

Young People and Alcohol Advertising

An investigation of alcohol advertising prior to the
Advertising Code changes

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Section 1

Foreword

Ofcom (the Office of Communications) is the regulator of the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, telecommunications and wireless communications services. Ofcom was established on 29 December 2003 and replaces the Independent Television Commission (ITC), the Radio Authority, the Broadcasting Standards Commission, Oftel and the Radio Communications Agency. As Ofcom's co-regulatory partner in broadcast advertising regulation, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has undertaken the implementation of the new rules on alcohol advertising.

The Communications Act 2003 requires Ofcom to review its functions and to have regard to the extent to which its duties are likely to be furthered or secured by effective self-regulation. Against this background, Ofcom decided that a self-regulatory approach to broadcast advertising regulation may be better equipped to handle the growing issues of convergence raised by the growth of digital communications than the current statutory system. It also believed that a single point of contact for consumers for advertising issues across all media might serve the public better than the current fragmented approach to advertising regulation. Therefore, in November 2004, Ofcom delegated day-to-day responsibility for applying the broadcast advertising codes to the ASA (Advertising Standards Authority). Because the ASA already applied the non-broadcast advertising codes, this meant that the ASA became a "one stop shop" for advertising complaints.

In July 2004, Ofcom consulted on proposals to revise Section 11.8 of the Advertising Standards Code for television advertising. (Rule 11.8.1 applies to all advertising; 11.8.2 contains additional rules which apply only to advertising for alcoholic drinks; 11.8.3 contains relaxations for low alcohol drinks).

The decision to review the rules came from a background of widespread concern about the drinking behaviour amongst teenagers and young adults, including excessive or binge drinking or anti-social behaviour associated with drinking. The balance of evidence available to Ofcom indicated that alcohol advertising has some influence on the attitudes of children and teenagers to drinking but that this influence is certainly less significant than other factors such as peer pressure and family environment (see Ofcom's website for more details). Ofcom judged that, as part of a multi-faceted effort to combat the abuse of alcohol, it would be appropriate to consult on proposals to revise Section 11.8 of the Advertising Standards Code for television advertising (Rule 11.8.1 applies to all advertising; 11.8.2 contains additional rules which apply only to advertising for alcoholic drinks; 11.8.3 contains relaxations for low alcohol drinks).

The consultation was launched in July 2004 and new rules for TV advertising came into force on 1 January 2005. However, Ofcom accepted at the time that some advertisers may already have been filming commercials intended for summer 2005 and therefore allowed a 'grace period' until 30 September 2005 for advertisers who had already committed themselves to campaigns which may not comply with the revised rules.

Amongst other objectives, the changes are aimed at preventing alcohol advertising having a strong appeal to 'under 18s' and, in particular, being associated with youth culture. Although there had been disagreements at the public consultation stage about the most appropriate wording for this rule, this objective was supported by both the alcohol industry and organisations that work to prevent the abuse of alcohol.

The new rule requires that alcohol advertising 'must not be likely to appeal strongly to people under 18, in particular by reflecting or being associated with youth culture'.

In June 2005 the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP, the industry self-regulator that has always written the non-broadcast codes) published revised rules for non-broadcast advertising. These had similar objectives to the TV code changes.

Full details of both Codes can be found at www.cap.org.uk/cap/codes/cap_code/ and www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/AlcAds/decision/rules.pdf (see sections 11.8.1 and 11.8.2).

Section 2

Background and research objectives

This report contains findings from a benchmark wave of quantitative and qualitative research among young people across the UK conducted by MORI, an independent research agency, in 2005 on behalf of Ofcom and the ASA. The study has been designed to assess the impact of regulatory changes in alcohol advertising rules aimed at reducing the appeal of some alcohol advertising to young people under the age of 18 years.

This first phase of research focuses on the appeal of a selection of alcohol advertisements that aired pre-regulatory change to respondents aged 11–21 years. The results of this part of the research will provide the ASA/Ofcom with a benchmark against which the results of a follow-on, post regulatory change study can be compared in about two years time.

In addition to the bespoke primary qualitative and quantitative research with MORI, the report also includes other secondary research, such as:

- Semiotic analysis (MORI).
- Discourse analysis on the transcripts from the group discussions (MORI).
- Analysis of market data on alcohol consumption (Taylor Nelson Sofres).
- Analysis of the advertising market based on data sourced from Nielsen Media Research (in-house Ofcom analysis).

The research report also cites a recent study by the Department of Health (2005): *Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2004*.

Before the report investigates the appeal of alcohol advertising, it offers analyses of young people's general attitudes to alcohol, their drinking behaviour, their brand awareness and brand choices. This provides an essential context to the consideration of the appeal of specific campaigns.

It is important to bear in mind that there are other, more powerful influences alongside advertising that affect teenagers' attitudes and behaviours in relation to alcohol. These include factors such as family background, peer pressure and the wider culture. While the regulation of advertising may have some influence on the drinking habits of young people in the UK and the growing problem of under-age drinking, it can only be a small part of the jigsaw puzzle. If these other factors do not change considerably over the period of the research – a very short time for cultural movement - it is likely that the second phase of research will reveal little difference in attitudes and behaviour even if the new advertising rules are successful in reducing the appeal of some alcohol advertising.

2.1 Research objectives

The overarching purpose of this research is to measure the extent to which the alcohol advertising rule changes reduce the levels of **appeal** of some alcohol advertising to those under 18 years of age. As already mentioned, the research programme is being conducted over two stages, of which this is the first, benchmark stage.

The research objectives for the benchmark stage were to explore:

- Young people's relationships with drinking and alcohol.
- What drives positive and negative appeal of advertising amongst young people.
- What drives positive and negative appeal of 'alcohol advertising' amongst young people.
- The extent to which a selection of alcohol advertisements appeal to people under 18 years of age.

2.2 Methodology

To meet these objectives MORI conducted both qualitative and quantitative research during the first half of 2005. The focus of both pieces of research was a thorough investigation of young people's reactions to alcohol advertising (using specific executions that aired during 2004 pre-rule change) and their level of appeal. The research also explored a wider context regarding young people's relationships with drinking and alcohol by exploring and measuring their behaviour and attitudes.

Qualitative phase

This involved 16 group discussions with teenagers and young adults aged between 11 and 21 years. The research groups were held across the UK in a mixture of urban, deprived and rural locations. Quotas were set according to age, gender, school/employment status and location. Participants were also recruited according to their own evaluation of their drinking behaviour.

The group discussion matrix is described in Table 1.

Table 1

Age (years) and gender	Status	Drinking behaviour	No of groups	Region	Location
11–12 Females	Year 7	Sometimes/rarely/never	1	Northern Ireland	Belfast – inner city
12–13 Females	Year 8	Sometimes/rarely/never	1	London	Surbiton – suburban
12–13 Males	Year 8	Sometimes/rarely/never	1	Wales	Carmarthen – rural
14–15 Females	Years 10 and 11	Sometimes; Like to get drunk	1	Scotland	Glasgow – suburban
14–15 Females	Years 10 and 11	Sometimes; Like to get drunk	1	Midlands	Lichfield – suburban
14–15 Males	Years 10 and 11	Sometimes; Like to get drunk	1	Manchester	Inner city
16–17 Males	A level students	Sometimes; Like to get drunk	1	West Country	Tiverton – rural
16–17 Females	Working & Not working	Sometimes	1	West Country	Tiverton – rural
16–17 Females	A level students	Like to get drunk	2	London and Midlands	Surbiton & Lichfield – suburban
16–17 Males	Working & Not working	Like to get drunk	1	Manchester	Inner city
16–17 Mixed	FE College	Like to get drunk	1	London	Hackney – inner city
18–21 Females	In education	Sometimes	1	Scotland	Glasgow – suburban
18–21 Males	Not working	Sometimes	1	Wales	Carmarthen – rural
18–21 Mixed	Working	Like to get drunk	1	London	Hackney – inner city
18–21 Mixed	In education	Rarely/never	1	Northern Ireland	Belfast – suburban

A total of 28 broadcast and non-broadcast advertisements was selected to be shown in rotation across the 16 groups. Twenty were alcohol advertisements and eight were non-alcohol brands.

Discourse Analysis of the transcripts was also undertaken. Discourse Analysis is the analysis of the words that people choose to use to help understand things people subconsciously think or the way they react. In this case it helped to put their drinking behaviour into context and understand the relationship alcohol plays in their lives.

Semiotic desk research was also undertaken to look at the symbols and influences operating on young people, in order to understand better the cultural context within which young people make decisions and find something appealing.

Quantitative phase

This phase was conducted among a representative sample of 1539 young people aged 11–21 years. Interviews took place between 18 April and 12 June 2005, and lasted an average of 24 minutes. They were conducted face-to-face in respondents' homes using multi-media CAPI technology.

In order to ensure that the sample achieved was representative of 11- to 21-year-olds in the UK, a random location sampling technique was used with quotas set on age and gender. For those aged 16 years and over, quotas were also set on working status. The data was weighted at the analysis stage to ensure that the final sample was representative.

For the quantitative stage, the advertisements used in the qualitative research were reduced to 11 executions (eight TV and three press / poster). The responses to the advertising executions discussed in the qualitative research determined which to investigate further in the quantitative research.

Each individual respondent was shown five of these advertisements (four TV and one press or poster) during the course of the interview. The advertisements shown to each respondent were selected at random from the predetermined list during each interview.

Note: For reasons of commercial sensitivity, the specific advertisements researched have been de-branded within this report.

In order to elicit responses that were as 'honest' as possible, questions relating to behaviour and attitudes towards drinking alcohol were posed using a self-completion approach. Participants entered their responses directly onto the laptop at this stage of the interview.

In line with Market Research Society regulations, permission of a parent or guardian was sought prior to interviewing all young people aged under 16 years. Parents and guardians of those aged 16–17 years were also informed about the study and notified that participants would be exposed to alcohol advertising during the course of the interview.

2.3 Advertising stimulus selection

The advertisements used in the study were not a random selection and are not necessarily representative of all adverts in the category. The ASA carried out a search using the Thomson Intermedia database to identify all alcohol advertising that ran during the second half of 2004. The ASA, Ofcom and MORI chose examples of advertising styles and techniques that were aimed at the younger end of the legitimate alcohol market but which were thought likely also to appeal to 'under 18s'. The selection criteria were based on the conclusions of an ITC study: *Alcohol Advertising and Young People* (2004) and included:

- How appealing the advertisements were thought to be to young people 11–21 years of age.
- How appealing the actual product/drink was thought to be for young people 11–21 years of age (i.e. alcopops adverts were identified as being particularly appealing).
- Whether the advertisements covered the issues/themes which had been highlighted in the revised Code.

A number of non-alcoholic TV advertisements were also chosen to be shown in the qualitative stage of the project only. These advertisements were chosen on the same basis as the alcohol advertisements.

During the group discussions, the teenage and young adult respondents were shown at least seven advertising executions, including at least two press or poster advertisements. However, before they were shown the alcohol stimulus, and in order to probe the appeal of advertisements in general, they were asked to recall and discuss an advertisement, and were also shown non-alcohol advertisements.

Section 3

Executive summary

3.1 Measuring the impact of regulatory change

The overarching objective of this research is to measure the extent to which the alcohol advertising rule changes reduce the levels of *appeal* of some forms of alcohol advertising to people under the age of 18 years. The findings from the benchmark wave of the study are detailed in this report. The report details the benchmark wave landscape prior to rule change and does not attempt to draw any conclusions on possible changes in attitudes or appeal.

This benchmark wave research assesses the *appeal* of alcohol advertising both qualitatively and quantitatively. It analyses the executional elements of advertising that appeal to young people, as well as examining their brand awareness and brand consumption patterns.

Quantitatively, the key measures of '**advertising appeal**' are:

- Likeability of advertisement (scale of 1 to 10)
- Advertising statements (how strongly do you agree/disagree with the following)
 - stands out as different from other ads;
 - makes the drink look appealing;
 - aimed at people like me;
 - the ad will encourage people to drink.

The post-wave will be conducted in about two years time. The objectives and measures for evaluation will remain the same at the post-wave thus enabling any movements in appeal to be assessed within the context of the entire survey. The core difference between the benchmark wave and the post-wave will be the set of alcohol advertisements explored. The post-wave research will contain a different set of advertisements that air after the rule changes in order to measure any differences in response among an identically profiled sample of respondents.

The benchmark wave study provides robust research from several sources that includes:

- Bespoke primary qualitative research among groups of teenagers and young adults aged 11–21 years (MORI).
- Bespoke primary quantitative research among groups of teenagers and young adults (MORI) aged 11–21 years (total sample: 1539).
- Semiotic analysis (MORI).
- Discourse analysis on the transcripts from the group discussions (MORI)
- Analysis of market data on alcohol consumption (Taylor Nelson Sofres)
- Analysis of the advertising market based on data sourced from Nielsen Media Research (in-house Ofcom analysis)

The research report also references a recent study by the Department of Health (2005): *Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2004*.

There are a number of research issues that need to be noted prior to evaluating the research contained within this report:

Research Note 1: Ofcom and the ASA note that it is notoriously difficult to probe the actual effect and influence of TV advertising because:

- virtually everybody is exposed to advertising so there is no control group against which to make comparisons;
- alcohol advertising is only one of a multitude of factors influencing people's relationship with alcohol, and cause and effect research into this is at best difficult, and at worst, impossible due to the complexity of the interrelationships

However, reviews of academic research do indicate that TV advertising is likely to contribute to children's attitudes about drinking, albeit at a relatively minor level. Other media, such as films, are likely to be more significant. Availability, price and general social mores are probably the strongest influences.

Given that the relationship between young people and alcohol is complex and multi-faceted, it is recognised that primary research of this nature can only go so far in understanding the impact of regulatory change. In practical terms, research can investigate the appeal of individual alcohol advertisements and the creative/executional factors that drive appeal, along with brand awareness and brand repertoires. Analysis of these measures can then be compared pre- and post-regulatory change to establish if any changes in the appeal of selected alcohol advertising have taken place. It would be much more difficult (if not impossible) to quantify cause and effect relationships. The research can also provide a context or background of drinking behaviour in terms of the amount of alcohol consumed and brands drunk.

While the regulation of advertising may have some influence on the UK's growing youth drinking problems, it can only be a small part of the jigsaw puzzle. If the other factors do not also change over the period of the research – a very short time for cultural movement – it is likely that the second phase of research will reveal little difference in attitudes and behaviour even if the new advertising rules are successful in reducing the appeal of some alcohol advertising.

Research note 2: The ads selected for investigation in the benchmark wave were *not* a random selection and are not necessarily representative of all adverts in the category. The ASA carried out a search using the Thompson media database to identify all alcohol advertising that had ran at some time during the second half of 2004. The ASA, Ofcom and MORI chose examples of advertising styles and techniques that were aimed at the younger end of the legitimate alcohol market but which were thought likely also to appeal to 'under 18s'.

For reasons of commercial sensitivity, the specific advertisements researched have been de-branded within this report.

The post wave will use advertisements selected on a similar subjective basis.

Research note 3: For the purposes of analysis of the quantitative data, teenagers and young people have largely been categorised into three age groups throughout this report: 11-to 13-year-olds, 14- to 16-year-olds and 17- to 21-year-olds. These categories have been defined primarily on the basis of young people's drinking behaviour as identified by the data – key changes in which are identified as occurring between the ages of 13 and 14 years and again between the ages of 16 and 17 years (e.g. in terms of how often young people get drunk, what is consumed and where the drinking takes place).

It was felt that defining the subgroups in these age ranges was more revealing when defined by actual behaviour than when defined as being above or below the legal drinking age. More detailed analysis of the key changes in behaviour and attitudes between these key ages can be found in section 3 of this report. A comparative analysis of the reported age groups (11–13/14–16/17–21 years) versus the legal drinking age ranges (11–17/18–21 years) is annexed to this report.

Research note 4: Ready-to-drink beverages (RTDs) or alcopops as they are more commonly known are referenced extensively throughout this report. These drinks or brands will be referred to as alcopops from this point forward.

3.2 Young people and alcohol

Claimed incidence and frequency of drinking

Eighty-five per cent of the teenagers and young adults interviewed in the quantitative research said that they had tried alcohol. However, this figure masks large variations in experience and level of drinking by age.

- Two-thirds (67%) of 11- to 13-year-olds say they have tried alcohol although the majority of these have tried it only once or twice, or only have had a drink on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas.
- Around 1 in 10 (9%) of 11- to 13-year-olds claim they are regular or occasional drinkers.
- The prevalence of drinking increases with age. One in five (20%) of 14- to 16-year-olds claim they are drinking at least weekly. One in four (25%) 14- to 16-year-olds are occasional drinkers (two to three times a month).
- Just under two-thirds (63%) of 17- to 21-year-olds claim to be regular drinkers (at least once or twice a week). One-third (32%) are occasional or infrequent drinkers. Only 4% say that they have never tried alcohol.
- Drinking behaviours develop at different rates amongst males and females, with females starting to drink more often at an earlier age. For example, among 14- to 16-year-olds, 50% of females are classified as regular or occasional drinkers (drink at least twice a month) compared to 38% of males.
- More males in age group 17–21 years claim to be regular drinkers than females of this age (68% of males say they drink once a week or more in comparison to 57% of females).

In addition to age and gender, claimed parental drinking behaviour appears to have an influence upon young people's propensity to drink to get drunk. Young people who perceive that their parents drink frequently are more likely to say that they themselves get drunk regularly, in comparison to those who perceive their parents to drink infrequently¹ (32%, compared with 18%).

¹ Perceived parental drinking behaviour: 'Frequent', one or more parent perceived to drink alcohol at least three or four times a week; 'Moderate', one or more parent perceived to drink at least once every couple of weeks; 'Infrequent', parents perceived to not drink or no parent drinks more than once a month.

² Respondents were asked to state which brands they had consumed in the last six months by choosing from a precode list, and writing in any brands which they had consumed but which were not listed.

Drinking locations

- 11- to 13-year-olds who say they have drunk alcohol are most likely to have tried it in their own home with their parents (66%) or with a meal (21%), indicating that much of the drinking conducted by the youngest age group is moderate and supervised by parents/guardians.
- 14- to 16-year-olds who have drunk alcohol and are beginning to drink in bars and clubs (22%) despite being under age. Claimed drinking in public places is highest among this age group. Girls aged 14–16 years are more likely than boys to be drinking in bars and clubs (24% vs 19%), at a party (45% vs 36%) and at home with friends (44% vs 39%).
- Drinking in bars and clubs dominates venue preferences among 17- to 21-year-olds who have drunk alcohol (76%), followed by drinking at parties (57%), drinking at home with friends (no parents present) (49%) and with a meal (43%). There is still some drinking in public places e.g. in a park or on the street (17%) but this is lower than the peak among 14- to 16-year-olds (30%).

Types of alcohol consumed²

Alcopops are popular types of drinks among young people, particularly 14- to 16-year-olds and females. Lager consumption is low until the later teenage years, increasing considerably around the ages of 16–17 years among males. Because of the differences in brand preference among males and females, gender preferences are reported separately below. All figures reported in subgroups are amongst those that claim to have drunk alcohol in the last six months:

Males

- WKD is the leading brand of alcohol among 11- to 13-year-old males who say they drink alcohol (20% of those who have drunk in the last six months). Bacardi Breezer ranks second (19%). Carling (17%), Fosters (15%), and Stella (11%) are also popular brands.
- WKD (35%) and Carling (34%) are the leading brands claimed as being drunk among 14- to 16-year-olds who have drunk in the last six months. Smirnoff Ice (29%), Bacardi Breezer (28%), Budweiser (28%) and Stella (27%) rank beneath, demonstrating a similar preference for lager and alcopops among boys of this age.
- By the ages of 17–21 years, beers and lagers are the most popular brands drunk by males (54% claim to have drunk Carling), though alcopops – particularly Smirnoff Ice (38%) - are still drunk by a large proportion of this age group.

Females

- Bacardi Breezer (30%), WKD (27%) and Lambrini (22%) are popular brands among 11- to 13-year-old girls who have drunk in the last six months.
- The most popular brands for 14- to 16-year-olds are WKD (45%), Smirnoff Ice (44%), Lambrini (43%) and Bacardi Breezer (42%), although Smirnoff Vodka, Baileys and Reef are also brands drunk by around a quarter or more of females in this age group.

- Smirnoff Ice (49%) is the most popular brand among females in age group 17–21 years. Other brands claimed to be drunk by this age group include Bacardi Breezer (40%), WKD (38%), Baileys (35%), Smirnoff Vodka (33%), Reef (29%) and Lambrini (28%).

Implications of drinking

The qualitative research identified that drinking alcohol provides a way for teenagers and young adults to interact with their peers in a confident manner. For some, it also provides access to a 'more adult' lifestyle.

There was also acknowledgement of the downsides of drinking. The quantitative survey indicated that 27% of young people who have tried alcohol strongly agreed or tended to agree that they had put themselves in danger. Agreement increases with age (11% of 11- to 13-year-olds, 25% of 14- to 16-year-olds and 35% of 17- to 21-year-olds who have tried alcohol say this³ in line with the increase in drinking experience).

Males are more likely to agree that they have put themselves in danger when drunk than females (30% vs 24%).

Overall, 84% of young people said they felt informed about the risks of drinking alcohol. Those who claimed to have tried alcohol felt more informed of the risk than non-drinkers.

Young females were more likely to feel informed of the risks associated with alcohol at an earlier age than males. Ninety-two per cent of females in the survey aged between 14 and 16 years say they felt well informed, compared with 83% of males the same age.

During the qualitative discussions, females were generally more aware and concerned about being vulnerable when drinking and were warned by parents about date rape and 'spiking' drinks. Magazines for young females were also seen as a source of information.

Post-drinking repercussions, such as being ill, having a hangover or the 'morning after' embarrassment of trying to remember what happened the night before, were all familiar scenarios to the young people spoken to in the group discussions who drank alcohol. However, these images are rarely top-of-mind when they talk about what drinking means to them. The fun, glamour and liberating adult aspects of drinking seem far more appealing and immediate.

3.3 Young people and alcohol advertising⁴

Media background: spend and impacts

In 2004, £203m was spent by alcohol advertisers across all media, representing a year-on-year increase from £198m in 2003 – television spend accounted for the majority of this. However TV's share has been in decline, for example, it fell from 66.4% (£146m) in 2001 to 59.8% (£121m) in 2004.

Year-on-year there has been an increase in advertising spend on Stout (£11.0m in 2003 to 16.5m in 2004) and a decline in spend on alcopops (£21.4m in 2003 to £11.2m in 2004).

It should be noted that this analysis captures above-the-line spend only. Data is unavailable for below the line activity.

³ Bases: Those who have tried alcohol: 11- to 13-year-olds, $n=267$; 14- to 16-year-olds, $n=416$; 17- to 21-year-olds, $n=615$.

⁴ Data analysis based on the 'Alcoholic Drinks' sub-category within the 'Drinks' category as defined by Nielsen Media.

It should also be noted that alcohol advertising cannot be aired on TV in programming aimed at children or within programmes that are of particular interest to under-18-year-olds.

In 2004, a total of 1.7 billion 16- to 24-year-old adult impacts were delivered across all alcohol television advertising – this accounted for 2.3% of all television advertising seen by this audience.

Amongst 10- to 15-year-old children, 949m alcohol impacts were delivered, representing 1.9% of all television advertising seen by this audience. Year-on-year exposure among this audience has declined – although more recent data suggests an increase in exposure to alcohol advertising in January–June 2005 versus the same period in 2004.

3.4 Analysis of the advertisements: general appeal

Qualitative discussion of the elements of advertising that young people liked included humour, music, originality, the unexpected and people having fun or behaving in a childish fashion. Other core triggers included originality, quirkiness and fantasy settings.

There was also some evidence that advertisements where the product/brand was central to the execution/storyline were more likely to make the product/brand, as well as the drinking experience, look more appealing than in advertising where it wasn't.

Advertising which promotes a desirable image often has the strongest pull for young people, as it will often 'talk their language' and portray images or events that are relevant to their lives and interests.

'Kidult' marketing is a strategy that harnesses the values and attitudes of childhood/youth for marketing adult products and works in reverse to aspirational marketing techniques. Semiotic research conducted as part of this study identified typical kidult codes as adults having fun, being irresponsible, behaving like children; and adopting youth behaviour. While the 'kidult' theme is ostensibly aimed at adults, it blurs the fixed lines between adults and children with 'kidults' laying claim to childhood or youth.

Alcohol advertisements that play on the boundary of adult and teenage behaviour to bring the teenage and adult world closer together appear to have strong appeal for young people.

In terms of age group differences observed within the qualitative groups:

- **11- to 13-year-old females** tended to be attracted to advertisements that contained bright, colourful, eye-catching images, have strong music/dominant sound tracks and contain 'mouth watering' product shots.
- **11- to 13-year-old males** particularly liked advertisements with slapstick humour. The humour most liked was often blatant and juvenile. There was a need for a blatant advertising message and product link for the advertisement to make sense, and therefore work on their level.
- **14- to 15-year-old females** were drawn to the stylistic elements of an advertisement, focusing on colours, lighting, camera movements, clothes and the look of the actors. Originality and music also played a role in making an advertisement appealing to this age group. This group are more aware of sexual undertones, although overt sexual imagery was not always liked.
- **14- to 15-year-old males** found sexual imagery, speed, adrenalin/aggression and playful humour appealing. The adverts that worked best were those that were easy to decode and had a fairly straight-forward message (at least on the surface). Abstract advertising or unfamiliar settings were not always understood and became confusing.

- **16- to 21-year-old females** tended to be more ‘ad-literate’ and could appreciate advertisements that used more subtle messaging in addition to more straightforward sales/product persuasion.
- **16- to 21-year-old males** liked advertisements that were considered clever and contained humour where the unexpected or random, ironic incidents occur.

NB: Please see section 5.6 for details of the learnings from the case studies. However, as highlighted in the note earlier, for reasons of commercial sensitivity the specific advertisements researched have been de-branded within this section.

Section 4

Background: young people and alcohol

In order to understand the appeal of alcohol advertising it is necessary to understand the context in which the experience of drinking alcohol is set. Insight into young people's drinking behaviour and their attitudes towards alcohol is useful when trying to understand why some alcohol advertisements have more appeal than others.

In this chapter, both quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed to illustrate the relationship young people have with alcohol. The research conducted by MORI for Ofcom and the ASA is supplemented with recent Department of Health research⁵ about drinking amongst school pupils. Trended alcohol consumption data produced by Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS)⁶ is also included to add context to the research.

4.1 Young people and alcohol

Adolescence is characterised as a period of change. Teenagers experience the mental and physical changes of adolescence on the pathway to becoming an adult. They spend time working out 'who they are', developing their personalities and searching out new experiences and situations to express these identities. The semiotic observation and discourse analysis of the group discussions confirms that drinking alcohol is one such rite-of-passage into adulthood and provides an opportunity to develop different identities and express themselves.

"It's what you do when you're growing up. Everybody sneaks around their parents trying new stuff with their mates. I did it when I was younger, you try smoking and drinking and smoking bud. It's one of those things you do when you're young 'cos it's cool, everyone's doing it."

Boy, 18–21, Belfast

Note: Although much of the discussion in this section is about the development of young people as 'drinkers' (85% of the total sample in age group 11–21 years in the quantitative research have 'ever tried' alcohol), many of the young people in the research (particularly those aged 11–13) do not drink or do not drink with any degree of regularity. For example, when looking at 11- to 13-year-olds in isolation, just under a third (31%) claim never to have tried alcohol, 58% have tried it once or twice or only have a drink on special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas (in many of these instances this would be with the permission of their parents/guardians), 6% claim to have a drink two or three times a month. The remaining 3% claim they are regular drinkers (at least once a week or more often).

It should also be noted that within the group discussions, 'non-drinking' was viewed by some as being equally as important to their identity construction as drinking was to their peers.

⁵ *Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2004*, National Centre for Social Research & the National Foundation for Educational Research for the Department of Health (2005).

⁶ Taylor Nelson Sofres data from National Drinks Survey (NDS) and Family Food Panel (FFP) 2005

“When I was young, my friends started drinking and stuff, I would never join in, because I just wanted to stay away from it.”

Girl, 16–17, Midlands

“I think they think it’s pretty cool to drink. The same with smoking, they think it’s pretty cool and, to be in the in-crowd, they’ve got to drink and maybe drink as much as they can, or whatever.”

Boy, 18–21, Belfast

4.2 Learning to drink: ‘the apprenticeship of drinking’

Qualitatively, it was discussed and acknowledged that there are good and bad ways of drinking and learning to become a drinker. There exists a kind of drinking apprenticeship whereby individuals (or groups) progress from being novice/naïve drinkers to more sophisticated, knowledgeable (adult) drinkers (Figure 1).

The discourse analysis indicated that young people are keen to present themselves as having achieved the status of ‘drinker’. A ‘drinker’ is someone who both knows their own limitations, and knows how to manage themselves while drunk, demonstrating their competence through their experience.

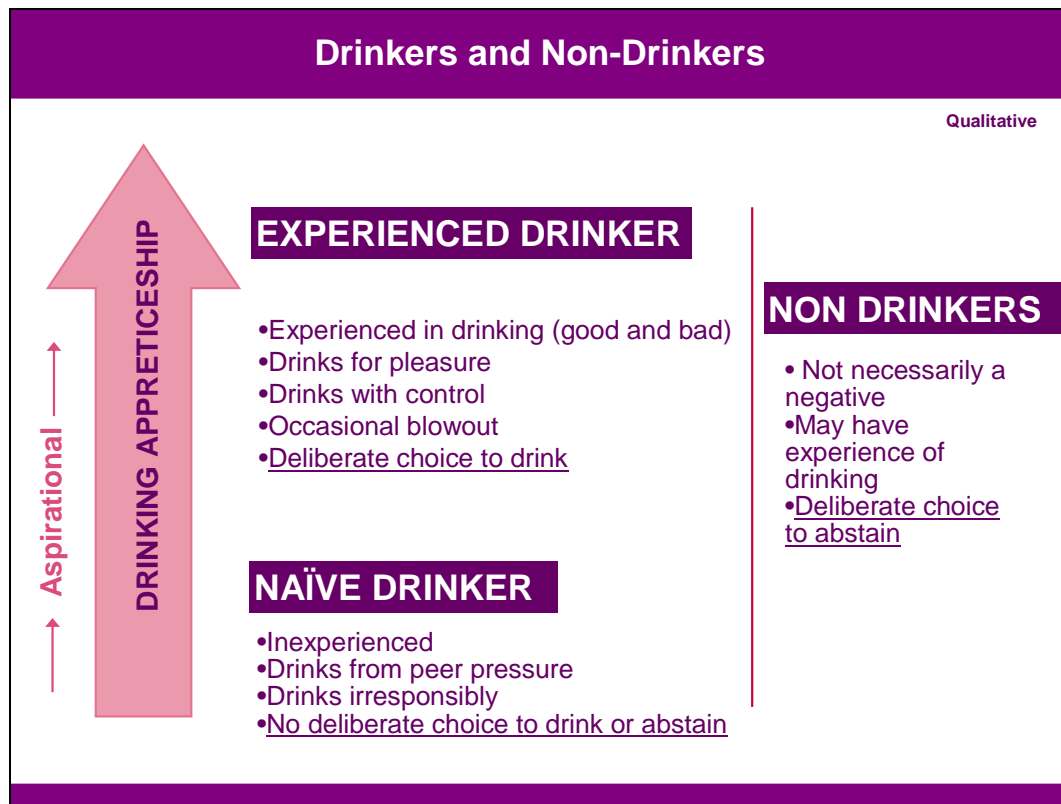
Therefore becoming a ‘proper’ drinker can be characterised as an apprenticeship, as a practice that is learnt. However, it is a practice that needs to be ‘secret’ as the inability to manage their own drinking behaviour is scorned upon by their peers. This concept was recurring throughout the discussion groups.

“It’s, like, inexperienced drinking... like youth discos, but everyone’s drunk. They’re not really drunk, they’ve had just a couple and they’re, like, ‘whoa, I’m pissed.’”

Girl, 16–17, West Country

The desire to ‘get drunk in a hurry’ is another attitude that differentiates the naïve drinker from the ‘proper’ drinker and often distinguishes children from adults. By moving away from this need to get drunk quickly, young people can show that they have graduated to ‘adult’ drinking. The rules of drinking are learned through drinking experiences and observations, therefore young people undergo a ‘secret apprenticeship’, negotiating the path from their naïve status to the end-stage of a ‘drinker’.

Figure 1



Source: MORI qualitative research

4.3 Drinking patterns

This section explores how often young people drink alcohol, the extent to which they get drunk, where they drink, what they consume, and their attitudes to drinking alcohol.

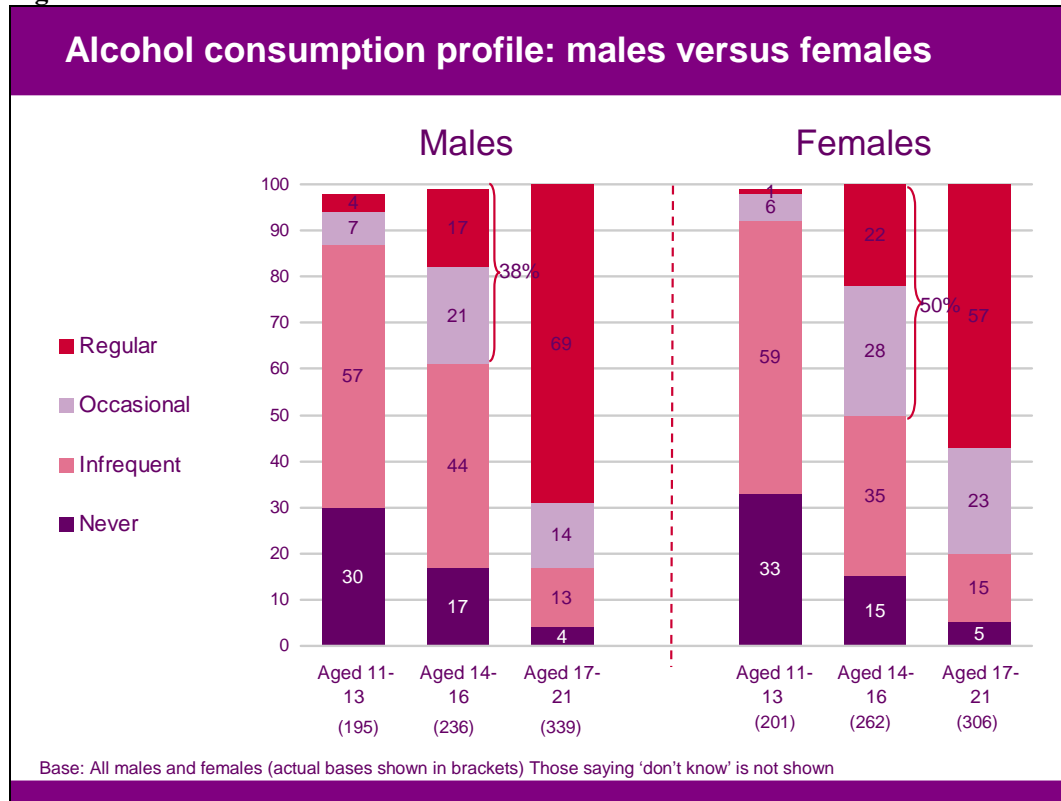
For the purposes of analysis of the quantitative data, teenagers and young people have largely been categorised into three age groups throughout this report: 11- to 13-year-olds, 14- to 16-year-olds and 17- to 21-year-olds. These categories have been defined primarily on the basis of young people's drinking behaviour as identified by the data – key changes in which are identified as occurring between the ages of 13 and 14 years and again between the ages of 16 and 17 years (e.g. in terms of how often young people get drunk, what is consumed and where the drinking takes place).

It was felt that defining the subgroups in these age ranges was more revealing when defined by actual behaviour than when defined as being above or below the legal drinking age. More detailed analysis of the key changes in behaviour and attitudes between these key ages can be found in section 3 of this report. A comparative analysis of the reported age groups (11–13/14–16/17–21) versus the legal drinking age ranges (11-17/18-21) is annexed to this report.

Alcohol consumption patterns

The drinking classifications are formed from responses to a 'scaled' question (Q14) from the MORI quantitative survey detailed in Figure 2.

Figure 2



Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey.

Never	I have never drunk alcohol
Infrequent drinkers	I have only tried alcohol once or twice/I have an alcoholic drink on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas or New Year
Occasional drinker	I sometimes have an alcoholic drink but no more than two or three times a month
Regular drinkers	I have an alcoholic drink once or twice a week/I have an alcoholic drink three or four times a week/I have an alcoholic drink every day

The majority of the 11- to 13-year-old respondents are classified as ‘infrequent drinkers’ who have either tried it once or twice or drink alcohol only on special occasions such as birthdays or Christmas. Many of these ‘special’ occasions may include a parent or adult being present and be in a safe/home environment as opposed to illicit under-age drinking with friends outside of the home or in the home without a parent or adult being present (Figure 3). Only a very low proportion of 11- to 13-year-olds claim to drink with any degree of regularity (4% of males and 1% of females).

Regular and occasional drinking increases significantly among 14- to 16-year-olds – indicating an active period of alcohol experimentation. 50% of females are classified as ‘regular’ or ‘occasional’ drinkers compared to 38% of males within this age bracket showing that females tend to progress through the drinking apprenticeship and consumption ladder more quickly than males.

Unsurprisingly, once the legal drinking age approaches or is reached, there is a significant increase in regular drinking amongst the 17–21 years age range. Within this age group the gender differences have been largely ironed out and similar proportions of males and females are regular or occasional drinkers. In fact, more males aged 17–21 years old claim to be regular drinkers than females of this age (69% of males say they drink once a week or more in comparison to 57% of females). The penetration of alcohol abstinence among both males and females within this age group is very low.

The Department of Health research amongst school pupils in 2004 found that 41% of pupils aged 11–15 years reported they had never drunk alcohol⁷. The figures were the same for males and females. Ofcom's figures for 11- to 15-year-olds indicate that 25% of 11- to 15-year-olds claimed never to have drunk alcohol. A further 19% have only tried it once or twice and 33% only on special occasions; 14% are drinking two to three times a month and 8% are drinking at least once a week. The Department of Health figures therefore indicate higher abstinence figures than the Ofcom/ASA survey. There are a number of potential reasons for the difference:

- The first is the methodology. The Department of Health survey was carried out using a paper self-completion booklet in schools. The Ofcom survey was carried out in-home using CAPI technology and was part self completion and part interviewer administered. Both the Ofcom/ASA ($n=1539$) and Department of Health ($n=9616$) surveys, however, were very robust so the differences are unlikely to be a result of sampling skews.
- Secondly, the alcohol consumption question wording on the Department of Health survey was very different to the Ofcom/ASA survey. The Department of Health's survey asked "*Have you ever had a proper alcoholic drink - a whole drink, not just a sip? Please don't include drinks labelled as low alcohol*", whereas the Ofcom/ASA survey used a repertoire scale (as detailed above).
- Thirdly the Ofcom/ASA survey had already discussed alcohol advertising in detail prior to asking the consumption questions which may have helped 'normalise' the conversation about drinking more than the Department of Health survey approach.

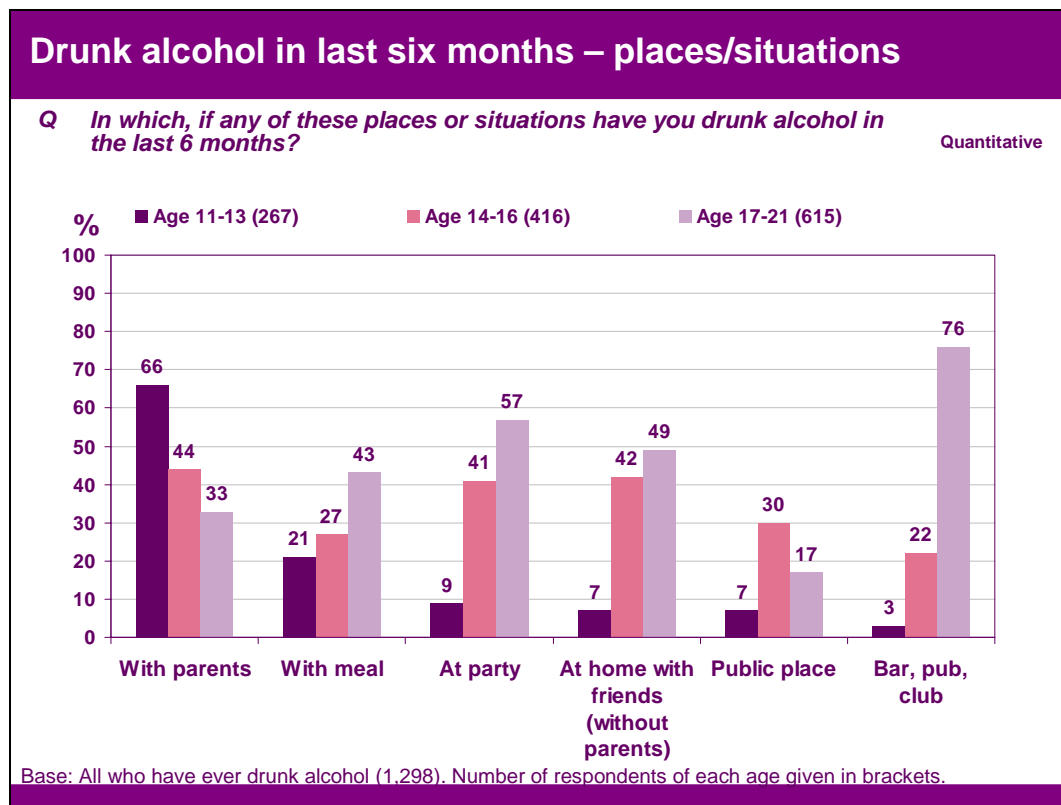
The Department of Health survey findings concur with the Ofcom/ASA study that the number of teenagers claiming to have 'ever had a drink' increases with age.

4.4 Drinking locations

The MORI quantitative research asked about the places in which young people drink alcohol. Figure 3 illustrates that teenagers aged 11–13 years who say they have ever drunk alcohol are most likely to have tried it in their own home with their parents (66%) or with a meal (21%), confirming that much of the drinking conducted by the youngest age group is moderate and supervised by parents/guardians. Much lower numbers of 11-to 13-year-olds who say they have ever tried alcohol claimed to have drunk 'unsupervised by an adult/parent' either at a party (9%), at home without parents (7%), in a public place (7%) or in a bar/club (3%).

Figure 3

⁷ Base: 9616.



Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey

A smaller proportion of 14- to 16-year-olds (who have ever drunk alcohol) claim to drink with parents (44%). However they are significantly more likely to be drinking at parties (41%), at home without parents (42%) and in public places (30%). They also claim to be drinking in bars and clubs (22%) more frequently, despite being under-age.

Bars, pubs and clubs are the most common drinking venue amongst 17- to 21-year-olds (76% have drunk in these in the last six months), followed by drinking at parties (57%), drinking at home with friends (without parents present) (49%) and with a meal (43%). There is still some drinking in public places (17%) but this has dropped by comparison to the peak amongst 14-year-olds.

In line with the data that show girls are drinking more than boys in the age group 14–16 years, girls of this age are more likely than boys to be drinking in bars and clubs (24%), at a party (45%) and at home with friends (44%). This is likely to be driven by their ability to ‘look older’ with the use of make-up and by some girls maturing more quickly than boys at this age. It is also often because they keep the company of older boys.

“We go to parties and sometimes to a club. We usually go with some guys we know.”
 Girl, 14–15, Midlands

“They’re mostly older guys who we go with, though. Boys our age, we don’t really see them at clubs and stuff.”
 Girl, 14–15, Midlands

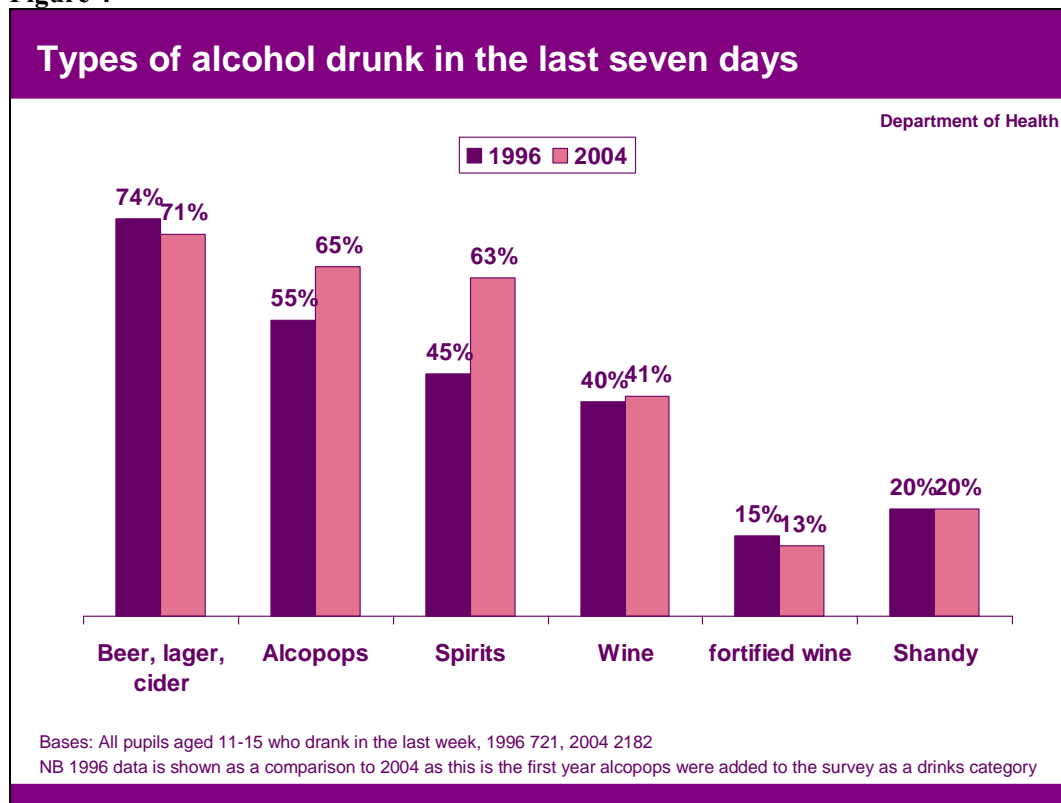
Many of the males (11–13 years) discussed drinking in public places such as parks or alleyways.

“We just drink anywhere. Sometimes there’s no place to drink, so, like, the street’s good.”
 Boy, 14-15, Manchester

4.5 Types of alcohol consumed

The Department of Health survey (2005) identified that the type of drinks pupils in the age group 11–15 years claim they consume has evolved since 1996. Figure 4 shows the types of alcohol that 11- to 15-year-olds who had an alcoholic drink in the previous week claim to have drunk. The data for 1996 and 2004 are compared. Although beer, lager and cider are still popular drinks amongst this age group, spirits and alcopops form more of young people’s drinking repertoires in 2004 (65% of those who drank in the last week said they had drunk an alcopop and 63% said they had drunk a spirit – indicating a significant increase in these categories over the period of the research).

Figure 4



Source: Department of Health research 2004, published 2005

The Department of Health survey indicates the different preferences amongst the females and males interviewed during 2004 (Figure 5). Beer, lager and cider are preferred by the young males (86% of males said they drank these vs 56% of females), whilst alcopops, spirits and wine are preferred by the young females.

Figure 5



Source: Department of Health research 2004, published 2005

MORI's quantitative study also indicated sub-category consumption differences by gender. The survey found that alcopops are popular from an early age, while lager consumption remains lower until the later teenage years, increasing considerably (particularly amongst males) around the ages of 16–17 years.

Table 2 Brand drunk

Years of age	MALES			FEMALES		
	11–13	14–16	17–21	11–13	14–16	17–21
Base: all who have drunk in the last six months	(119)	(181)	(320)	(127)	(212)	(285)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Smirnoff Ice	15	29	38	19	44	49
WKD	20	35	33	27	45	38
Bacardi Breezer	19	28	23	30	42	40
Carling	17	34	54	9	15	18
Stella Artois	11	27	46	3	14	15
Smirnoff Vodka	7	18	28	2	29	33
Baileys	12	15	21	17	25	35
Budweiser	6	28	42	4	13	19
Fosters	15	25	45	7	12	12
Lambrini	9	8	8	22	43	28
Reef	13	10	18	11	26	29
Carlsberg	4	20	42	5	10	11
Red Square	3	12	14	4	20	19
Vodka Kick	4	12	13	1	16	23
Malibu	1	6	9	3	22	25
Archers Aqua	7	9	6	6	22	23
Bacardi Rum	2	7	16	1	10	17
Heineken	5	7	23	2	5	8
Guinness	9	10	20	1	7	5
Strongbow	5	15	16	1	9	5
Kronenbourg	2	6	22	-	2	5
Vodka Mudshake	-	6	5	3	13	12
John Smith's	3	7	14	1	2	1

Q: And which of these brands of alcoholic drinks, if any, have you drunk in the last six months?

Note: Highlighting indicates where a brand is drunk by 25% or more of the sub-group of respondents

Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey. (Respondents were asked to state which brands they had consumed in the last six months by choosing from a precode list, and writing in any brands which they had consumed but which were not listed.)

Alcopops are popular types of drinks amongst young people, particularly 14-16 year olds, and females. Lager consumption is low until the later teenage years, increasing considerably amongst males around the ages of 16–17 years (Table 2).

Males

WKD is the leading brand of alcohol amongst 11- to 13-year-old males who say they drink alcohol (20% of those who have drunk in the last six months). Bacardi Breezer ranks second (19%). Carling (17%), Fosters (15%), and Stella (11%) are also popular brands.

WKD (35%) and Carling (34%) are the leading brands claimed as being drunk amongst 14- to 16-year-olds, who have drunk in the last six months. Smirnoff Ice (29%), Bacardi Breezer (28%),

Budweiser (28%) and Stella (27%) came next, demonstrating an equal preference for lager and alcopops among boys of this age.

By the ages of 17- to 21-years, beers and lagers are the most popular brands drunk by males (54% claim to have drunk Carling), though alcopops – particularly Smirnoff Ice (38%) - are still drunk by a large proportion of this age group.

Females

Bacardi Breezer (30%), WKD (27%) and Lambrini (22%) are popular brands among 11- to 13-year-old girls who have drunk in the last six months.

The most popular brands for 14- to 16-year-olds are WKD (45%), Smirnoff Ice (44%), Lambrini (43%) and Bacardi Breezer (42%), although Smirnoff Vodka, Baileys and Reef are also brands drunk by around a quarter or more of females in this age group.

Smirnoff Ice (49%) is the most popular brand among females aged 17–21 years. Other brands claimed to be drunk by this age group include Bacardi Breezer (40%), WKD (38%), Baileys (35%), Smirnoff Vodka (33%), Reef (29%) and Lambrini (28%).

The TNS Family Food Panel consumption data confirms the popularity of alcopops amongst the younger age groups and females. The data shows that 25% of the alcopops consumed are drunk by 16-year-olds and under and 56% are consumed by females (40% are consumed by females aged between 17 and 34 years old).

4.6 Motivations to drink: the appeal of alcohol amongst young people

The Department of Health research (2005) found that amongst pupils in the age group 11–15 years who claimed to have drunk an alcoholic drink in the last week, 46% reported having been drunk in the last week (50% of females and 42% of males)⁸. This increased with age, ranging from 26% of 11- to 12-year-olds to 57% of 15 year olds⁹. The report also noted that, among pupils who had drunk in the last week, 31% said they had *deliberately* tried to get drunk (no significant difference by gender; 33% of males and 30% of females). Again, there were trended age increases: 14% of 11- to 12-year-olds claimed this, increasing to 41% of 15-year-olds¹⁰.

In line with this finding, this research shows that the proportion of young people who *regularly* drink alcohol with the intention of getting drunk increases with age, and remains high into young adulthood.

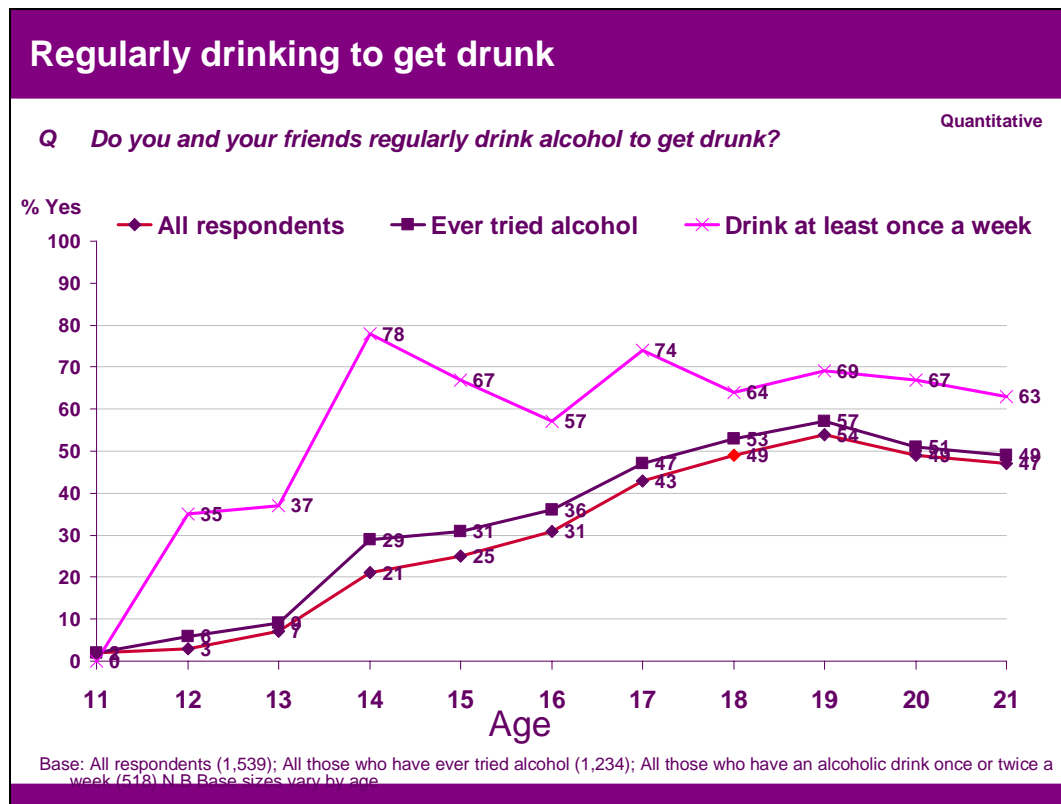
Figure 6 shows that ‘drinking regularly to get drunk’ peaks at the age of 18–19 years when considering all respondents in the survey and also those who have ever tried alcohol. However, between two-thirds and three-quarters of those who claim to drink at least once a week, *regularly* drink for this purpose once they have reached the age of 14 years.

⁸ The Department of Health report comments on the possibility of under-reporting of alcohol consumption because of difficulties in remembering, or over-reporting consumption in an attempt to appear grown up. However the questionnaire was administered through self-completion to ensure as honest and accurate responses as possible.

⁹ Base: Those who drank in the last week: total, 2167; females, 1061; males, 1106; 11- to 12- year-olds, 271; 15- year-olds, 932.

¹⁰ Base: Those who had drunk in the last week: total, 2163; females, 1059; males, 1104; 11- to 12-year-olds, 271; 15-year-olds, 930.

Figure 6



Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey

The qualitative analysis showed that ‘young adults’ in their late teens are keen to dissociate themselves from juvenile behaviour or naïve drinking. This helps explain the drop-off in regularly drinking to get drunk post ages 18–19 years.

“Like now that we’re a bit older, you sometimes just want to have one drink and sit down with some friends and have a chat.”
 Girl, 16–17, Midlands

The group discussions highlighted how those in their late teens had learned to appreciate the social aspects of drinking with friends and did not necessarily need to get drunk to enjoy themselves. However, some of the females admitted that, invariably, they would not stop drinking after one drink.

“I mean, you don’t have to get drunk every time. You could just have a drink and chat to people, but I find that one drink leads to two and then you’re there all night and you’re having fun.”
 Girl, 18–21, Scotland

“I still go out and get really trashed, but that’s not all we do, all the time. Sometimes we just have one drink and then do something else.”
 Boy, 18–21, Hackney

Despite a low penetration of drinking amongst the 11- to 13-year-old age group, both males and females were equally likely to say that they regularly drink alcohol to get drunk (6% and 3% respectively). However, a significantly higher proportion of 14- to 16-year-olds claim they regularly drink to get drunk. By this stage, 31% of females claimed they and their friends regularly drank alcohol to get drunk compared with just 21% of males. Girls drinking alcohol at a younger age than boys is a pattern that emerges throughout the report. By the age of 17 years, males (52%) overtake females (45%) in their likelihood to drink regularly.

In addition to age and gender differences, perceived parental drinking behaviour also appears to have an influence upon young people's propensity to drink to get drunk. Young people who perceive that their parents drink frequently are more likely to say that they themselves get drunk regularly, in comparison to those who perceive their parents to drink infrequently¹¹ (32%, compared with 18%) suggesting indirect parental influence.

Ethnicity is also an influencing factor. Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are twice as likely to say their parents drink infrequently (68%, compared with 32%). These young people are then less likely to say they personally regularly drink to get drunk (10% of those from ethnic minorities say this, compared with 34% of young people who are from white backgrounds).

Young people from socio-economic groups C1, C2 and DE are also more likely to say that they and their friends regularly drink to get drunk (32%) than those from the AB social group (22%). However, unlike ethnicity, this is not linked to parental drinking behaviour because those with AB social backgrounds are more likely to perceive that their parents drink frequently than those from C1, C2, DE households (29%, compared with 20%).

4.7 Appeal of drinking

In the qualitative discussion groups, young people discussed how alcohol masks insecurities and gives them the 'life of the party' persona to which they aspire. Drinking environments (parties, pubs, clubs, parks) provide a way for young people to interact with their peers with the added confidence that drinking alcohol brings.

"It's about letting yourself go. Alcohol makes you feel like you can talk to anyone and be anyone you want."
Girl, 16–17, Midlands

"I think drinking is great fun. I love drinking with my mates and trying new stuff."
Boy, 14–15, Wales

To young people, drinking alcohol provides access to an adult-like lifestyle.

"When I started drinking, I really felt like I was doing something cool and grown-up. I felt like I'd finally grown up and I didn't really like the taste, but it felt good to be doing it."

¹¹ Perceived parental drinking behaviour: 'Frequent', one or more parent perceived to drink alcohol at least three or four times a week; 'Moderate', one or more parent perceived to drink at least once every couple of weeks; 'Infrequent', parents perceived to not drink or no parent drinks more than once a month.

Girl, 14–15, Midlands

These attitudes towards drinking alcohol were explored quantitatively by asking participants to express the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements relating to the effects of alcohol¹² (Table 3).

Table 3 Agreement with statements about the effects of drinking alcohol

	Total sample	11–13	14–16	17–21
<i>% strongly agree/tend to agree (Top 2 boxes)</i>	<i>(1298) %</i>	<i>(396) %</i>	<i>(498) %</i>	<i>(645) %</i>
I feel more confident when I've had a drink	51	16	50	67
I have more fun when I am drunk	45	15	43	60
I find it easier to chat someone up when I've had a drink	45	14	42	60

Base: All who have ever tasted alcohol

Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey

Personal experiences of alcohol differed by age group. Relatively few of the 11- to 13-year-olds claimed that they had more fun when drunk (15%), said that they find it easier to chat someone up (14%) or that they felt more confident (16%). However between 42% and 50% of 14- to 16-year-olds agreed with these statements and between 60% and 67% of the 17- to 21-year-olds agreed with these. It should be borne in mind when interpreting these figures that these statements will have different relevance to each of the age groups because their motivations and experiences are different at different stages of development. For example, 'chatting people up when they have had a drink' may be less relevant to a 13-year-old than to an 18-year-old.

Agreement with all of these statements is considerably higher amongst those who claim they regularly drink alcohol to get drunk. Amongst this group, 75% say they 'have more fun' when they are drunk; 80% say they 'feel more confident'; and 74% that they 'find it easier to chat someone up'.

¹² Responses were recorded by self-completion. Those who had never drunk alcohol were excluded from answering and as such, the base for these findings is all those who have ever drunk alcohol.

4.8 Perception of danger and risk: the negative effects of alcohol

Short-term dangers and risk taking

Young people in the qualitative discussions acknowledged that drinking also has a downside. They recognised that drinking can lead to unpleasant and dangerous consequences.

“You start off feeling really cool and good, chatting up everyone and then you wake up, or you got into a fight and you just don’t know how it’s going to turn out.”
Boy, 18–21, London

“We drink some Bud then smoke some bud and you having a good time out, but, like, all of a sudden, girls get really stupid and start screaming and you always get in a fight.”
Boy, 16–17, Manchester

The initial thrill of the drinking and being drunk can reduce awareness of responsibility and outweigh the consequences at that time.

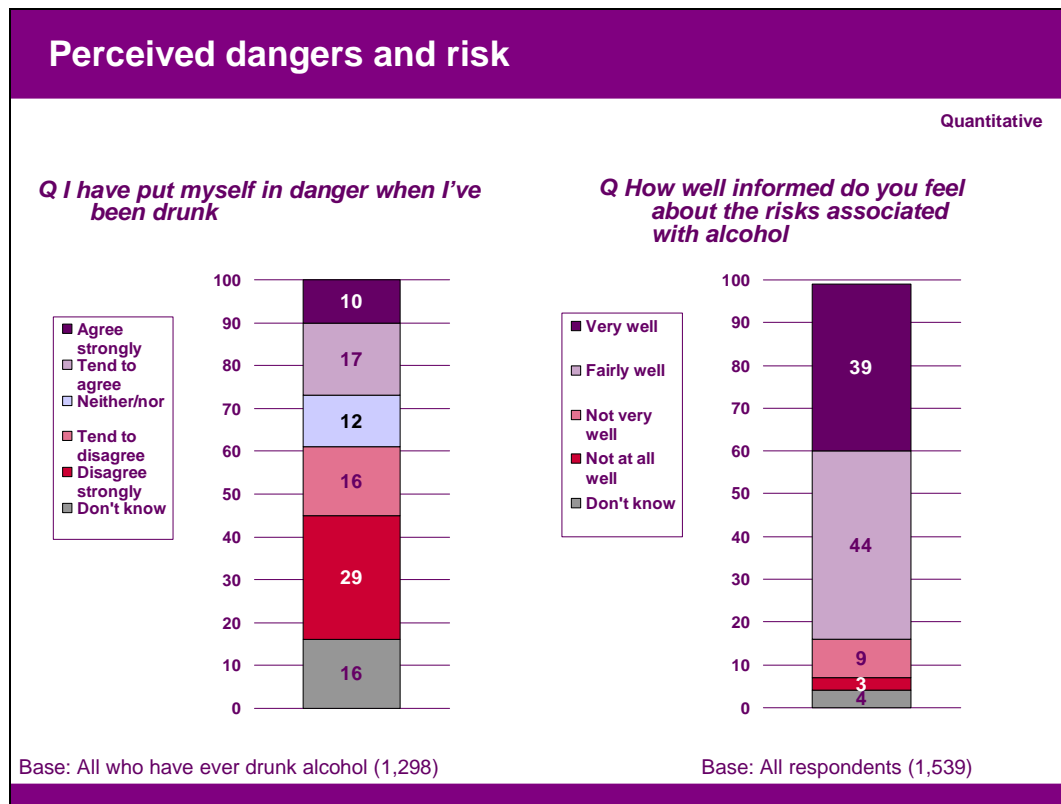
“Who cares anyway, you’re having a good time.”
Boy, 18–21, London

“Sometimes, you wake up the next morning and you feel really bad and you can’t remember what you did, you just hope you didn’t totally lose it and be sick in front of people.”
Girl, 16–17, Midlands

The survey indicated that 27% of young people who have tried alcohol strongly agreed or tended to agree that they had put themselves in danger, whilst 45% strongly disagreed or tended to disagree with this (Figure 7). The agreement among young people who say that they ‘have put themselves in danger’ when they have been drunk increases with age (11% of 11- to 13-year-olds, 25% of 14- to 16-year-olds and 35% of 17- 21-year-olds who have tried alcohol say this¹³) and males are more likely to agree that they have put themselves in danger when drunk than females (30% vs 24%). Around two-fifths (42%) of those who say they regularly drink to get drunk feel that they have put themselves at risk.

¹³ Bases: Those who have tried alcohol: 11- to 13-year-olds, 267; 14- to 16-year-olds, 416; 17- to 21-year-olds, 615.

Figure 7



Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey

The Department of Health survey found that amongst pupils 11–15 years of age who had drunk alcohol in the last week, the following were claimed to be the consequences of drinking the *last time* they had drunk alcohol:

- having an argument (16%);
- lost money or belongings (13%);
- damage to clothes or belongings (12%);
- a fight (9%);
- trouble with the police (6%);
- being taken to hospital (1%)¹⁴.

Awareness of risks and sources of information

Overall, 84% of all the young people interviewed said they feel informed about the risks of drinking alcohol, with a fairly even split between those feeling ‘very well informed’ (39%) and those who feel ‘fairly well informed’ (44%). Those who have tried alcohol felt more informed of the risk than non-drinkers; 85% of those who have tried alcohol said they were either very well or fairly well informed, whereas 76% of non-drinkers said this.

¹⁴ Base: Those who had drunk in the last week 2123.

Those who said they feel ‘very’ or ‘fairly well’ informed about the risks associated with alcohol, were equally likely to intentionally get drunk as those who felt ‘not very well’ or ‘not at all well’ informed.

The survey also found that young females were more likely to feel informed of the risks associated with alcohol at an earlier age than males. Ninety-two per cent of females in the age group 14–16 years say they felt well informed, compared with 83% of males the same age.

During the qualitative discussions, females were generally more aware and concerned about being vulnerable when drinking and were warned by parents about date-rape and ‘spiked’ drinks. Magazines for young females were also seen as a source of information.

“My dad always goes on about drinks getting spiked and taking your drink into the toilet with you, don’t leave it on a table.”
Girl, 14–15, Midlands,

“I’ve seen stuff in magazines about date-rape drugs and stuff in bars or guys getting violent ‘cos someone spiked their drink, like in teen mags. But it is there at the back of your head.”
Girl, 16–17, London

In the qualitative research discussions some participants say they felt there were fewer messages in the media promoting ‘responsible’ drinking or ‘anti-drinking’ when compared to anti-smoking messages. Young people discussed the anti-smoking advertisements as being very powerful (dripping fat execution).

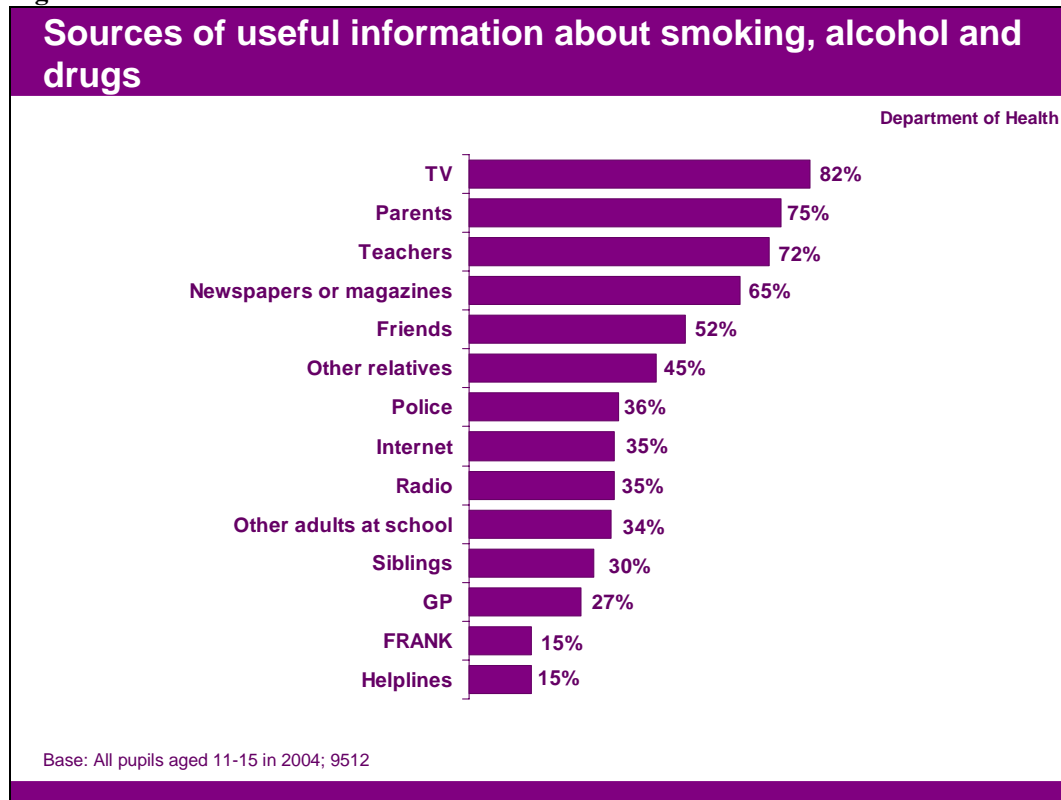
Drink–driving advertisements, while they were considered powerful, appeared to have less resonance with young people as many do not drive.

“Those drink–driving adverts are pretty shocking. The smoking ones are the worst, makes you feel really sick.”
Girl, 12–13, Surbiton

However, the Department of Health survey found that when asked “*have you got useful information on smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol or taking drugs from any of these places?*” pupils were most likely to say they had received this through the television (82%), their parents (75%) or teachers (72%)¹⁵ (Figure 8).

¹⁵ Base: All pupils 9512.

Figure 8



Source: Department of Health research 2004, published 2005

The young people in the MORI group discussions felt that the messages from their parents about drinking were not always clear or straightforward. For example, drinking may be allowed as long as it is 'responsible'. However, it can be hard to decipher the boundary between 'responsible' and 'irresponsible drinking'.

"My mum doesn't want me to get hurt, so she says don't drink too much. But I see them drinking and doing worse, so how can she tell me not to?"
Boy, 14-15, Manchester

A theme in the group discussions was the perception that the effects of alcohol on the body are less immediate and less likely to affect young people than the effects of smoking and other drugs.

"Everyone knows you'll end up drinking, but they are really scared about drugs and smoking. Drinking isn't really that bad."
Girl, 14-15, Midlands

"You don't really hear much about drinking. Anyway, it's not really that bad because we are quite young. You only get your liver damaged after, what, 25 years of drinking. So we've still got loads of time."
Boy, 16-17, London

“The people in the advert seem to be having a good time, so it can’t be that bad for you can it?”

Girl, 14–16, Scotland

Post-drinking repercussions

Post-drinking repercussions, such as being ill, having a hangover or the ‘morning after’ embarrassment of trying to remember what happened the night before, were all familiar to the young people in the discussion groups who drank alcohol. However, these images are rarely at the forefront of mind when they talk about what drinking means to them. The fun, glamour and liberating adult aspects of drinking seem far more appealing and immediate.

“I got really sick one time after a night out. It was awful. I said I’d never drink again, but that didn’t happen.”

Girl, 16–17, London

“Sometimes you wake up and you’re trying to remember what happened but you just know it was real nice.”

Boy, 14–15, Manchester

Pupils who said they had ‘drank in the last week’ in the Department of Health survey (2005) were asked about feeling ill or sick and about vomiting from too much alcohol in the last week. Of these, 14% reported that they have felt ill or sick from too much alcohol during that time. Female pupils were more likely than males to have felt ill or sick (18% compared with 10%). No clear pattern was found between age groups. A smaller proportion said they had actually vomited after drinking too much alcohol in the last week (7%). Again, females (9%) were more likely than males (5%) to claim this¹⁶.

¹⁶ Base: Those who drank in the last week: total, 2165; females, 1059; males, 1106; 11- to 12-year-olds, 271; 15-year-olds, 932.

Section 5

Background: young people and alcohol advertising

This section looks at alcohol advertising and the messages that young people receive from advertising. It begins by identifying the levels of spend on alcohol advertising and then moves on to investigating young people's impressions of advertising generally. Finally, and more specifically, it explores attitudes and responses to alcohol advertising.

The section references Nielsen media data analysis, the qualitative and quantitative research conducted by MORI along with broader references to advertising theory and some observations through semiotics research in this area (also conducted by MORI). The analysis includes both alcohol and non-alcohol advertising thus providing a broad context in which to examine the appeal of alcohol advertising executions.

Note: For reasons of commercial sensitivity, the specific executions researched have been de-branded within this report.

5.1 Context: levels of advertising spend

Alcohol advertising: total media spend

Data sourced from Nielsen Media provide an insight into recent advertising trends across the alcohol market¹⁷.

As Figure 9 shows, television is a key advertising medium for alcohol advertisers with 59.8% of the £203m total media¹⁸ spend in 2004 allocated to television advertising. In comparison, television accounted for 45.0% of total UK advertising spend in 2004.

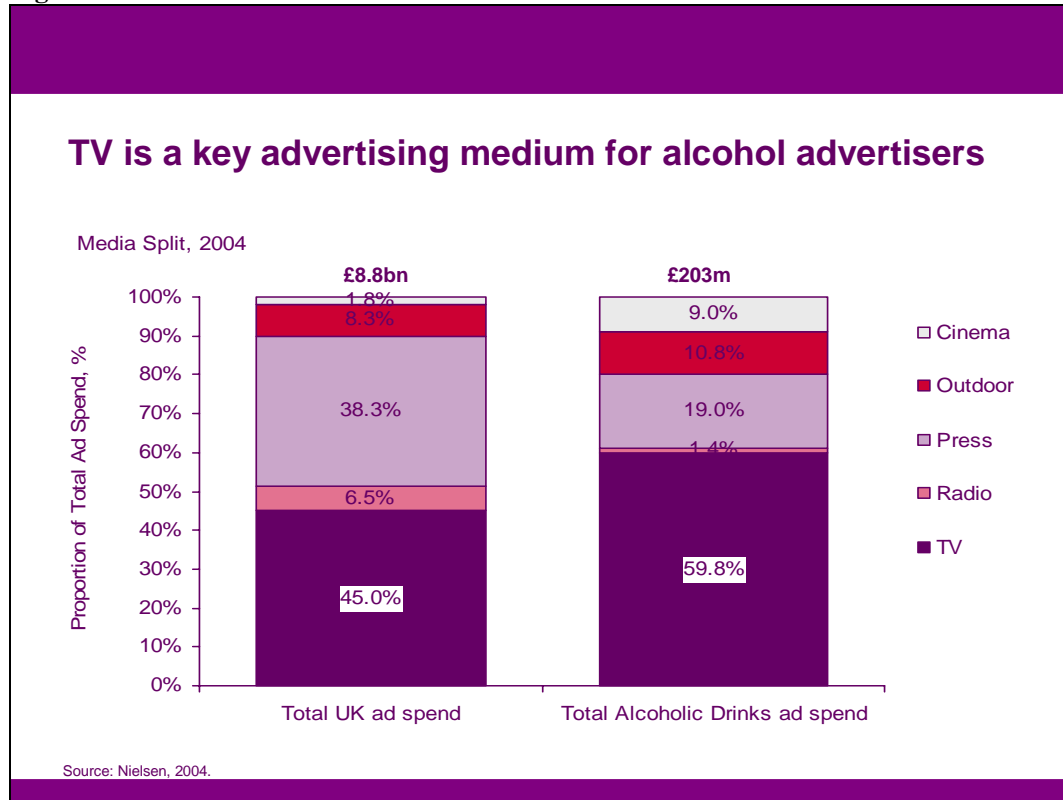
Compared with the UK average, press (19.0% vs 38.3% average) and radio (1.4% vs 6.5% average) represent a relatively smaller proportion of alcohol advertising spend with a greater proportion allocated to outdoor (10.8% vs 8.3% average) and cinema (9.0% vs 1.8% average) advertising.

Data is unavailable for 'below the line' activity.

¹⁷ Data analysis based on the 'Alcoholic Drinks' sub-category within the 'Drinks' category as defined by Nielsen Media.

¹⁸ Nielsen Media data analysis excludes Direct Mail and Internet activity due to lack of trend data.

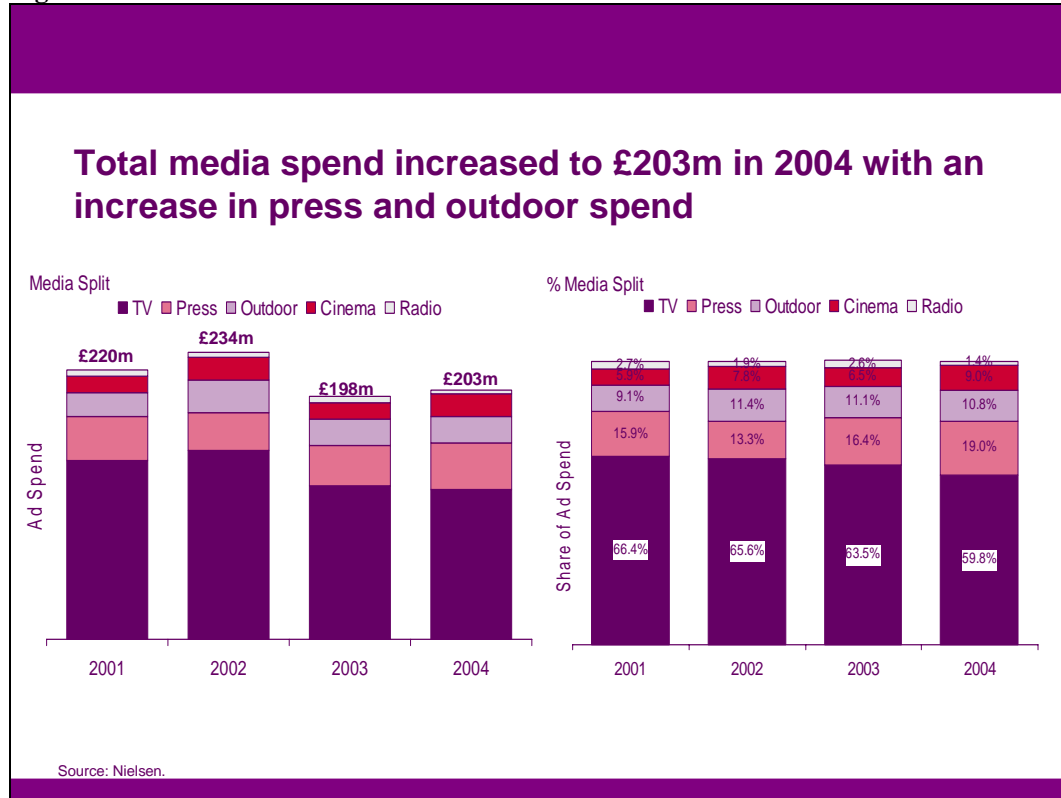
Figure 9



In 2004, £203m was spent by alcohol advertisers across all media – an increase from £198m in 2003 (Figure 10). Although television accounted for the majority of spend, the proportion allocated to this medium declined from 66.4% (£146m) in 2001 to 59.8% (£121m) in 2004.

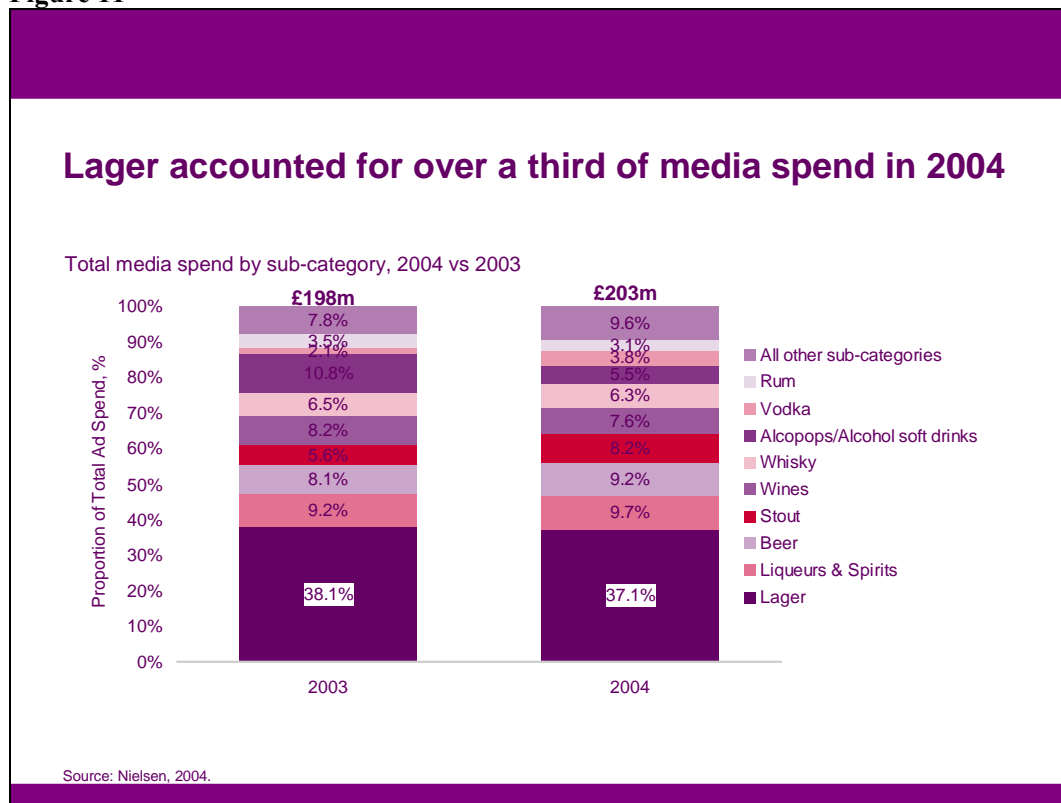
As the proportion of spend allocated to television has declined, alcohol advertisers have spent an increasing amount on press (£35m in 2001 to £39m in 2004) and cinema (£20m in 2001 to £22m in 2004) advertising.

Figure 10



A breakdown of total media spend by sub-category shows advertising of Lager products accounted for 37.1% of total media spend across the alcohol category in 2004 (Figure 11). Year-on-year there has been an increase in advertising spend on Stout (£11.0m in 2003 to 16.5m in 2004) and a decline in spend on alcopops (£21.4m in 2003 to £11.2m in 2004). Advertising expenditure on alcopops accounted for 5.5% of total alcohol advertising spend in 2004 – down from 10.8% in 2003.

Figure 11



Alcohol advertising: television activity

Alcohol television spend fell from £124m in 2003 to £121m in 2004. As seen across total media spend, Lager products represent the greatest proportion of alcohol spend – 44.9% of 2004 spend. Year-on-year trends in television activity are similar to those described above with an increase in expenditure on Stout and a decrease in Alcopops expenditure (Figure 12).

More recent trends (January–June 2004 vs January–June 2005) show an increase in television spend and an increase in the proportion of spend represented by Lager products. It is important to note these trends may vary throughout the year as alcohol advertising increases during the second half of the year in the run up to Christmas (Figure 13).

Figure 12

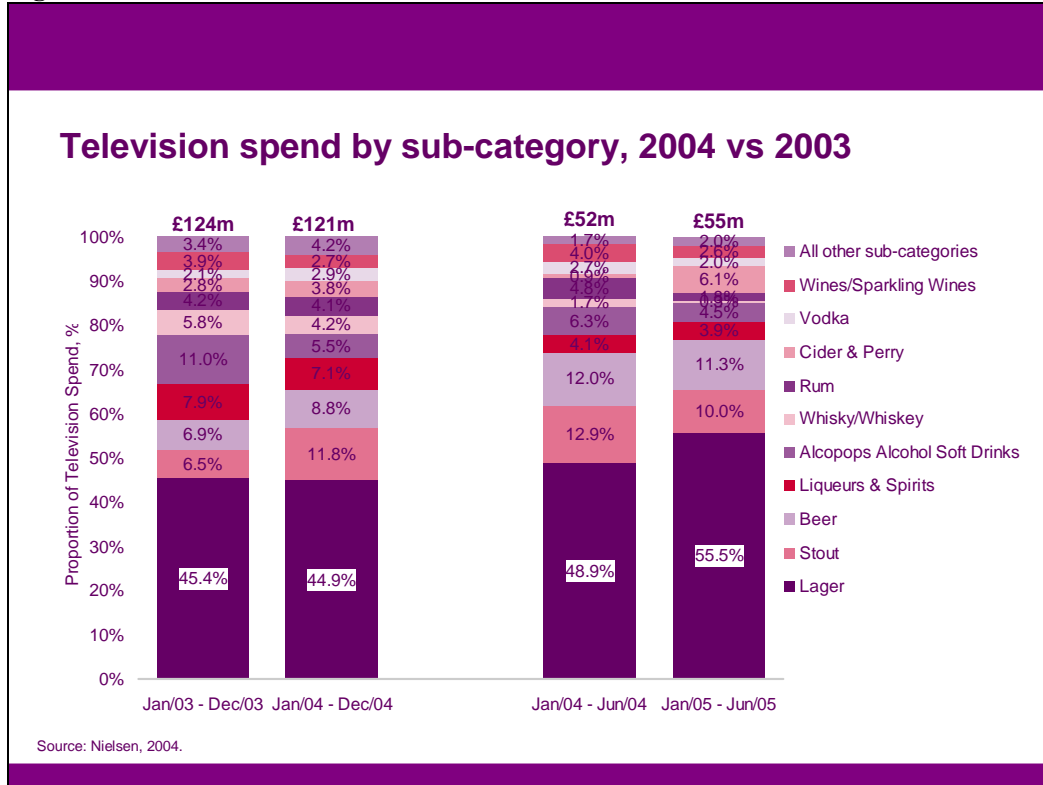
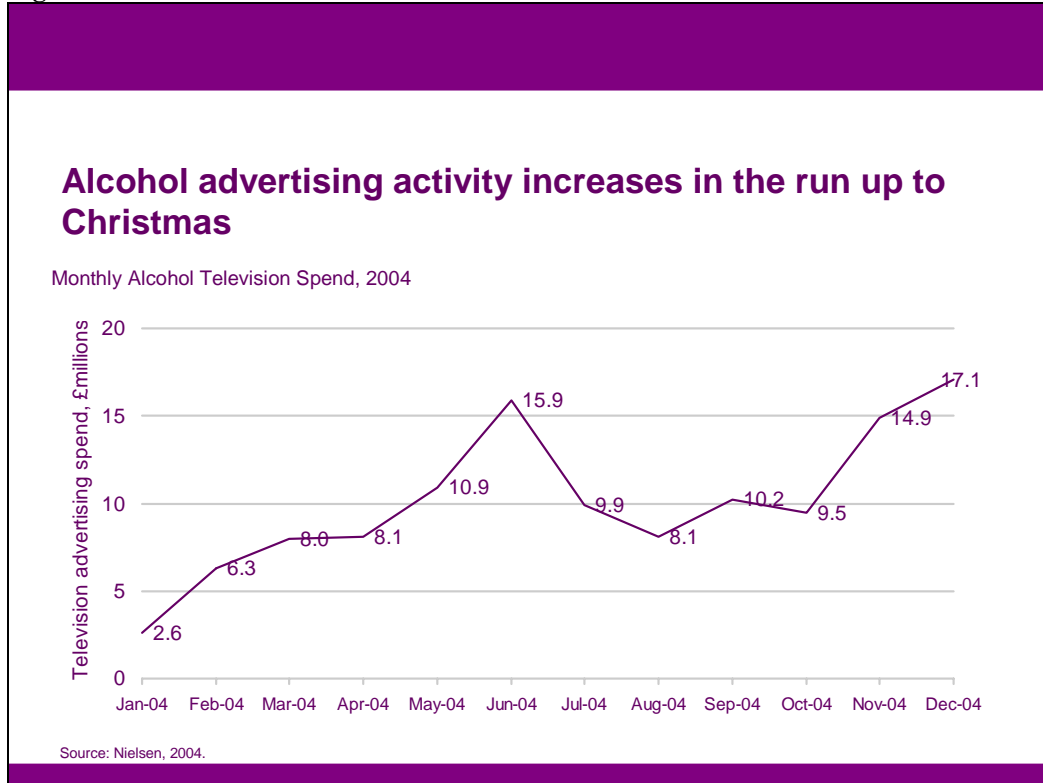
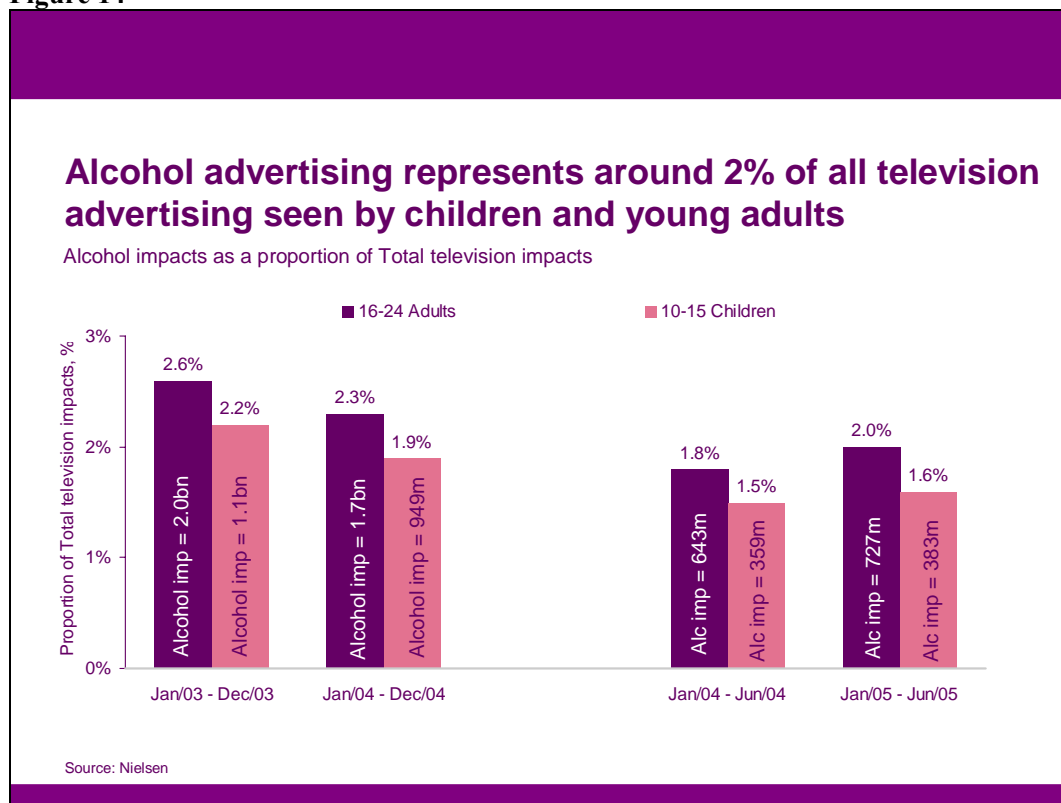


Figure 13



Exposure to advertising is measured in terms of *impacts*. One impact is equivalent to one member of the target audience viewing one commercial spot. In 2004, a total of 1.7billion 16- to 24-year-old adult impacts were delivered across all alcohol television advertising – this accounted for 2.3% of all television advertising seen by this audience. Over the same period, 949m alcohol impacts were delivered amongst 10- to 15-year-old children, representing 1.9% of all television advertising seen by this audience. Year-on-year exposure has declined – although more recent data suggests an increase in exposure to alcohol advertising in January–June 2005 versus the same period in 2004.

Figure 14



Figures 15 and 16 illustrate alcohol advertising exposure by sub-category across 16- to 24-year-old adults and 10- to 15-year-old children. As Lager advertising accounts for the largest share of alcohol television advertising, the category also represents the largest share of impacts delivered across both age groups. Lager accounted for 44.9% of television advertising spend by alcohol advertisers in 2004 – in comparison this category represented just over a third of impacts (16- to 24-year-old adults, 37.3%; 10- to 15-year-old children, 36.1%).

In 2004, alcopops accounted for 5.5% of television spend and almost 10% of alcohol advertising seen by 16- to 24-year-olds (9.3%) and 10- to 15-year-olds (8.9%). Recent data suggest the share of impacts represented by alcopops has declined year-on-year.

Figure 15

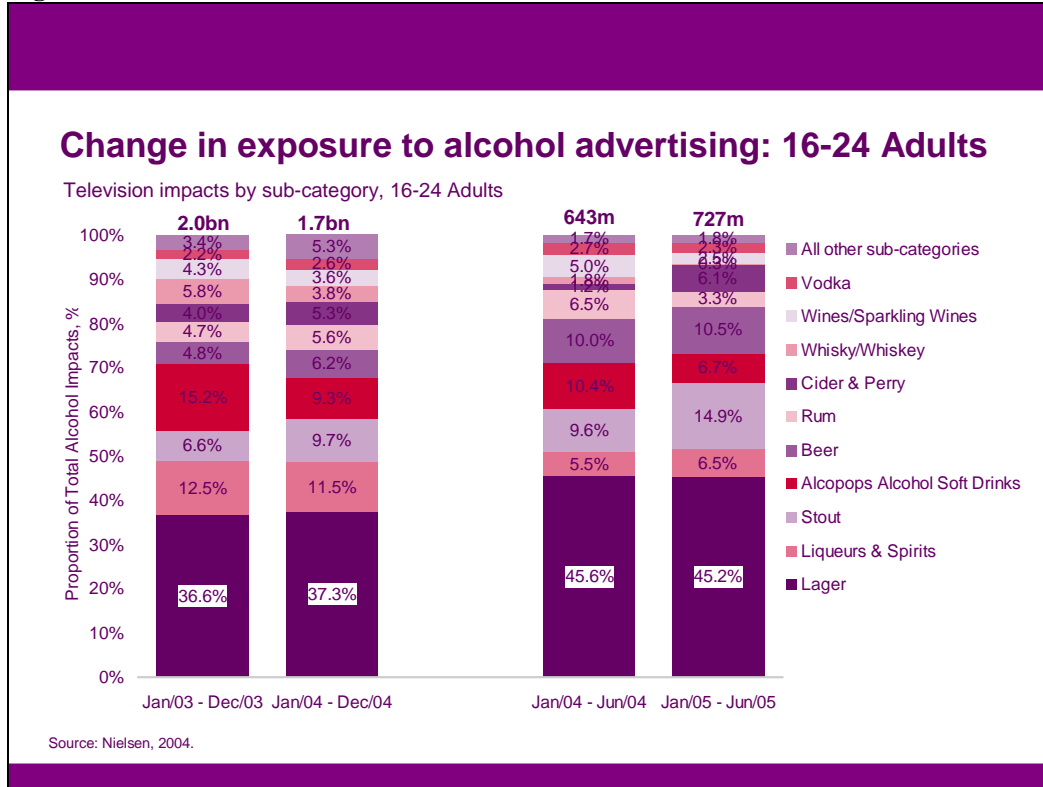
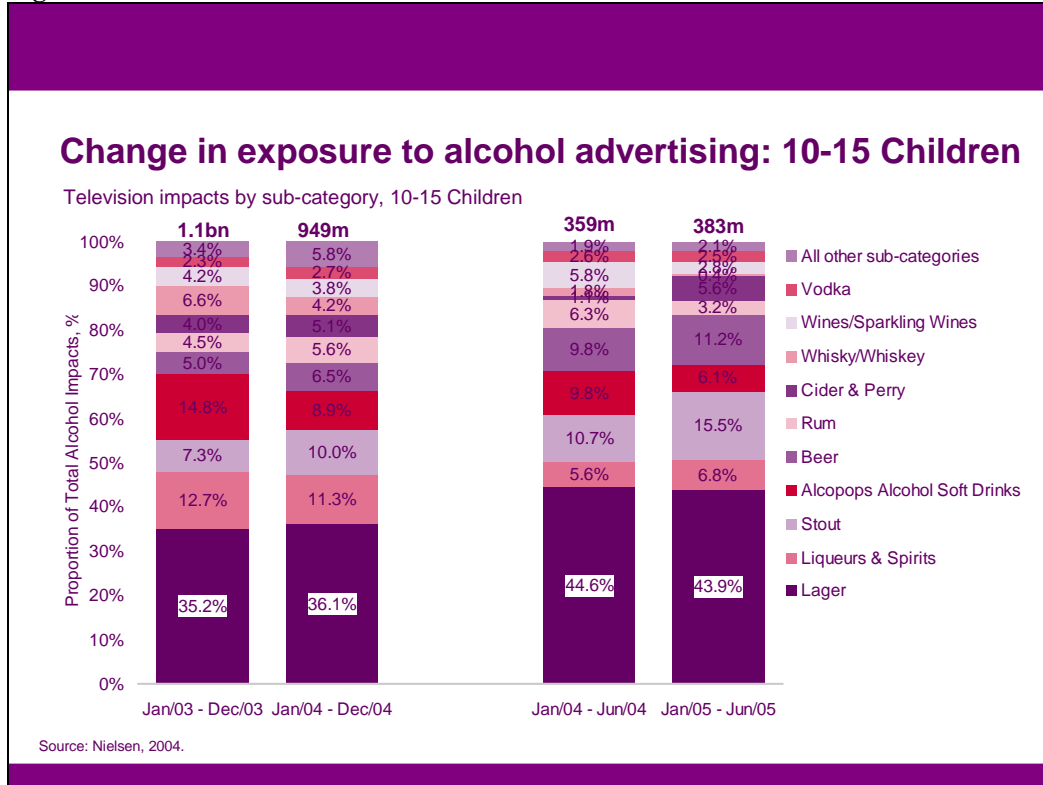


Figure 16



5.2 Advertising relationships and general appeal

It is widely acknowledged that young people today are advertising and marketing savvy. Their relationship with, and understanding of, advertising is complex and varies according to age, exposure and relevance, as well as a whole host of other factors. On a very simple level, advertising relationships can be described ranging from a rational relationship to a more complex emotional one.

Rational: A logical understanding that the advertiser is trying to sell a product, target particular audiences, make a brand well-known in the marketplace or persuade consumers to buy the product/services.

Emotional: How advertising makes people feel a certain way about the message or theme of the advertisement, and the relevance of this message and/or theme in their lives, and ultimately how the advertising makes the consumer feel about a brand/product/service.

Emotional advertising often has the strongest pull for young people, as these types of advertisements often ‘talk their language’ and portray images or events that are relevant to their lives and interests. This type of advertising tends to be very lifestyle and image focused and operates on an aspirational level.

Based on discussions about advertising in general with teenagers and young people within the group discussions, the elements that young people liked that came up consistently across the groups included humour, music, originality, the unexpected and people having fun or behaving in a childish fashion. Other core triggers included originality, quirkiness, fantasy settings and the unexpected (Figure 17). There was also some evidence that advertisements where the product/brand was central to the execution/storyline had a stronger product/brand impact among young people.

Figure 17

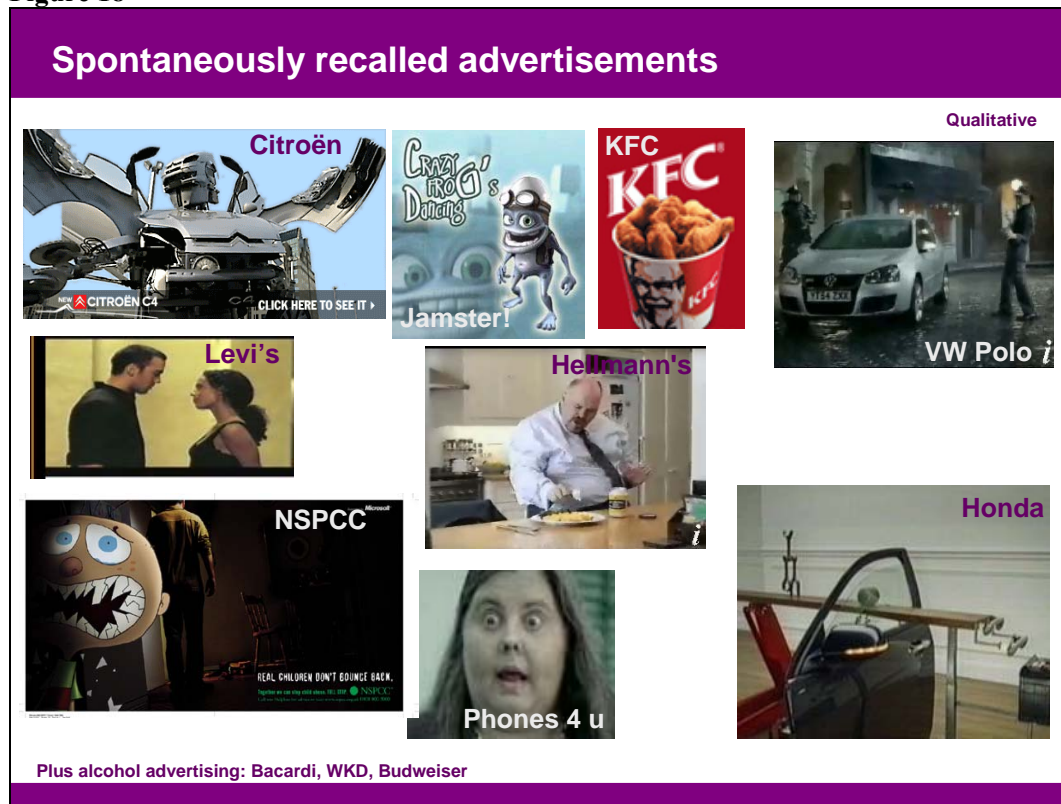


Source: MORI qualitative research

All age groups in the research voiced a determination not to be seduced by advertising – this is, however, common within market research. When people discuss how advertising and marketing activities may affect them as individuals, they tend to say that advertising and marketing is not influential in their lives and only impacts on other people.

Appealing advertisements that were spontaneously mentioned within the group discussions are shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18



Source: MORI qualitative research (2005)

In terms of age group differences observed within the qualitative groups, **11- to 13-year- old females** tended to be attracted to advertisements that contained bright, colourful, eye-catching images, had strong music/dominant sound tracks and contained ‘mouth watering’ product shots.

Males 11–13 years old particularly liked advertisements with slapstick humour. The humour most liked was often blatant and juvenile. There was a need for a blatant advertising message and product link for the advertisement to make sense, and therefore work on their level.

The 14- to 15-year-old female participants were more drawn to the stylistic elements of an advertisement, focusing on colours, lighting, camera movements, clothes and the look of the actors. Originality and music also played a role in making an advertisement appealing to this age group. Many females in this age group are beginning to discover their own sexuality and sexual confidence, and this influences their attitudes towards how sex is depicted in advertising. They become more aware of sexual undertones, although overt sexual imagery is not always liked by everyone, and can be polarising.

The 14- to 15-year-old males in the groups found sexual imagery, speed, adrenalin/aggression and playful humour appealing in general. As with the younger females (11- to 15-year-olds), the adverts that worked best were those that were easy to decode and had a fairly straight-forward message (at least on the surface). Abstract advertising or unfamiliar settings were not always understood and became confusing. Clever, unexpected, self-contained humour or storylines where a normal scene rapidly becomes fantasy did, however, have strong appeal as they could see how

the advertisements progressed away from normality. Overt product presence was also important for this group so they could clearly see the link with the product.

The **16- to 21-year-old females** in the qualitative groups tended to be more ‘ad-literate’ than the others and were more able to understand when an advert was communicating a personality or an image rather than a more straightforward sales/product persuasion message. Despite being more ad-literate than the other groups they were still attracted to advertising with young humour.

The **16- 21-year-old males** in the qualitative research liked advertisements that were considered clever and contained humour. Advertisements spontaneously mentioned were Mini Cooper (old people and fish) and Hellmann’s Mayonnaise. These are examples of normal scenes where the unexpected or random, ironic incidents occur.

5.3 Alcohol advertising and appeal

Qualitative analysis and semiotic research identified three main emotional themes that appeal to young people, specifically in relation to alcohol advertising:

1. Aspirational imagery of adult drinking
2. ‘Kidult’ marketing codes
3. Familiarity/relevance

Aspirational imagery of adult drinking

As part of the growing up process younger people tend to aspire to being older and images of maturity and sophistication are often very appealing (although not too much older); this was confirmed in the research findings. Advertisements that operate through aspirational imagery often include scenes of attractive, well-dressed people in bars, clubs or parties. These types of advertisements conjure up notions of what it would be like to be with beautiful people in a carefree, confident environment.

“Makes you want to be there, be in that party and be having fun like them.”
Boy, 16–17, West Country

“I would love to be at a party like that. They’re all drinking and dancing and having fun.”
Boy, 14–15, Manchester

‘Kidult marketing’ codes

It is generally acknowledged that increasingly in our culture it is acceptable for adults to choose different identities for themselves without feeling that as they grow older they need to have a firm ‘responsible’ identity (for instance, men in their thirties may be as fascinated by an X-Box as a 14-year-old is without any real negative connotations). Being youthful is traditionally associated with irresponsible, unsafe and ‘exciting’ behaviour, and when adults choose this kind of youthful behaviour they can be described as adopting ‘kidult’ behaviour.

Kidult marketing is a strategy that harnesses these values and attitudes of childhood/youth for marketing adult products, and works in reverse to aspirational marketing techniques. Semiotic research conducted as part of this study identified typical kidult codes as adults having fun, being irresponsible, behaving like children and adopting youth behaviour. While the 'kidult' theme is ostensibly aimed at adults, it blurs the fixed lines between adults and children with 'kidults' laying claim to childhood or youth.

Such advertisements promote a particular view of adulthood that often includes freedom, a lack of sophistication and a world free of responsibilities. With regard to alcohol advertising that can result in a view of adulthood that depicts irresponsible and childish behaviour in 'adult drinking'. Alcohol advertisements that play on the boundary of adult and teenage behaviour to bring the teenage and adult world closer together appear to have strong appeal for young people.

Familiarity/relevance

Observations from the qualitative research indicate that advertisements can be more appealing when the events in the storyline are familiar or have a resonance with the viewers' life experiences. For example, younger age groups may not respond so strongly to advertisements where the storyline is set in an adult environment, such as an office or other work-related environment. Conversely, advertisements that centre around environments such as bars and clubs or popular activities, such as sports, tend to have strong appeal.

However, it should be noted that likeability of the execution does not guarantee likeability of the product/brand. Likeability and advertising appeal can be driven purely from a response to the creative execution, and this will not necessarily transfer to the brand. For the brand to benefit there has to be an existing relationship, point of relevance/appeal or some form of persuasion.

5.4 Comparative quantitative assessment of broadcast alcohol advertising

This section examines reactions to a number of advertisements to give insight into young people's views on alcohol advertising and, in particular, the appeal of the advertising.

As mentioned previously, the advertisements included as case studies were all broadcast during the second half of 2004, prior to the January 2005 amendments to the Advertising Standards Code. These executions were not a random selection of alcohol advertising representative of the alcohol category. They were chosen as examples of advertising styles and techniques that were aimed at the younger end of the legitimate alcohol market but which were thought likely also to appeal to 'under 18-year-olds'.

Reminder Note: For reasons of commercial sensitivity, the specific advertisements researched have been de-branded within this section.

In order to quantitatively assess appeal a number of advertisements were assessed on a number of dimensions including:

- How much the advert is liked (ratings out of 10).
- The ad will encourage people to drink (agree–disagree)¹⁹.
- Makes the drink look appealing (agree–disagree).

¹⁹ It is noted that it may be difficult for young people to project the effect of advertising on other people. However given that young people often think they are unaffected by advertising or are keen to be seen as unaffected by it, this question wording was considered to be the most effective way of understanding their view on this issue.

- Aimed at people like me (agree–disagree).

Young people were asked to rate each of the adverts they were shown in terms of how much they like the advertising (rating between 1 ‘don’t like it at all’ and 10 ‘like it a lot’). This allowed the advertisements to be ranked in terms of overall likeability – with Brand 1 as the most liked advert and Brand 8 as the least liked advert.

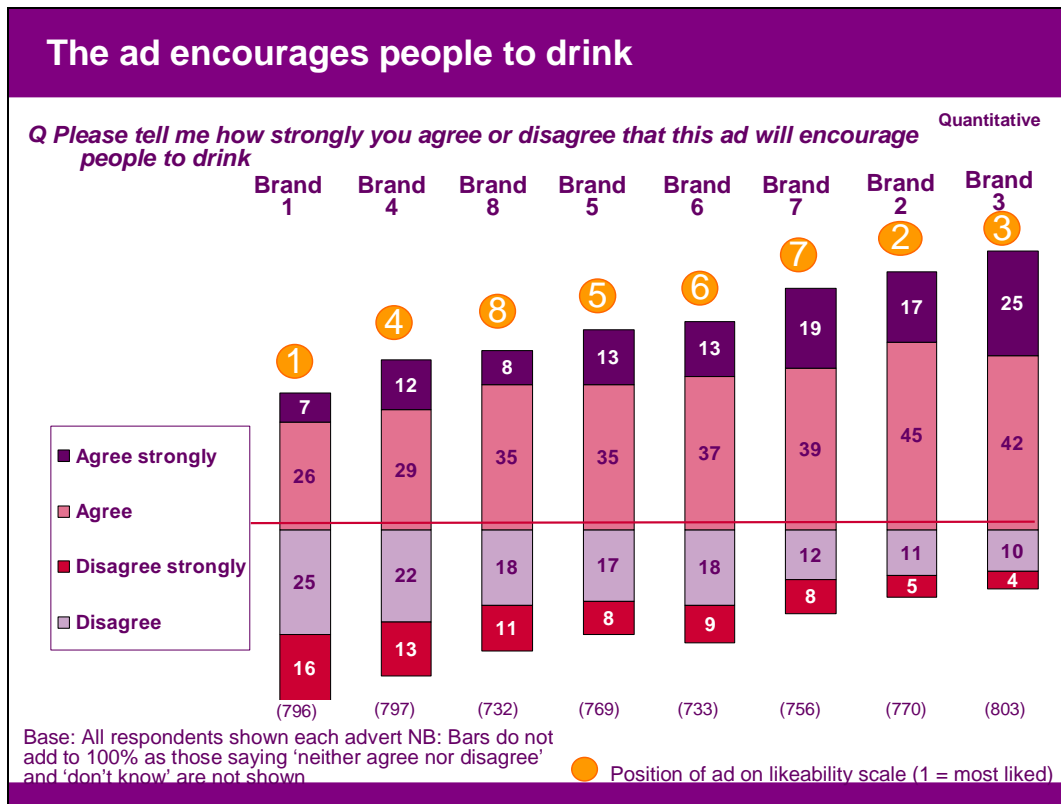
Encourage people to drink

The extent to which young people agree that each advertisement will ‘encourage people to drink’ was rated on a 5-point agree-disagree scale – the results of this question are displayed in Figure 20. The yellow spots indicate the ‘likeability’ position of each advertisement.

Figure 19 shows that the most liked advert (Brand 1) rated lowest on ‘encourages people to drink’ – indicating clearly that likeability does not automatically translate into persuasion. However, the advertisements for the brands ranked in second and third positions on likeability are the strongest rated executions for ‘encouraging drinking’. Brand 7 is not a well liked execution but ranks third on ‘encouraging drinking’.

The data shown therefore reinforces the point that likeability of an execution does not guarantee likeability of the product/brand. Likeability and advertising appeal can be purely driven from a response to the creative execution, and this will not necessarily transfer to the brand.

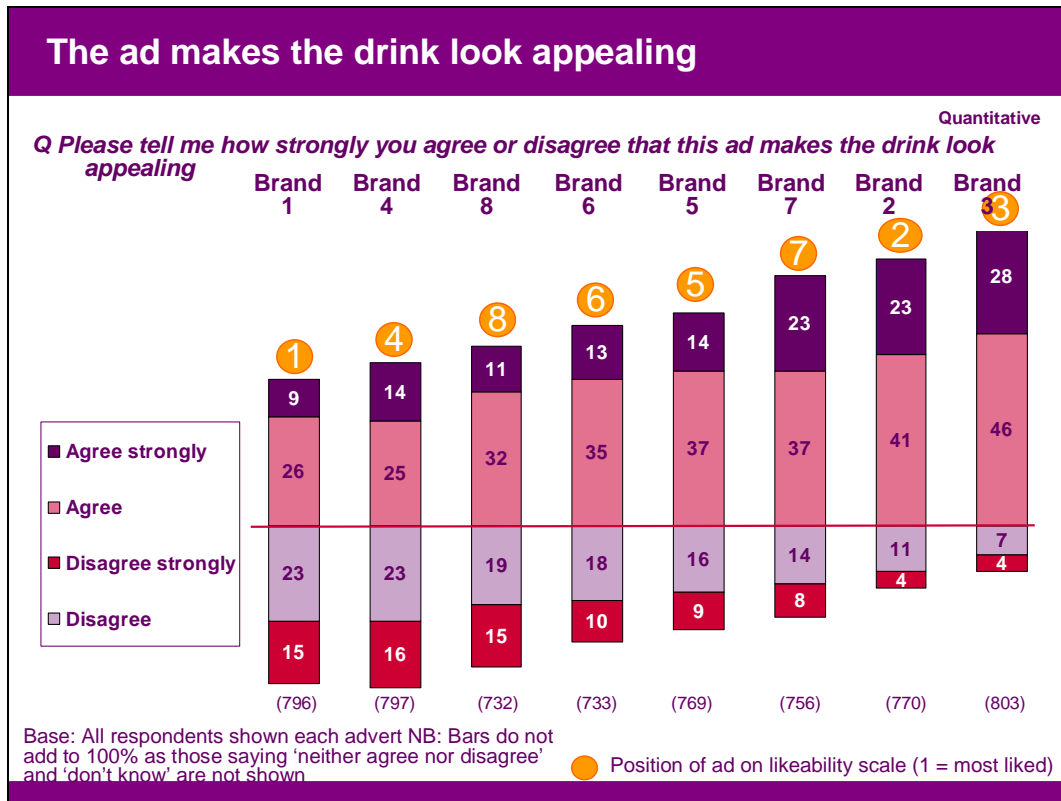
Figure 19



Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey (2005)

Figure 20 shows the responses to ‘makes the drink look appealing’. This chart shows that, other than a change in position for Brand 5 and Brand 6, the relationship between likeability and making the drink look appealing is almost identical in sequence to likeability and ‘encourages people to drink’ for the ads investigated in this research (although this may not be the case if a different selection of advertisements were focused upon).

Figure 20

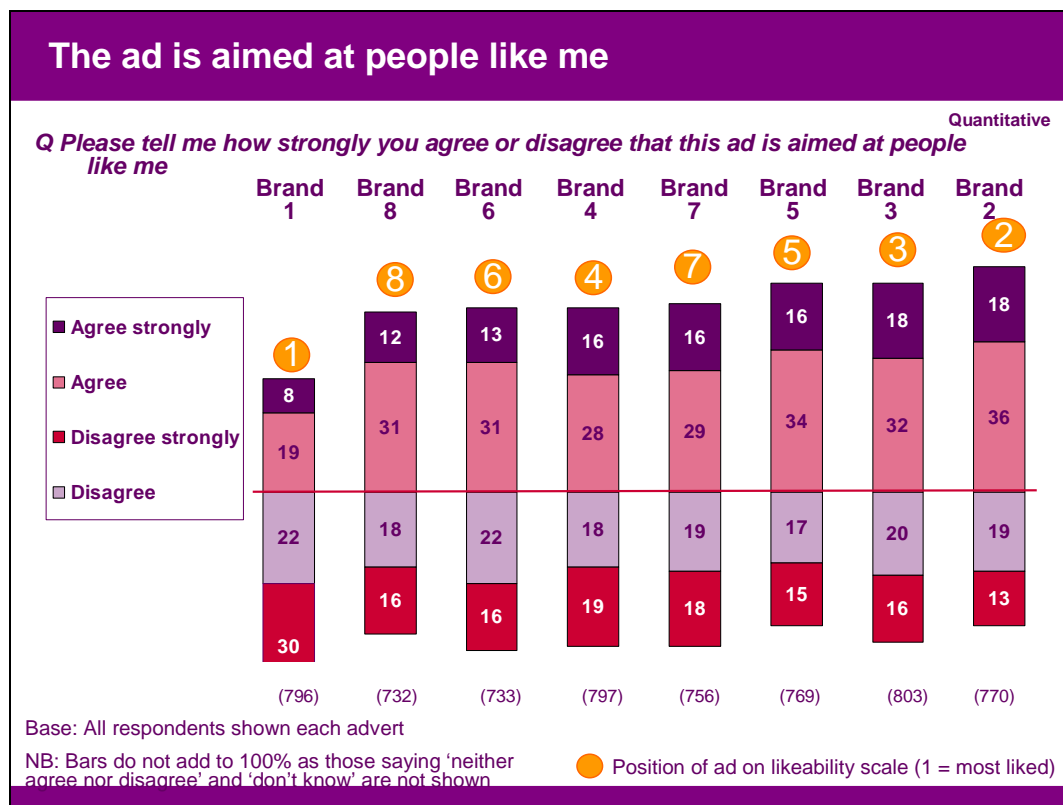


Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey (2005)

Aimed at people like me

Figure 21 shows young people’s opinion on how much the different advertisements are ‘aimed at people like me’. This chart shows that there is less of a hierarchy on this measure and the majority of the advertisements were thought to be targeting them, by at least 4 out of 10 young people. In all cases except Brand 1’s execution, more young people agree or strongly agree that the advertising is aimed at ‘people like me’, than disagree or strongly disagree with this. Brand 1 is the exception largely because it is a brand that is not a popular consumption choice among young adults and whilst the execution was thoroughly enjoyed it remains an unlikely drinks choice amongst this age group.

Figure 21



Source: MORI quantitative benchmark wave survey (2005)

5.5 Learning outcomes from the case studies

The advertisement for **Brand 1** is clearly enjoyed and liked by young people even though they do not think that the ad is aimed at them or that it makes the drink look appealing. The reason for the strong and positive response was driven by the use of a celebrity and a humorous storyline. The weaker scores for 'aimed at me' and 'made the drink look appealing' are driven by two key factors. First, the product was not central to the execution meaning that the brand did not gain the full benefit of the executional response due to this detachment. Second, and perhaps more importantly, this brand is not a popular brand of choice among this age group and would not ordinarily sit within young peoples drinking repertoires. Therefore, even though the executional response was strong, driven by the use of a celebrity and humour, the brand response was limited.

Recall and recognition for **Brand 2**'s execution was the highest of all the advertisements shown. This ad was shown only to the males in the survey, as sport was central to the storyline. Whilst this level of recognition is likely to have been achieved through high spend and an effective media strategy, there is also likely to be something about the creative execution that has helped to achieve this level of prominence. The execution was well liked and two-thirds of the males in the sample agreed or strongly agreed that the advertising would 'encourage people to drink'. The strong response was largely driven by the older males who consume the brand as part of their drinking repertoire. The features of the ad most mentioned spontaneously were dominated by mentions of sport along with the music, implying both these elements acted as strong hooks to appeal. The use of sport as the central theme of this advertisement taps into the interest and hobbies of males. However, discussions identified that the younger males did not discern a link between participating in sports and drinking alcohol. The younger males, who were fairly literal-minded about the events in an advertisement struggled to find a commonality between alcohol and sport, which made this advertisement lack strong emotional appeal.

The advertisement for **Brand 3** was well received and measured high enjoyment on the likeability scale. Significantly more girls in the 14–16 and 17–21 year age groups liked the advert when compared to other sub-groups in the sample. The execution received more positive responses on 'makes the drink look appealing' and 'will encourage people to drink' than all other advertising featured in these case studies. The most memorable and favourable feature of the advertisement was the music. Other mentions included the dancing and the party atmosphere. Discussions in the qualitative groups found that the advertisement had emotional appeal and contained a strong aspirational element for the young people. It was seen to present a care-free, exciting image of adult lifestyle, and drinking is thought to be portrayed in a glamorous light.

The advertisement for **Brand 4** was considered extremely funny – it contained a practical joke element which took them by surprise. In the qualitative discussions young people commented on how the humour was 'young' in that it is usually teenagers who play practical jokes on people. It was also noted that the ad 'spoke their language'. This advertisement uses a number of emotional triggers including the 'kidult code' of adults acting like teenagers, young humour and unexpected events emerging from a normal real-life scenario. However, just because it was funny and enjoyable to watch, young people across all age groups did not feel it particularly encouraged them to drink – despite the fact that it is a popular brand among young people. This may have been because the product was not central to the storyline.

A poster advertisement was also shown for Brand 4, though this was only shown to the male respondents. The sexual innuendo in the advertisement was mentioned as something that was liked and that grabbed the attention of the males. Overall though, appreciation of this

advertisement was less marked than that of the TV execution. However, similar attributes were selected to describe this advertisement as those selected to describe the TV ad such as ‘sticks in your mind’, ‘original’ and ‘entertaining’. Males 17- to 21-years-old were more likely than younger respondents to say the advert was funny and original. In contrast, younger males aged 11–13 years were more likely to have negative associations with the advert (such as claiming it was ‘boring’ or ‘stupid’).

The advertisement for **Brand 5** was moderately liked when compared to the other advertisements in the quantitative research. It was shown only to the females, as the qualitative research indicated lower interest levels for both the advertisement and the brand amongst males. The females considered it to be funny and entertaining, though the 14- to 16-year-olds and 17- to 21-year-olds were significantly more likely to claim the advert was entertaining than those aged 11–13 years. The appeal of this advertisement rested on whether the females were sexually confident or if they had aspirations to be as sexually confident as the girl in the advertisement.

The poster advertisement for Brand 5 was also only shown to female respondents. The tag-line was the element of the ad which respondents claimed to notice and like. The advertisement was considered to be funny by one in five females while an equal proportion felt that it would stick in their mind. Actual recall, however, of the advert was relatively low.

The **Brand 6** advert did not have a strong emotional connection with young people despite featuring a prank that was potentially funny or appealing. Firstly there was a lack of relevance of the storyline to young people’s life experiences and respondents therefore found it difficult to relate to this particular scenario. Also the setting and style of humour did not resonate with young people. They suggested that the execution would be more appealing if the prank were more relevant to their peer group. Secondly, the respondents found no direct relationship between the product and the narrative of the advertisement. The survey results found that the advertisement did nevertheless make young people laugh, albeit to a lesser extent than other ads evaluated.

The advertisement for **Brand 7** was successful in making the drink look appealing to many of the young people and being thought of as encouraging drinking *without* being rated highly in terms of likeability or being seen as particularly targeting the young people. Whilst **Brand 7**’s advertising execution was weak on appeal, it is a popular brand of choice among young people and it managed to achieve stronger levels of persuasion and brand appeal. The execution reinforced the palatability of the drink and used colours and music to target its audience: when asked what stood out and what they liked about the advertising, respondents claimed to like the music and the colours, and much of the commentary regarding the advert surrounded product-related attributes as opposed to the style, tone or storyline. These findings concur with the qualitative research which found that the younger age groups place greater importance on the product focused messages in advertising.

The **Brand 8** advertisement was the least liked of all those shown at the quantitative stage. The qualitative research identified that many young people felt that the scenes were too dark and that the music did not match the look of the ad. The mismatch of cultural codes was instantly noted by young people, adding to the lack of appeal of this advertisement. The discussion groups also identified the lack of relationship between the advertisement and the product; most young people commented that this could have been an advertisement for any product.

During the qualitative stage the **Brand 9 print** advertisement was found to be confusing by some young people. They did not find the execution appealing because they did not know what the advertisement was trying to communicate. At the quantitative stage the advertisement was only

shown to females. The survey indicated that the clothes/look of the characters were the aspects that females claim caught their attention or claim they liked; two-thirds interpreted the women in the advertisements to be models. Females aged 17 years and above were significantly more likely than those aged 11–13 years to mention ‘the clothes/look of the characters’. When prompted with possible descriptors, the advertising was described by the young people as ‘glamorous’, ‘sexy’ and ‘really up to date’, though 17-21 years olds were significantly more likely than 11- to 13-year-olds to associate these descriptors with the advertisement.

The case-study findings, therefore, reinforce the difficulties in assessing the appeal of alcohol advertising amongst those under 18 years of age. Every advertisement may work in a different way; the context of the brand and product may contribute to a particular response to an advertisement as well as the executional details. Every advertisement will need to be evaluated carefully and in its own right following the advertising rule changes.