

Call for Papers

Advertising literacy: Dealing with persuasive messages in a complex media environment

*German Communication Association DGPuK
Advertising Communication Division and Media Education Division*

27 – 29 November 2019
University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

Advertising is a ubiquitous part of our day-to-day lives. We are confronted with persuasive messages via different channels, in different situations and – due to the increasing use of hybrid and embedded advertising formats like native advertising, advergames, influencer marketing and product placements – with varying degrees of transparency. The blurring of different media genres and reference frameworks in a complex media environment poses challenges to the recipients. These challenges are particularly hard to master for children and adolescents since they are less experienced in handling commercial messages (Livingstone & Helsper, 2006).

To be able to identify persuasive messages and to process them in a competent way, child, teen, and adult recipients alike need skills such as the ability to recognize, understand, and evaluate advertisements and other commercial messages. These skills can be summarized under the term “advertising literacy” (Young, 2003). The extent of how recipients are properly equipped with these skills influences how they further process and reflect persuasive messages (Friestad & Wright, 1994).

Recipients’ effort to identify persuasive messages in today’s blurred advertising/media environments can be supported by external factors. For instance, advertising disclosures can help recipients to identify persuasive messages (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012) and support their right to decide whether they wish to engage with the persuasive content or not (Cain, 2011). Furthermore, especially when dealing with children and adolescents, mediation strategies are important to empower young recipients in their process of identifying and recognizing as well as understanding and evaluating persuasive messages. The effectiveness of such factors and how advertising literacy can even be adequately assessed (Rozendaal, Oprea, & Buijzen, 2016) is an ongoing debate in the field.

In the light of the described challenges, this call for papers aims to address, but is not limited to, the following research questions:

- (1) *Conceptual advances*: How can “advertising literacy” be conceptualized? What are the dimensions of advertising literacy, especially in the digital media environment? How does advertising literacy relate to other literacy concepts, such as information, digital, media, or consumer literacy? What are the blind spots to our understanding of how persuasive messages are processed and identified? How are embedded advertising techniques connected to advertising literacy?
- (2) *Methodological advances*: How can we measure advertising literacy? What challenges have to be met when measuring this concept for different age groups, especially when dealing with young recipients?



- (3) *Advertising to children and adolescents*: When and to what extent is it morally justifiable to advertise to children and adolescents? What are effects of advertising literacy (or the lack of it) on, for instance, concepts such as materialism, consumer literacy, and normative beliefs?
- (4) *External factors*: What are effective factors to increase advertising literacy, especially when it comes to children and adolescents, or other vulnerable populations? What do effective mediation strategies, training programs or disclosures look like and what role do audience predispositions or the social and political environment play in that context?
- (5) *Responsibilities*: Who is or should be responsible for fostering advertising literacy in various consumer populations? What is or should be the role of advertising research? Which regulatory measures or initiatives might be important for supporting consumers in their right to decide whether to engage with persuasive content? How powerful is the advertising literacy concept and how far can it take us?

Submissions that draw across disciplinary and/or methodological perspectives are especially welcome.

Additional Open Call:

Additionally, there will be an open panel for each organizing division of the German Communication Association DGPuK (*Advertising Communication Division* and *Media Education Division*) with 4-6 scheduled presentations. Submissions for the open panel should be clearly marked as such on the title page and follow the same guidelines as the extended abstracts described below regarding length and submission date.

Submissions:

Extended Abstracts (anonymized) in English (**max. 1.000 words** excluding references) should be sent to adlit@univie.ac.at as a pdf-file. Please send a separate pdf-file designated "Title Page" including the topic designation ("Call" or "Open Call") and author's/authors' details.

The deadline for submissions is 15.06.2019. Notification of acceptance will be sent to authors by mid-September. The **conference** will take place from **27.-29.11.2019** in **Vienna (Austria)**.

Contact:

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the organizers Nils S. Borchers (nils.borchers@uni-leipzig.de) or Brigitte Naderer (brigitte.naderer@univie.ac.at) for the *Advertising Communication Division*; Ruth Festl (r.festl@iwm-tuebingen.de) or Christine Dallmann (christine.dallmann@tu-dresden.de) for the *Media Education Division*. Please direct questions regarding the conference location, traveling, and accommodations at Brigitte Naderer (brigitte.naderer@univie.ac.at).

References:

- Boerman, S. C., van Reijmersdal, E. A., & Neijens, P. C. (2012). Sponsorship disclosure: Effects of duration on persuasion knowledge and brand responses. *Journal of Communication, 62*(6), 1047-1064.
- Cain, R. M. (2011). Embedded advertising on television: Disclosure, deception, and free speech rights. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 30*(2), 226-238.
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- Livingstone, S., & Helsper, E. J. (2006). Does advertising literacy mediate the effects of advertising on children? A critical examination of two linked research literatures in relation to obesity and food choice. *Journal of Communication, 56*(3), 560-584.
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- Young, B. (2003). Does food advertising influence children's food choices? A critical review of some of the recent literature. *International Journal of Advertising, 22*(4), 441-459.