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THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENTS ON PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Currently, the growing number of literary works in the field of psychology and pedagogy discusses the matter of the negative impact of media and advertisements on the development of pre-school children. Ever since it comes into this world, a child is exposed to the impact of an environment dominated by mass media. Constituting a vital element of these media, advertisements influence children from the very first years of their lives. Such impact gradually extends as children grow. Pre-school and elementary school children believe that advertisements present reality as it is and, thus, are prone to being manipulated. As they gain knowledge, however, they start to understand the purpose advertisements serve and are able to differentiate between the received messages. The lack of protective mechanisms makes young children the target group for many advertisers. By publishing their materials, especially in the TV, they intend to influence people's thinking. Considering these circumstances, this paper aims at identifying the impact of TV commercials on pre-school children. Keywords: children, media, advertisement, impact, damaging effect. Modern mass media Nowadays, mass media gradually extend their impact on people's lives.

The access to press, television, radio and the Internet enables citizens to track news about their neighbourhood, country or other parts of the world. Mass media provide modern people with a chance to relax and get their mind off everyday responsibilities. They also motivate citizens to communicate with others more frequently (cell phones, Skype, the Internet) [6]. It is no longer necessary to leave one's house to buy a newspaper, a book or a CD. Media provide quick and easy access to information, literature (e-books), entertainment, films, comedy shows, music of all kinds (including audio and video recordings), etc. [11]. Moreover,

media promote various kinds of computer games. Television and the Internet offer more and more space for purchasing and selling different goods. In this case, the impact of omnipresent advertisements on human behaviours and decisions extends. Undoubtedly, mass media have played a crucial role in the development of globalisation [11].

Children as mass media users For many years now, psychology and pedagogy, especially those schools which refer to developmental, cognitive and humanist theories, point to the influence of various groups of factors on a child's development [4;5]. The role of the resultant of dynamic relationship between the wide concept of a child's background (genetic and biological) and the impact of the environment it is raised in has gained popularity in the context of a child's development. It is assumed that the closest environment, i.e. micro-system, influences intellectual, emotional and social development of pre-school and elementary school children the most [6].

Taking this into consideration, the question which should be currently raised is this: what is and what should be the characteristic of such an environment and how it influences a child? For many years, this environment has been created and governed by the child's family. Now it is no longer so consistent – family competes with television, the Internet and other kinds of mass media. Although sometimes they support the family, in most cases mass media tend to manipulate, captivate, stultify, encourage laziness, indoctrinate and may become addictive. For many modern children, media substitute their parents. Television and the Internet provide them with information, games, fun, entertainment and facilitate establishing new relationships. Mass media gain the power of substituting face-to-face interactions with other people and frequently compensate the absence of parents.

On one hand, they facilitate functioning in modern, highly developed society, but on the other hand, they impose limitations and challenge internal and social development of a person. Such impact concerns all dimensions of human life [9]. Since they are a couple of months old, children have access to all kinds of mass media and find themselves under their real influence. Pre-school children are provided with many ways of watching different programmes. It is no longer limited to local television, but includes cable television, CDs, DVDs, smart phones and tablets. Television and the Internet frequently become the priority in a young person's life and it becomes hard for him/her to function without them. To some extent, electronic media model social behaviour of children and adolescents through providing multiple patterns of behaviour [10].

Researchers have no doubts that television fosters education. It is assumed that media may play an important role in school and out-of-school education through implementing concepts of cross-cultural, global and planetary education as well as education for peace and democracy. Available research results on receiving different TV materials by children indicate that such programmes are becoming the primary source of completely new information on all kinds of subjects, social and moral values as well as inspirations [5]. The captivating quality of television programmes fosters such a tendency. It makes the sole process of gaining knowledge casual and involuntary. Thus, children do not associate it with work, effort and struggle but pleasure, fun and entertainment. It is the perfect way of igniting passion and interest towards

various disciplines, developing cognitive curiosity (e.g. Documentaries on science, nature, geography, etc.) Apart from these positive qualities, in particular the access to information, supporting valuable ideas, believes and figures, media have their dark side as well [1].

They may cause the fall of established role models, values and rules of social relationships. The fine line between imagination of a young viewer and the reality becomes blurred. Television influences mental, physical and emotional development all at the same time. Available Polish and foreign research results prove that all media incorporating images include disproportionate amount of material including aggression, violence, sex and wealth [1; 5; 6]. Although the data is different for different producers, they all present hundreds (a couple of dozens per hour) of violent and destructive images. Even though it may be argued that such images are present in real life as well, they are much less frequent than they are in the media. While violence and destruction presented in television take the lead, constructive images concerning cooperation, social initiatives, kindness, friendship, charity, etc. are left behind [5]. Conflicts watched in television are usually solved through physical or verbal violence, which is shown in its full force. Violence and brutality are also incorporated in commercials, whose main goal is to grasp viewers' attention and impress them. Advertisements In many languages, also in Polish, the word for advertisement derives from Latin: *reklamo, reclamave, reclamavi, reclamatum*, which mean a loud call, making noise, shouting [12].

Currently, we observe all kinds of advertisements embedded in Polish rural and urban landscapes. Countless, intrusive posters, colourful neon lights and slogans promoting various products are intended to interest passers-by and make them buy the advertised goods. Moreover, advertisements constitute a new means of social interaction [13]. In its common understanding, the term advertisement is not associated with a material object, but rather an aural and visual presentation of a product or sales promotion. Hence, an advertisement is perceived as a process of: exporting information about goods, their qualities, values, locations and ways to purchase them; praising someone; recommending something via press, radio, TV and materials (posters, slogans, adverts, etc.) designed for this purpose [9; 11].

While at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first century, advertisements in Poland were treated as a symbol of the modern world and the Western civilisation, nowadays they are no longer associated with a certain political system or country. They constitute a part of entertainment. No wonder that people perceive it as a kind of TV programme [12]. An advertisement is probably one of the most dynamic and progressive media material encountered by members of the so-called "civilisation of information" [8; 9]. According to the American Marketing Association, an advertisement is: "any announcement or persuasive message placed in the mass media in paid or donated time or space by an identified individual, company, or organization". The common definition of an advertisement is: "form of exporting information about goods, their qualities and ways to purchase them; praising someone; recommending something via press, radio, TV" [14]. According to McLuhan: "Ads are not meant for conscious consumption. They are intended as subliminal pills for the subconscious in order to exercise a hypnotic spell, especially on sociologists. That is one of the most edifying aspects of the huge educational enterprise that we call advertising, whose twelve-billion-dollar annual budget approximates the national school budget [10]."

Nowadays, it is virtually impossible to sell a product or service without a good advertisement [8; 9]. In his book, Robert Nowacki [12] distinguishes several functions of an advertisement: informational, supportive in terms of sales, including tempting and reminding, educational, competitive, persuasive. W. Rudolf defines four types of advertisements, such as: informational, which is focused on presenting new qualities of a product, the change of price, etc., tempting, which constructs the brand awareness through comparative advertising and persuading to change the product to the advertised brand, reminding, which ensures that a consumer does not forget a particular product or service, enforcing, which ensures the potential receivers that they have chosen the best possible option through presenting satisfied customers [6].

Considering the used media, advertisements may be divided into: TV commercial, press advertisements, radio commercial, poster advertisement film commercial published commercial, advert postal, advertisement gift advertisement [6]. TV commercials introduce changes in people's individual and social behaviours. We become eager to look like persons presented in a commercial and to possess the same things. The change of IT systems from the traditional to the modern one, i.e. Mass media, leads to destruction of interpersonal relationships. In the course of various processes, the world shrunk to the size of a so-called global village, which enable the media to freely model human behaviours. Importantly, according to A Lepa advertising became a medium for different ideological material. Due to implementing manipulation, such as creating illusionary image of a product, a receiver takes in certain content of advertisements without analysing real qualities of the product. The buyer becomes absolutely positive that this particular product is unique and irreplaceable. Thus, it might be stated that advertisements obviously include an element of deception.

As Marta Cygan emphasises, advertisements are practically everywhere. On television, in the Internet, in the street. We are convinced that we are immune to their effects, as they are directed towards our emotions rather than intelligence. They are so common that we often seem not to spot them. Eventually, however, we involuntarily fall victim to their content. Hence, if resisting advertisements poses a challenge even for adults, how can it be possible for children? The influence of advertisements on children Commercials are usually released before or in the middle of a programme and are frequently repeated. It suggests that their main goal is to code their content in the receiver's memory. Such strategy fosters creation of associations and, even more importantly, influence the emotional development and the value system of the receivers. Watching commercials consumes a considerable amount of children's time. In the USA it is estimated that it takes them 3 hour a week [2].

In Poland, assuming that children watch television for 30 hours a week, watching commercials takes approximately 3 hours. Young viewers watch commercials before the programme they intend to watch and stay before the TV screen to watch them after the programme finishes. According to Izdebska "Polish children spend from 2 to 3 thousand hours in front of the screen even before they start school, while the older group, 8-12-year-olds, spend 2-5 hours every day on watching TV. They watch TV in different parts of the day: in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening or, in some cases, even at night" (Izdebska, 1996, p. 18, quoted after: Łaciak, 2003, p. 141). Even a superficial analysis of TV guides provides information that half of air time of various channels is devoted to programmes directed to

children and adolescents. According to Sitarczyk and Łukasik, one out of six children between the age of 6 and 13 has access to its own television, 61% of children between the age of 3 and 13 turns on the TV once a day, 8% of children spends more than 5 hours a day in front of television and it is proven by research conducted in Germany as well [2].

It should be highlighted, that directing advertising messages towards children and adults (their parents) simultaneously becomes a popular strategy among the producers. An advertisement aims at weakening the critical thinking of an adult through featuring a child in the material and thus igniting the adult's positive attitude. A child on the other hand, should become convinced that if, for instance, it is able to persuade its parent to purchasing the advertised washing powder, it will do the adult a favour and will not be blamed for staining its clothes. Producers perceive a child as a proxy between the product and the adult consumer. According to research conducted by the Department of Pedagogy of the Warsaw University [7], TV commercials, apart from animated films, are one of the most favourite and most frequently watched elements of television programmes for children. Pre-school and elementary school children believe that commercials present the real world, which makes them more susceptible to their messages. On the course of their development and education, children become to understand the true purpose of advertising and start to distinguish advertising messages sent by producers.

Table 1. The way children react to advertisements.

Source: "Uwikłani w świat pieniądza i konsumpcji. O socjalizacji ekonomicznej dzieci i młodzieży" M. Goszczyńska, S. Kołodziej, A. Trzcńska According to M. Goszczyńska et al (table). critical attitude towards advertisements is established only after the age of 8.

Basing on conducted research, authors claim that 40% of children between the age of 7 and 10 claimed that some advertisements are lying, because toys bought after watching a commercial turned out to be much less attractive than they were presented.

Positive effects of advertisements

Experts state that advertisements have positive and negative effects. Undoubtedly the former include: 1. providing entertainment, as they are generally based on jokes or funny stories, 2. in some cases, supporting children's creativity through organising various contests, e.g. artistic ones, 3. providing the source of ideas for games among children. Behaviours, slogans or stories deriving from commercials may be used in real life. 4. providing a scaffolding for constructing consumer skills, as they may be used for shaping critical attitude and enabling the child to estimate the quality of received information. 5. promoting healthy lifestyle, e.g. Those advertising toothpastes and tooth brushes, mineral waters, etc., 6. promoting positive social initiatives, e.g. Helping peers, sharing, looking after weaker groups, etc. 7. providing a source of information on modern culture [3; 7; 9].

While evaluating the positive role of television in children's life Gajda highlights its educational potential concerning:

- "first of all: expanding number of programmes, including for instance separate channels focused on one discipline, an offer calculated basing on satisfying interests of multiple groups, resulting from fighting for the viewer;
- second of all: the possibility of educating the young generation especially in the

axiological context - raising children to respect such values as truth, good, beauty, love, freedom, tolerance, etc.;

- third of all: increasing the level of education in the Polish society, which facilitates receiving TV contents according to the principle of utility and advantage - through selection and critical choice, immune to manipulation and directed towards higher levels of culture, as opposed to behavioural theories stating that receivers present passive attitude and are susceptible to strong influence of the media” [3].

Negative effects of advertisements

Considering the fact that young children are unable to differentiate between reality and fiction, they accept everything they see and hear as real. It may consequently affect the cognitive development of a child in a negative way, as it takes in everything the media communicate. The negative effects of advertisements include especially: 1. provoking emotions that influence children’s attitudes and behaviours. Children are negatively affected by these advertisements which trigger negative emotions resulting from e.g. The lack of fulfilment of a need created by an advertisement. 2. presenting a simplified, even manipulated reality, which may lead children to creating unrealistic expectations. Should a product bought because of an advertisement turn out not to be perfect, a child experiences disappointment. 3. providing children with all kinds of behaviour patterns (behaviours, clothes, language), which are automatically adapted by them. Assuming that these patterns work in a simplified image of reality, following them will be ineffective in real life. 4. promoting

Age	Child’s reaction to advertisements
5-7	Lack of criticism: a child treats advertisements like fairy-tales telling a story about reality. It shapes the child’s image of the world.
8-13	Moderate criticism: a child starts to distinguish between advertisements and television programmes, however, it is till susceptible to their influence.
13-15	Criticism: upon experiencing cognitive dissonance, a child distrusts advertisements and shapes its opinion on a product basing on its friends views.

and shaping consumerism, as it suggests that purchasing a particular product is a temporary or permanent solution to a problem and will, consequently, bring the consumer happiness. Moreover, advertisements insinuate that buying new goods is a life purpose. 5. in the case of sweets, promoting overeating and unhealthy lifestyle, 6. affecting the process of upbringing through presenting a certain image of reality.

If advertisements feature children who have everything they want, a child functioning in real life will expect that its parents will fulfil all its wishes. Refusing to satisfy such whims may trigger conflicts between parents and their child. 7. incorporating violence and

brutality, which may be copied by children [8]. Countless, intrusive advertisements tend to convince young people that there are miraculous ways of achieving a happy life, i.e. easy paths leading to success [1;8]. Images presented in advertisements promote unrealistic expectations concerning such spheres of life as beauty [9]. Vivid characters, loud music, smiling faces – all these elements draw a child's attention. That is why over 50% of cartoons tell stories of products which can be bought in shops. Moreover, once a child starts to grumble in a shop, parents usually end up buying what their child wants so advertisers use the mechanism. That is how a new branch of marketing, kinder marketing, was born. It is defined as marketing directed towards children [15].

Yet another negative effect of advertisements is shaping demanding attitude of children towards their parents. Such attitude impedes achieving goals in adult life. A child is not resistant to failures and experiences all disappointments in a more severe way than its peers whose parents refused to buy everything their child wanted. Advertisers provide young viewers with value system focused on consumption and leading to permanent frustration. It is impossible for all the people to have the same things and young people fear being perceived as worse than their peers. Unfulfilled needs trigger frustration which may lead to acts of violence or crimes. Such scenario is exceptionally probable in the case of adolescents in the angst phase [1]. Advertisements foster children's need to get all kinds of goods. They frequently buy them, especially when it comes to inexpensive products, such as sweets or Coke. If they cannot afford something themselves, they put pressure on their parents [7].

Available literature shows that parents decide on buying a large percentage of products under the influence of their children whose choices are motivated by advertisements. Children use various, frequently very effective strategies, thanks to which parents buy what their kids want. This indirect (leading through children) impact on adult consumers is intentional. Advertisers perceive children as tools necessary for achieving their goal. Conclusions Examining the influence of a certain advertisement on children poses quite a challenge, as such materials are effective while combined and repeated. Moreover, the diagnosis of this phenomenon is limited by the fact that results, which would be of the greatest interest, are subconscious or not fully conscious. Hence, they cannot be examined through survey tests, which appeal to a child's consciousness (e.g. by asking question: do you like watching commercials?) Such research includes only projective methods (i.e. targeting subconscious motivation) or complex experiments. Available literature does not provide adequate examples. Research conducted in Poland included a small group of children and, thus, failed to determine general principles. However, they enabled defining certain phenomena concerning subsidiary, yet vital consequences of watching advertisements by children [2].

The most alarming ones include adapting consumerism, facilitating overeating, aggression and erotization of imagination. Considering all these facts, it is crucial for parents to treat their educating responsibilities very seriously and to teach their children how to use media properly. The necessity of developing preventive programmes for children and adolescents, aiming at preventing effects of abusing mass media and at educating on the destructive role of mass media in promoting advertisements among pre-school children, is of no less importance.

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ВПЛИВ РЕКЛАМИ НА РОЗВИТОК ДІТЕЙ У ДОШКІЛЬНОМУ ВІЦІ

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Останнім часом у психолого-педагогічній літературі все частіше розглядається тема негативного впливу засобів масової інформації та реклами на розвиток дітей дошкільного віку. З моменту народження дитина зазнає впливу навколишнього середовища, де домінують засоби масової інформації. Реклама в різних засобах масової інформації впливає на сучасних дітей з перших років життя і поступово збільшує вплив з віком. Діти дошкільного та раннього віку вважають, що реклама показує правду, що підвищує їхню чутливість до змісту реклами. Поряд з освітою, яку вони отримують, вони починають розуміти мету реклами і здатні диференціювати передані рекламні повідомлення. Відсутність оборонних механізмів часто робить дітей головним об'єктом рекламодавців. Реклама, особливо телебачення, характеризується значним впливом на психіку людей, особливо дітей. Метою цього дослідження є визначення впливу теле-реклами на дітей раннього шкільного віку.

Ключові слова: дитина, засоби масової інформації, реклама, вплив, шкідливість.

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