

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS ABOUT  
CIGARETTE ADVERTISING

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A THESIS

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BY

ELISA CARVER, R.D.H., B.S.

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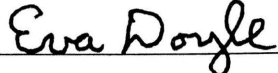

(Date)

To the Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Elisa Carver entitled "Women's Perceptions About Cigarette Advertising." I have examined this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Health Studies.

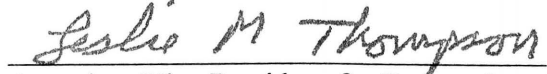
  
Barbara J. Cramer, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and  
recommend its acceptance:

  
Chair, Department of Health Studies

Accepted:

  
Associate Vice President for Research and  
Dean of the Graduate School

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father, Ellis L. Owens, whose enthusiasm for education and quest for knowledge influenced not only myself but many others whose lives he touched. I would like to thank my Advisor, Dr. Barbara Cramer, for her words of encouragement and belief in my ability. In addition, I also want to acknowledge my committee members, Dr. Susan Ward, and Dr. Eva Doyle, for their support and direction. Also, I appreciate the tolerance and faith shown by my employers and coworkers. Finally, I wish to convey my profound appreciation to my husband, daughter and mother, whose love and words of support and courage smoothed out the peaks and valleys encountered during my graduate school experience and the development of this thesis.

## ABSTRACT

COMPLETED RESEARCH IN HEALTH SCIENCES  
Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas

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The purpose of this study was to determine if the female employees of Cleburne Independent School District perceive they are being targeted by tobacco companies in cigarette advertising. The following variables were examined: the perceptions of nonprofessional females toward cigarette advertising, the perceptions of professional females toward cigarette advertising, the difference between the perceptions of nonprofessional and professional females toward cigarette advertising, and the ex post facto reliability of the Carver's Women and Cigarette Advertising Instrument. In this study it was determined that the mean score for professional females was 13.4229 while the mean score of the nonprofessional female was 16.2740. The two sample  $t$ -test indicated that both groups perceive they are being targeted by cigarette advertising; however, the professional females perceive this targeting to a greater degree.



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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Since the mid-1960s, the health problems and risk factors associated with smoking and use of tobacco have been increasingly reported to the public. Associated with this knowledge has been the gradual decline of smokers in the United States. Statistics showed that while the number of male smokers has declined about one-half, the number of female smokers has diminished only by about one-third (Kaufman, 1994). According to Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (1996), the 1994 National Health Interview Survey indicated that, of the 48 million adults who smoke, 22.7 million were women. Fried (1994) and Greenhalgh (1992) stated that women who smoke are particularly at risk to the hazards of smoking for they are not only vulnerable to the health problems that are suffered by male smokers, but the poisons associated with cigarette smoking can also wreak havoc on a woman's reproductive system as well as her offspring.

Cigarette smoking has decreased in prevalence to about 25% of the population primarily as the result of widespread public health campaigns on the national, state, and local levels by government and voluntary organizations. Other contributing factors have been legislative actions, such as banning cigarette advertisements in electronic media, requiring warning labels on cigarette packages and in the printed advertisements, and more

recently, legislation restricting cigarette smoking in public places.

All this has not been as effective with female smokers as it has been with male smokers. The disappointing decline in the number of female smokers has been the combination of slower cessation rates of female smokers coupled with higher increase in the initiation rate among young females. A factor which is held responsible for this has been a trend since the mid-60s of a significant increase in the number of cigarettes brands specifically manufactured for women and cigarette advertisements which target women (Pierce, Lee, & Gilpin, 1994).

Researchers (Amos, 1990; Cotton, 1990; Pierce, Lee, & Gilpin, 1994) have indicated that the cigarette advertising industry targets not only women, but youth and minorities yet little evidence exists to answer the question, "Do women perceive that they are the subjects of this targeting by cigarette industry advertising?"

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine if the female employees of Cleburne Independent School District perceive that they are being targeted by tobacco companies in cigarette advertising.

### **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was used to guide this study: There is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the professional and nonprofessional

females employed by Cleburne Independent School District toward advertising by the cigarette industry.

### **Definitions of Terms**

The following definitions of terms were determined to be beneficial to the understanding of this study:

1. Carver's Women And Cigarette Advertising Instrument. An investigator-made instrument which measures if women perceive they are being targeted by cigarette advertisements.
2. Cigarette advertising. Paid promotions by cigarette companies which encourage smoking.
3. Nonprofessional. A female who has not earned a college degree.
4. Professional. A female who has earned a college degree.
5. Perception. The physiological acknowledgement that a stimuli exists and the process of attaching awareness or meaning to the stimuli.

### **Assumptions**

There were seven assumptions made for the purpose of this study. It was assumed that perceptions are complex and can be measured and that they may influence the behavior of individuals. It was also assumed that both professional and nonprofessional females have perceptions about cigarette advertising. Lastly, it was

assumed that subjects would respond honestly to the Carver's Women and Cigarette Advertising Instrument and that all respondents read and understood English.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

A non-randomized sample of convenience, which focused on one independent school district influenced the generalizability of this study. Only English literate females were chosen for this study.

### **Significance of Study**

Understanding the professionals' or nonprofessionals' perceptions about being targeted by cigarette advertising might provide health educators and other health professionals an opportunity to develop and implement educational strategies which would more effectively discourage smoking by females. In addition, because research has traditionally been directed toward the male smoker, knowledge of how females perceive being targeted by cigarette advertising may encourage further research on the influence of perceptions on smoking.

The fact may be that individuals employed in a public education setting are viewed as role models by the students. If the profession understands how their perception toward cigarettes is effected by advertising, health educator's might be able to prevent this negative role modeling.

Decreasing the effects of cigarette advertising on females may decrease smoking



within the female population. This, in turn, could reduce cigarette-related diseases and deaths. Such a reduction might enable the United States to reach its national health objective for the year 2000 of reducing the prevalence of cigarette smoking among adults to no more than 15%.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1994, the number of female smokers (22.7 million) had almost caught up with the number of male smokers (25.3 million) (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 1996). This is a shocking fact when as recently as the 1920s, women were rarely, if ever, seen or pictured smoking.

Another alarming fact according to Covey, Zang, and Wynder (1992), is that typically, blue collar workers (either male or female) have represented the largest percentage of smokers, but recently there has been a trend of increasing numbers of female white collar workers who smoke. This alarming increase in the number of women smokers has been partly credited to the number of cigarette advertisements which target women, especially since the 1960s (Fried, 1994).

Women, in particular, have some unique vulnerabilities to the hazards of smoking that their male counterparts do not have. Tobacco use has dire effects on the female body. The poisons associated with cigarette smoking can wreak havoc on a woman's reproductive system, pregnancy and hormonal status. Cigarette smoking is associated with cervical cancer and women who smoke are more often subject to infertility, miscarriage, spontaneous abortion, stillbirths, and underweight babies. Women over 35

who smoke and use oral contraceptives are at greater risk of death from stroke or heart attack. Female smokers also lose bone faster than nonsmokers, putting postmenopausal women at greater risk for osteoporosis (Fried, 1994).

Yet many women, when looking at cigarette advertisements which depict only the glamorous, do not consider the health hazards, the yellowing teeth, and malodorous clothes. Numerous females are aware of the ill effects of tobacco use yet, because much of the initial tobacco use research was conducted on male subjects with less information related directly to women, some women still believe that tobacco use more adversely affects males (Fried, 1994). Other women, despite access to and knowledge of the damage that cigarettes cause, continue to smoke.

The literature reviewed was chosen to focus on the history and current trends of cigarette advertising, how women are being targeted by tobacco companies through cigarette advertisements and development of "women only" cigarettes, and the effects of cigarette advertisements on women. Also examined were the differences in the perceptions of professional and nonprofessional females toward cigarette advertisements.

## **Cigarette Advertising**

### **History**

Historically, women and tobacco usage have not gone hand in hand. In fact, into the early 1900s, strong social pressure discouraged smoking among women. Not until

the 1920s were women even depicted in a cigarette advertisement (Orlandi, 1986).

Through time, smoking became a symbol of emancipation and liberation. The women who were the educational and occupational pioneers of the early 1900s began to claim rights of reason, autonomy and achievements, rights which had previously been reserved for the male sex. This "new woman," according to Barthel (1949), espoused androgyny in the form of cross-dressing or smoking cigarettes. This was indeed welcome to cigarette advertisers, who quickly recognized and encouraged her taste for the glamorous, the innovative, the modern.

Lorrillard, a tobacco company, broke the ice in 1919, using images of women smoking to market its Muran and Helman brands. Soon Marlboro linked cigarettes to fashion and slimness with its "mild as May" campaign in the sophisticated fashion magazine Le Bon Ton in 1927. In 1928 Lucky Strike encouraged women to "Reach for a Lucky Instead of a Sweet."

In A Report of the Surgeon General, it is noted that

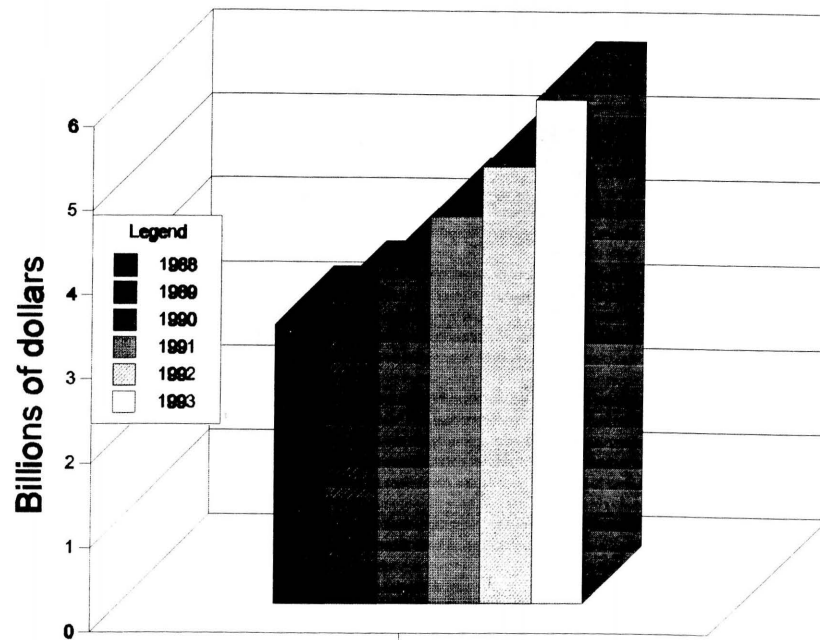
One of the early consequences of motivation research was to help the (tobacco) industry give brands of cigarettes distinctly male or female identities. Probably no brand more dramatically demonstrated this strategy than Marlboro, which in 1956 was converted, through an enormously successful advertising campaign, from a previous, stereotypically "female" advertising image to a stereotypically "male" image that culminated in the Marlboro cowboy. (p.127)

The Surgeon General's Report goes on to note that this campaign was so marvelously successful that Philip Morris went onto launch another brand, Virginia Slims,

which utilized typical female characteristics with the following results: "The success and durability of both these campaigns evidence the power of nonverbal imagery to communicate subjective values such as independence, masculinity and femininity, and to attract and retain customers" (p. 172). This began the trend for tobacco companies to specifically design cigarettes especially for women. This marketing trend began in the late 1960s with Philip Morris' successful Virginia Slims brand and its "We've Come a Long Way, Baby" campaign (Kaufman, 1994) and continues in to the 1990s with ongoing creations of new brands of cigarettes designated to appeal to women smokers.

### **Trends**

Botvin, Goldberg, Botvin and Dusenbury (1993) stated that cigarettes were the most heavily promoted product in the country. In 1988, US cigarette manufacturers spent \$3.27 billion on cigarette advertising and promotion or the equivalent of \$100 per second (Warner, Goldenhar & McLaughlin, 1992). Figure 1 depicts data which has been gathered by the Federal Trade Commission (1995) and distributed through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Demonstrated is the increase that has occurred in cigarette advertising from 1988 to 1993, when the latest statistics were available.



**Figure 1.**

Billions of dollars spent by tobacco industry on advertising and promotion.

Since the 1971 ban on cigarette advertising in electronic media, advertisers have dramatically increased their expenditures for cigarette advertisements and other types of promotion. It has been reported by the Surgeon General's Report that in a study between the years 1957 and 1977, the volume of cigarette magazine advertisements in Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, and the Ladies Home Journal increased eightfold (Surgeon General's

Report, 1994).

In many developed countries, smoking is on the decline (especially among men). This, combined with the fact that tobacco kills off a quarter of its consumers, pressures tobacco companies to create and expand new markets for their products. Amos (1990) stated that women are key target groups in both developed and Third World countries. The following items from the tobacco advertising press stress the importance attached to targeting women. Articles entitled "Suggesting that retailers should look to the ladies," "Women--a separate market," and "Creating a female taste" have appeared in the British journal Tobacco (1983,1988, 1989). Amos went on to state that similar articles have also appeared in the United States. The international journal Tobacco Reporter (1983), has featured articles such as "Targeting the female smoker", which concludes that "women are a prime target". Amos (1990) also stated strategies successfully used by tobacco companies that have been adopted, with the most important being: (a) using women's magazines to direct advertising at women, (b) promoting images designed to appeal specifically to women, and (c) producing new brands for women only.

In a study of the words and images of all 567 cigarette advertisements in 108 issues of Life and Look, judges analyzed both verbal and nonverbal content and messages. The judges saw some stereotypical differentiation between men and women which was evident. ". . . ads featuring men were significantly more likely to use images of bold and lively behavior, whereas the ads featuring women were significantly more likely to use images of glamour and luxury" (1994 Surgeon General's Report, p.180).

## **Marketing Strategies**

### **Women's Magazines**

The question of whether there is an emphasis on promotion of cigarettes to females was addressed in a study conducted by Warner and Goldenhar (1992). This study examined 92 magazines published over a 28 year period which covered 1959 to 1986. These researchers classified these into women's magazines, sports magazines, magazines with predominantly blue collar readerships, and magazines with predominately professional readerships. They found that the growth of the relative share of cigarette advertisements (the percentage of cigarette advertising revenue divided by the percentage of total advertising revenue) was the most rapid in the case of women's magazines. It was noted that the relative share at the end of the period, however, was close to average for all magazines. This dramatic increase was documented by the minuscule share women's magazines received during the 1960s as compared to a disproportionately large share in the mid 1980s. Their conclusion was that there was a clear pattern of increasing interest by cigarette advertisers in the female smoking market place. According to Pierce, Lee and Gilpin (1994), the advertising budgets for women's brands of cigarettes started in 1967 and increased through 1979 by which time advertising which targeted women had achieved levels equal to advertising which targeted men.

There are several reasons why women's magazines are being laced with over \$300 million of cigarette advertisements stated Amos (1990): (a) They have an enormous



number of readers, (b) they are read by women of all ages and backgrounds, (c) magazines can lend a spurious social acceptability or stylish image to smoking, and (d) the presence of tobacco advertisements in magazines may dilute the impact of articles on tobacco and health.

### **Advertising Images Designed to Appeal to Women**

Amos (1990) discussed the subtle and not so subtle ways the tobacco companies make cigarettes seem appealing to women.

These cigarette advertisements allude to the concept that smoking is glamorous, sophisticated, fun, romantic, sexually attractive, healthy, sporty, sociable, relaxing, calming, emancipated, liberated, rebellious, and an aid to slimming. These images and themes have been conveyed by a variety of means ranging from straightforward verbal to visual messages. (p. 417)

She also stated that advertisements feature young attractive thin women or use the more subtle visual imagery of luxury represented by silk, satin or symbols of success and high style. Such imagery is designed to specifically appeal to women (Amos, 1990).

Botvin, Goldberg, Botvin and Dusenbury (1993) continued by stating that women are targeted through a variety of other promotional activities as well. These include special offers such as free silk stockings, contests, free cosmetics, and clothing carrying the brand logo. Another popular method is the sponsorship of women's sports (e.g., tennis) which receive widespread media coverage, and of women's events such as fashion shows.

### **Designed for Women Only**

The creation of cigarette brands for women only is the final targeting strategy discussed. This new phase began in the late 1960s with the launch of Kim and Virginia Slims. These "women only" brands are advertised and packaged with an emphasis on feminine characteristics and positive female images. For example, Eve, with its archetypal female name, has the filter tip decorated with a flower motif. Satin has a special luxury satin-like paper tip. There has also been an explosion in the number of extra-long (over 100 mm) cigarettes, which are particularly popular among women. This has been followed by Capri, the world's first ultra-slim cigarette, and Dakota, launched in the United States for "virile females" (Amos, 1990).

An example of a well researched and developed a campaign for a cigarette created for women is the Dakota brand. Bromberg (1990) described how the new cigarette Dakota was apparently designed to overtake Marlboro as the brand of choice among young adult females. According to a marketing survey leaked to the Washington Post, Dakota's chief goal was to capture the lucrative market among 18-20 year old women, the only group of Americans whose rate of smoking continues to increase. Bromberg stated that:

the campaign focuses on a certain group of women whose favorite pastimes include cruising, partying, and attending hot rod shows and tractor pulls with their boyfriends. The study goes on to describe this woman in much greater detail, down to the genre of her dress (knit tops), career (she couldn't care less) and her favorite music groups (all male). (p. 27)

According to Davidson (1995), when information about the new Dakota cigarette and Reynolds' marketing campaign reached and was publicized by the press, public outcry was so strong that "Reynolds denied it had such a marketing plan and discontinued developing the product" (p. 10).

### **Effects of Cigarette Advertising**

Female smoking prevalence did not exceed 25% until World War II, when it was still half that of men's. Throughout the 1940s women's smoking rates continued to accelerate. Within the 1950s this acceleration was fueled by the introduction of filtertip cigarettes. According to Orlandi (1986), per capita consumption of cigarettes reached a peak in 1963. In the early 1960s prevalence of regular cigarette smoking had reached 52% among males and 33% among females.

Orlandi (1986) also stated that, following the 1964 release of the first report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General, cigarette smoking prevalence has generally declined. From 1965 to 1976, however, smoking prevalence among females remained virtually unchanged though, since 1976, the proportion of female smokers has gradually decreased to below 30%.

While the percentage of overall women smokers is declining, the same cannot be said for the subgroup of teenage females. Botvin, Goldberg, Bolvin, and Dusenbury, (1993) reported that, in 1968, when Philip Morris launched the first major promotional campaign directed to women, only 8.4% of teenage females smoked. Other tobacco

companies followed this same promotional direction and soon cigarette products for women became the most heavily advertised products in periodicals for young females. Associated with this phenomenon was a significant increase in the proportion of teenage females smoking cigarettes, which nearly doubled to 15.3% between 1968 and 1974.

Cotton (1990) found that the prevalence of cigarette smoking among teenage females is slightly higher than it is among teenage males. Amos (1990) also stated that the reason there is a narrowing gap in the overall smoking rates between males and females is credited to the tobacco industry's targeting women which occurs not just in the United States but in many other countries as well.

These initiation rates among young females rather than the cessation rates are mostly responsible for the narrowing gap between the smoking prevalence among males and females in the United States. Less educated adolescents from lower socioeconomic status are most likely to become one of the 3,000 new smokers who start each day. In fact, 20 to 30% of these adolescent smokers become regular users by age 19. Over the last three decades, boys have decreased, but girls have increased, their likelihood to try cigarettes (Fried, 1994).

Cotton (1990) conducted a study to explore the possibility of a correlation between this increase in teenage females initiation rates and the increase in cigarette advertising which targeted women. This study concluded that starting in 1967, when cigarette advertisers began targeting females, the initiation rate of all 11 to 17 year old girls rose rapidly to a peak before starting to decline. Also determined by this study was

the fact that an increase in initiation rate specifically in girls younger than legal age to purchase cigarettes started the same year that the tobacco industry introduced women's brands of cigarettes.

Cotton (1990) concluded that an abrupt change in trend of smoking initiation occurred among minor females which corresponded to the rapid growth of cigarette advertisers targeting women which occurred between 1967-75. This trend was also reported by Fried (1994) who noted that in 1968, Virginia Slims were introduced and in the six years following this introduction, the proportion of US teenage girls regularly smoking cigarettes nearly doubled. According to Kaufman (1994), virtually all smoking initiation occurs by the age of 18 years. He reported also the fact that for girls and adolescent females, advertising is a potent lure.

## **Perceptions**

### **Definition and Theory**

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1987) defines "perception" as the "result of perceiving or observation; a mental image or concept" (p. 872). It further defines "perceive" as the result of attaining "awareness or understanding; to become aware of through the senses" (p. 872). The health educator seeks to understand what motivates an individual to perform or not perform a certain behavior. Carter (1990) discussed the complexities which influence that behavior. He described the Value Expectancy Theory

which is seen as a chain-of-events model, where behavior is viewed as the end point of a chain of psychological events that begin with an assessment of the possible consequence or outcome associated with each behavior under consideration. On the basis of this assessment, the decision maker chooses a course of action that he or she tends to follow. The assessment is a result of that individual's perception of the situation.

The Theory of Reasoned Action also originates the intention to perform or not perform a certain behavior with an individual's beliefs and evaluations of behavior outcomes or their normative beliefs. Green and Krueter (1991) indicated that beliefs, values and attitudes are independent influences, but that the differences between them are often complex and subtle. It is further stated by them that

behavior may not change immediately in response to new awareness or knowledge but that the cumulative effects of heightened awareness, increased understanding and greater command of facts seep into this system of beliefs, values, attitudes, intentions, and self-efficacy, and eventually into behavior.  
(p. 156)

A study testing a prototype Model of Risk Behavior tested perceptions associated with four health risk behaviors (smoking, drinking, reckless driving and ineffective contraception). Results indicated that perception was related to risk behavior in both a reactive and a prospective manner. Specifically, that perceptions changed as a function of change in behavior, and perceptions predicted those behavior changes as well (Gibbons & Gerrard, 1995). An individual's perception (understanding or awareness) is then recognized as one of the many variables which influence the individual's beliefs or attitudes and eventually, behavior.

## **Perceptions Toward Cigarette Advertising**

### **Female Population in General**

Cigarette advertisements welcomed the fact that the new better educated, more liberated, more emancipated women had come into her own. She was quickly recognized and encouraged in her taste for the glamorous, the innovative, the modern. The advertising industry came of age and matured in its endeavors to promote the cigarette to this new market (Barthel, 1988). The perceptions of women toward cigarettes would be greatly influenced by these new marketing techniques.

Kaufman (1994) explored the fact that young women may be uniquely vulnerable to enticements to smoke. This author suggested that girls' perceptions of their physical appearance and overall sense of self-worth are much lower than those of boys and fall with increasing age during early adolescence, and that these perceptions are associated with regular smoking. He also noted the societal preoccupation with female thinness which affects adolescent girls' perceptions of the supposed benefits of smoking. The tobacco industry exploits and reinforces these vulnerabilities by linking smoking to fashion, where unnaturally slim models epitomize beauty and glorify images that most young girls cannot attain.

Fried (1994) noted that most girls experiment with cigarettes between the ages of 10 and 14. The fact that a typical characterization of the young adolescent female includes cognitive and emotional immaturity, a tendency toward impulsive behavior, difficulty with

cognitive and emotional immaturity, a tendency toward impulsive behavior, difficulty with achieving a positive body image, and hypersensitivity to peer pressure make her "particularly vulnerable to experimentation with and initiation of the tobacco habit."

She also stated that tobacco use is also found to be related to personal factors such as self-image and self-esteem. Because body changes and body acceptance pose difficulties for the adolescent girl, she may begin to use smoking as a weight control measure. In addition, because society considers thinness a component of beauty, the tobacco habit again serves as a tool for enhancing self-esteem and self-image.

These hosts of environmental factors predispose the adolescent female to tobacco use with the principle influencing factor being the tobacco industry's seductive advertising. "Advertising that depicts women smokers as powerful, glamorous, happy, successful and attractive--the characteristics craved by the ill-defined adolescent girl's psyche." Fried (1994) concluded by stating that "tobacco advertising depicts a lifestyle that girls and women desire."

### **Nonprofessional Females**

It has been discussed that the female gender is more susceptible to the appeal of smoking which is depicted in cigarette advertisements, but there are several other variables in addition to gender which are associated with cigarette smoking. Fried (1994) stated that these include low income, poor housing, lack of education, single, divorced or separated marital status, unemployment, city dwelling, lack of independence, housewife,



initiation rate was 1.7 times higher in girls who never went on to attend college compared to those who did.

Botvin, Goldberg, Botvin, And Dusenbury (1993) stated that adolescents who reported a high level of exposure to cigarette advertisements were between 1.44 and 1.93 times more likely to be smokers than those reporting low level of exposure. The two most important predictors of cigarette smoking in this study were friends' smoking status and exposure to cigarette advertisements.

Pierce, Lee, and Gilpin (1994) reported that their study demonstrated that tobacco advertising has a temporal and specific relationship to smoking uptake in girls younger than the legal age to purchase cigarettes. The conclusion was that these findings added to the evidence that tobacco advertisements play an important role in encouraging young people to begin a lifelong addiction before they are old enough to fully appreciate its long-term health risks. Although this segment of the population is affected specifically, it was not singled out in this study.

### **Professional Females**

No literature was found which indicated that professional females might be influenced differently than the nonprofessional female by cigarette advertising. It is noteworthy, however, that in the study done by Warner and Goldenhar (1992), there was a shift in the 92 magazines analyzed for cigarette advertising from magazines with white collar readerships to those with blue collar readerships. This fact may be overshadowed

by the statistical trend noted in Covey, Zang and Wynder (1992) that although traditionally female nicotine-dependent smokers were more often found among blue collar workers, recent years show an increase in numbers of smokers among white collar females.

This increase in smoking among white collar females might partially be rationalized by Fried (1994) who explained that smoking can be used as a coping mechanism in addition to the other previously discussed reasons why women smoke. Women are reported as being subjected to constant societal and media messages which promote women, glamour, success, and tobacco use. Certainly a professional woman wants to be viewed as successful and faces many stresses in her quest to achieve this success. Tobacco companies know this and tailor some advertisements to appeal to this type of woman. Certainly one of the most famous campaign slogans would be "You've come a long way, baby" which promoted Virginia Slims and appealed directly to a woman's sense of personal advancement and success.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of this descriptive study is discussed in relation to its population, procedures used to sample the population, instrument used to measure the variables, procedures used to collect the data, and descriptive and statistical techniques that were used to treat the data.

#### **Population and Sample**

A descriptive survey study using a posttest only design was utilized. The instrument was distributed to female employees of Cleburne Independent School District located in Johnson County, Texas. The sample population was identified as all professional and nonprofessional female employees of Cleburne Independent School District (N=550). The instrument was written in the English language, thus only employees who read and understood English were sampled.

#### **Protection of Human Rights**

To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of subjects no names were used. Only group data were analyzed and only volunteers were utilized. It was stated in a cover

letter and again on the instrument that the return of the completed inventory would indicate consent to participate in the study. This study was approved by the Texas Women's University Human Subject Review Committee prior to the start of the study. Agency approval was obtained (see Appendix A).

### **Instrumentation**

A two-part investigator-made self-report instrument using a Likert-type scale was developed. Ten statements which explored different perceptions toward cigarette advertising were developed (see Appendix B). Responses were assigned values on a 5-point scale with choices representing the strongest degree of favorability assigned 5 points and least favorable choices receiving 1 point. The favorable statements were numbers 2, 5, 6, and 8. The unfavorable statements were 1, 3, and 10. The neutral questions were 4, 7, and 9. Reverse scoring was used for the unfavorable statements. The summative score of the Carver's Women and Cigarette Advertising Instrument was determined for each subject.

The Likert Scale was chosen for its simplicity and wide-spread usage for self-reporting methods of measuring (Grolund, 1985). Five points are considered effective for most uses in assessing the individual's varying degree of perceptions about a statement without making the instrument too complicated with numerous degrees of responses between the five basic points of response. This author also indicated that it is usually best to ask for anonymous responses so that the subject feels he or she can be sincere in the

recording of their feelings and opinions. An anonymous manner of response was utilized in the design of the study.

The validity of the instrument was assessed by a panel of experts. Three health educators and two marketing professors who are experts in attitude inventories were selected. The instrument and a cover letter were mailed to the panel of experts. They were asked to critique each statement and make any suggestions or recommendations that might make the survey more effective in measuring perceptions about cigarette advertising. The panel of experts mailed or faxed their responses back within two weeks. If a majority of the panel suggested an item or items should be deleted or modified, the investigator did so.

A Cronbach's Standardized Alpha test was run as part of the statistical analysis of the returned, completed instruments to estimate the ex post facto internal consistency of the Women and Cigarette Advertising. The Cronbach's Alpha test was run four different ways. It was run on the responses of the professional females to all questions and then run again eliminating the three neutral questions. This was repeated with the nonprofessional female group. It was determined that the instrument scored very low when the three neutral questions were included (professional group -- 0.2391; nonprofessional group -- 0.1946).

It was determined not to include the three neutral (questions 4, 7, and 9) in the Cronbach's Alpha or the two sample t-test to improve the instrument's reliability and make it more internally consistent. Tables 1, 2, and 3 reflect the exclusion of data from these

questions by placing an asterisk (\*) beside the three questions. The resulting Cronbach's Alpha test run on the remaining seven questions was 0.6474 for the professional group and 0.5989 for the nonprofessional group.

### **Collection of Data**

The personnel director of Cleburne Independent School District furnished the number of female employees located at each campus or administrative building. The investigator assembled packets containing a cover letter (see Appendix C) and the instrument and put the correct number of packets in large envelopes with the campus or administrative building name on the outside. These were then distributed at a staff meeting at Cleburne Independent School District on February 18, 1997, which was attended by all principals and administrative personnel. The principals were verbally informed about the distribution of the survey. A cover letter (see Appendix D) was also included with the large envelopes which informed the principals about the nature of the survey, how they were to be distributed, and when they would be picked up.

It was stated both in the cover letter and also verbally that the surveys would be picked up on February 28, 1997. Some campuses returned the surveys via courier to the administration building and the investigator picked some up directly at the campus. It was determined that if the instrument was not returned in one week, it would not be used. The personnel office at Cleburne Independent School District was informed that the results would be reported to them and they would be able to post the results on employee bulletin

boards if desired.

### **Treatment of Data**

The research hypothesis was tested by using a two sample  $t$ -test with unequal frequencies to determine group differences. The data were treated using the statistical package, Biomedical Data Package. A .05 level of significance was chosen. Descriptive statistics, percentages, and frequencies were performed on all variables measured. Appropriate tables and illustrations were used to support the narrative.

## **CHAPTER IV**

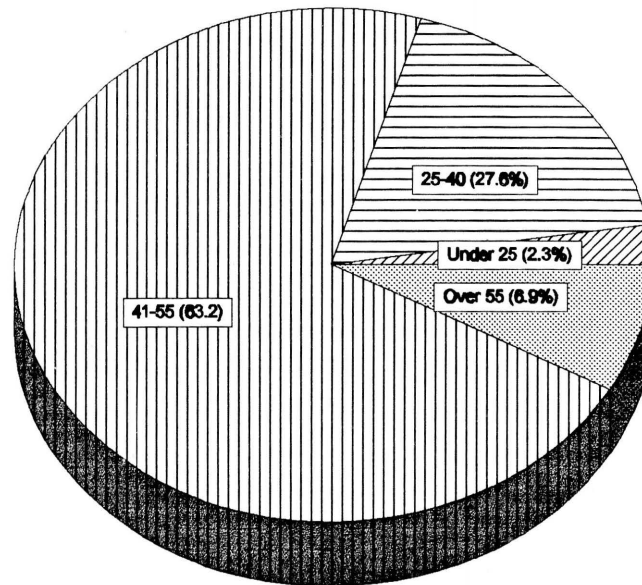
### **FINDINGS**

This study was designed to investigate whether females perceive they are being targeted by tobacco companies through cigarette advertising. In addition, this study determined the difference, if any, between professional and nonprofessional females in perceptions of this targeting.

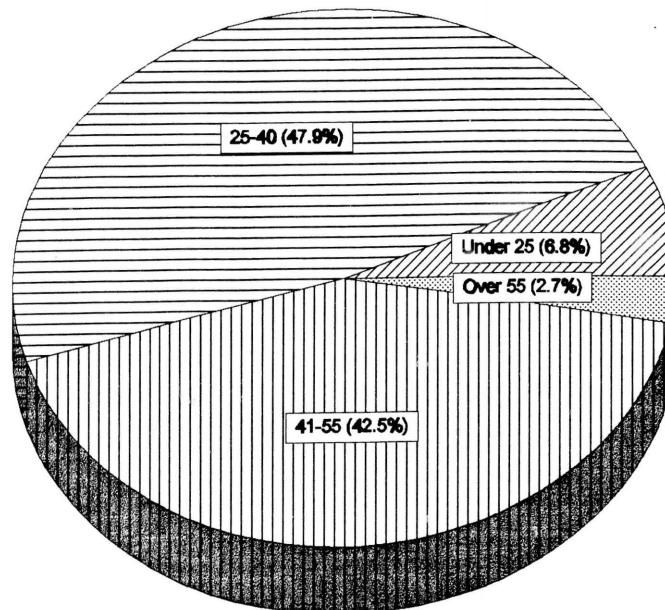
#### **Demographic Findings**

The number of professional females in this study was 180 (71.1% of the study group) while the number of nonprofessional females who participated in this study was 73 (28.9% of the study group). The largest (83.2%) group of professional females were in the 41-55 age category. Similarly, the nonprofessional group of females had the greatest percentage in the 25-40 age group (47.9%). The distribution of age of the two groups is indicated in Figures 2 and 3.



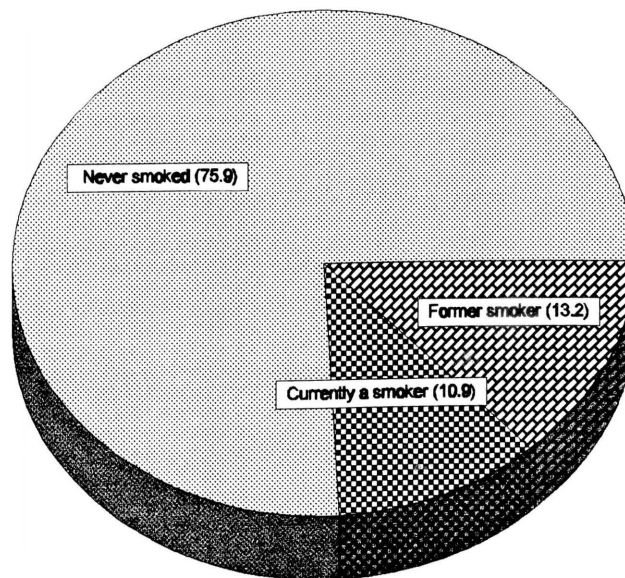


**Figure 2.**  
Current age of professional group.



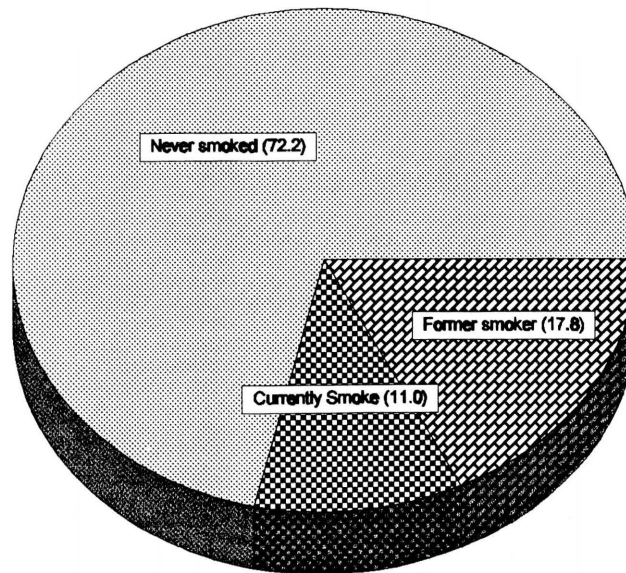
**Figure 3.**  
Current age of nonprofessional group.

Figures 4 and 5 represent the smoking or nonsmoking habits of the two groups. It is interesting to note in comparing Figures 4 and 5 that the percentages of never smoked are similar between the professional (75.9%) and nonprofessional (72.2%) group. However, there is a greater percentage of current or former smokers in the nonprofessional group. The percentage of current smokers in the professional group is 10.9% while the percentage of current smokers in the nonprofessional group is very similar at 11.0%. The percentage of former smokers in the nonprofessional group (17.8%) is higher than in the professional group (13.2%).



**Figure 4.**

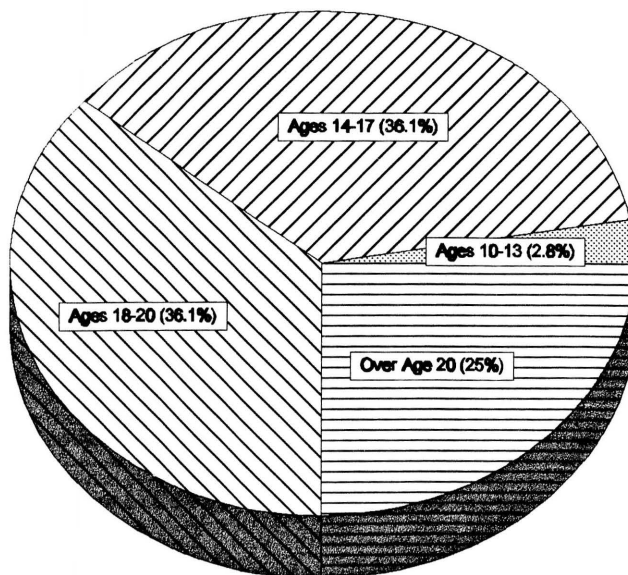
Percentages of smokers, nonsmokers and former smokers in professional group.



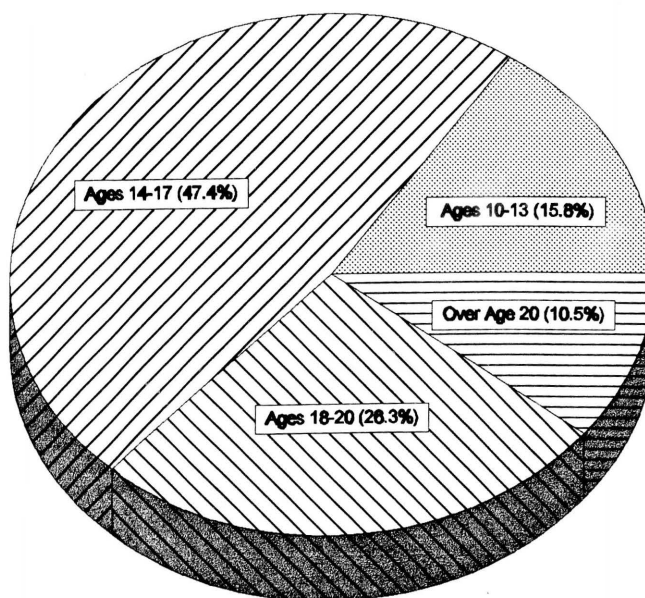
**Figure 5.**

Percentages of smokers, nonsmokers and former smokers in nonprofessional group.

The age of smoking initiation showed some distinct differences. The 15.8% of the nonprofessional group who have smoked began doing so between the ages of 10 and 13 while only 2.8% of the professional group of those who have smoked began that young. In the nonprofessional group 63.2% began smoking before age 18, whereas in the professional group 38.9% initiated smoking prior to age 18. Note that all age categories differ in the typical age of initiation, for example, 25% of the professional group initiated smoking after age 20 whereas, only 10.5% of the nonprofessional group started smoking after age 20. Figures 6 and 7 depict the smoking initiation age of the two groups.



**Figure 6.**  
Age of smoking initiation in professional group.



**Figure 7.**  
Age of smoking initiation in nonprofessional group.

### Findings by Research Hypothesis

The mean score of the Carver's Women and Cigarette Advertising Instrument for professional female was 13.4229 while the mean score of the nonprofessional female was 16.2740. The  $p$ -value for the Levene  $F$  which tests for the assumption of equal variance was 0.8840. Due to the differences in group sizes, Levene's technique was used to test for homogeneity of variance. The degree of heterogeneity was not significant ( $F = .02$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = .88$ ).

The research hypothesis stated that: "There is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the professional and nonprofessional females employed by a school district toward advertising by the cigarette industry." A  $t$ -test analysis of the mean score of the professional group and the nonprofessional group had a result of  $<.0001$  where a score  $\leq .05$  is considered a significant difference. The research hypothesis was rejected. Table 1 indicates the results of the  $t$ -test analysis.

Table 1

T-test Analysis of Responses to Carver's Women and Cigarette Advertising Instrument

Status	M	SD	t	df	p
Professional	13.4229	3.5901	5.56	246	<.0001
Nonprofessional	16.2740	3.8882			

Note. The three neutral statements were eliminated in this analysis.

### Other Findings

Both professional and nonprofessional females of the school district perceived they are being targeted by cigarette advertisements however, more professional females strongly agree (42.4%) and agree (34.9%) than their nonprofessional counterparts (24.2% and 40.7% respectively). It is interesting to note that the nonprofessionals do agree that they are being targeted, but not as strongly. Approximately twice as many nonprofessionals disagree or strongly disagree (13.3% and 4.5% respectively) than their professional counterpart (7.0% and 2.3%) that they are being targeted by cigarette advertisements. The following tables 2 and 3 depict the frequency and percentages of responses given by both the professional and nonprofessional group to the Carver's

## Women and Cigarette Advertising Instrument.

Table 2.

Professional group inventory responses by frequency and percentages (n=253)

Question	<u>Str. Agree</u>		<u>Agree</u>		<u>Undecided</u>		<u>Disagree</u>		<u>Str. Disagree</u>	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	102	58.6	37	21.3	12	6.9	19	10.9	4	2.3
2.	88	50.3	66	37.7	18	10.3	1	0.6	2	1.1
3.	16	9.1	65	37.1	49	28.0	36	20.6	9	5.1
4.*	16	9.1	66	37.7	59	33.7	26	14.9	8	4.6
5.	95	54.3	68	38.9	10	5.7	1	0.6	1	0.6
6.	70	40.0	58	33.1	23	13.1	17	9.7	7	4.0
7.*	2	1.1	9	5.2	11	6.3	58	33.3	94	54.0
8.	82	46.9	73	41.7	18	10.3	1	0.6	1	0.6
9.*	2	1.1	8	4.6	23	13.1	62	35.4	80	45.7
10.	66	37.7	60	34.3	34	19.4	11	6.3	4	2.3

Note.\*Questions omitted from analysis

Table 3.

Nonprofessional group inventory responses by frequency and percentages (n=253)

Question	<u>Str. Agree</u>		<u>Agree</u>		<u>Undecided</u>		<u>Disagree</u>		<u>Str. Disagree</u>	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	27	37.5	22	30.6	10	13.9	11	15.3	2	2.8
2.	31	42.5	30	41.1	6	8.2	4	5.5	2	2.7
3.	5	6.8	24	32.9	15	20.5	20	27.4	9	12.3
4.*	10	13.7	28	38.4	20	27.4	14	19.2	1	1.4
5.	22	30.1	36	49.3	8	11.0	6	8.2	1	1.4
6.	14	19.2	33	45.2	13	17.8	12	16.4	1	1.4
7.*	2	2.8	9	12.7	10	14.1	33	46.5	17	23.9
8.	14	19.4	38	52.8	16	22.2	3	4.2	1	1.4
9.*	3	4.1	14	19.2	12	16.4	31	42.5	13	17.8
10.	10	13.7	24	32.9	20	27.4	12	16.4	7	9.6

Note. \*Questions omitted from analysis



## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

This study explored the research hypothesis which stated that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of professional and nonprofessional Texas females employed by a selected school district toward advertising by the cigarette industry. An instrument of 10 statements regarding cigarette advertising was created to determine this perception.

The demographic data included a response of job type so that two groups could be determined: Professional (those possessing a college degree) and Nonprofessional (those not possessing a college degree). In addition to this age was divided into four age categories: Under 25, 25-40, 41-55, and Over 55. Smoking status was determined by the subject selecting "Never smoked," "Currently a Smoker," or "Former smoker." The initiation of smoking age was also included in demographic data and was divided into the following categories: Age 10-13, Age 14-17, Age 18-20, and Over Age 20.

A nonrandomized convenience sample of all female employees of the Cleburne Independent School District (n=253) was utilized in this study. The instrument was distributed along with a cover letter to the principals of all schools within that district or to

designated responsible individuals at the various administrative offices. These individuals then distributed the Carver's Women and Cigarette Advertising Instrument and cover letter to all female employees at that campus or office. The investigator picked up all surveys from the administrative office and proceeded to determine the summative score of each subject. A two-sample t-test was used to determine group differences which resulted in a score of  $<0.0001$  with a level of significance of  $\leq .05$ . The hypothesis was rejected.

### **Discussion**

The definitions of "professional" and "nonprofessional" which were used in this study left some room for discrepancies. "Professional" was anyone who had earned a college degree and "nonprofessional" was anyone who did not possess a college degree. This allowed someone who perhaps had several years of college to be classified as a nonprofessional and allowed someone who had two-year college degree to be classified as a professional. The purpose of classifying these two groups was to determine if the level of education influenced the subject's perception of targeting by cigarette advertising. The definitions which were used to determine the subject's inclusion in each group, however, could allow someone with a higher level of learning to be classified in the nonprofessional status simply because her requirements for a college or university degree had not been fully satisfied. The results, therefore, could be skewed.

This study substantiates other literature which reported that the percentage of smokers who are professional or educated females are beginning to equal those of the less

educated female. The percentage of professional females who were current or former smokers (24.1%) was only slightly less than the percentage of their nonprofessional females counterparts (27.8%).

The percentages of those reporting to be current smokers (professional--10.9%; nonprofessional--11.0%) is less than those reported in the 1994 National Health Interview Survey (23.1%). If this is an accurate portrayal of Cleburne Independent School Districts' female smoking habits, it is also well below the Healthy People 2000 objective which as stated previously seeks to reduce the prevalence of cigarette smoking among adults to no more than 15%.

There were two interesting discoveries in the comparison of smoking initiation age between the professional and nonprofessional groups. The fact that 15.8% of the nonprofessional group began smoking between the ages of 10 and 13 compared to only 2.8% of the professional group was one marked difference. This might indicate that the nonprofessional group might be influenced to start smoking at an early age perhaps as a result of peer pressure more so than the professional group.

The other interesting fact was that 25% of the professional group members initiated smoking after age 20, whereas only 10.5% of the nonprofessional group began smoking that late in life. It is possible that the professional group might start to smoke later in life as part of a coping mechanism due to stresses associated with achieving higher education levels and/or careers associated with this higher educational achievement. Another study might determine the difference in the perceptions of targeting by cigarette

advertisements by those who begin smoking at the various age levels.

It would also be interesting to compare the perceptions about cigarette advertising targeting between the group of females who are current or former smokers and the perceptions of the group who have never smoked. It is possible that nonsmokers do not pay much or any attention to cigarette advertisements at all since they do not use the product depicted.

It should be noted that historically, men have been researched more often in smoking related subjects than females. It could be very beneficial, as the number of female smokers has risen, if more studies about cigarette usage would focus entirely on women. Perhaps this would give insight as to why women risk their health, lives, and sometimes that of their offspring for the sake of cigarette use.

Furthermore, this should be considered a pilot study. The results of Cronbach's Standardized Alpha test indicate some modifications in the instrument need to be made. The neutral statements should be eliminated and replaced with statements which will reflect either distinctly favorable or unfavorable perceptions toward cigarette advertising. Running a Cronbach's Alpha prior to the distribution of the instrument will allow for strong statements to be retained while weaker statements could be modified or eliminated entirely. This would make sure the test was more internally consistent which would help insure reliability.

### **Conclusions**

The results of this study indicated that the female employees of Cleburne Independent School District do perceive they are being targeted by tobacco companies through cigarette advertising. It was also determined that there is a difference between the professional and nonprofessional groups of females in the perceptions about this targeting.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations for this study are:

1. To improve generalizability of the results, replication of similar studies should be conducted with a larger sample population, and more than one independent school district.
2. Redefine the distinction between the terms "professional" and "nonprofessional."
3. The reliability and validity of the Carver's Women and Cigarette Advertising Instrument should be improved.

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## APPENDIXES



APPENDIX A

LETTER OF AGENCY APPROVAL

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH STUDIES  
AGENCY PERMISSION FOR CONDUCTING SURVEY

The Cleburne Independent School District

GRANTS TO

Elisa Carver

a student enrolled in the master's degree program in Health Studies at Texas Woman's University, the privilege of its facilities/data in order to study the following problem:

What is the attitude of the professional and non-professional female in Texas toward advertising by the cigarette industry?

The conditions mutually agreed upon are as follows:

1. The agency (may) (may not) be identified in the final report.
2. The names of consultative or administrative personnel in the agency (may) (may not) be identified in the final report.
3. The agency (wants) (does not want) a conference with the student when the report is completed.
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: 11-22-96

Elisa Carver  
Signature of Student

James R. Hunter  
Signature of Agency  
Barbara J. Hunter  
Thesis Committee Chairman

## APPENDIX B

### INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

## WOMEN AND CIGARETTE ADVERTISING

The following survey is designed to assess your perceptions about cigarette advertising. Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements on the following scale. Beside each statement, please indicate your belief by circling either an SA, A, U, D, or SD. There are no right or wrong answers. A returned, completed survey indicates your willingness to be included in this study.

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Maybe or Undecided; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree  
Circle One

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. The tobacco industry does <i>not</i> direct some of its advertising in printed media toward women.    | SA A U D SD |
| 2. Advertisements which feature long, slim cigarettes would appeal more to women than men.               | SA A U D SD |
| 3. Cigarette billboard advertisements which depict smoking use mainly men or masculine themes.           | SA A U D SD |
| 4. Cigarette advertisements in magazines target men and women equally.                                   | SA A U D SD |
| 5. There are cigarette advertisements in magazines or on billboards which are meant to influence women.  | SA A U D SD |
| 6. A cigarette advertisement which shows a woman smoking is directed more toward women than men.         | SA A U D SD |
| 7. A cigarette advertisement which says "...it's a <i>woman</i> thing" doesn't necessarily target women. | SA A U D SD |
| 8. Some advertisements depict cigarettes which are manufactured specifically for women.                  | SA A U D SD |
| 9. Cigarette manufacturers do <i>not</i> specifically target either men or women.                        | SA A U D SD |
| 10. Cigarette advertisements do <i>not</i> appeal to a woman's freedom to make her own choices.          | SA A U D SD |

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Age:            ☐ Under 25    ☐ 25-40    ☐ 41-55    ☐ Over 55

Have you earned a college degree? ☐ Yes    ☐ NO

Smoking Status: ☐ Never Smoked    ☐ Currently a Smoker    ☐ Former Smoker

If you currently smoke or have smoked, indicate age you began smoking: ☐ 10-13; ☐ 14-17; ☐ 18-20; ☐ over 20

**THANK-YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY  
 PLEASE RETURN TO PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE AS INSTRUCTED**

## APPENDIX C

### INSTRUMENT COVER LETTER

February 18, 1997

To whom it may concern:

The past several years have seen a significant increase in the targeting of women in advertisements by the cigarette industry. Not surprisingly, this has been accompanied by an increase in the numbers of women who smoke. It has been projected that the percentage of women who smoke will be greater than the percentage of men smokers.

The Cleburne Independent School District has been selected to participate in a study which will seek to identify how women perceive different forms of cigarette advertising. To ensure that the study is truly representative, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned. Please place your completed survey in the attached envelope and seal. Return to the principal or other person who is asked to collect completed questionnaires. To be included in this research, the questionnaire must be returned in one week.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. Your name is not to be put on the form. Your return of the survey will indicate your permission for the information to be included in this study.

The results of this study will be made available to the school district with instructions to post the findings.

Your participation in this research may enable health educators to be more effective in the prevention of smoking by women. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research or how it is being conducted you may contact the Office of Research and Grants at Texas Woman's University at (817)898-3375 or feel free to contact me at (817)641-1032.

If you choose *not* to participate in this study, please place your blank questionnaire in the provided envelope, seal and return to the designated person.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Elisa Carver

APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL'S COVER LETTER

February 18, 1997

To whom it may concern:

The envelopes in this packet contain a survey which intends to determine whether women perceive they are being targeted by the tobacco industry through cigarette advertising. The information returned on the surveys will be confidential as the attached cover letter indicates. The respondent should enclose the survey in the envelope provided. If she chooses *not* to participate in the survey, she should return the blank survey in the envelope.

Thank you for distributing this survey to *all* female employees on your campus or in your administrative office. This survey seeks the input from both smokers and nonsmokers.

The envelopes containing the returned surveys may be collected in the large folders provided. You may return these to the main administrative office or you may call me at 641-1032 and I would be happy to collect them from your campus myself. These surveys need to be returned no later than February 28, 1997.

Again, thank you for your assistance in this study.

Sincerely,

Elisa Carver