Symbolic Interactionism and Adolescent Reactions to Cigarette Advertisements
with Dante Pirouz and Todd Pezzuti, University of California, Irvine

Abstract

Does restricting the age of models in cigarette advertising to 25 years or older really work in deterring adolescents from smoking? It is important to understand how the characteristics of cigarette ad models, such as age, influence teen behavior. Based on symbolic interactionism theory, the authors conducted three experiments to examine how altering age of models used in cigarette advertising affects whether adolescents are drawn to or deterred from smoking. Adolescents exhibited a boomerang effect when exposed to teen cigarette models, lowering intent to smoke, while exposure to young adult cigarette models increased intent to smoke.