

## INVESTIGACIÓN/RESEARCH

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### IMPORTANCE OF THE ADVERTISING

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#### ABSTRACT

The present work analyzes the advertising and the need to educate the population in this matter. Our aim with this article is to demonstrate the need to educate the citizenship, specially the children, in order that they learn to read advertising and, this way, to minimize its negative effects in the society. For it, in this article we are going to analyze the current advertising situation, paying particular attention to the infantile public, in order to know and to understand with greater detail the need of an advertising education. Also we will know the importance of the school in this labor that we raise. All that will allow us to conclude that - as it happens in the rest of areas of the life - the education is the only option to solve all the problems that stem from the great volume of advertisements to which we are exposed every day, to make really free citizens with regard to the consumption and of offering to the society an authentic autonomous capacity with regard to the advertising, as tool of the capitalist sector.

#### KEYWORDS

Advertising-Education-Society-Communication-Ethics-Values- Mulberry tree-Children-School.

### IMPORTANCIA DE LA EDUCACIÓN PUBLICITARIA

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## RESUMEN

El presente trabajo analiza la publicidad y la necesidad de educar a la población en esta materia. Nuestro objetivo con este artículo es demostrar la necesidad de educar a la ciudadanía, especialmente a los niños, para que aprendan a leer publicidad y, así, minimizar sus efectos negativos en la sociedad. Para ello, vamos a analizar la situación publicitaria actual, prestando especial atención al público infantil, con el fin de conocer y entender con mayor detalle la necesidad de una educación publicitaria. También conoceremos la importancia de la escuela en esta labor que planteamos. Todo esto nos permitirá concluir que – al igual que ocurre en el resto de ámbitos de la vida- la educación es la única opción para solucionar todos los problemas que se derivan del gran volumen de anuncios al que estamos expuestos cada día, para hacer ciudadanos realmente libres respecto al consumo y de ofrecer a la sociedad una auténtica capacidad autónoma respecto a la publicidad, como herramienta del sector capitalista.

### **PALABRAS CLAVE:**

Publicidad – Educación – Sociedad – Comunicación – Ética – Valores – Moral – Niños – Colegio

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The role of advertising in the society in which we live is undeniable. If we counted the ads we see every day, voluntarily and involuntarily, we would be surprised by the amount to which we are exposed. As Noguera explains, "*since we were small we assume that advertising is part of the daily scenery that surrounds and accompanies our existence. It follows us wherever we go, it is present even if we do not look, or listen to their calls (2006: 46).*" This massive exposure is what makes mandatory to prepare the consumer to read advertising, to know what to expect from it and that preparation should be done from the education system, in order to ensure the correct interpretation of it and reduce its negative aspects in society. Therefore, in this article we will raise the issue in detail and provide arguments to support this educational work, much needed, in our view, in today's society.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In this article we will show the need to provide education to the public on advertising matters. To do this, we will offer arguments and data that demonstrate the importance of the issue, through bibliographic review of numerous expert authors in the fields of education and publicity.

### 3. DISCUSSION

The first thing to do is define Advertising, as it is essential to define the concept in order to know what we are talking about. According to the General Law on Advertising, the Advertising is:

It is all forms of communication by natural person or corporate firm, public or private in the exercise of a commercial, handicraft, industrial or professional in order to promote the dealings in direct or indirect form of real estate, services, rights and obligations ( Normacivil, 2010).

The advertising, therefore, is responsible for promoting sales, becoming one of the fundamental elements of capitalist society without which its operation would be very difficult. That would be its economic role – and primarily function at the same time, but the fact is that today's society and, according to its strong presence in it, has led to another set of functions, that we must not forget, because, as stated by Noguera "*nobody ignores that advertising exerts other functions derived from its main activity, which is selling* (2006: 46)." According to Furones, these functions are as follows (1980: 9):

**Funformative function:** it informs consumers about available products and services.

**Financing function** certainly advertising helps finance the communication media.

**Substitutive function:** advertising operates by replacing the presentation of a real object, as it is, for the most elaborate message that sometimes sells a product that is the opposite of what it says it is.

**Stereotypical function:** because of its mass distribution, advertising tends to equalize tastes, criteria, ideals. The studies investigating the relationship between advertising and social change in specific groups result very interesting It would be surprising to learn how much they have influenced consumption habits, in affective relationships, in ways of life.

**Causing no problems function:** advertising tends to present a funny, entertaining, fascinating world, where the majority of products are consumed in leisure time, never during work. This image of the beautiful side of life, operated by the advertising world, aims to remove drama from everyday life, to smooth the other side: the crisis, unemployment, inflation, violence, pain, death, social inequality.

**Conservative function:** advertising always teaches what we have seen, it speaks of what was already spoken. Behind its apparent continuous innovation, what is actually it tries to make look like knew what is already accepted.

These features make advertising a very important phenomenon and therefore worthy of being studied and taught to all citizens. As Eguizábal says, "*to think that what is essential in advertising is to sell genres is so naive as to think that the essence of fashion is to cover our nakedness or protect us against the cold* (2007: 7)." Hence, if we analyze the evolution of advertising, we can see that over the past decades there has been

producing a gradual slippage of advertising as an economic entity to advertising as a cultural phenomenon. Of course, this does not occur throughout the world, but only in rich countries, and that only in the event that the basic needs are met, you can try creating other needs-as does advertising.

Advertising, therefore, has an important presence in our lives, but do we know enough? As suggested by Eguizábal, "*probably there is nothing in today's culture so present and so unknown at the same time, for the average citizen, such as advertising (2009: 9).*" The author gives a possible explanation to this, saying that:

Like other forms of power, advertising tends not to demonstrate, to hide its weapons, to disguise. The public, which sees every single day of its life an impressive number of advertising messages ignores all or most of their structures, organizations and ideas behind them (2009: 9).

This reflection of the author is very interesting because it's so funny how a phenomenon known by all for his intense presence in our lives can be at once so unknown to all.

Thus we do not know its influence on our lives, even though "*the reality shows that the long-term effects of advertising on our lives are real and effective (Noguera and Cristofol: 46)*". As Costa says, "*advertising can be considered as a determining part of the acts of individuals, linked to consumption and its ritual. And through it, it is a vertiginous generator of the models that shape our social imaginary (1992: 11).*" The author adds that "*it is clear that advertising is an industry and as such, must ensure their business. But it is a cultural industry that does not produce tangible products that the public buys, consumes and destroys, but that makes messages, information and role models (Costa, 1992: 14).*" This position is shared by many authors and organizations. Advertising models behaviors, as we can see, but also transmits values, in some cases new and in others those which are already present in society (Ferrer Rosello, 1992: 19).

Having demonstrated the great importance and influence of advertising in today's society, we must ask what is the position of the receiver in this process. According to Caridad Hernandez:

The recipient of the advertising communication is not passive, but brings into play a series of cognitive mechanisms by means of which he selects, captures and interprets information addressed to him, placing himself in the place of the sender, and taking part in the interaction process that will culminate with a specific type of response (Ferrer Rosello, 1992: 75).

In this sense, Gerardo Pastor explains that "*even the most captivating advertising claims, transmit images and messages whose contents, falsified or not, complete or biased, are processed by people receiving quite able to unmask a lie and reject them, for audiences perhaps reluctant to accept them (Bonnet, 1999: 173).*" In any case, either with a rational or emotional basis, the receiver has an active role in the marketing communication.

As Lakoff says:

The communication process is not seen anymore from the reductionist assumptions of measurement of effects, but from the most comprehensive

perspective of a symbolic construction of reality. And this paradigm shift is associated to a more active conception of the public, which is no longer regarded as a mere object that reacts to certain stimuli, but more as an active subject of communication (1995: 28).

According to these approaches, the active receiver has the ability to decrypt the message, but the question here is whether the receiver has the right key to decrypt these messages correctly, especially considering that advertising is increasingly turning to the emotional to sell their products and services, leading to freedom of choice of receiver certainly becoming weaker. We adult consumers have seen the birth and development of advertising, but no one has taught us to decipher it. We read it as we have considered, without an advance indication of how. It would be difficult to learn to read a text properly if we have not learned the vowels and consonants before. The same applies to advertising, which has manifested itself immersed in our communication media as a component with different nuances that we should know. If this is necessary for adults, it is more necessary in the case of children, because, as Soria says, *"the truth and, above all, the persuasion, becomes more problematic when the recipients have the naiveté and the immaturity of their few years (Bonnet, 1999: 158)."* Children thus become defenseless consumers *"unable to protect themselves against the deceptions and temptations to whom the vendors or indoctrinating preachers submit them (Bonnet, 1999: 166)"*, as Gerardo Pastor explains. Many companies take advantage of this situation and focus even more their efforts on minors, getting to sponsor even nutritional education campaigns, school materials or entering school through vending machines, common situations in the United States, although in Spain they have not yet been implanted with such intensity (Shor, 2006: 28-29).

The interest in children is clear. As Clyde Miller says, it is *"a task that takes time, but worth it if you think about the benefits to be gained by conditioning the millions of children who will one day be adults willing to buy certain products (Bonete, 1999: 158)"*. To this is added that children constitute a large audience in number, that influence the purchases of their parents, as states José Luis León, and those who find it more difficult to distinguish between fiction and reality, as it is not until 8 or 9 years old, that children begin to develop their ability to reason (Bonete, 1999: 158). Moreover, it is from that age onwards when children begin to compare themselves to others (Tierno and Giménez, 2004: 96). All that allows to seduce them more easily.

The truth is that when we analyze the data of exposure of children to advertising, the importance of the issue increases. According to a report by the Council of Europe, a ten year child of our geopolitical environment has seen more than two hundred thousand ads, since the child spends 25 to 30 hours weekly before the classroom without walls, which is equivalent to the hours used in schools (Madrid, 2006: 21). From this report other data arise, such as that over 90 percent of children three years old, or an even preschoolers begin to ask their parents the toys advertised on television. Bernabé Tierno says that:

Children between 9 and 12 years old spend at least four hours a day watching television and on weekends they exceed five or six hours, we can say that any child sees during the year 1500 hours - or more- of television while at school

they spend about 1,000 hours. If we start from the basis that one of the ways of learning is the observation, we find that television is an essential point of reference for our children (2004: 139-140).

Considering that advertising is inserted in the communications media, especially on television - for its features such as speed (Ramonet, 2002: 193) or color- it is the most appropriate means of advertising support, we can get an idea of the intense advertising exposure to which children are subjected. Advertising and media join forces with the main objective to sell, an objective that follow others, derived from the activity itself, since:

The communication phenomenon is undoubtedly the most trascendental and significant note that characterizes the contemporary world society . (...) As stated Moreno, the technified picture and sound penetrate in our lives, and condition not just what we eat, drink or do, but also what we want and dream, as the media have to meet a series of substitute satisfactions of direct and practical experience (Aguaded, 2001: 14).

Now we must ask ourselves what the consequences of the intense advertising activity are. According to scholars of the subject, children with only three years consider brands, with the values they transmit, express their personal characteristics. This is especially important when you consider that *"selfishness is a characteristic of children between 3 and 6 years. This personality trait makes them think that their view is unique, that there are no alternatives (Tierno and Jimenez, 2004: 47)."* Those values from little boys we acquire are those who *"reflect the personality of the individual and are the expression of the moral, cultural, intellectual, emotional and social tone marked by family, schools, institutions and society in which we live (Tierno and Jimenez, 2004: 137)."* As Madrid Canovas explains, *"before the traditional trade, in which the object identified the producers, through advertising objects just end identifying the consumers (2006: 199)."* In addition, advertising works with metaphors and as Lakoff says:

Metaphors can create realities, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus become a guide for future action. These actions certainly will conform to the metaphor. This will strengthen the ability of the metaphor to make the experience coherent. In this sense, metaphors can be self-fulfilling prophecies (1995: 198).

And these prophecies that advertising attempts to transmit, a product that identifies those who consume it, is what gives rise to the appearance of problems with depression, anxiety and low self-esteem in young children (Shor, 2006: 223), which can not always have the desired toy or product, and the seniors, who have been educated in this consumer culture and with those very marked values. Illustrative is the fragment that we extracted from the book 'Brave New World' of Huxley, in which he said (1985: 51):

- Every man, every woman, every child was required to consume as much per year. To promote the industry. The only result ...
- It's better to discard than having to patch. The more I patch, the poorer I feel.

- This will -end badly the best day Fanny said sadly.
- Large-scale scrupulous objection: it was a matter of not consuming, the return to nature.

After posing the question, we must address the possible solution. In this regard, we must point out that adults today have learned to read advertising gradually, as they began to see it when it was still an economic phenomenon, with rational arguments, and were watching their evolution to cultural advertising based on the values and emotions. But children have known only that emotional advertising, the more dangerous if you do not know how to interpret it. Therefore, we believe that education is the ultimate solution to this problem, to prevent children from suffering the negative consequences of advertising, since neither the laws nor the existing codes of conduct today, are able to eliminate these effects. This is because *"it is clear that if we want to harvest certain values, we must plant them and harvest them in practice. If we want our students to be participatory, critical, cooperative, solidary, the educational exercise has to be participatory, critical, cooperative and solidary (2004: 107), "as Antonio Perez says.*

Moreover, as Antonio Perez explains, *"education is becoming increasingly important around the world, it is regarded as the key element to combat poverty, increase productivity and train autonomous people and honest and responsible citizens (2004: 150) "and teaching children to read advertising, taking into account the influence it has on the life and personality of citizens, will make them truly autonomous and free and as Tuts says, that "depends on all educational agents, and from the classroom we play with an advantage (2006: 13). "*

Advertising and school have in common the fact of being part of our lives, making a *"the school into an essential tool in our industrialized society and it is an essential tool if we want to be prepared to adapt ourselves to the many changes that we are exposed (Tierno and Jimenez, 2004: 62). "* Tuts added in this regard that:

Educate not only from school but from all areas of the training, it is to train people for their integration into society and their solidarity and responsible citizen participation. That question, among others, the traditional reproductive role of school: it teaches the values of the past. The present and future are for extracurricular contexts ... and the fracture with reality arises and the school microcosm emerges. With the advent of fast communication channels, Internet, satellite broadcasts, the information activates us, challenges us (2006: 11)

And one of those challenges is the advertising education.

As Tierno explains, *"a society in which is given value and importance only to money, wealth, fame, to the material and take into account other values, such as respect, good get-together the justice, solidarity, etc., will gradually de-humanize until destroying itself. Therefore, it is important that parents and educators understand that the values that we instill in our children are crucial for their future and the future of generations to come (2004: 138-139).*

Thus, if we allow advertising to be freely read, without prior training, we will continue to contribute to this existing society, in which the material is the only thing that is important. In fact, as today's advertising conveys, the material is what gives happiness, well-being and pleasure of citizens:

As Aguaded says:

To prepare citizens, especially young people, to deal with the challenges of communication in this new information society, is more necessary to the extent that the school be aware of the important role the media are acquiring in the transmission of social knowledge. (...) In this context, and as Area indicates, no one doubts the powerful influence over the people and its important educational potential and, therefore, the need to integrate them into the teaching processes (2001: 19).

The author establishes a number of reasons because of which he considers important to educate citizens in the media (2001: 22):

1. High doses of communication consumption
2. The ideological influence of communication in contemporary society.
3. The construction of information / reality by the media
4. The increasing influence of the media in the democratic development of the peoples.
5. The growing importance of audiovisual code in all spheres.
6. The urgent need for the school to update content and prepare for the future.
7. The transformation of communication into a commodity in the hands of commercial companies.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

As we mentioned, the media are the main advertising supports, so educating people - and especially children-in the media, means educating them in advertising, because advertising is one of the main media contents, without which they could not survive. Aguamed advocates to get "*a critical analysis of the media (2001: 33)*" and we add to that, a critical analysis of advertising, which allows the citizens to know well their keys, procedures and techniques and thus offer true freedom of choice. As Ballesta says:

The school should be aware of the effect of the media in the knowledge society, which necessarily involves addressing the role that the media in today's society and pose, a reflexive and reasoned approach to take us to clarify actions on the meanings we give to the various proposals received from the media (2009: 180).

The author adds that:

The big mistake is to assume that whoever is going to use the media already has enough training, for doing that, which is usually not true in most cases. They need to have prior knowledge or an acquired requirement by the

analysis from personal, cultural and group experience, able to serve as a reference to what comes to us from the media (Ballesta, 2009: 181).

For all this, we believe, as Ballesta says, that "*students should receive, during their passage through compulsory schooling, a training for understanding the media, its messages, in the activities and matters of knowledge that it develops* (2009 says: 184) ".

Advertising, therefore, has gone from being an economic phenomenon to a cultural phenomenon, its presence in our lives is becoming more abundant and intense. Despite all that, and that is clear and demonstrated its influence and power in our lives, it transmits values and patterns of behavior, it is largely unknown to the public, especially children, that do not know their keys and how to read and interpret it. When you read a newspaper or watch an informative program, you understands that is reality what is told. When you go to the cinema, you understand that it is fiction-in most of the cases it is what counts. But when you see an ad, do we think it is fact or fiction? Well, that's what you have to teach citizens: to know how to distinguish from one another, know what is expected from advertising and what it actually offers. And the only way to teach all that and make more free, independent and responsible citizens, is through education. Only through it we will achieve this goal, since it is the one that provides the tools and instruments to understand and interpret the world and, therefore, it is the one that should explain us how to interpret advertising.

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