

Dr. Valerie Lynn Schrader

Professor Tenure-Line

Communication Arts and Sciences

Title of your research project.

“Talk to Your Doctor:” A Rhetorical Analysis of Burkean Identification in Direct-to-Consumer Pharmaceutical Advertisements

Description of research. Please provide a few sentences that explain the question and the methods employed in this research project.

In this article, we use rhetorical criticism as a research method to apply Burkean identification to four direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical television commercials, suggesting that the commercials create a state of consubstantiality with the audience. We contend that the identification strategies of common ground, the assumed “we” through the use of the word “you,” and dissociation are utilized in these commercials to inspire consumers to initiate a conversation with their doctor about their healthcare needs. Based on the success direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertisements have had with inspiring patients to engage in a dialogue with their healthcare providers, we argue that Burkean identification could have significant implications when used in other areas of health communication studies, particularly in regards to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We suggest that applications of Burkean identification to health campaigns could increase their effectiveness and cause patient-consumers to be more receptive to the messages being presented.

Did this project include Penn State students as researchers?

Yes, Sophia Bates.

If yes to the above question, please state where it was published.

It is currently under review

What problem do you address with your research?

How people can connect with direct-to-consumer advertisements.