

PSYSOC 2013

## Aggressive Marketing, Consumer Kids and Stereotyping of Media Contents

Blandína Šramová\*

*Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Education, Račianska 59, 813 34 Bratislava, Slovak Republic*

---

### Abstract

Marketing communications focused on the children's consumer sometimes include expressive elements of aggression that are explicitly shown in the advertising media texts carried out by communication media in advertising communication processes. Children are very sensitive and they make their vision of how the world works on the basis of what they see and hear. Defamation and aggressive marketing communication are highly harmful to their development. This is due to the fact that they still fail to distinguish between fiction and reality. Consequently, the gender (verbal and visual) stereotypes presented in advertising, as well as in videogames, journalism or film production, may even lead to the idea that violent relationships between the two genders are standard and that women are passive victims unconditionally accepting the dominance and violence from men's side. This article answers the following questions: 1) what is the role of stereotypes in media contents and processes of aggressive marketing, 2) how to apply stereotypes in aggressive marketing influence on the development of consumer competencies of children with respect to their cognitive and moral abilities.

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of PSYSOC 2013.

*Keywords:* aggressive marketing; advertising; children; marketing communication; gender stereotypes; media

---

### 1. Introduction

In order to increase consumerism, consumers are exposed to sophisticated persuasive approaches that influence their attitudes and purchase behaviours. Higher income of consumers is reflected to higher purchase power which then results to the growth of consumption, lower savings and increased indebtedness. We are witnessing that shopping centres, thanks to consumerism, are becoming the architects and at the same time cathedrals of

---

\* Corresponding author: Blandína Šramová +421- 2- 502-223-48.  
*E-mail address:* [sramovab@fedu.uniba.sk](mailto:sramovab@fedu.uniba.sk)

contemporary culture (Šramová, 2012). These processes are founded on advertising messages, continuously stressing the fact that if an individual purchases the advertised product, s/he will be happier, more successful, more popular and will avoid anxiety resulting from the failure to fulfil his/her social needs (Moschis & Churchill, 1979; Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003).

If the media convey the given information and simultaneously provide – apart from families, schools and peer groups – also an important socializing function, then the media teach children the standards and values, according to which they adopt and shape attitudes towards the objects of social reality. Advertising is even considered as one of the most influential socializing institutions in modern society (Jhally, 1987). Research claim that a child until the age of ten or eleven is not able to differentiate whether presented news reflects social or media reality (Helus, 2004; Šramová, 2012). Children shape their image of the world, design their mental picture and learn how the world works also through the life shown in commercials. Through the media, children learn the consumer behaviour, i.e. the skills and knowledge regarding the consumer behaviour and shape their attitude towards consumerism.

According to J. Piaget's (1999) cognitive theory, this process is connected with human cognitive development. The way how people code and decode news, information and media messages depends on the individual's cognitive schemes and structures. The reflection of the social world thus proceeds through assimilation (i.e. the process of incorporating a new object or event into the child's existing mental scheme) and accommodation (i.e. the process where the existing scheme is unable to incorporate new knowledge and the scheme needs to be changed). The author states that this process forms from the sensomotor stage (aged 0-2 years) to the formal operational stage (from 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> year of age). The reflection of the social world thus leads from egoism to decentralization, to moral reciprocity and to the ability to understand the views and opinions of others.

From the marketing point of view, this is a highly sensory stimulating process, where children and adolescents are, as consumers of advertising, pulled into the media world and thus they uncritically adopt advertising messages. They are fascinated by media celebrities and their lifestyle, try to identify with them and strive for uniformity that would ensure social acceptance by their peers. In this process, however, consumers trying to achieve individualism demonstrated by the denial of advertising and advertising contents, reach the critical reflexion of the social world.

The social constructivism and communication pragmatic approach to reality (Pavelka, 1992; Burr, 2004) explains that the media, through media contents, deliver not only a passive reflection or expression of social reality but they also actively co-create and design the social reality and culture. The standardization and stereotyping of media contents belong to the most used, most effective and at the same time, the most problematic tools of mass and advertising communication.

“Human communicative behaviour generates cultural products – and in the course of genesis and development of the human races – the completely social and cultural reality. On the other hand, human communicative behaviour is dependent on this reality because it works as an ambience where all this human communicative behaviour takes place and it is at the same time a set of standards that help construct and interpret these social and cultural products“ (Pavelka, 2008, p. 23).

Stereotyping in the media sphere helps audiences understand the presented messages faster and more easily. It aims to show the social reality in accordance with how the majority of recipients perceive it and thus contribute to their stability and confidence. Stereotypes represent an important element in the social construction of reality. They help people in orientation, evaluation, conceptualization and categorization of the world. „Stereotypes occur as a part of discourse. [...] So stereotypes will be employed as a device for maintaining an ideological position in an argument rather than a result of some cognitive process of categorization“ (Hinton, 2000, p. 25).

On the other hand, stereotyping or stereotyped images in advertising often lead to distortion, simplification and depreciation of real social and cultural problems. With respect to the stereotyping of their contents, advertising shows a strong tendency to distort and simplify the image of individual groups and communities – generalized ideas and opinions relating to groups are usually shaped based on insignificant attributes. Advertising contents shape the expectations for certain forms of behaviours pertaining to a person who belongs to a specific stereotyped group. These expectations, however, do not necessarily have to reflect the reality and may prevent its correct perception. It is why the media are subject to research and critical reflections.

## **2. Stereotyping in Mass and Advertising Communication and Influence of Communication Stereotypes on Child Consumer**

We often witness that the media negatively depict the stereotypes regarding a certain group of people which

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1112924>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1112924>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)