Advice From a Caterpillar: Mainstreaming Hookah Consumption Into American Pop Culture

Merlyn Griffiths, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA
Tracy Harmon, Syracuse University, USA

Hookah smoking as a social phenomenon has taken hold in American popular culture, despite the barrage of anti-smoking messages in multiplicitous media outlets pointing to the dangers of smoking. Hookah lounges, cafes and bars are popping up in and around college campuses across the United States. As opposed to consumers of Middle Eastern, Indian, or Arabic decent, for whom hookah is a traditional part of the culture, the majority of customers attracted to this consumption activity are adolescents, teens and college kids from white suburban neighborhoods. Just what is the appeal of this practice, and to what might we attribute its epidemic-like spread in mainstream culture. We investigate this phenomenon and identify factors relating to attitudes, beliefs and attributed meanings that are contributing to the proliferation of hookah smoking.

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Merlyn A. Griffiths, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, USA

Tracy R. Harmon, Syracuse University, USA

Hookah smoking is a less known entity for consumer behavior researchers. Research on consumers’ smoking behaviors have been vast in the marketing area, and has offered compelling evidence of the negative effects of smoking. The majority of these studies have focused primarily on cigarette consumption and the effects of advertising messages, antismoking messages and placement in media, as well as the addictive effects on adolescents, teenagers and young adults (see Pechmann and Reibling 2006; Pechmann and Reibling 2000; Pechmann and Shih 1999; Pechmann and Ratneshwar 1994; Pechmann et al. 2003). However, no studies to date have focused on American consumers’ adoption or practice of hookah smoking. Just what is the appeal of this practice, and to what might we attribute its epidemic-like spread in mainstream culture. We investigate this phenomenon and identify factors relating to consumer attitudes, beliefs and attributed meanings that are contributing to the proliferation of hookah smoking.

Employing qualitative methods, our findings point to a significant disconnect for consumers in their perceptions. We have found nostalgic emotional disconnections, and disconnection of the risks and consequences involved in hookah consumption relative to cigarette and cigar smoking. Hookah consumption is viewed as a positive pleasurable experience that fosters group bonding.

**References**


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**Who to Choose? Source Credibility and Attractiveness of Endorsers in the 2008 Presidential Primaries**

Pamela Grimm, Kent State University, USA

Hyeunjung Lee, Kent State University, USA

Neslihan Yilmaz, Kent State University, USA

Endorsements in politics are ubiquitous, especially in the run-up to a presidential election. Though both marketers and politicians try to influence consumer/voter behavior through endorsements, the endorsement process in politics is more complicated than in marketing for several reasons. First, in marketing the endorser is usually a celebrity or expert on the product category, is paid for his or