

Analyzing Vaping and Age on TikTok

Samuel Park¹, Avery Salerno², Kyle Palmberg², Megan A. Moreno²
 Waunakee Community High School¹, University of Wisconsin–Madison²



Introduction

- Vaping was initially seen as a replacement for conventional cigarettes, though it is now known to still be **damaging to health**, from its ability to **cause permanent lung damage** to its **highly addictive nature**
- Previous research has uncovered the fact that **adolescents and young adults (AYAs) are being exposed to various kinds of vaping content on social media** including comedic content, marketing, and warnings
- Studies have concluded that **AYAs find vaping more appealing** than conventional cigarettes
- Topics within posts about vaping on TikTok have not been explored

The purpose of this study was to analyze TikTok posts about vaping and compare these posts based on the creator's age.

Methods

Design: We conducted a **content analysis** of **vaping-related TikTok posts**.

Subjects: Our subjects were the **first 100 TikTok posts** under the search query **"vape"** that contained vaping content, were in English, and were created by a creator who showed themselves.

Measures:

Variable	Description
Number of likes	The like count of a post
Number of comments	The comment count of a post
Age of creator	Creators were categorized into AYA (adolescent & young adult) or adult
Mentions vaping's benefits	Creator states benefits of vaping in post
Mentions vaping's drawbacks	Creator states drawbacks of vaping in post
Tells audience to not vape	Creator explicitly tells audience to not vape

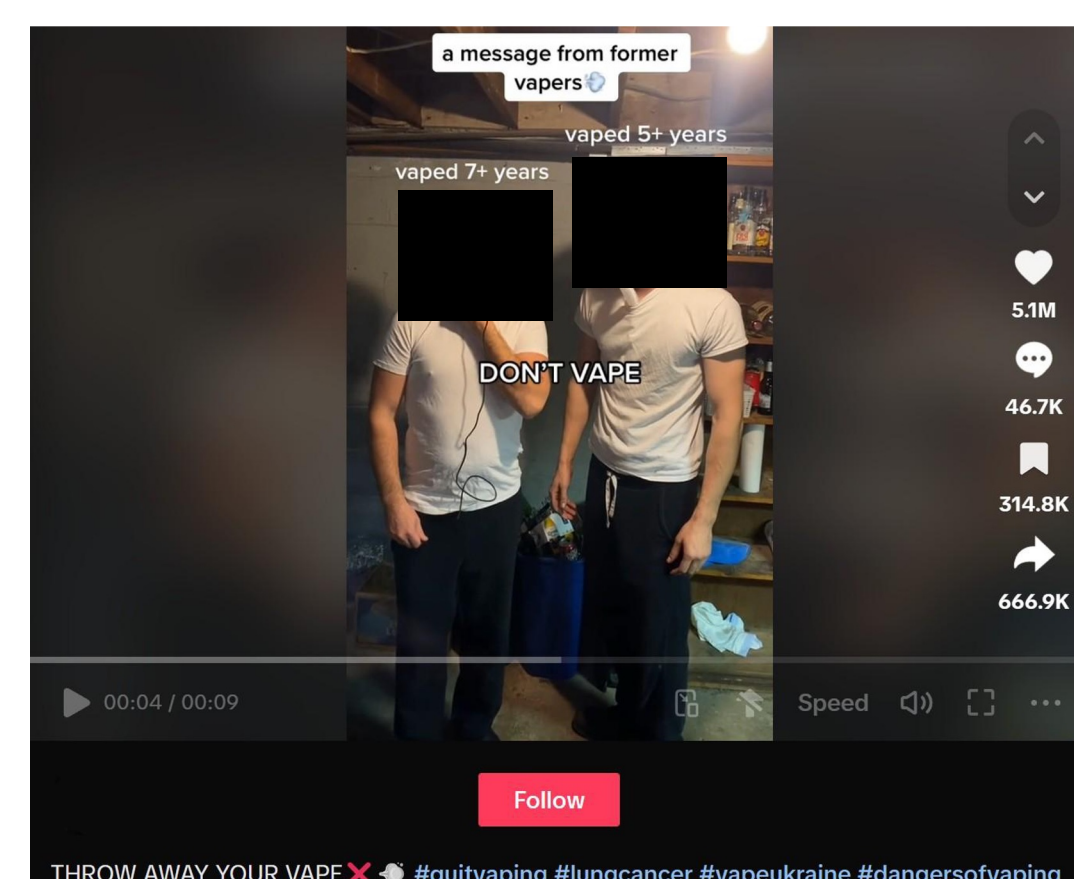
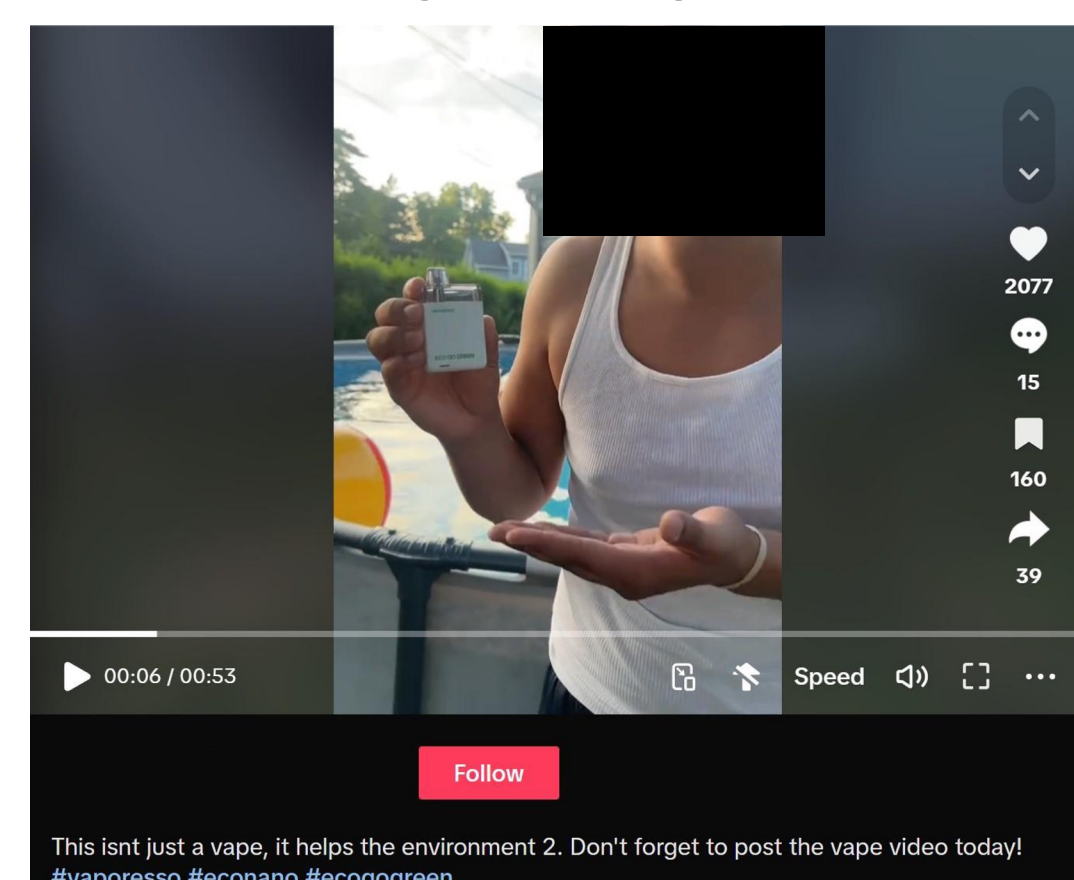
Analysis:

- The **percentages of posts** in each coding category
- The **percentages of posts** in each coding category **by age group**
- The **percentages of age groups** of individuals in the posts
- The **median like/comment numbers by age group**

Results

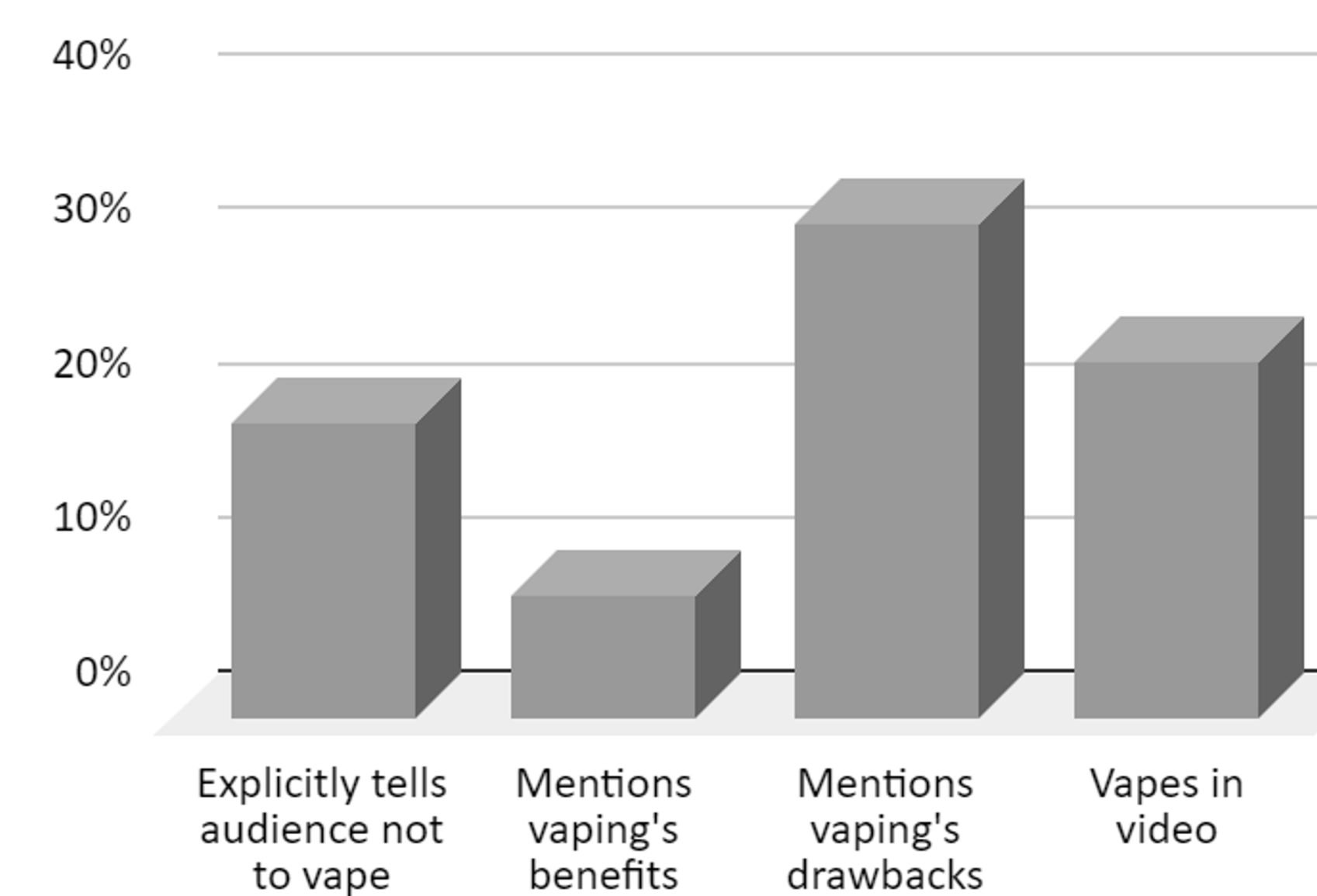
* **AYA = Adolescents & Young Adults (10-25 years old)**
Sample Size: 100 posts

AYA post using a vape and mentioning vaping's benefits



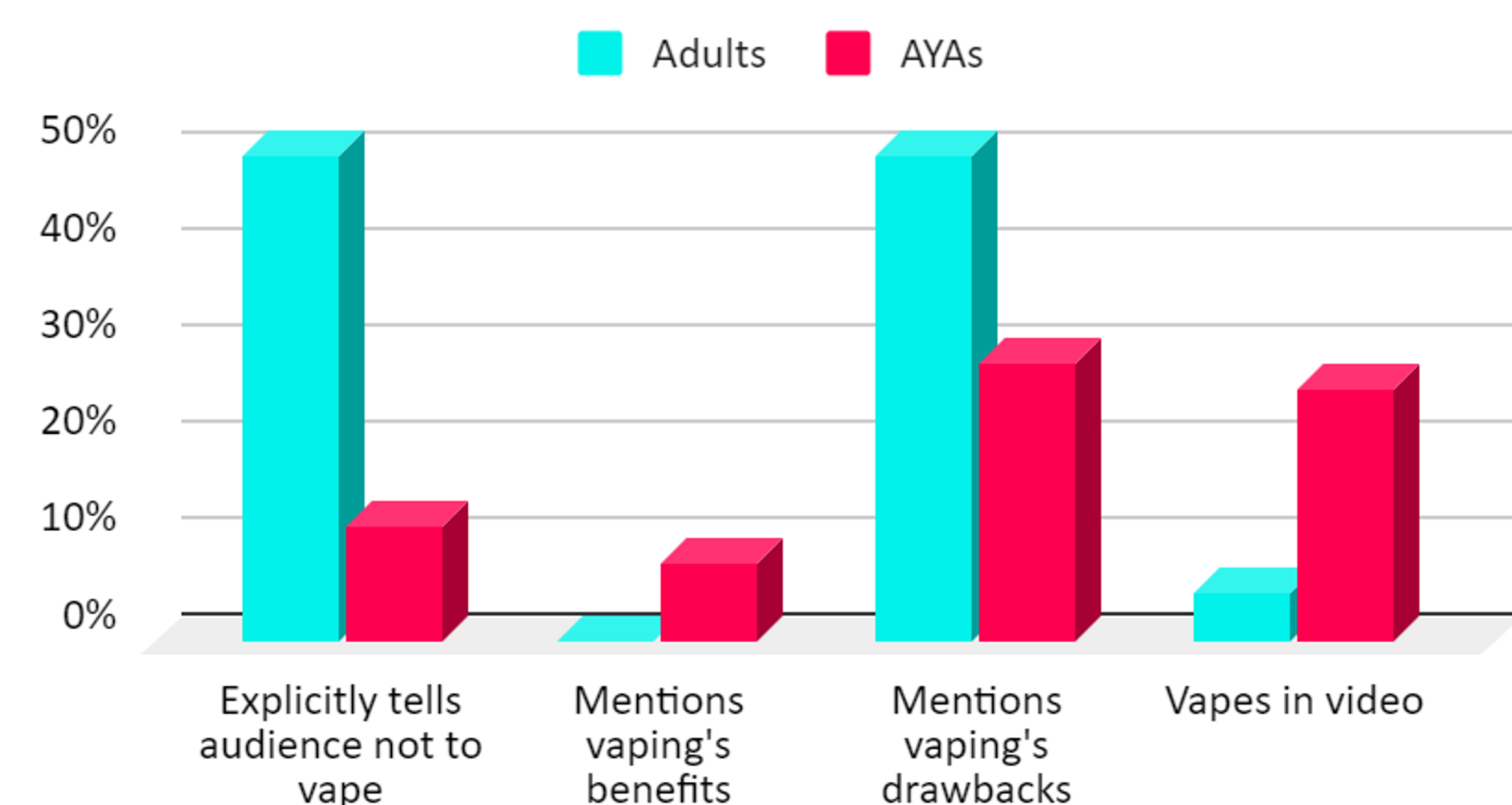
Adult post telling others not to vape and mentioning vaping's drawbacks

Percentages of Posts By Coding Category



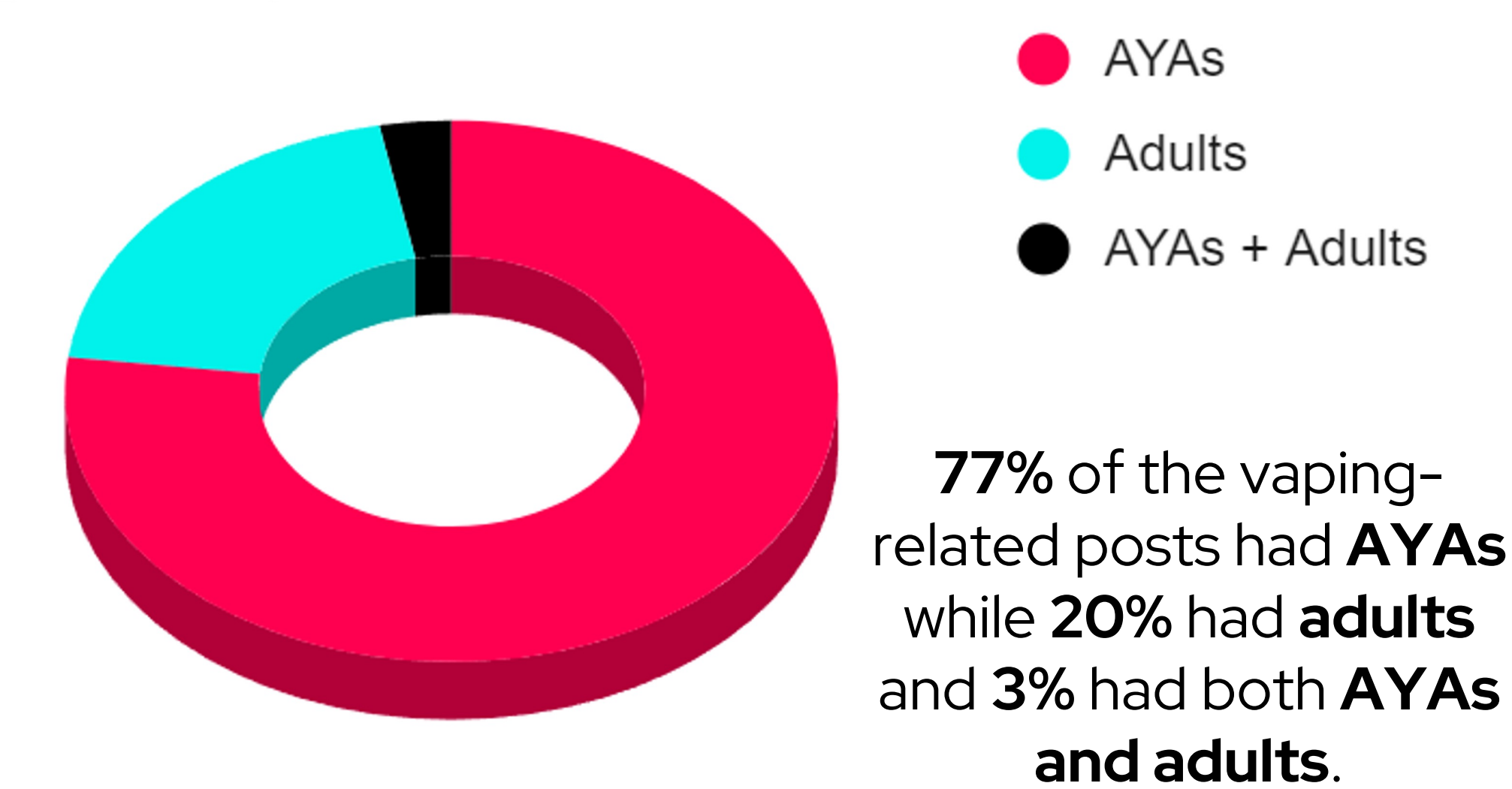
The **most common coding category** was posts mentioning **vaping's drawbacks**.

Percentages of Posts in Coding Categories by Age



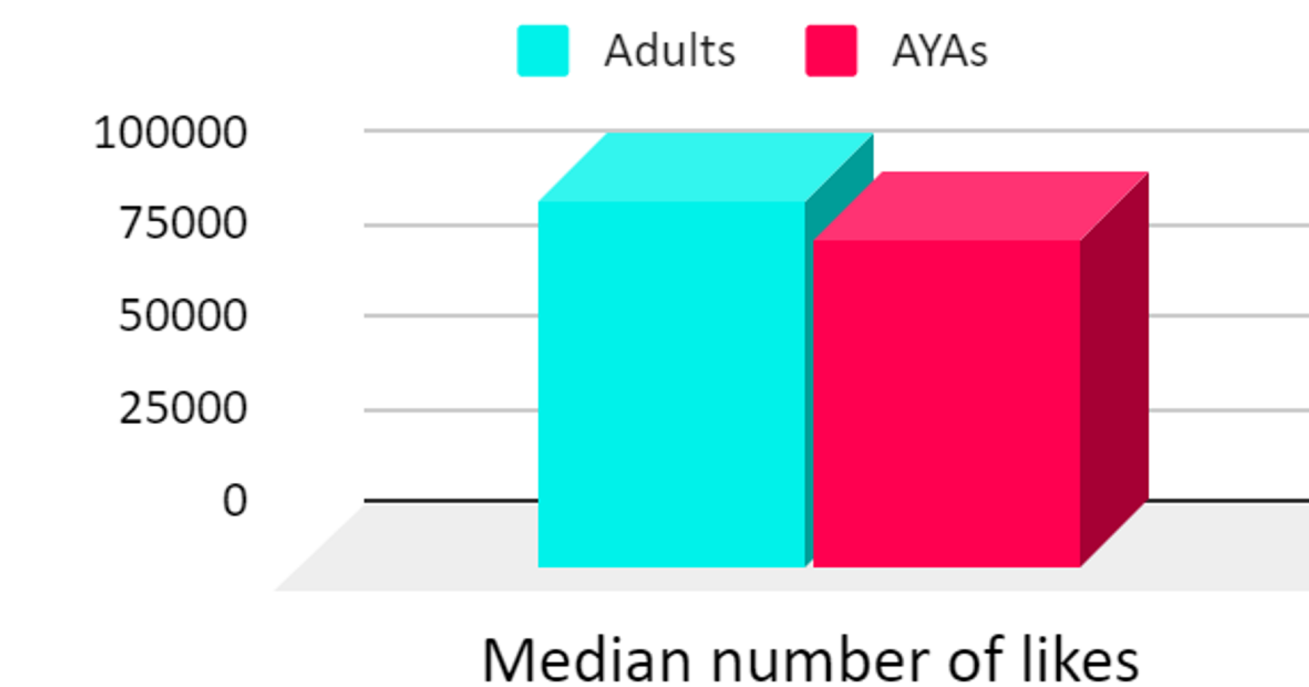
AYAs were more likely to vape and mention vaping's benefits in vaping-related posts than adults were.

Age Groups of Individuals in Post



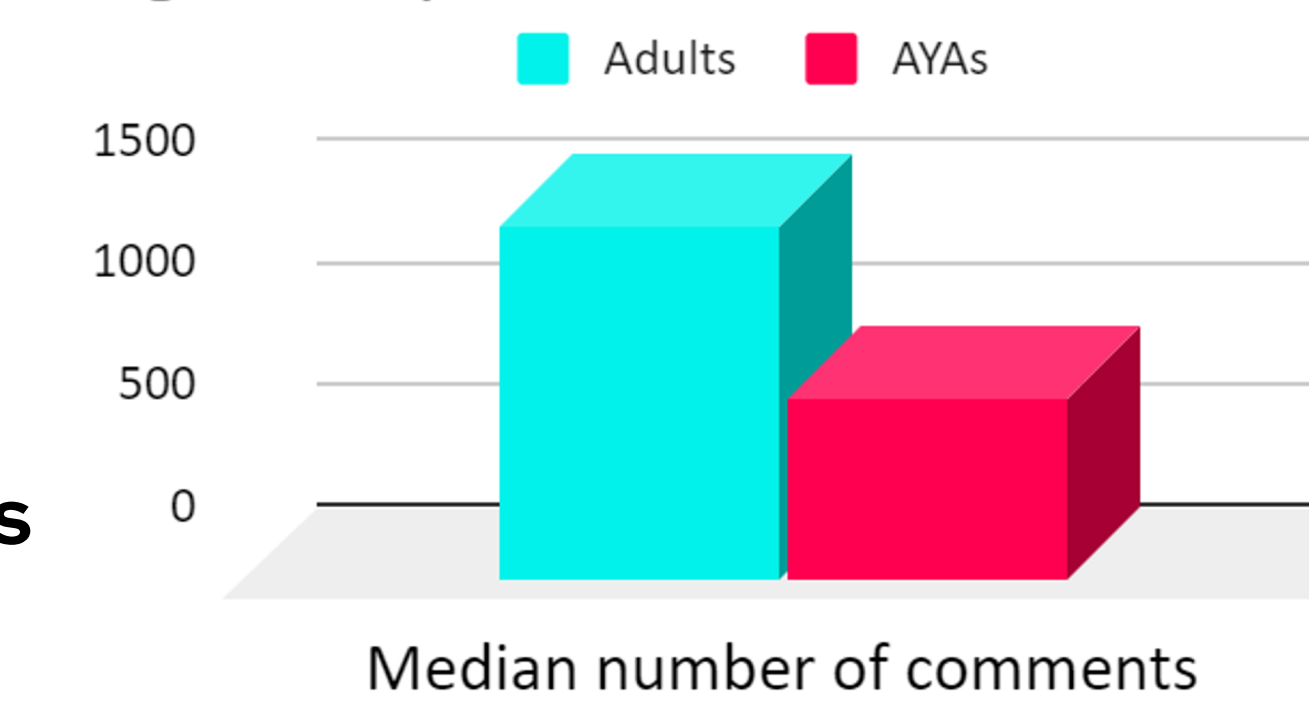
77% of the vaping-related posts had AYAs while **20% had adults** and **3% had both AYAs and adults**.

Age Group and Number of Likes



AYAs and adults were **similar in the median number of likes** their vaping-related posts gained.

Age Group and Number of Comments



Vaping-related posts made by **adults had nearly double the median amount of comments** as those by AYAs.

Conclusions

Main Points:

- AYAs are more prevalent** in vaping-related TikTok posts than adults
 - This may be due to the **targeting of AYAs by vape companies** in their product design and advertisement, leading to higher AYA use of vapes and more vaping-related TikTok posts with AYAs than posts with adults
- AYAs mentioned benefits of vaping more often** than adults, while **adults mentioned drawbacks of vaping more often** than AYAs
 - This may indicate that **AYAs tend to favor vaping more than adults** do in vaping-related TikTok posts

Limitations: Some of the sampled posts had **elements which were not accounted for** by our variables. For example, some **creators stated in posts that they were quitting** vaping, but their posts **could be classified as neither "Tells audience not to vape" nor "Mentions vaping's drawbacks"** as the post did not explicitly do either.

Future Directions: Further studies **analyzing the demographics of vaping-related TikTok posts** while **noting the types of posts** (e.g. joke posts, quitting posts, skits, informative posts) would help in learning more about **what type of vaping posts are most common** and get the **most engagement**.

Implications: Considering that AYAs tended to vape more often and mention vaping's benefits more than adults in vaping-related TikTok posts, the **importance of informing AYAs on the serious health risks of vaping** has been highlighted. This could look like **public education efforts** or increased **regulation around youth vaping**.

Acknowledgements

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Contact us!

Samuel Park
 samuelthegentle@gmail.com

