EEIA-2018
2018 International Conference "Education Environment for the Information Age"

THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL ADVERTISING ON THE SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION OF TEENAGERS

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the development of digital technologies and their influence on the formation of teenagers' personality. The article focuses on the sociological analysis of the problem, the changes in the social identification of adolescents under the influence of digital advertising. An attempt is made to identify the characteristics of modern digital advertising materials aimed at adolescents and the level of their social identification. The authors prove the idea that digital advertising acts as a resource and a means of influencing teenager' social identity. Conclusions about the significant impact of digital advertising on the formation of teenagers' social identity have been drawn based on the results of the research. The authors note that when young people stop identifying themselves with large groups, the role of digital advertising in forming social identity of adolescents increases. It has also been shown that the images produced by advertising primarily affect the emotional sphere of a person and usually carry a certain concept of identity. It finds a lively response in the minds of young people and becomes part of the socialization process. Digital advertising is becoming a powerful channel for creating images that influence values and meanings, and has a significant impact on forming the identity and behavior of modern youth.

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Keywords: Teenagers, digital technologies, digital advertising, identity.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century more and more young people spend much of their time on the Internet. Therefore, using screen media to establish contact with the audience is simply a way of following new, powerful trends in the way information is received and disseminated. According to a study by TNS Web Index47 (TNS Russia, 2016), 84% of Internet users go online using more than one device - for example, a computer and a smartphone, and among young people the proportion of mobile Internet use on a daily basis prevails over the desktop one. It could be noted that the processes of globalization and the fourth technological revolution led to a new social reality, a reconsideration of the factors influencing the formation of the individual, including the growing influence of digital advertising (Smakotina, 2017).

Advertising as a social institution, as well as the influence of advertising materials on the behavior models formation that guide personality in the context of global contradictory tendencies and factors, was analyzed in the works of Jennings Bryant (Bryant, & Thompson, 2004), Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1994), Armand Dayan (Dayan, 1994), O Savelieva, L. Dmitrieva, N. Rozenberg, V. Teremenko, E. Uralieva, L. Fedotova, A. Matantseva. Advertising as a social construct was viewed in the works of A.V. Kostina, A.R. Kozharinova (Kostina & Kozharinova, 2015), B. Borisov, I. Rozhkov, M. Starush, N. Starykh, V. Evstafiev.

Social dynamics and adaptation of individual groups and strata in a changing society are reflected in the works of M. Aleshina, D. Zaitsev, V. Pechenkin, L. Yakovlev. The spiritual values of everyday culture as a basis for the self-consciousness formation are considered by N. Rozenberg. Socialization as a complex cultural translation is studied by V. Vorobyov. The analysis of the sociocultural contexts of our time has been carried out in the works of G. Karpova, V. Shcheblanov, K. Sankova.

Aspects of social identification of the individual, social and socio-psychological mechanisms of identity formation have been studied by Erik Erikson (Erikson, 1996), William James (James, 1982), Étienne Balibar, (Balibar, 2003), Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard, 2004), H. Hartmann (Hartmann, 2015), G. Andreeva (identity search), M. Gorshkova, E. Belinskaya, Z. Golenkova, Y. Levada, V. Yadov (Yadov, 2010) (social and socio-psychological mechanisms of identity formation), V. Semenov (Semenov, 2015), P. Gurevich, E. Spirova (Gurevich & Spirova, 2015). E. (2015). I. Kon (Kon, 2008), Marshall McLuhan, William Thomas, Malcolm Waters look at young people as a social group, as well as their role in the modern society, the problems of youth as a social group.

The basis of the modern understanding of identity is the conceptualization of the relationship of "me" ad "the other", represented in symbolic interactionism by George Mead (Mead, 2009). According to Mead, the communicative nature of identity lies in the fact that a person begins to perceive himself or herself as others see them. Thus, recognizing the role of the other, an individual evaluates himself from his point of view. According Thomas Luckmann, Peter Berger (Berger, 1995), the ability to perceive oneself from the position of the other is the beginning of the identity forming. According to this approach, the substitution of the significant other by the synthesized one implies the completion of primary socialization.

According to I. Kon, "the human psyche should constantly process and coordinate a huge amount of information. The more heterogeneous internally and externally it is and the more diverse such information is, the more acute the individual self-awareness will be and the more complex and differentiated the image of "me" will be" (Kon, 2008).

In addition to Kon, B. Yadov, T. Baranova (Baranova, 2003), O. Dudchenko, A. Mytil, S. Solovieva (Solovieva, 2018), O.Popova (Popova, 2017) and other Russian sociologists analysed the issue of identity. The study of identification as self-determination of individuals in the system of social and group interactions in a situation of social instability was considered by Y. Kachanov and N. Shmatko, S. Klimova, A. Mudrik (Mudrik, 2014), A. Rean (Rean, 2015), P. Kozyreva and Y. Kozyrev.

The problem of personal choice is solved by people during their lives, but it is during adolescence that interests are formed, life goals are created in the most general form and personal abilities are revealed. The goals themselves can have an individual, local character (achieving personal well-being, providing a level and a way of life "like everyone else" or "not worse than others"), can become society-wide and be aimed at large-scale social transformations or creative success.

The factors influencing the process of social identification are different and they can be classified by their spheres of influence.

Firstly, these are social institutions that have a strong influence on a child in the process of the upbringing (family, education). Secondly, this is a social environment in which a child is formed, a circle of contacts: friends, social connections and relationships adopted in a particular community. Thirdly, these are sociocultural factors, which include normative model of culture, rules, customs, traditions, attitudes to religion or a confession type. Fourthly, the world of mass media, and a special role here can be given to advertising. The evolution of advertising is characterized by constant improvement of influence methods for the individual and a group of people. By resorting to such mechanisms as stereotyping and identification, advertising creates certain standards for young people, making them consumers of a specific brand, forming reference groups out of known, trustworthy individuals. At the same time the advertisement uses an image that evokes different emotions in young people - envy, admiration, the desire to imitate. A teenager begins to identify himself with a group of successful people, based on the standards of advertising culture. The mechanism of identification is particularly effective if the main motive for choosing a product is social approval. It is important for the consumer that his choice be appreciated by others. Such people can be aggressive, sometimes cruel, self-confident, communicative and wishing to have the life shown in the video, trying to adopt the qualities that help the character to achieve success.

Thus, advertising forms patterns of social action and conditions, such as life satisfaction, which is increasingly manifested in modern individuals not in the process of individual social formation, but as a result of the acquisition of a standardized set of goods.

Young people are more likely than other age groups to be influenced by advertising, it is at this life stage that the identity formation takes place. For this reason more attention is paid to advertising now, in particular digital advertising, its quality, focus and influence on self-awareness and social identification of adolescents.

2. Problem Statement

Given the fact that more and more teenagers are able to access the information resources of the Internet, they become out of reach for traditional media. In this case, the use of digital advertising is not only a way of obtaining information, but also a special channel of socialization. And with the advent and

wide dissemination of mobile devices that allow them to connect to the Internet, digital advertising messages accompany young people literally everywhere.

Advertising poplularizes models of behavior in the media information space, that subsequently serve as a means of forming certain values and stereotypes in society. It promotes the spread of a culture of consumption and general norms of behavior in large groups. Perceiving and evaluating the real object, young people consciously correlate it with a certain picture, image, standard.

In this connection, the authors are interested in analysing the degree of influence of digital advertising on the formation of identity and behavior patterns of modern youth.

3. Research Questions

The main research questions were: how much can advertising influence the process of forming teenagers' identity? Is digital advertising capable of influencing behavior patterns and the choice of certain types of lifestyle by young people, and what educational potential does digital advertising have in adolescent environments?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the potential of digital advertising in forming the social identity of teenagers.

5. Research Methods

Historical, philosophical, sociocultural and systemic approaches were used, as well as a comparative method in the theoretical part of the study where advertising is seen as an instrument of influence on the youth.

A survey (a questionnaire) was selected as an empirical method of research. Respondents aged 14-17 took part in this survey (the total sample size was 300 respondents).

Each block of questions of the questionnaire pursued its own goal, namely, it revealed certain characteristics of the subject of research. In our study, this corresponds to the assessment of the interest in advertising, the attractiveness of various types of advertising, significant values of respondents, the factors that influence the choice of goods, the perception of advertising and the socio-demographic section.

6. Findings

In 2016 a survey of teenagers in Moscow was conducted in order to determine the degree of influence advertising images has on young people, as well as to determine the potential of digital advertising in the formation of values. The object of the study were Moscow teenagers aged from 14 to 17. Based on the results of the survey, the following results were obtained.

As expected, most adolescents pay attention to advertising, 92.3% of respondents answered this question positively. Only 5.1% of young people indicated that they do not pay any attention to advertising. Advertising on the Internet is viewed as the most attractive and interesting type of advertising by 52.5% of adolescents and only 20% prefer advertising on TV. Also, most adolescents (66.7%) believe that advertising affects their behavior.

More than half of young people (55%) want to look like the heroes of Internet videos. Teenagers consider the following qualities of advertised characters to be the most attractive: visual appeal - 72.5%, interpersonal skills - 45%, self-confidence 42.5%, kindness and sympathy 37.5%, aggressiveness - 12.5%. In the system of values of young people visual appeal is a leading feature, which can be explained by the fact that these qualities are brought to the forefront in the biggest part of the information content in general and in digital advertising content in particular.

It is interesting to consider the question of the values of young people. The results of the survey showed that the main values for young people are: family (67%), love (31%), education (30%), material well-being (28%), work (21%), friendship (12%), success (12%), patriotism (8%). At the same time, only 27.5% of respondents believe that today's Internet advertising promotes such traditional values as family, health, love, and 74% of respondents agree with the statement that there are commercials on the Internet neglecting moral norms. Also 62.4% of respondents expressed the opinion that advertising does not take into account national traditions.

7. Conclusion

Digital advertising is not only an important channel for selling goods and services, but it also has several latent functions.

By exercising a significant influence on consumer preferences of young people, digital advertising encourages buying goods not only because they are necessary, but based on the external signs, design, brand, packaging, identifying a young person with a certain group. Conspicuous consumption helps young people to show their individuality, stand out among others and draw attention to themselves. Such consumption, influenced by advertising, becomes an addiction for many young people, influences their behavior, changes their priorities and motivation.

In case of abrupt changes in the society, when young people stop identifying themselves with large groups, the role of digital advertising in forming social identity of adolescents increases. The images produced by advertising primarily affect the emotional sphere of a person and usually carry a certain concept of identity. It finds a lively response in the minds of young people and becomes part of the socialization process. Digital advertising is becoming a powerful channel for creating images that influence values and meanings, and has a significant impact on forming the identity and behavior of modern youth.

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