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A Study of Trends in Alcohol/Safety Public Information Campaigns 1970-1975

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FINAL REPORT

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| 16. Abstract A structured content analysis of major alcohol/safety public information campaign materials was conducted. Television and radio spots, print ads and pamphlets from 30 governmental, private, industrial and voluntary campaigns conducted between 1970 and 1975, were analyzed. Trends in theme, message and audience characteristics were identified and discussed in light of current directions of the field. | | | | | |
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ABSTRACT

A structured content analysis of major alcohol/safety public information campaign materials was conducted. Television and radio spots, print ads and pamphlets from 30 governmental, private, industrial and voluntary campaigns conducted between 1970 and 1975, were analyzed. Trends in theme, message and audience characteristics were identified and discussed in light of current directions of the field.

PREFACE

This is the final report of a study conducted for the Office of Driver and Pedestrian Programs, U.S. Department of Transportation. The study was made possible because contributions from the private and public sector have maintained the Public Information Materials Collection of the Highway Safety Research Institute.

Mrs. Ann Grimm, who coordinates the Materials Collection, deserves credit for facilitating the use of the Materials Collection as a research base.

Findings and conclusions based on the analysis of Materials Collection items are only generalizable to the population of such materials in the HSRI collection. We feel, however, that this set of items is sufficiently complete to permit valid, systematic research with cautious generalizations.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1974 a contract with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration permitted the development of a methodology to utilize the Materials Collection of the Public Communication Project as a research base.¹ This study was made possible because of the procedure and methodological foundation established in 1974.

The Materials Collection is an ongoing function of the Public Communication Project, Systems Analysis Division, Highway Safety Research Institute.

The primary purposes of the Public Communication Project are to foster the coordination of public information campaigns and to encourage cooperation among organizations planning campaigns in alcohol and traffic safety. The Public Communication Project maintains a materials collection of campaign materials from approximately 300 organizations of all types--industries, governmental agencies, commercial and voluntary organizations, insurance firms, and a wide range of state and local programs and projects. Recently the Public Communication Project was designated as the repository for campaign materials produced by the nationwide Alcohol Safety Action Projects supported by NHTSA. The collection is primarily intended to aid in the design of future campaigns and the improvement of current activities by making available to those responsible for such programs, materials produced in previous campaigns. Individuals and groups who are about to embark on a new program are able to use the materials collections, as a resource for consultation, to see what other organizations have created. Utilization of the collection is expected to aid in preventing mistakes that have been made in the past and to encourage more widespread use of innovative and effective ideas. At the present time the materials collection contains approximately 600 journal articles and research or evaluation reports, over 3000

¹Douglass, R.L., Robinson, E.A.R., and Johnston, P.A. "A Comparative Analysis of 25 Major Campaigns in Alcohol and Highway Safety". Volume I, Public Communication Group Materials Collection Review. Highway Safety Research Institute, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. May 1974, p. 5. UM-HSRI-AL-74-5-1.

promotional and other campaign items such as pamphlets, television and radio spots and scripts, print ads, etc.; and over 50 newsletter subscriptions from a wide range of programs in the U.S. and abroad.

The Public Communication Project was initiated in 1970. To a limited extent this report is intended to identify any changes in the field of public information in alcohol safety that have occurred during the period of performance of the Project. Obviously we are not suggesting that this small project is responsible for any changes we might wish to claim. We may, however, speculate about the partial contribution of the project in certain changing areas of this complex and dynamic field since 1970.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The basic methodologies of this study include the definition of a research "population" of public information campaign materials, the identification and standardization of analytic variables, coding and data analysis methods and, finally, the limitations and advantages of the final design.

2.1 A Population of Campaign Materials

Within the Materials Collection of the Public Communication Project are a subset of campaigns which are large in comparison to other campaigns in the 1970-1975 time period. The degree of completeness of these campaigns, determined by the number of items in the collection compared to the total number of items produced by campaigns, was used as a principal eligibility criterion for inclusion in this analysis.

The set of campaigns finally selected represents major actors in the field from the public and private sectors. The campaigns included are listed by sponsorship in Table 2.1.

The materials produced by these campaigns which were in the Materials Collection as of July 1976 define the study population of items for the present analysis. The limits of this population while obvious, need to be specified to reduce any unadvisable generalizations.

First the population is only representative of public information campaigns with similar sponsorship, budgets and auspices.

Second the population is composed of those campaigns actively cooperating with the Public Communication Project by providing items to be included in the Materials Collection on a routine and on-going basis.

We feel that modest generalizations to the full universe of public information programming are valid because the selected campaigns

Table 2.1

1970-1975 Campaigns Included in Analysis

National Programs

Addiction Research Foundation, Toronto, Ontario
Alcohol Education Center, Jamestown, North Carolina
Allstate Insurance, Northbrook, Illinois
American Automobile Association (AAA), Falls Church, Virginia
Canada Safety Council, Ottawa, Ontario
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS), Washington, D.C.
General Motors, Detroit, Michigan
Kemper Insurance, Long Grove, Illinois
State of Michigan, Department of Public Health, Lansing, Michigan
National Council on Alcoholism, New York, New York
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, D.C.
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Rockville, Maryland
National Safety Council, Chicago, Illinois
Rutger's Center of Alcohol Studies, New Brunswick, New Jersey
Seagrams, New York, New York
Seagrams, Montreal, Quebec
State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co., Bloomington, Illinois
Virginia Highway Safety Department, Richmond, Virginia

Local Action Programs

Alcohol Traffic Safety Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Alcohol Safety Action Project (ASAP), Charlotte, North Carolina
ASAP, Columbus, Georgia
ASAP, Columbia, South Carolina
ASAP, Denver, Colorado
ASAP, Fairfax County, Virginia
ASAP, Hennepin County, Minnesota

Table 2.1 continued

ASAP, Nassau County, New York

ASAP, Portland, Oregon

ASAP, King County, Seattle, Washington

ASAP, Sioux City, Iowa

ASAP, Wichita, Kansas

are dominant at this time. The fact that the collection most validly represents only itself, however, should not be disregarded and we will infrequently extrapolate any findings or conclusions beyond the rather conservative limits of the population of campaign materials.

2.2 Analytic Variables

The analytic framework for this study was developed and reported in 1974.² The definition conceptual and operational, of variables for analysis is based on the following conceptual model of public information materials:

Campaign Item = f (Medium, Theme, Message, Audience)

Where discrete categories of each key concept include:

MEDIA:

- 1 Radio Spot Ad
- 2 Television Spot Ad (or story board)
- 3 Pamphlet
- 4 Print Ad, Poster or Bus Card

THEME: Normative

- 1.1 "Get (keep) the problem drinker (excessively drunk drivers) off our highways (the road)."
- 1.2 "Urge problem drinkers (any drunk person) to not drive; keep them from driving; drive a drinker home."
- 1.3 "Drink moderately; don't be afraid to say 'no'; if you chose to drink, drink responsibly; know your limits; live within your limits; cut your drinking short, not your life; if you're going to drink and drive, use the (BAC) chart first."
- 1.4 "Help stop the traffic (drunk driver) slaughter, Scream Bloody Murder; help change the laws."
- 1.5 "Let's keep our friends alive."
- 1.6 "Don't drive when you've had too much, don't drive when you're drunk."
- 1.7 "Don't let drivers get drunk, you really can't ask a driver to have another drink; don't ask a man to drink and drive."
- 1.8 "Don't drink and drive; if you've had anything to drink, don't drive; drink, drive-rationalize."
- 1.9 "Cure the alcoholic driver; urge problem drinkers to get help."

²Douglass, et. al., 1974 op. cit.

- 1.10 "Be a friend first and then a good host."
- 1.11 "Friends don't let friends drive drunk."
- 1.12 "Other"

THEME AND MESSAGE: Non-normative

- 2.1 Personal Threat (cost, etc.)
- 2.2 Social Threat
- 2.3 Legal Threat
- 2.4 Health or Life Threat
- 2.5 Value (judgment)
- 2.6 Informative, general and behavior (action-intervention suggestions)
- 2.7 Informative, statistical
- 2.8 Informative, legal facts
- 2.9 Informative, alcoholism, effects of alcohol consumption
- 2.10 Feedback Information (addresses, telephone number)
- 2.11 Informative, drugs and effects of drugs

Promotional

- 3.1 Campaign success to date, "What we've done so far."
- 3.2 Campaign details, "What we will be doing, or are doing now."
- 3.3 Sponsoring agent advertised.
- 3.4 What (you) can do to help the campaign, specific suggestions.
- 3.5 "What you can do...contact us for more information."

AUDIENCE:

- 1 General Public
- 2 Problem Drinkers and Alcoholics
- 3 Social Drinkers
- 4 Families and Friends of Problem Drinkers, Alcoholics and Social Drinkers
- 5 Drivers
- 6 Young People, Teenagers, College-age Youth, Pre-teens
- 7 Law Enforcement Personnel, Judges, Police, Court Workers
- 8 Minority Groups
- 9 Businessmen and Employees
- 10 Physicians and Lawyers
- 11 Civic Groups, Religious Groups, Service Organizations
- 12 Other: Legislators, Government Officials, Opinion Leaders, the Press, etc.

Thus, the conceptual model of campaigns and campaign items was operationalized by restricting item assignments to appropriate categories within broad conceptual groups. The categories that define campaigns and component items were developed by a combination of theoretical, practical and empirical decisions in 1974. The code values were upgraded for the present analysis to include values that were unique to the 1974-1975 time period and, therefore, not identified before.

2.3 Analysis

Coded data sets for each campaign were analyzed to identify time-ordered changes by campaign auspices, sponsorship or sponsorship category. It soon became clear that the code values were too finely determined to permit meaningful aggregated analysis and sub-aggregates were created by combining variable categories. Specifically the following combinations were used:

Theme Analysis Categories

Directive = Σ (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9)*

Third Person Intervention = Σ (1.2, 1.5, 1.7, 1.11, 1.12)

Non-Normative = Σ (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5)

Normative = Σ (2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11)

Promotional = Σ (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)

Audience Analysis Categories

Target Group = Σ (2, 3, 5, 6, 8)

Third Person Primary Intervention = Σ (4)

Third Person Secondary Intervention = Σ (9, 10)

Other = Σ (1, 7, 11, 12)

Message Analysis Categories

Informational Normative = Σ (2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11)

Non-Informational-Non-Normative = Σ (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5)

Frequency counts, by year for the time period 1970-1975 were made from the coded data. Percentages of analysis categories of total annual materials reviewed were computed. Because NHTSA materials dominated several categories in the analyses of themes and audiences, the NHTSA contribution in terms of items was isolated. The separation of NHTSA from the campaigns permitted the testing of certain hypotheses that could otherwise have been obscured.

* Code values refer to variable categories identified in Section 2.2.

Four initial hypotheses were tested in the analytic phase of this study. These hypotheses included:

- H₁ Non-Normative, Non-Informational Themes and Messages became less common over time among all campaigns.
- H₂ Campaign Themes and Messages have reflected increasing reliance on third person intervention and primary prevention.
- H₃ Promotional Themes and Messages have become less common over time.
- H₄ Audiences, Themes and Messages have become more sophisticated and directed toward target groups and third person interventions instead of toward the general public.

To an extent, if supported, each hypothesis is related to the system of public, private and official programs that produce public information campaigns and the extent to which these various and heterogeneous organizations have learned to cooperate and learn from each other and from past inadequacies.

3.0 FINDINGS

The specific findings of the content analyses will be presented first, in order of hypothesis presentation, followed by other observations. General impressions that entered during the study will be presented after the more detailed findings.

3.1 Findings Associated with Original Hypotheses

The first hypothesis stated that:

Non-Normative, Non-Informational themes and messages became less common over time among all campaigns.

As shown in Tables 3.1 - 3.5, this hypothesis was variously tested. A noticeable decrease in Non-Normative, Non-Informational messages was found among TV spots over the 1970-1975 time period. Concurrent trends for other media, however, were less clear. A relative increase in Informational-Normative messages in the Print Ad medium can be observed, however this is offset by a decrease in the volume of print-ad production during the same time period.

Hypothesis 2 states that:

Campaign themes and messages have reflected increasing reliance on third person intervention and primary prevention.

Among television items a modest increase in Informational-Normative messages; with the most noticeable increase among items produced by NHTSA with third person intervention increasing from 33% in 1973 to 100% in 1974 and 1975.

A clear shift toward third person intervention and primary prevention is apparent between 1972 and 1975 in the Print Ad medium. Again the item analysis identified NHTSA as the principle force in the medium toward behaviorally-oriented themes and messages.

The radio medium between 1970 and 1975 experienced a general drift toward third person intervention; however, the mix of such themes

Table 3.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CAMPAIGN AUDIENCES BY YEAR

| Medium/Analytic Code Category | 1970 | | 1971 | | 1972 | | 1973 | | 1974 | | 1975 | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Total N | NHTSA % | Total N | NHTSA % | Total N | NHTSA % | Total N | NHTSA % | Total N | NHTSA % | Total N | NHTSA % |
| Television Spots | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Target Group | --- | --- | 35 | 80 | 5 | 26 | 5 | 24 | --- | --- | 13 | 61 |
| Third Person Primary In- tervention | --- | --- | 8 | 18 | 4 | 21 | 3 | 14 | 4 | 57 | 4 | 19 |
| Third Person Secondary Intervention | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Other (general public) | 1 | 100 | 2 | 100 | 10 | 53 | 13 | 62 | 9 | 70 | 3 | 43 |
| Totals | 1 | 0 | 45 | 0 | 19 | 5 | 21 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 21 | 4 |
| Radio Spots | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Target Group | --- | --- | 9 | 41 | 46 | 54 | 53 | 61 | 4 | 8 | 10 | 37 |
| Third Person Primary Intervention | --- | --- | 8 | 36 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 2 | 15 | 13 | 48 |
| Third Person Secondary Intervention | --- | --- | --- | --- | 3 | 40 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Other (general public) | 10 | 100 | 5 | 23 | 25 | 30 | 21 | 24 | 7 | 33 | 4 | 15 |
| Totals | 10 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 83 | 0 | 87 | 13 | 27 | 14 | 24 | 9 |

*within-group, by-strata percentage NHTSA contribution

Table 3.3 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CAMPAIGN THEMES BY YEAR

| Medium/Analytic Code Category | 1970 | | | | 1971 | | | | 1972 | | | | 1973 | | | | 1974 | | | | 1975 | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------|-----|-----------|----------|-------|-----|-----------|----------|-------|-----|-----------|-----------|-------|-----|-----------|-----------|-------|-----|-----------|----------|-------|-----|
| | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Television Spots | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Directive | 1 | 100 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | 5 | 25 | 5 | 100 | 9 | 43 | 7 | 78 | 3 | 38 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Third Person Intervention | --- | --- | --- | --- | 6 | 32 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | 2 | 10 | 2 | 100 | 4 | 50 | 4 | 100 | 4 | 29 | 4 | 100 |
| Non-Normative | --- | --- | --- | --- | 1 | 5 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | 1 | 5 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Normative | --- | --- | --- | --- | 12 | 63 | --- | --- | 6 | 30 | --- | --- | 7 | 33 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Promotional | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | 9 | 45 | --- | --- | 2 | 10 | 2 | 100 | 1 | 13 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Totals | 1 | 0 | | | 19 | 0 | | | 20 | 5 | | | 21 | 11 | | | 8 | 4 | | | 4 | 4 | | |
| Radio Spots | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Directive | 10 | 100 | --- | --- | 2 | 10 | --- | --- | 37 | 53 | --- | --- | 22 | 39 | 8 | 36 | 1 | 5 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Third Person Intervention | --- | --- | --- | --- | 6 | 39 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | 6 | 11 | 2 | 33 | 10 | 48 | 10 | 100 | 7 | 39 | 7 | 100 |
| Non-Normative | --- | --- | --- | --- | 2 | 10 | --- | --- | 2 | 3 | --- | --- | 2 | 4 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Normative | --- | --- | --- | --- | 10 | 48 | --- | --- | 22 | 31 | --- | --- | 16 | 28 | --- | --- | 9 | 43 | --- | --- | 5 | 28 | --- | --- |
| Promotional | --- | --- | --- | --- | 1 | 9 | --- | --- | 9 | 13 | --- | --- | 11 | 19 | 3 | 27 | 1 | 5 | --- | --- | 6 | 33 | --- | --- |
| Totals | 10 | 0 | | | 21 | 0 | | | 70 | 0 | | | 57 | 13 | | | 21 | 10 | | | 18 | 7 | | |

Table 3.4 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CAMPAIGN THEMES BY YEAR

| Medium/Analytic Code Category | 1970 | | | | 1971 | | | | 1972 | | | | 1973 | | | | 1974 | | | | 1975 | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|-------|-----|-----------|----------|-------|-----|-----------|-----------|-------|-----|-----------|----------|-------|-----|-----------|----------|-------|-----|-----------|----------|-------|-----|
| | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | | Total | | NHTSA | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Print Ads | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Directive | 5 | 41 | --- | --- | 26 | 83 | --- | --- | 19 | 49 | 9 | 47 | 20 | 86 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 50 | --- | --- | 4 | 50 | --- | --- |
| Third Person Intervention | --- | --- | --- | --- | 2 | 7 | --- | --- | 3 | 8 | --- | --- | 1 | 4 | 1 | 100 | 4 | 50 | 4 | 100 | 6 | 60 | 4 | 67 |
| Non-Normative | 4 | 33 | --- | --- | 2 | 7 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Normative | 3 | 25 | --- | --- | 2 | 7 | --- | --- | 9 | 23 | --- | --- | 1 | 4 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Promotional | --- | --- | --- | --- | 1 | 3 | --- | --- | 8 | 21 | 2 | 25 | 1 | 4 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Totals | 12 | 0 | | | 33 | 0 | | | 39 | 11 | | | 23 | 2 | | | 8 | 4 | | | 10 | 4 | | |
| Pamphlets | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Directive | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | 5 | 14 | --- | --- | 11 | 23 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 9 | --- | --- | 1 | 13 | --- | --- |
| Third Person Intervention | --- | --- | --- | --- | 1 | 7 | --- | --- | 1 | 3 | --- | --- | 2 | 4 | --- | --- | 1 | 5 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Non-Normative | 1 | 5 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | 1 | 5 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Normative | 16 | 80 | --- | --- | 10 | 71 | --- | --- | 12 | 33 | --- | --- | 23 | 48 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 64 | --- | --- | 5 | 63 | --- | --- |
| Promotional | 3 | 15 | --- | --- | 3 | 21 | 1 | 7 | 18 | 50 | --- | --- | 12 | 25 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 18 | --- | --- | 2 | 25 | --- | --- |
| Totals | 4 | 0 | | | 14 | 1 | | | 36 | 0 | | | 48 | 9 | | | 22 | 0 | | | 8 | 0 | | |

Table 3.5 CONTENT ANALYSIS CAMPAIGN MESSAGES BY YEAR

| Medium/ Analytic Code Category | 1970 | | 1971 | | 1972 | | 1973 | | 1974 | | 1975 | |
|-----------------------------------|------|-----|------|-----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Television Spots | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Informational-Normative | --- | --- | 22 | 65 | 40 | 80 | 19 | 61 | 7 | 47 | 19 | 95 |
| Non-Informational, Non-Normative | 1 | 100 | 12 | 35 | 10 | 20 | 12 | 39 | 8 | 53 | 1 | 5 |
| Totals | 1 | | 34 | | 50 | | 31 | | 15 | | 20 | |
| Radio Spots | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Informational-Normative | 10 | 50 | --- | --- | 71 | 60 | 59 | 50 | 24 | 62 | 14 | 64 |
| Non-Informational, Non-Normative | 10 | 50 | --- | --- | 47 | 40 | 60 | 50 | 15 | 38 | 8 | 36 |
| Totals | 20 | | 0 | | 118 | | 119 | | 39 | | 22 | |
| Print Ads | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Informational-Normative | 14 | 52 | 28 | 48 | 45 | 58 | 27 | 61 | 12 | 75 | 10 | 59 |
| Non-Informational, Non-Normative | 13 | 48 | 30 | 52 | 32 | 42 | 17 | 39 | 4 | 25 | 7 | 41 |
| Totals | 27 | | 58 | | 77 | | 44 | | 16 | | 17 | |
| Pamphlets | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Informational-Normative | 27 | 73 | 19 | 76 | 48 | 55 | 62 | 65 | 36 | 68 | 6 | 75 |
| Non-Informational, Non-Normative | 10 | 27 | 6 | 24 | 40 | 45 | 34 | 35 | 17 | 32 | 2 | 25 |
| Totals | 37 | | 25 | | 88 | | 97 | | 53 | | 8 | |

and messages with other content makes this trend in radio spot production less distinct.

Hypothesis 3 stated that:

Promotional Themes and Messages have become less common over time.

In general a shift away from promotional themes is noticeable among all media, however this is less clearly interpreted because the volume of all material has decreased along with the reduction in promotional items over time. The peak year for promotional themes was in 1972 with a steady reduction in such themes among television, radio and print ads through 1975. Pamphlets have not demonstrated a decrease in promotional themes during the time period; probably because this medium is well suited to public relations and organizational promotion. Also the limited involvement of those sponsors with a major investment in third person intervention themes and messages (usually in other media) helps explain the lack of change over time in the pamphlets.

Hypothesis 4, the final initial hypothesis proposed that:

Audiences, themes and messages have become more sophisticated and directed toward target groups and third person interventions instead of toward the general public; with relatively less dependence upon fear arousal and more emphasis on behavioral change.

In the media of print ads and television the item content analysis demonstrated an increase in the use of specific target groups. This was generally true for the other media. However the general decrease in the volume of materials somewhat confounds the interpretation of this increase. To some extent the increase in target group-specific audiences in Print Ads and Television Spots has been at the expense of other audiences. In all media except pamphlets, Target Groups and Third Person (for) Primary Prevention and Intervention have replaced general public (for) promotion and other non-behaviorally directed purposes.

The rapid development of NHTSA television spots in 1974 and 1975 into behaviorally-specific, primary intervention themes and messages with credible third party identification is one of the only striking findings of this analysis. It is quite apparent that the television items produced for NHTSA stand apart from the field in degree of sophistication.

Equally apparent, however, is the absence of television materials produced by or for other organizations with sophistication comparable to the 1974 and 1975 NHTSA campaigns. This phenomenon could be due to a ready acceptance and adoption of NHTSA materials in lieu of independent production, or a waning of interest by other organizations in the television medium.

The generally higher level of sophistication seen in NHTSA television spots is also found, but less dramatically, in radio spots. No durable trends are noticeable in pamphlets which are generally unchanged in audience, message, and theme content since 1973 when pamphlet production reached a maximum volume.

Holding NHTSA materials constant there are few clear trends among the total group of other sponsoring organizations' materials. A constant presence of Normative themes in between 22% and 48% of all items characterizes the field which can hardly be considered as progress. It is suggestive that the fear arousal norms in media materials production of the 1950's and 1960's has been replaced by less dramatic, but equally tenacious Normative themes in the 1970's.

3.2 Other Findings of the Content Analysis

Inspection of Tables 3.1 - 3.5 uniformly reveals a general decrease in the volume of materials produced by the full set of campaigns since 1973. This negative trend is in part an artifact in that several of the ASAP campaigns and others have been concluded since 1973 and other campaigns, of comparable size, have not entered the scene.

The general decrease in materials in 1974 and 1975, however, also reflects a reduction in the investment of several organizations that were previously deeply involved in public information in alcohol safety and alcohol problems.

There are some serious implications of this negative trend in campaign development by the majority of sponsors, concurrent with maintained interest and contribution by a few large sponsors. First, the credibility of the core group of sponsors that have participated actively in this field for several years will be challenged if other organizations fail to join in a multi-sponsor effort representing the full range of interests and viewpoints in alcohol safety. There will be a tendency over time for the materials to be stereotyped and dismissed by the public if the apparent base of support for alcohol safety is too narrow.

Second, and in a sense more wasteful, the utilization of research findings and research and development to create behaviorally-specific materials that are designed to promote prevention and third person intervention are characteristic of a very small minority of participating sponsors at this time. If it is true that the more sophisticated materials are being diffused to other campaigns where research capabilities are small, then the public will be exposed to high quality materials with relatively homogenous themes and messages. On the other hand, if the apparent decrease in organizational participation suggested in the content analysis is real and associated with diminished participation of past sponsoring organizations, then the best materials in recent years will be isolated and potentially of reduced effectiveness.

3.3 General Observations

There are some general developments in the 1970 to 1975 period that should not go unreported in this review. These developments are both positive and negative and will be mentioned, but not detailed here.

Fear arousal and highly emotional normative campaign themes and messages are infrequently found among campaigns developed between 1970 and 1975. While the argument of the effectiveness of fear arousal in health behavior remains inconclusive, there is general concurrence that this approach has failed to reap lasting results in alcohol safety.

The "responsibility" theme that has been the standard of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, Inc. (DISCUS) has had remarkable success, finding its place in public, private, and voluntary campaigns both nationally and at the local level. A number of distilled spirits and the alcoholic beverage producers have included suggestions of moderation, responsibility-to-others when drinking and other messages with their advertising since 1970. This development was very uncommon in years prior to 1970.

In this time period several organizations have initiated jointly sponsored campaigns with mutual benefits. These cooperative efforts include:

- a. NHTSA and National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- b. National Council on Alcoholism, Inc. with both NHTSA and NIAAA.
- c. NHTSA, NIAAA, and Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), (initiated by conference in 1972; however no campaign result)
- d. Exchanges of materials among Alcohol Safety Action Projects
- e. U.S. Jaycees and NIAAA
- f. Cooperative efforts of the U.S. Brewer's Association, the California Wine Institute and DISCUS.

There have been increased exchanges of materials, ideas and campaign components in the developmental stages of both large and small campaigns. This was cited as an objective in the 1970 conference on Public Information on Alcohol and Highway Safety held in Ann Arbor, Michigan^{*} and has, to a limited extent, become a reality. Particularly in the 1972-1973 period the homogeneity and complimentary character of a spectrum of campaigns contrasts with conflicting and incompatible materials of the 1968-1970 period.

There are still campaign materials that reflect the level of sophistication of the 1960's and earlier. It is not uncommon to find campaign items with technical errors, inaccurate target group identification and themes that conflict with the behavior-change orientation of the mid-1970's. It is possible that reduced funding levels, non-diffused research findings and poorly distributed evaluation research conclusions have all contributed to the occasional appearance of poorly designed materials and (probably) ineffective campaigns.

^{*}Public Information Programs on Alcohol and Highway Safety: Proceedings of National Conference of Governmental, Commercial and Voluntary Organizations. Editors: James W. Swinehart and Ann C. Grimm. Highway Safety Research Institute. 1972.

4.0 SUMMARY

From the structured analysis and other observations it has been determined that the population of public information campaign materials has become somewhat more sophisticated since 1970 in terms of behaviorally-specific themes and messages and well targetted audiences designed to effect third person intervention and prevention. This general trend has been most apparent by NHTSA in that most other campaign sponsors have reduced involvement in alcohol/safety or continued into 1974 and 1975 with materials not generically distinct from those of 1972 and 1973.

It has been suggested that promotional themes have decreased in television, radio and print ad material while pamphlets have continued to be primarily promotional items. Fear Arousal and other non-directive themes have been generally replaced with more effective content in the great majority of campaigns reviewed.

There is evidence of increased cooperation among campaign sponsors; however, there is also evidence that the state-of-the-art is not adequately diffused to all participating organizational sponsors.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the analyses and observations above we suggest the following recommendations:

- A. Greater utilization of sources of information about campaign design, material development and evaluation would benefit apparently isolated and/or small sponsoring organizations. We recommend that clearinghouses and collections of such information be made known to a broader base of campaigns at the appropriate staff levels to improve utilization of current practice and knowledge.
- B. If our detection of an apparent decrease in material development is associated with actual decreases in organizational involvement and/or public exposure to alcohol/safety public information, action should be taken to reverse this negative trend.
- C. Measurements need to be made of the extent to which behaviorally-specific materials with prevention and intervention objectives have been utilized by campaigns other than those NHTSA (or NHTSA affiliated) directed. It is necessary to determine the comparability of public exposure to public information of various sponsors and assess the level of sophistication of that exposure. The results and findings of the current study only reflect the materials produced by recent campaigns. These findings are totally independent of the utilization of campaign items in the field.

