appeals to status, which in turn promotes social competitiveness and induces envy and false pride.

The continual emphasis on novelty in advertising, which is understandable in view of the demands for goods and services, results in a lack of respect for the experience and a distrust of history and tradition. The focus on youth and the youth culture of fade and fashion reduces the authority of family and devalue old age. Advertisements also use sexuality as part of a way to sell.

Head and Sterling (1982) are of the view that television is very persuasive. They observed that when it advertises dog food it makes you wish you were a dog. Some of the psychological advantages of electronic media advertisements include:

- 1) Access to consumers: radio and television viewers are found virtually in all homes, broadcasting has unrivalled access to all members of the family.
- 2) Timeliness: advertisers time their messages to coincide precisely with activities relevant to their products.
- 3) Ability to demonstrate: Television's ability to show how products work and how they affect consumers a unique asset. Colour adds to the effectiveness of demonstrations as does participation by celebrity endorsers.
- 4) Entertainment value: Commercials exploit all the entertainment values of theatre – character, conflict, suspense and resolution. Skills, craftsmanship, attention to minute detail and lavish expenditure go into creating the best commercials.
Attention – holding value: A great deal of research and planning goes into planning commercial messages, so that advertisements are featured at just the right moment to maximize their chances of being heard or seen.
- 5) Status value: The very fact that a product is advertised in a major medium confers a certain status. (Pollay, 1986)

4.0 Language Use in Alcohol Adverts and the Kenyan Youth

According to Jenkins (1994), although advertising is justified for economic reasons, representatives of the intellectual left (including teachers) often accuse it of being immoral and parasitical force which exalts false values and induces people to buy things that they either do not need or cannot afford.

Ouko (2002) states that alcohol consumption in Kenya today has entrenched itself as an integral part of the behaviour of Kenyans so much that it is almost considered part of the struggle to establish the long elusive “Kenyan identity”. This may explain why “Tusker” (a Kenyan beer) commands a more patriotic quintessence than other foreign drinks. In his view it is not surprising that Kenya Breweries (the manufacturers of Tusker) only need to invoke the “Tusker, My country, my beer” slogan to send competitors scampering. The slogan my country my beer evokes the spirit of patriotism in the consumers. The image on the other hand is especially appealing to young people who are more likely than adults to be insecure about the image they are projecting. Sexual and athletic prowess are two themes that dominate advertising aimed at youth.

Advertisements also use unique language that distorts the reality about the effect of the product. For example an advertising slogan “It separates the exceptional from the merely ordinary” for Piper Champagne illustrates the major premise of the mythology that alcohol is magic. The choice of language shows that it is a magic potion that makes you successful, sophisticated and sexy; that the consumer is not ordinary. Another example is the Guinness beer slogan – “Guinness for Power”. This slogan creates the impression that drinking makes one powerful and strong. It is likely to lure the youth especially vulnerable young men. Alcohol advertisements hence maintain market share and build brand loyalty by rewarding existing customer base through reinforcing brand values.

In addition advertisements tend to encourage the consumption of a product by creating expectancies in the consumer. For instance “Drink amarios and know why birds fly”. Beer adverts never indicate any signs of trouble and hints of addiction are usually avoided. In fact, they never make any connection between the message and intelligence or creativity meaning they provoke emotions rather than skills. The language used is also poetic and dulling the mind. In most advertisements drinking takes place in glorious and unique settings for example at the beach. The youth hence taste substances with inadequate information about the effects of the substances on their life and health. Among other ploys that beer companies use to encourage consumption of their products is by organizing contests with large cash prizes.

In Kenya, beer companies frequently organize competitions. Some of the most recently held competitions include “Mawindo ya mfalme.” This when directly translated means hunt of a king. This implies that whoever wins the competition is the “king.” “Bambua tafrija” was also another competition whereby participants were expected to check for lucky numbers under the crown of the bottle top. Lucky participants win money. “Project Fame” is also a competition held annually. It mainly involves talented participants singing on television in order to win a prize.

As the competition progresses participants are eliminated so as to get a winner. Whenever the programme is aired, viewers are encouraged to participate by checking the bottle top liners of Tusker to see if they have won a prize. Although such competitions are mainly meant for adults, to a large extent they contribute towards encouraging underage youth to drink hoping they will be lucky to get a prize.

The youth are also vulnerable to influence from media messages because at adolescence they are in search of identity, they evaluate and experiment with the world as they progress towards adulthood. There is a tendency by youth to belong to a group of friends or age mates. The youth therefore tend to imitate behaviour of individuals who are their role models. This process leads the youth to question authority figures and the values that were previously instilled in them. Children who have been brought up to conceive drinking as wrong can question adults, especially parents. At adolescence, most young people experiment with the drugs and when youth culture emerges as a dominant force, drinking would appear to take new meaning and social significance. It is on this premise that this paper seeks to establish the effect of television advertisements on perceptions of youth towards consumption of alcohol in Eldoret municipality.

5. Bandura's Theory of Learning

This paper is based on Bandura's (1986) theory of social learning. The social learning theory postulates that except for elementary reflexes, people are not born with inborn repertoire of behaviour but they learn it. New response patterns can either be acquired by direct experience or by observation. According to Bandura's, (1986), the environment influences the behaviour we observe. He argues that watching other people perform those actions i.e. by identification one learns a full range of behaviour.

Television messages and advertisements are powerful and influential especially when the participants are personalities whom the young people admire and would like to be identified with. Social learning theory implies three major impacts on the observer. These include: imitation, distribution and resource facilitation. The first one is imitation, in which an observer copies a novel behaviour that he has witnessed. This view is supported by Cooley (1902) who argued that a person's self grows out of a person's interaction with others. The social origin of his life comes by the pathway of intercourse with other persons. The self to Cooley is not first individual then social; it arises dialectically through communication. A person's consciousness of himself is a reflection of the ideas about himself that he attributes to other minds, thus, there can be no isolated selves. There is no sense of 'I' without its correlative sense of you, him or them. This is because we ourselves are always a result of how we look at others. We gradually build up an image of ourselves from the notions of others opinions of us thus the "looking glass self" (Cooley, 1902). We therefore tend to imitate individuals we look up to or admire such as those on television who form the significant others or role models.

The second impact according to Bandura (1986) is distribution, in which a behaviour that was previously inhibited is now acted upon because there are no negative consequences for the action. The third impact is resource facilitation in which a socially desirable behaviour increases in frequency as one observes another perform it. Television is one of the socializing agents for young people hence it contributes towards influencing attitudes and practices. Content portrayed on television provides a model to the young.

The social learning theory has however been criticized for taking the individual as a passive recipient of stimuli in the environment. To cover for this shortcoming, Diffusion of innovation theory was used as an explanatory tool to explain the fact that individuals are not passive recipients of stimuli in the environment rather there are other factors in the environment that play an important role in determining what is imitated. Rogers (1995) defines diffusion as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Rogers sees the diffusion process as one which is the spread of a new idea from its source of invention or creation to its ultimate users or adopters. Rogers differentiates the adoption process from the diffusion process, in that diffusion process occurs within society, as a group process whereas, the adoption process affects an individual. The adoption process is the mental process through which an individual passes from first hearing about an innovation to final adoption. Rogers breaks down the adoption process down into five stages.

These are:

- 1) Awareness
- 2) Interest
- 3) Evaluation
- 4) Trial
- 5) Adoption

In the awareness stage, the individual is exposed to the innovation but lacks complete information about it. At the interest or information stage, the individual becomes interested in the new idea and seeks additional information about it. At evaluation stage, the individual mentally applies the innovation to his present and anticipated future situation and then decides whether or not to try it. During the trial stage, the individual makes full use of the innovation. At the adoption stage, the individual decides to continue to fully use the innovation. The adoption stage is very important to advertisers. The purpose of marketing and advertising is to increase sales that result in increased profits. It is through analyzing and understanding the adoption process that social scientists, marketers and advertisers are able to develop a fully integrated marketing and communication plan focused at a predetermined stage of adoption process.

Finally, Rogers holds the view that communication through a specific medium held in high esteem by the potential adopters can make the difference in terms of making the decision as to whether to associate with the innovation or not. In this case television as a medium of communication is held in high esteem and that advertisements therein generally receive positive consideration especially among the youth who are generally conscious of the dichotomy between the modern and the less modern.

6. Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to describe the effect of language use in television advertisements on perceptions of youth towards consumption of alcohol. A survey design was used to collect data used in this study. The research area in this study is drawn from the Eldoret Municipality. A questionnaire was designed by the researcher to elicit responses from the respondents for purposes of statistical analysis. The questionnaire had twenty five items which dealt with issues on advertisements and perception of the youth. One of the items dealt with the way alcohol related messages are portrayed on television as shown on illustrated on Table 1. The second item dealt with models in advertisements as evidenced on Table 2. The third item on the questionnaire dealt with persuasiveness of adverts as evident on Tables 3 and 4. The final item of the questionnaire was to confirm if the students felt that adverts gave the negative effects of drinking. The questionnaires were developed and mainly administered to the youth. Structured types of questions were mainly used to elicit information on alcohol related information. The participants consisted of 200 teenagers aged between 14-17 years selected through purposive and systematic random sampling. The responses categories on the items were on a 5-point scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. A frequency and percentage analysis were performed to determine the perceptions of the youth.

Observation was also used for content analysis of advertisements and other programmes that feature alcohol and cigarette related messages. Television programmes and commercials were observed for a period of three months i.e. July-September 2007 from 6.00p.m-10.00p.m to establish their alcohol content. The researcher mainly concentrated on alcohol advertisements. The advertisements were mainly observed on three Kenyan television channels that is Kenya Television Network, Nation and Citizen. Alcohol and advertisements featured on television were recorded. The advertisements were analyzed and the events narrated in a chronological order. The language used was also considered.

Alcohol advertisement (1)

On television, alcohol advertisements are usually featured during commercial breaks. One such advert is for alcohol advertisement 1. The advert shows a young, well built male executive in his office and he seems exhausted most likely after a busy day's work. He has extended his day in the office and as he finishes his work, he's looking forward to 17: 59 hours, the time he usually has his favourite drink. The scene then moves to his secretary's office. A slim and beautiful woman is shown as she winds up the day's work. After some time, the young executive puts away that day's work and stands to leave the office. He forgets that a clear wall glass separates his office and that of the secretary and he bumps his head into the wall glass.

He falls on the floor. His secretary, who was busy finishing up some work, is startled by the commotion and she raises her head to find out what is happening but she does not see anything. The scene then moves to a pub. The pub is full of tall young men who are neatly and smartly dressed, and are having fun. There is lots of laughter and noise, people hugging each other and drinking. This advert tends to emphasize that 17: 59 is it is time for drinking. Young male executives have also been used; this is likely to pass across the message that to drink is to be intelligent and stylish.

Alcohol advertisement (2)

There is another alcohol advert, which is featured in a stadium. In the advert, just before an important race begins in the stadium; the wife to one of the athletes is kidnapped. The athlete is distressed and luckily his friend sees the kidnap. He signals to his friend to continue with the race as he moves to save the friend’s wife. He is very fast and strong. Not only is he able to catch up with the kidnappers, but he is also able to overpower them and save his friend’s wife. As the advertisement ends Michael’s friend has won the race and they celebrate his victory with Guinness beer. The advert ends with the statement “Guinness brings out the power in you.” In this advertisement drinking of Guinness is linked with bravery and being powerful. This message is further enhanced by its slogan “Guinness for power.”

In a different advert for Amarios drink, the bottles containing Amarios are well displayed. A bird is then shown as it soars and flies away and the viewer is urged to drink Amarios and find out why birds fly. Just as a bird flies to higher heights the use of a bird implies that drinking Amarios will enable one to get to higher heights.

Alcohol advertisement 3

The Tusker advert message circulates mainly around nationalism. In the advert Kenyan athletes who are well known worldwide for their prowess in races are shown celebrating victory after winning an international race carrying the Kenyan flag, different products produced by Kenyan factories are shown as they are produced. The scene then moves to a pub where we are then shown Kenyans from different walks of life drinking Tusker beer together. As the advert ends a lorry on which the Tusker slogan is shown written. The slogan reads: “Tusker, my country my beer.” This advertisement tends to link drinking to patriotism.

Alcohol advertisement 4

The alcohol advertisement 4 mainly links drinking to bravery. Pilsner Beer uses a lion as its main symbol. The slogan is “Bia imara Kama simba” (as firm as a lion) the advert links drinking Pilsner to bravery.

7. Results and Discussion

The objective of this paper is to describe language use in alcohol adverts and how this contributes to alcohol use among the youth. In order to investigate attitudes of youth towards alcohol related messages, a likert scale was designed such that the respondents would fill in the spaces provided according to what they felt about alcohol messages portrayed on television. Respondents gave their ratings of alcohol related messages portrayed on television.

The respondents were asked if they find alcohol related messages to be attractive. Of the youth, (Table 1) 76% find alcohol adverts attractive. A higher percentage of the youth find alcohol related adverts to be attractive.

Table 1. Alcohol related messages and advertisements portrayed on television are attractive

	Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Strongly disagree	23	11.5	11.5
Disagree	10	5.0	16.5
Undecided	15	7.5	24
Agree	69	34.5	58.5
Strongly agree	83	41.5	100
Total	200	100	

It can thus be generalized that the youth find drug related information portrayed on television attractive. This is because adverts are biased in their portrayal because they give a greater than life picture. It emerged that among the things that make advertisements attractive include the models in the advertisement.

The images portrayed in adverts and alcohol related messages were also important to the youth. According to the youth they generally admired the people featured in the adverts and wished to be part of the crowd. Some viewed drinking as being social. Advertisements with alcohol related messages were viewed to be attractive for various reasons. In the first place according to the respondents the adverts are featured for a short span of time and tend to end in suspense so that they tend to arouse the viewer's curiosity. Alcohol adverts also make use of posh environments. Drinking is never featured as taking place in a dirty or dingy environment. The models also behave decently as they smoke and drink. Disorderly drunken behaviour is never featured. In any case the people are shown to be enjoying themselves. This is evident from the general analysis of the alcohol advertisements.

Models in advertisements

Advertisers usually use models to endorse their products so as to lure consumers and especially the youth to buy the products. Respondents were asked if they found models in the adverts to look popular or belong to a class of people who lived a good lifestyle.

Table 2 shows that 1% strongly disagree that models look popular or belonging to a high social class, 0.5% disagree, 0.5% are undecided, 52 % agree and 46 % strongly agree. This indicates that most of the respondents generally look at models in adverts as people who are popular or who live a good lifestyle. It is likely that many young people tend to associate the use of alcohol to a unique lifestyle i.e. belonging to a high social class.

Table 2. Models look popular or are portrayed as belonging to a class of people with a good lifestyle

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	1.0
Disagree	1	0.5
Undecided	1	0.5
Agree	104	52.0
Strongly agree	92	46.0
Total	200	100

One of the most popular models among the youth was Mr. Michael Power, the main character in the Guinness advert. He has a physique many young men would like to have. He is a tall, strong and athletic man. In the advertisement he is portrayed as a brave fast runner. Most of the respondents were generally of view that the models who feature in advertisements are usually admirable people. They termed "admirable people" as ones who are either handsome or beautiful depending on the sex, smart and neat in their physical appearance, young and successful especially in their careers.

Persuasiveness of Adverts

Drinking and socialization

Respondents were asked whether, on television, taking alcohol is portrayed as a great way to meet people and socialize. As indicated in Table 3, 24.8% strongly disagreed, 10% disagreed, 5.4% were undecided, 33.7% agreed and 25.2 % strongly agreed and are of the view that television portrays drinking as a great way to meet people and socialize. This is because rarely does any alcohol advert feature an individual drinking alone. In most cases people drink as a group.

Table 3. Drinking alcohol portrayed as a great way of socializing (In school respondents)

	Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Strongly disagree	50	24.5	2.5
Disagree	20	3.0	5.5
Undecided	11	2.0	7.5
Agree	68	34	41.5
Strongly agree	51	58.5	100
Total	200	100	

To find out if attractive alcohol advertisement could lure youth into trying out the products, respondents were asked if they would think of trying out the product, if they saw an attractive alcohol advertisement. Of the in school respondents (Table 4) 2.5% strongly disagreed, 3.0 disagreed, 2.0% were undecided, 34.0% agree and 58.5 % strongly agreed.

Table 4. If I see an attractive alcohol advertisement, I would be tempted to try out the product (In school youth)

	Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Strongly disagree	5	2.5	2.5
Disagree	6	3.0	5.5
Undecided	4	2.0	7.5
Agree	68	34	41.5
Strongly agree	117	58.5	100
Total	200	100	

Most of the respondents were more likely to be tempted to try alcohol products. According to the respondents they are likely to be tempted by alcohol advertisements because most alcohol advertisements associate drinking with being sociable and because drinking is as a way of celebrating. This is a common feature in the Tusker advert. The Tusker advert portrays drinking as a way of identifying yourself or having a sense of belonging. In the Guinness advert, drinking is associated with power. Drinking is also perceived as an acceptable habit.

4.8 Television messages and negative effects of drinking.

Respondents were asked whether advertisements and programmes on television give the negative effects of drinking. 32.5% of the in school respondents strongly disagreed that TV programmes give the negative effects of drinking, 48% disagreed, 5.5% are undecided, 9.0% agree and 5.0 % strongly agree. Approximately 80% of the respondents said that TV programmes and adverts do not give the negative effects of drinking. Only 14 % feel that television programmes and messages give the negative effects of drinking. It could also mean that most programmes and adverts tend to glamorize drinking.

	Frequency	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Strongly disagree	5	32.5	32.5
Disagree	6	48.0	80.5
Undecided	4	5.5	85.5
Agree	68	9.0	41.5
Strongly agree	117	5.0	100
Total	200	100	

Findings

It is likely that young people find alcohol related information and adverts attractive because they are fairly innocent and thus gullible. They tend to have impressionable minds. Though the youth are vulnerable to being influenced to trying out various brands advertised, there are a number of factors that could determine their trying out the products. It was evident that peers and significant others play an important role in influencing an individual's decision. This implies that the youth, generally found alcohol and related messages and advertisements portrayed on television to be attractive. Television affirms to the youth that drinking is normal and makes them feel part of the crowd.

Some of the youth were of view that, usually on television high quality products are advertised hence they use brands knowing that they are good. Drinking is also linked to certain attributes, for instance drinking linked to bravery and being powerful as enhanced by the Pilsner beer slogan "Pilsner for power." The language used in the adverts was generally found to be persuasive. The youth look at models to be people who are popular or belong to a high social class. Most of the respondents said that they are usually tempted to try out a brand that has been advertised by someone they consider youthful, intelligent and modernized. Modernization and being part of the crowd emerged to be important to the youth.

Similar research has indicated that lifestyle or image oriented advertising also appears to result in more favorable attitudes toward alcohol brands and products among young people when compared with product oriented or informational advertising (Kelly et. al:2002). The adverts and programs that convey modernity are likely to be copied by the youth. An explanation for these would probably be that as a people grow there are people they look up to as role models or people they would like to imitate.

This is because at adolescence stage one is neither a child nor an adult hence they are in search of their own identity. As they look for their own identity, they identify persons they admire and imitate some traits from them. It is therefore likely that some of the young people are likely to be lured into drinking by persons they admire. The youth are believed to have a preference for alcohol advertisements. According to Atkins (1993) High school students find beer commercials more visually appealing than public service announcements. Drinking is also viewed as a way of socializing and of entertaining oneself. In regard to these it can therefore be concluded that young people find advertisements to be attractive when they are in their early teens but as they grow and become wiser they do not find advertisements as captivating as they were earlier. Though the youth are vulnerable to being influenced to trying out various brands advertised, there are a number of factors that could determine their trying out the products. From the focused group discussions it was evident that peers and significant others play an important role in influencing an individual's decision.

Conclusion

The paper set out to find out whether language use in adverts acts as a tool of construction of perception on alcohol use among secondary school students. It was found that young people consider alcohol adverts to be attractive and captivating especially in their early teens, more youth have a preference for alcohol adverts. It was found that the language used and the image portrayed plays an important role in influencing the teenagers. The image advertising is especially appealing to young people who are more likely than adults to be insecure about the image they are projecting. They tend to identify with persons they admire and look up to hence tend to imitate them.

References

- Arens, F.W and Boree, L.C (1994) Contemporary Advertising 5th ed. Richard Irwin Inc: U.S.A.
- Atkin C.K. (1993) Effects of media alcohol messages on adolescent audiences. *Adolescent Medicine: State of the Art Reviews*. 4:527-542.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ : Prentice-Hall
- Burnette, C. F. and Gerald, W. F. (1995) *The Kalenjin Heritage Traditional, Religious and Social Practices*. Africa Gospel Mission Publishers: Nairobi.
- Chen M.J. and Grube J.W. (2001) T.V. Beer and Soft Drink Advertising: What Young People Like and what effects. Paper presented at the manual Meeting of the Research Society on Alcoholism: Montreal ,Quebec, Canada
- Cooley, H.C. (1902) *Human Nature and the Social Order* Scribners: NewYork Retrieved from: <http://www.dumn.edu/cla/faculty/jhamlin/2111/Blumer/charles>
- Galbraith, J.K. (1985) *The Affluent Society* Hamish: U.K.
- Head, W. S. and Sterling, C. H. (1982) *Broadcasting in America. A Survey of Television, Radio and New Technologies*. 4th ed. Houghton Mifflin Co: U. S. A.
- Jefkins, F. (1994) *Advertising* 3rd ed. Macmillan India Ltd: New Delhi.
- Kelly K.J., Slater M.D., Karan D,(2002)Image Advertisements Influence On Adolescents Perceptions of the Desirability of Beer and Cigarettes. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* 21:295-304
- Martin, B. (1998) *Beyond Mass Media* Freedom Press: London.
- Martin S., Snyder L. Hamilton M., Fleming F., Slater M, Stacy A., Chen.M.J, Grube, J.W. (2002) Alcohol Advertising And Youth. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* 26; 900-906
- Mc Donald, C (Ed) (1992) *How Advertising Works: A Review of Current Thinking* NLC Publications Limited: London.
- McQuail, D. (1983) *Mass Communication Theory* SAGE Publications Ltd.: London.
- Nath, U (1986) *Smoking: Third World Alert* Sage Publications: New York
- Pollay,R.W. (1986)The Distorted Mirror :Reflections On The Unintended Consequences of Advertising .*Journal Of Marketing* 50:18-30
- Robinson T.N. Chen H. L., .Killen .J.D. (1998) Television and Music Video Exposure and Risk of Adolescent Alcohol Use :*Paediatrics*:102 :54
- Rogers, E. (1995) *Diffusion of Innovations*. The Free Press: New York.
- Ouko, J. (2002) The Big Issue "Are We Drinking Too Much?" In *The East African Standard* Monday 5th August 2002.
- Watson.J . And Hill,A.(1985) *A Dictionary Of Communication And Media Studies* Edward Arnold Publishers: London