

Companies should not be allowed to advertise products that can negatively affect ...

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



Introduction

“ Advertising is legalized lying” H. G. Wells. This quote applies perfectly when manufacturers are advertising products such as tobacco, alcohol and other related products. In 2011, the three most advertised cigarette brands; Marboro, Newport, and Camel were also the three most smoked cigarette brands by young people (12-25 years) with 46. 2%, 21. 8%, and 12. 4% preference rates respectively! (CDC, 2013). In most cases, the advertisement of products such as cigarettes, alcohol, fast foods, and prescription drugs do not mention of the harming potential of their products. This causes people to consume the products with minimal or no knowledge at all of the effects different products have on them. Children are more exposed and alert to advertisements as compared to adults, and, therefore, the advertisements may have very adverse effects on the children (Espejo, 18). This is so because the average American child spends about 35 hours per week watching TV and watches about 40, 000 commercials per year! This prolonged exposure can cause children and adults, to take up drinking and smoking in order to appear “ cool” and socially acceptable. Companies should be banned from advertising products that can negatively affect adults and children in order to avoid worsening the health of people, their productivity, and the general socio-economic status of a given society. Authorities should ban companies from advertising products such as fast foods because children and adults are not adequately knowledgeable on the harmful effects of some of the products they are lured to consume. Advertisers and marketers take advantage of people’s vulnerability to persuasive messages. Food advertising usually promotes the nutrient-poor, <https://assignbuster.com/companies-should-not-be-allowed-to-advertise-products-that-can-negatively-affect-essays-example-essay-samples/>

calorie-dense foods (Lusted & Mary, 15). These foods can cause obesity to both adults and children. Up to the age of 12, nearly no children can understand that consuming certain foods will expose them to obesity that has a very negative impact on healthy living. Companies such as McDonalds spend about \$600 million per year on advertisements with majority of their advertisements being tailored to children between the age of 7-12 years. Adults also fall prey to falsified advertisements and consume the high-calorie foods that cause them to become obese or predispose them to health conditions such as heart attacks, high blood pressure, cancers among many others. As such, authorities should ban companies from advertising products that can negatively affect adults and children.

Advertisements on prescription drugs at times mislead people to misuse them thereby posing dangers to human life and wellbeing. Adults in the developed world are very prone to such advertisements because of the liberalization of the pharmaceuticals industry. Many adults fall prey to the advertisements and purchase the drugs over the counter at chemists without the prescription of a qualified physician. The people take overdoses, mix the drugs with others, engage in certain activities, take the drugs while they could be allergic or hypersensitive to certain chemicals contained in the drugs among other issues that are not usually mentioned in the adverts. As such, the advertisements of prescription drugs should be banned.

Advertising products such as alcohol and tobacco products to children and adults can cause them to get into addictive habits that negatively affect their lives. The media is rife with advertisements on alcohol and tobacco products that portray characters smoking or drinking as sexy, social and lovable

(Spence & Brett, 23). Adults and children alike see advertisements on alcohol and tobacco during prime time, on billboards at concerts and sporting events, and this tempts them to believe that smoking and drinking make people look “cool”. According to Espejo, people who see many advertisements on beers, wines, cigarettes and other related products admit that the adverts influence them to engage in the addictive habits (168). Advertising of “harmful” products influences heavy and unplanned expenditure. In as much as the advertisers target children for a myriad of products, their main intention is to have the children want the advertised product and demand for them from the parents. This in a way looks unethical as it amounts to pressure or blackmailing adults into buying things to appease children. According to Lusted and Mary, advertisers rely on this gimmick heavily with “tweens” (8-12 year olds) influencing parental purchases worth more about \$600 billion per year! (169). This has compelled 80% of all global brands to employ an advertising strategy that target children in that age bracket. As such, companies should be banned from advertising products such as fast foods, alcohol related products among others that have negative effects on the children.

Flamboyant advertisements especially on fast foods, alcohol, video games, movies, and fashion influences adults and children to become materialistic and has resulted in an epidemic of materialistic values. The departure from humanistic values into materialistic values negatively affects human development especially in children. Psychologist, Allen Kanner observed that years back when children were asked what they wanted to be, their answers used to be “astronaut”, “doctor”, “scientist” and the like. However, in

recent times most children will just say that they “ just want to make money”! (Clay). According to Kanner, advertisements and the media heavily influence this change of response. Kanner notes that the advertisement of “ evil” products causes “ narcissistic wounding” in both adults and children. The advertisements convince people that they are inferior if they do not have many new products or lack the things that they are like (Clay). Children are very fond of demanding for things that they see in advertisements. Adults can also influence their spouses to demand for items that they saw in advertisements. In such cases, when the person from whom someone is demanded tries to explain that the demanded item can be harmful, the “ demanding” party might interpret the explanation to be justification for denial. This might strain the parent-child or adult-adult relationships and as such, advertisements of harmful products should be banned.

Not all is gloom about advertisements of harmful products and there is a very positive side to the issue. Advertising products with negative effects has massive economic benefits. Regardless of the effects that a product has, marketers customize their advertisements to suit children because they can easily lure them. The children then in turn demand and press their parents to purchase products worth more than \$600 annually! This in essence translates to the growth of the companies that create and sustain millions of jobs directly as employees or through the media houses, advertising companies, and many other related companies. Interestingly, many parents are employed by beer, cigarette companies, fast foods and many other companies that produce “ harmful” things (Lusted & Mary, 12). The government also rakes in massive revenue from the taxes paid by the “

evil” companies. As such, the advertisements are an important link in the economic sustenance of the families and the country at large.

Although advertising products with negative effects has massive economic returns, the ethicality of the issue coupled with the long-term effects of the practice should compel authorities to ban or place very restrictive measure on the practice. It makes little economic sense if the country is to raise its population on fast foods and alcohol. The health effects of these habits would include obesity and a myriad of costly health conditions that lower the productivity of the country. As such, there should be tight controls on advertisement of certain products to prevent tempting children into addictive and unhealthy practices that can water down any economic gains that the society has made.

Conclusion

Advertising products that can negatively affect adults and children has very strong and long-term effects on both adults and children. Notably, the effects are hardest on children because they spend as many as 35 hours per week watching TV and watch as many as 40, 000 commercials per year!

Authorities should ban the practice or place restrictive measures. First, it is unethical since advertisers only exploit the ignorance of the children and many adults while blackmailing the parents to make unnecessary purchases. Psychologically, advertising has negative effects as children develop materialistic values and failure to get the products can lead to strained relationships with their parents. Advertisement of products with negative effects can mislead adults into taking up drinking and smoking in order to fit

into certain social groups. On a positive note, advertising to children prompts parents to purchase products worth more than \$600 billion in the US and this point to massive economic returns in a number of industries. In the long term, continued advertisements of products with negative effects has the potential to bring down the economy through low productivity and heightening the expenditure brought about by poor health in its populace. Since the concerned authorities cannot completely outlaw advertisements of “evil” products, they should place very restrictive measures on such advertisements.

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