

Be Marlboro in the Philippines: Influences and Appeal Among Youth

Lisa Lagasse, Marela Kay Minosa, Meghan Moran, Joanna Cohen

Background

- In the Philippines, 28% of adolescents ages 13-15 have ever smoked cigarettes, and 1 in 10 non-smoking adolescents report intention to start in the coming year
- Tobacco advertising is a powerful tool to promote smoking initiation and use among vulnerable youth
- Marlboro is a popular brand in Metro Manila in part led by aggressive marketing campaigns by Philip Morris International (PMI)

Objective: To examine the influence of Marlboro advertisements, as compared to a local cigarette brand, Mighty, on intention to smoke among Filipino youth using a mixed-methods design

Methods

Survey

- Participants: 13 to 17 year-old adolescents in Metro Manila, Philippines (N=626)
- Measures included three index indicators of appeal: 1) identification with, 2) likeability, and 3) perceived effectiveness of Marlboro and Mighty brand ads
- Multivariable logistic regression evaluated influence of appeal on reported youth intention to smoke in the next year

Focus Group Discussions

- Six groups of 13 to 17 year-old adolescents living in Metro Manila, homogeneous by socioeconomic status (SES), heterogeneous by sex and smoking status (N=51)
- Thematic analysis examined how youth interpret and respond to the ads

Findings

Survey

- Marlboro ads rated as more appealing than those for Mighty brand cigarettes
- Influence of ads on youth intention to smoke differed by smoking status
 - For never and former smokers, increasing likeability approximately doubled the odds of intention to smoke
 - For former and current smokers, higher perceived effectiveness was associated with increased odds of intention
- No significant effects were found for Mighty ads

Focus Group Discussions

- Marlboro ads were described by youth as promoting adventure and decisiveness
- Mighty ads were perceived by non-smoking youth as being for adults and current smokers



Figure 1. Marlboro ad

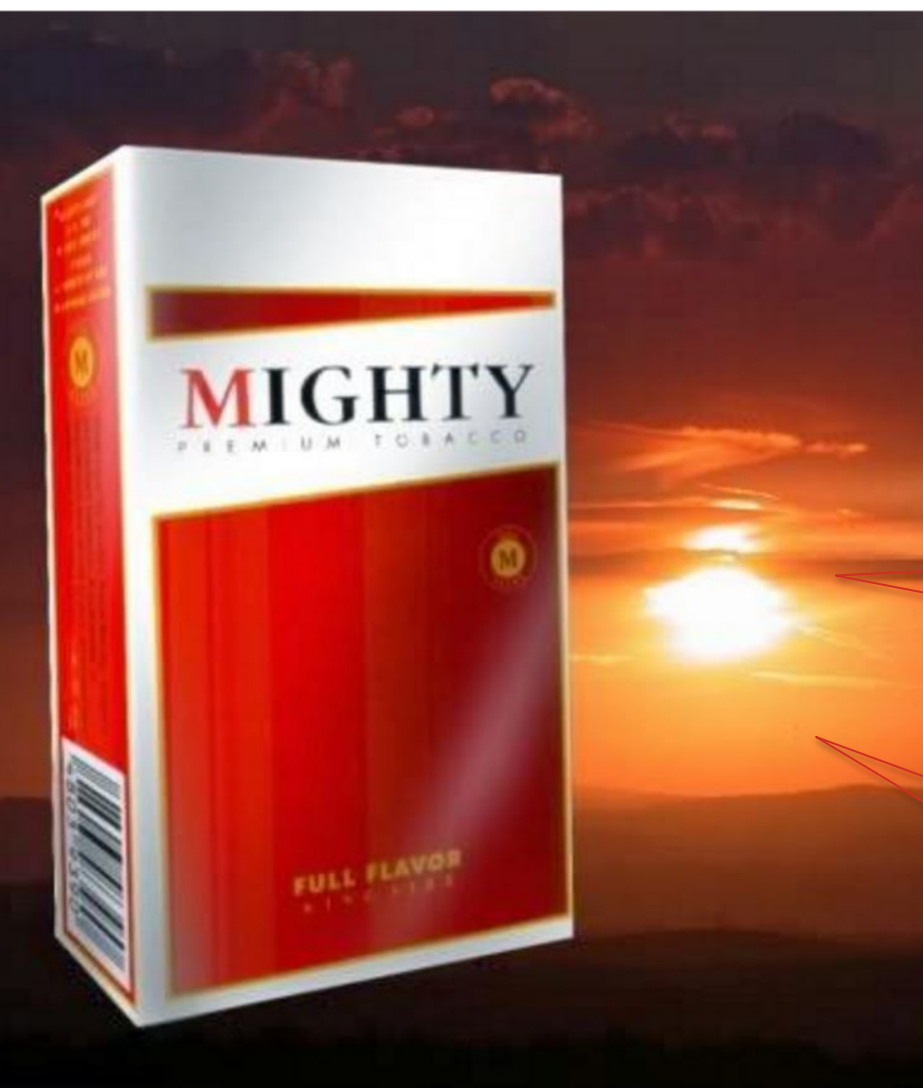


Figure 2. Mighty ad

What does the ad promote?
“Adventure.”
(Smoker, Group 4, mid-SES)

Who is the target audience?
“Many young people.” (Chorus, Group 6, high-SES)

What does the ad promote?
“When you smoke you also feel relaxed.”
(Smoker, Group 4, mid-SES)

Who is the target audience?
“Mostly cigarette users.”
(Smoker, Group 6, high-SES)

Table 1. Brand advertisement differences in advertising appeal indicators			
	Range	Marlboro M (SD)	Mighty M (SD)
Overall Sample			
Identification*	1-7	3.05 (1.24)	2.70 (1.33)
Likeability*	1-5	2.84 (1.04)	2.53 (1.14)
Perceived Effectiveness*	2-11**	5.03 (2.06)	4.87 (2.18)
*P values ≤0.05			
** Scale range: 2-14			

Table 2. Multivariable logistic regression analyses of Marlboro ads on the odds of youth smoking intention			
	Marlboro		
	Never Smokers	Former Smokers	Current Smokers
	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
Youth appeals			
Identification	0.68 (0.38, 1.21)	0.46 (0.20, 1.04)	0.62 (0.37, 1.03)
Likeability	1.94 (1.02, 3.70)	2.24 (1.00, 4.99)	1.66 (0.84, 3.28)
Perceived Effectiveness	1.13 (0.78, 1.63)	1.70 (1.08, 2.69)	1.47 (1.07, 2.04)
¹ Bolded meet statistical significance of ≤0.05			

Conclusions

- Results support concerns regarding the influence of Marlboro marketing in emerging markets
- Greater likeability towards and perceived effectiveness of the Marlboro ads were associated with increased odds of youth reporting intention to smoke in the next year
- Tobacco control efforts in the Philippines may benefit from integrated policy and educational efforts that focus on countering positive images of smoking as portrayed through tobacco advertising

Acknowledgement: The work was supported with funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use (www.bloomberg.org). No conflicts.