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Persuasive Communication

Ad Analysis Paper Final Draft

They Make The Morning Time Epic!

Thesis: This advertisement is likely to persuade its target audience by using the Activation Model of Information Exposure. It uses high-stimulation content that appeals to sensation-seeking audiences, who, in this instance, are children and teens.

Studies show that all humans have a distinctive nature when it comes to stimulation. Stimulation activates your mind and senses. It's natural for people to be sensation seekers, wanting that stimulus. However, there are two types of sensation seekers: low and high. Good persuaders are well-versed in this topic and use it to prompt a certain action. Activation Model of Information Exposure (AIME) is a theory that focuses on the relationship between one's need for stimulation and the likelihood that a message will attract and maintain attention. "High sensation seekers are theorized to respond more strongly to novel experiences and stimuli than are low sensation-seekers." (Hall, 2005, p. 236). According to this theory, high sensation seekers have a high need for stimulation.

The ad I have chosen, likely to be effective under the AIME theory, is the [Reese's Puffs commercial 'Rap' jingle](#). There are other Reese's ads in this same campaign, such as the older "[Eat 'em up](#)." This is a highly stimulating ad for the high-sensation-seeker target audience. This

advertisement is likely to persuade its target audience by using the Activation Model of Information Exposure. It uses high-stimulation content that appeals to sensation-seeking audiences, who, in this instance, are children and teens.

Description of the Advertisement

This is a thirty-second advertisement that is fully a rap song. The rap delivery was made by [William Lupo](#). This ad has high-energy, catchy lyrics and beat, fast cuts, bright Reese's colors, and a very theatrical feel. Making it hard to lose one's attention. "A variety of factors can contribute to the arousal potential or sensation value of media stimuli... including... novelty, surprisingness, emotional significance, and associations with reward" (Hall, 2005, p. 236). The Reese's colors (Orange, beige, and brown) are paraded across the screen, signaling that this is their commercial. The catchy lyrics often stick in viewers' memories, causing them to sing lyrics like "**They make the morning time epic! R double E S E S YES!**" even when the ad is not even on. There are also a lot of action-oriented edits that move the screen and eye-grabbing eagles. During these thirty seconds, graphics pop up on the screen and are thrown towards us. This had never had a slow/low section, just high stimulation scenes.

Target Audience/Receiver

For this ad, the target audience was children and teens, who at the time were members of Gen Z and the Millennial generation. These were also high sensation seekers. "Those who score high in this trait will find media stimuli with a high arousal potential or sensation value to be more appealing..." (Hall, 2005, p. 236). This ad evokes a high-energy sense of fun and coolness that many kids seek. *Oh, this cool rapper is eating and rapping about this cereal, so if I eat it, I'll be cool like him.* This is a likely and highly wanted mindset for the viewer. What also makes this ad

appealing to young attention seekers is that it doesn't mention any nutritional facts at all, just the excitement of eating. The hyper-sweet candy animations give the "Candy cereal" appeal. The audience is also likely to be familiar with the company's pre-ad due to its globally popular peanut butter chocolate bar, Reese's Cup.

Source Analysis

Reese's is already a well-established candy brand. Many kids have had or heard of Reese's at birthday parties, Easter egg hunts, Halloween, and other kid activities. Reese's are mainly known for their Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, which originated in the early 20th century. The brand is also part of the world's largest chocolate company, Hershey. According to the So Sweet store, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups are the third-most-purchased candy in America. So when kids see this brand on screen, they already have familiarity and trust with it. The Reese's ad is credible to the target audience of kids and teens. Making the source more likely to cause persuasion. The ad doesn't need to be that pushy or overly informative, since the target audience is already yielding. The other source, a teenage/young adult rapper, can influence younger viewers, as kids often look up to older teens or young adults. The source is crucial in persuading the audience, but where it is located is just as important.

Channel Analysis

Platforms used to distribute this ad were TV (Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network) and YouTube. "Television is one of the most pervasive media in the USA as 98% of U.S. households have at least one television set"(Hall, 2005, p. 237). The main TV channels that aired these ads were Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network, which predominantly air kids' shows. Additionally, these two

channels were targeted because the shows were popular on these platforms. Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network would more likely have more stimulating content than other networks like Disney or PBS Kids. These channels were home to iconic shows such as SpongeBob, Ed Edd n Eddy, iCarly, The Fairly OddParents, and many more. All of these shows have immensely stimulating content, which means the individuals who seek them out on these channels are high attention seekers. Branding these networks with quirky and bold humor, distinctive creator voices, and slightly edgy content. This Commercial was also distributed on the popular social media platform at the time, YouTube, which was then primarily used for watching music videos.

Message Analysis

The messages in these commercials are short and catchy, cereal-focused lyrics that are also easy to rap along to. Lyrics such as “Reese’s Puffs, Reese’s Puffs” and “R to the double-E, S-E-S.” can easily become stuck in someone's head. “Slogan information presented with music appears easier to retrieve than similar information presented without music.” (Alexomanolaki et al., 2006, p. 1191). This commercial will air not only during the day and night, but also in the morning before the target audience's school. This highly suggests parents or parental figures are also going to work or taking the kid to school. They might unconsciously retain this jingle and later recite it, for example, while buying cereal for the kids at the grocery store. The appeal utilized emotional cues, such as fun and excitement, along with peripheral cues like music, visuals, and humor. “The formal elements... including the large screen and surround sound system, provide a relatively high stimulation value”(Hall, 2005, p. 237). Distributing high stimulation leads to a greater increase in recall.

Application

By looking at this ad through the lens of the AIME theory, it is likely that it successfully persuaded the target audience of young, high-sensation seekers. The Reese's ad was persuasive because of its high level of stimulation, which appeals to high sensation seekers, leading to strong attention and memory. With its vibrant colors and fast cuts and edits, it is closely signed to its audience. "Advertisements... constructed with fidelity to the model stand a greater chance of attracting and holding the attention of HSS viewers so that the persuasive argument of the message stands a greater chance of processing..." (Helme et al., 2007, p. 401). This was also delivered to the most appropriate channels of Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon. Channels that feature highly stimulating content, such as SpongeBob. This advertisement has a significant impact; children remember it and ask their parents to buy Reese's Puffs. Additionally, nearby parents may unconsciously retain this jingle.

Counterargument

However, this advertisement is likely to be effective for individuals who seek high levels of sensation; it could be quite the opposite for those who seek low levels of attention. This ad was displayed multiple times, maybe even numerous times a morning. Low sensation seekers may find this overwhelming. They might also find the high stimulation, such as fast cuts, *too much* and turn it off. Low sensation seekers could be the parents nearby, letting their children pick which channel to watch, or a calmer older sibling.

This advertisement targets children and teenagers by using high-stimulation content based on the Activation Model of Information Exposure, making it very persuasive for this age group.

Matching the level of stimulation to the audience's preferences was crucial for the ad's success. Kids who watch shows on Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon typically enjoy weird and chaotic programming. The format of the Reese's ad effectively conveys a message that captures and holds the audience's attention. As a result, this advertisement led to increased sales and longevity. Till this day, more than a decade later, individuals, especially the kids watching those ads on Nickelodeon, still recite the lyrics "R double E S E S YES!" even if now we may choose the healthier option.

References

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