

The Use of Children in Television Advertising. Analysis and Perspective

MATONDO – KWA NZAMBI Edgard
Assistant at the National Pedagogical University.
PhD Student at the University of Kinshasa

Abstract :- Today we see throughout the world that many advertisements are directed at children. They have become effective means for the success of advertising that wants to convince its customers. Given that everything that happens on television is perceived in a selective manner, children appear to be the scouts for choosing products. These characters (children) play an important role in a television advertising story because their goal is to influence the mind through their.

The use of children in television advertising. Analysis and perspective.

Keywords:- Advertisement, Child.

I. INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the study of the presentation of children in advertising. Nowadays, more and more organizations, companies, businesses and other firms devote a significant part of their operating budget to advertising. This is with the aim of getting the public to know them, to appreciate and above all to consume the products they offer through various channels and more particularly that of advertising.

It is appropriate to point out that “the mass media are the favorite prey of publicists and other advertisers who use them as a springboard to reach their targets through the messages they broadcast. From giant billboards on the main roads of urban areas to advertising spots on radio and television, including posters on walls and advertisements in the written press, everything is good for convincing, persuading or seducing the public and attracting their attention. pay attention to the product or service offered to him.

Advertising is conceived as “a paid, impersonal and unilateral communication of the media and supports emanating from an industrial or commercial organization in favor of a product, a brand or a firm identified in the message. » In other words, advertising is a mass communication strategy which consists of “transmitting a message to a specific group of individuals with a view to helping to stimulate the demand that they may have for given products or services. »

The question of the image of children in advertising raises a fundamental problem, both from the point of view of advertisers and from the point of view of consumers or the public in general. This is justified by the fact that the conception that a society has of the child also reflects the place that society gives to their future. For its representations and for the symbol it constitutes, the use of the “child” character is one of the arguments most used by the advertiser to base the essence of the advertising message according to the category of the product offered to the prospect.

Despite the use of stars, the child or rather childhood has always kept its place in advertising communication. What is argumentation if not “the art of reasoning based on generally accepted opinions.” By using childhood as an argument to arouse, to increase public support for the service, for the product that we offer, advertising seeks to exploit the positive images contained in the world of the child, that is to say - say its social representations.

➤ *In Relation to this Evidence, the Main Thread of our Research will be Based on the Following Questions:*

- Why does advertising use children?
- Is this the only way to advertise this product?
- What is the role and impact of the child in this advertisement?

It is noticeable today throughout the world that many advertisements are directed at children. They have become effective means for the success of advertising that wants to convince its customers. Given that everything that happens on television is perceived in a selective manner, “children appear as scouts for choosing products”. Children influence the purchases of certain products by putting pressure on their parents.

II. THEORETICAL FRAME

- The notion of social representation

The way of approaching the problem of representation in the human sciences varies depending on the theoretical paradigm on which it is based. While in sociology we understand representations in terms of ideology and phenomenology and ethnology see it as a problem relating to knowledge and abstraction, social psychology studies it as cognitive appropriation.

The concept of “social representation” designates a specific form of knowledge, common sense knowledge, whose contents manifest the operation of socially marked generative and functional processes. More broadly, it designates a form of social thought.

Social representations are modalities of practical thought oriented towards communication, understanding and mastery of the social, material and ideal environment. As such, they represent specific characters in terms of the organization of content, mental operations and logic. The social marking of contents or processes of representation refers to the conditions and contexts in which representations emerge, to the communications through which they circulate, to the functions they serve in interaction with the world and others.

Generally speaking, phenomena are considered to concern everything that allows communication, social life as well as individual life. They cover a set of knowledge and know-how without which no communication is possible. In this regard, B. Rimé rightly considers that “in its essence, the communication process is an effort which aims to share representations”.

As an extension of the work carried out on this subject by S. MOSCOVI, D. JODELET has carried out very interesting investigations to explain the notion of social representation as a form of knowledge, socially developed and shared, having a practical aim and contributing to the construction of a reality common to a social assembly. This notion also designates “the mental activity deployed by individuals and groups to fix their position in relation to situations, events, objects and communication that concerns it, (or even) a form of specific social knowledge, common sense knowledge, whose contents manifest the operation of socially marked generative and functional processes.

D. JODELET’s definition emphasizes the practical and “pragmatic” nature of representations. He is joined in this conception by Pierre BOURDIEU who affirms that representations are “performative statements which claim to make what they state happen”

Like this form of practical knowledge, a social representation is defined among other things by content which is a sum of information, images, opinions, attributions... This content generally relates to an object which can be located in the context of a job, an economic event or a social character. Furthermore, a social representation is always the social representation of a subject, a family, a group or a social class. It is therefore dependent on the situation of this subject or social group in society, the economy and culture.

Generally speaking, there are three theoretical trends concerning the way in which social representation is developed. The first current is purely cognitive in nature and accounts for social representation based on two dimensions: the context dimension and the belonging dimension. Depending on the dimension of the context, the subject is in

a situation of social interaction or facing a social stimulus. Therefore, representation is a case of social cognition. This is how it is approached in social psychology. According to the dimension of appearance, the subject being a social actor, he brings into play, in the development of ideas, values and models that he takes from his group of belonging or from the ideologies conveyed in society. This orientation is supported in particular by J-C. ABRIC, E. Apfel-BAUME, J.P. CODOL and C. FLAMENT.

The second is the significant aspects of the work that the representation produces. The subject expresses the meaning he gives to his experience in the social mode. It involves systems of codes and interpretation.

The last takes the image of a more socializing perspective and uses the subject as the bearer of social determination. In this sense, representative activity is based on the reproduction of socially established thought patterns, visions structured by dominant ideologies, or even on the doubling of social relationships. It is in this perspective that P. BOURDIEU’s conception is situated.

The rooting of representation is the thesis which is based on these orientations. It derives its meaning and importance from the social body. The cognitive function of integrating novelty, the function of interpreting reality, the function of guiding behavior and social relationships are the basic functions of the representation evoked by rootedness.

These functions are accomplished and consolidated in interaction. Indeed, the role of integration is to reach a consensus on the way of presenting realities, to collectively construct ways of thinking, the world and human relationships, to ensure that these perceptions are unanimously shared by the the entire social body; because the members of a group are supposed to have in common a set of representations about things and values so that it is possible to live together, to work alongside each other and to understand each other. This form of consensus on the founding values of community life is forged and shared through communications that members have together.

III. CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

A concept placed out of context becomes a pretext, they say. Also, it is true that a concept can have as much meaning as there are as many receivers and each according to its context. This is why it is necessary to define each concept used in relation to the context of this work. This is how we will endeavor to clarify the main concepts of this study, giving them the meaning according to certain authors.

To this end, we will define the concepts child, advertising, image.

A. *The Child*

Part of the section called childhood. Childhood is an age group. The term childhood designates the optimal state of a person's physical and intellectual faculties including maturity, as opposed to senescence during which activities and

performances decline due to aging. The conceptions of classical antiquity distinguish several ages of life whose childhood symbolizes innocence and cheerfulness.

For Isidore Isou, author of "Treatise on Nuclear Economy", highlights that childhood represents the only dynamic and revolutionary force capable of acting on the economic circuit through the manifestation of pure and diverted creativity.

Continuing from the above we see how children can influence people's choices.

B. Advertising

The notion of advertising being important in this work, the concept will be defined, before presenting a typology and giving its functions. The concept of advertising has multiple meanings, often to the point of despairing of finding a common meaning of its different acceptances.

C. Definitions

Generally speaking, advertising is a communication technique aimed at facilitating either the propagation of certain ideas or economic relations between certain men who have a commodity or a service to offer and other men likely to use this merchandise or service.

According to some authors, advertising "is all the means and techniques used to make a brand known, to encourage the public to buy a product".

The sociologist MORIN EDGAR writes that the advertising action consists of 'transforming the product into a minor narcotic or inoculating it with the drug substance so that its purchase-consumption immediately provides euphoria-relief. It must both euphorize and disturb, give the foretaste of pleasure and the call of pleasure. It is a communication and promotion tool. We then say that the advertising is one-sided and mediated.

It is unilateral when it is in fact a one-way communication from the advertiser towards the intended target, without being feedback that the final behavior of the potential buyer moreover, it is not a dialogue but rather a monologue often narcissistic ;

On the other hand, mediated when it is often done through the media and more particularly the mass media or the means of mass communication. Each time it is a question of massively reaching very large audiences through the most modest supports such as advertising poster.

Advertising is the dissemination of a message that draws the consumer's attention to a specific product through the media.

According to GERVERAU Laurent, advertising is more about genres than material supports? She uses graphics, video, posters, photography, films. It produces meaning and constructs it. She is not a coincidence.

Advertising is a form of communication, the aim of which is to capture the attention of an intended target (consumer, user, voter, etc.) to encourage them to adopt a desired behavior, i.e. procurement .

Indeed, following all these preceding definitions, we conclude that advertising seeks to exert a psychological action for commercial purposes, advertising therefore has the ambition not only to make a product known to the public, but also to encourage the latter to acquire. This is what distinguishes it from other methods of persuasion, such as propaganda, public relations, etc.

D. Role and Purpose

➤ Role of Advertising

The role of advertising is to stimulate and promote the marketability of a product; it constitutes the most effective or quickest way to establish massive, simple communication with all consumers.

➤ The Purpose of Advertising

Advertising aims to persuade in order to sell. It seeks to capture consumers, transform their conviction into an act of purchase.

➤ Advertising Objectives

Generally speaking, an advertising action aims to inform, persuade, remind and reassure. From the above, we can distinguish the following types of advertising:

➤ Informative Advertising

It is especially useful at the beginning of a product's life cycle, when it comes to addressing primary demand. It is:

- Inform the market of the existence of a new product;
- Explain product information;
- Describe the services offered;
- Bring out the buyer's fear;
- Build an image.

➤ Persuasive Advertising

It is dominant in a competitive world when it comes to promoting selective demand for a particular brand. It aims to:

- Facilitate immediate purchasing;
- Facilitate an interview with the seller;
- Creates brand preference.

➤ Reminder Advertising

It is practiced in the maturity phase when it comes to maintaining demand. This involves reminding people of upcoming purchasing opportunities, maintaining awareness, and reminding people of the existence of the beneficiaries.

E. Stakeholders in Advertising

There are three main players in the advertising activity. It is advertisers, media and agencies.

➤ Advertisers

We call advertisers any organization that advertises: company, public organization, institution of a social, religious or political nature.

➤ Media and Supports

The media are a set of supports that relate to the same mode of communication. The medium is any vector of advertising communication.

• Among the Supports, we Distinguish:

- ✓ Television;
- ✓ The poster;
- ✓ The press
- ✓ The radio
- ✓ The movie theater.

There is a diversification of media, we find advertising spots, banners, catalogs, leaflets, newspapers, magazines, posters, etc.

➤ The Agency

An agency is an independent organization made up of specialists responsible, on behalf of advertisers, for the design, execution and control of advertising actions.

F. Advantages and Harms of Advertising

➤ Advantages of Advertising

The advantages of advertising are multiple. Advertising allows you to:

- Make a company, product or service known;
- Stimulate purchasing;
- Maintain notoriety;
- Increase sales of a product;
- Create a preference;
- Describe the services offered;
- Modify the market's perception of a product's attributes;
- Stimulate competition, innovation and efficiency;
- Regularize production.

➤ The Harms of Advertising

Among the harms, we only recognize advertising:

- Create artificial needs
- Depersonalize the man;
- Arouse luxury needs in a part of the population whose resources are not corresponding, that is to say insufficient;
- Is a source of envy, dissatisfaction and publicity when pushed to the extreme, invades man through the radio, newspapers, leaflets, giant signs on the roads, from his waking up until to his sleep.

This situation depersonalizes the man and sees a standard imposed on him by advertising. In addition, advertising leads the individual to buy the accessory before the essentials.

G. Characteristics of Advertising

- The power of action: powerful means of repeating the message;
- An exceptional ease of expression: a richness of expression of the highest order;
- An impersonal and unidirectional character: receive the message without distinction

IV. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

To develop this research, we will rely on content analysis. The content analysis method.

As part of this work we opted for content analysis. In this form of analysis, the ambition is to decipher the way in which each advertisement shows and predicts the child; it is what the advertisements contain from this angle which will be captured in each advertisement.

A. Presentation of the Method

Content analysis is one of the rare processes developed expressly by the study of communication facts. Several authors have spoken of content analysis as a technique or as a method.

We used the book *Media Content Analysis: From the Problem to Statistical Treatment* by Jean de BONVILLE.

To measure is to compare any quantity contained in the messages with another quantity taken as a standard. All content analyzes are far from being quantitative in the strong sense.

Counting means assigning a frequency to any category present in messages.

Content analysis focuses on the manifest content of communication; it must relate to the actual content of the message, as recorded on a physical medium: paper, newspaper, microfilm, magnetic or videotape, film, etc.

Only messages expressed by an author or coming from any source fall within the scope of content analysis.

Indeed, the interest of content analysis lies largely in the perspectives opened upstream and downstream of the messages themselves. However, there is no reason to consider any descriptive approach limited to the obvious content of the messages as useless and invalid.

B. Areas of Application of Content Analysis

The summary inventory of areas to which content analysis is applied helps to better understand its nature and usefulness.

We distinguish, for greater clarity, the theoretical, methodological and technical modalities of survey and interview and material for applying content analysis.

C. From a Theoretical Point of View

Our work did not choose content analysis as a theory, so we do not find it important.

D. From a Methodological Point of View

For some researchers, the main methodological advantage of content analysis is the abundance and availability of data to which it is applicable. Even if this observation is well-founded, it cannot justify the use of content analysis. On the contrary, it has certain characteristics that recommend it in certain research contexts.

Content analysis is transparent. Several research techniques that require the intervention of the observer with the object or person observed are likely to modify their behavior.

Thus, during an interview or in an opinion poll, the wording of the questions can guide the responses of techniques such as the interview or in an opinion poll, the wording of the question can guide the responses.

Techniques such as interviews, surveys, participant observation, laboratory research, tests of all kinds modify the research conditions simply because of their application: because the object of the research; because of the influence of the measurement process on the measured object; because of stereotypes present in the answers given.

Content analysis, on the contrary, because it always occurs after the messages have been sent, does not modify the observed situation. This is why it is said to be a transparent technique.

In other words, content analysis is particularly suitable for messages that are the subject of road reception and not of an aesthetic judgment.

E. From the Point of View of the Research Object

The research objects of communication specialists are numerous, and it is possible to develop several classifications. We will only propose two: the first based on the stages of the communication process and the second inspired by communication functions and media. These two approaches not only complement each other, but also overlap.

➤ *Communications Processes*

Content analysis can cover a multitude of subjects and can help answer a wide variety of questions regarding the content of communications. Drawing inspiration from basic concepts in communication, we will classify these applications by grouping them around the three main objectives of all research on communication, namely describing the attributes of the message itself; draw inferences about the causes of communication and the context of message production; draw inferences about the effects of communication or the context of message reception.

• *Description of Messages*

Content analysis focuses on all types of messages, written (press), oral (radio), visual (posters, announcements, etc.), audio visual (television, cinema, etc.), audio scriptvisual (multimedia, internet, etc.). The rules of content analysis methodology are universally applicable.

Analyses aimed at describing message attributes are grouped around two general questions: what? And how? The first introduces research on the theme, the object, the sphere of activities, etc. which the messages are about, the second concerns the way in which the messages are presented.

• *The Causes of Communication and the Context of Message Production*

The questions who? And why? Discuss some of the applications relating to upstream messages. To answer the first question, the analyst can, for example, seek to know the sources of information in newspaper articles or television news or to identify and characterize the authors of media messages. These are not always individuals or groups of individuals lending their voice to institutions. Researchers who are interested in the second question why? Postulate that the content of the media represents, sometimes in a roundabout and contradictory manner, the intention of its authors.

➤ *Communication Functions and Media*

Whatever stage of the communication process the analysis focuses on, it can relate to messages from various origins disseminated on a variety of media. The three traditional communication functions, journalism, advertising and public relations, are the main sources of messages disseminated to the public. The news, the advertisement or the press release, three categories of messages typically for these functions, can therefore in turn become the materials on which content analysis is carried out. Thus, the advertisement or the newspaper article can be analyzed for themselves and in their conditions of production or reception.

Public communications agents work in the media or use the media as a means of transmitting their message. The content analyst must therefore consider all media, written or audiovisual, as his domain. Certainly, his research concerns lead him to retain only a fraction of what the media broadcast. If he is interested in advertising, he can limit himself to television advertising, advertising aimed at children.

➤ *From a Pragmatic Point of View*

Indeed, from a practical or pragmatic point of view, we can consider the application of analysis in several contexts like most research techniques, it can be put to use.

V. THE USE OF CHILDREN IN ADVERTISING

This involves examining the fundamental traits that the advertiser finds as factors likely to influence consumer purchasing behavior. The representations in question are linked to the child. In this advertisement we will first say how the child is taken in the advertisement.

➤ *Children, a Prime Target of the Advertising System*

A number of studies on advertising and children emphasize the misleading nature of advertising, with children not knowing the difference between advertising messages and other television programs and therefore not being able to understand their commercial purpose before 7 years, 8 years, or even 11 years. This is particularly what Erling Bjurström, a Swedish professor of communications, reveals, whose work was used to develop the Swedish law on the regulation of advertising aimed at protecting children.

The vulnerability of children to advertising messages makes them a particularly popular target for advertisers, who have placed them as “best sellers”.

➤ *Role and Importance of the Child in Advertising*

➤ *Importance of the Image of the Child in Advertising*

It should be remembered that advertising communication is not the only way to promote sales. It is one of many forms of business communication which has the main objective of making customers known, liked and acted upon by allowing them to have knowledge of the existence of an offer, a product, a service, a benefit likely to provide an effective response to the problem they are facing.

Advertising communication is aimed at a specific target which is generally made up of well-identified consumers before or during the product implementation phase. To understand them, we must first identify their needs and motivations. It is only after gathering the information that we can use advertising communication with the aim of either creating awareness of certain needs on the part of consumers, or of pushing them towards a purchasing decision.

Indeed, every individual has a certain idea of their personality, of what they think they are and of the image they want to give. We don't just buy a product, we adhere to the values that it represents and conveys. It is this attitude that leads human beings to seek out products or services whose image is consistent with their own. The use by advertising of certain personalities, for example, whose beauty features, moral and intellectual values, sporting and cultural exploits, etc. are recognized and admired by a large number of people, finds its justification here.

Thus, the image of the child in advertising communication always acts in the sense of positively influencing consumers towards purchasing behavior through the foregrounding of audio-visual media.

➤ *Role of the Image of the Child in Advertising*

The child character is used in advertising for commercial purposes. It is mainly used in products intended for it. In most cases, it is used in advertising cosmetic products for children, in food products, in advertising messages for savings and insurance companies, etc.

The child is an innocent, pure being by nature who allows himself to be guided by adults. What is attractive about the role given to him in advertising is the fact that he sometimes loses this nature to sometimes play the role of an adult, that of a guide, in the sense that he can also teach adults to choose between good and bad. The child is, by nature, a weak, fragile and very precious being in the eyes of adults. A parent who respects himself or a parent responsible for his education and development. Knowing that a parent cannot resist the child's requests, the publicist uses the child to persuade the parents to buy the desired good.

➤ *Representations of the Image of the Child in the Spot*

We were able to highlight some forms of representation of the child in advertising communication. The main indications that this analysis allows us to establish correspond to the figures representative of the image of the child. Here is a sample:

• *Child as a Source of Joy*

In African societies, the child is a source of joy and an element of consolidation of a family, in the sense that marriage is much more based on children. A married couple who does not have children is a couple who is not stable, at any time there may be a breach of the marriage contract, or even one of the spouses may go elsewhere or will find better, at that moment both will live in total instability.

When a child is born into a family, there is total joy that sets in. The child is of such importance that, even if the man and the woman are not married, but from the moment they have children, automatically, a bond is created between them which will unite them for the rest of their lives. In our advertising films, the child is always surrounded by adults in addition to his parents, especially since the basic unit of education is the family.

VI. CONCLUSION

Here we are at the end of our study devoted to children in the Congolese spot? It consisted of analyzing the presence of the child in the advertising spot. The aim was to study how a company in a competitive situation could develop different attractive mechanisms to attract consumers, through innovative marketing strategies in order to ensure its development.

It is true that no company can market a very wide range of products but the way in which the company fights in its sector of activity where certain market segments to attract, win and retain consumers is essential in the developing a powerful marketing strategy.

From all of the above, the reason why our research focused on knowledge of marketing strategies to attract and retain consumers through advertising. This approach was essentially based on the documentation of children in advertising. These analyzes were able to note consumer reactions, particularly when they saw children presenting the product as good products.

On this, the studies carried out allowed us to confirm our hypothesis according to which children have an influence on the consumer because when they appear in an advertisement, they attract and push the purchase. The child here encourages us to take the cookie. They represent a phenomenon that is both aesthetic-magical and religious.

REFERENCES

- [1]. BARDIN, L. (1977), Content analysis, 2nd Edition, Paris,
- [2]. BOURDIEU, P. (1980), Practical sense, Paris, ed. threshold,
- [3]. JODELET, D. (1989), Madness and representation of mental illness, Paris, Puf, ,
- [4]. DASTOT, J.C. (2012), Advertising, principles and methods, Verviers, ed. Gerard,
- [5]. Lendrevie.,J.(2008), Publicitor, 360° communication, Ed. Dunod, Paris, ,
- [6]. BOURDIEU, P. (1980), Identity and representation, Proceedings of research in social sciences, Paris, ed. Hatchet,
- [7]. PHILPPE KOTLER and B. DUBOIS (2000), Marketing Management, 11th edition, Paris, Publi-unions,
- [8]. VION, R., (1992), Verbal interactions, Paris, Hachette,
- [9]. VAN VRACEM and M.JANSSENS, (1994), Consumer behavior: external influencing factors, Brussels, ed. From Boeck-university,
- [10]. Daniel, Caumont (2001), Advertising, ed. Dunod, Paris,
- [11]. DAYAN.A. (1988), Marketing, Paris, ed. PUF,
- [12]. Petit la Larousse Illustrated Dictionary, Paris, 1987.
- [13]. Gerverau Laurent, (2000), Understanding, analyzing images, La Découverte, Paris,
- [14]. RIVIERE, vinca. (2007), Behavior analysis applied to children and adolescents, publishers presses, Paris.