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СОЦИОСФЕРА

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- *РИНЦ*
- *Публикуются статьи по социально-гуманитарным наукам*

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[ПОДРОБНЕЕ](#)



СБОРНИКИ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЙ

- *Широкий спектр тем международных конференций*
- *Издание сборника в Праге*
- *Публикуются материалы по информатике, истории, культурологии, медицине, педагогике, политологии, праву, психологии, религиоведению, социологии, технике, филологии, философии, экологии, экономике*



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ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN ADVERTISING AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

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Abstract. Ethnic stereotypes are an effective means of communication in advertising. 42 people took part in our empirical study: young people, representatives of Vietnam (12 people), 25 people who identify themselves as representatives of the Slavic peoples and 5 people, representatives of the peoples of the Caucasus. The study participants were interviewed individually. The results of the study showed the existence of a stereotype of cooperation between representatives of different ethnic groups.

Keywords: ethnic stereotype; advertising; interaction; communication; cooperation; efficiency.

The ability of consciousness to define, isolate and generalize in a holistic way is the basis of the prosocial behavior of subjects in relation to certain social phenomena or social groups and their representatives. The existence of socio-psychological stereotypes, as well as their formation in relation to certain objects and phenomena, is an important part in the process of formation by an individual of knowledge about the surrounding reality.

Walter Lippmann, in his book *Public Opinion*, first described the method by which society tries to categorize people [5]. Lippmann identified four aspects of stereotypes: stereotypes are always simpler than reality; people acquire stereotypes, rather than formulating them themselves on the basis of personal experience; stereotypes are false, to a greater or lesser extent; stereotypes are very viable.

In the process of stereotyping, an individual in his mind creates an acceptable form of a phenomenon or object, relying not on

complete information, but on knowledge about some properties of the object. The formation of new stereotypes is influenced by the presence of already existing stereotypes in society.

Ethnic stereotypes act as a means of communication and an important socio-psychological tool for advertising. Stereotypes are an integral part of the information perception process. Marketing communications support some long-standing stereotypes, such as the white male hero, the submissive and sexy woman, the Asian ninja, and the black criminal [2].

Research examining advertising based on racial stereotypes highlights the social impact of these representations. However, scientists point out that ethnic stereotypes can have a positive effect on the effectiveness of advertising. When planning and conducting research, psychologists take into account indicators of consumer identity, social categorization, and the effectiveness of advertising per-



suasion. The results of experiments show the effectiveness of advertising both among members of ethnic groups and among non-members of the group that is stereotypically represented in advertising [4].

Studies on ethnic stereotypes in advertising show that the content of stereotypes is an important topic of public policy. The results show that there are openly stigmatized groups in the public consciousness, for example, residents of the Caucasus. Ethnic representation is also investigated by the category of the advertised product, ethnic interaction and the importance of the role played by ethnic characters [6].

Scholars and practitioners note that advertising is a symbolic reflection of social ties, and good examples of advertising evoke empathy. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the field of research on the potential positive, rather than negative, impact of ethnic stereotypes [1, p. 173].

It is also necessary to take into account when studying the effectiveness of advertising that stereotypes exist and are included in communication not alone, but interact with ideas about classes, castes, gender roles, and others. All this creates a system of influence on a potential consumer.

Studies show that representatives of different ethnic groups place semantic accents in different ways when viewing advertisements that represent people, members of different ethnic groups. The results show that black participants use race as the main feature when evaluating a character, while white participants use social class as the main cue [3].

Studies show that it is necessary to take into account the place of residence and the level of acculturation of advertising respondents and potential consumers of products and services. Representatives of ethnic groups with a successful level of acculturation react more favorably to a match that corresponds to a stereotype than to a match that is incompatible with the stereotype. The results of the

work of the "coincidence effect" between the perceived characteristics of the ethnic stereotype used in advertising and the characteristics of the advertised product or service were also revealed [7].

We assumed that when perceiving advertising, ethnic stereotypes can simultaneously serve as a barrier or filter for the information received, and contribute to a more effective impact of advertising. An ethnic stereotype activates information of different content and meaning among representatives of different ethnic groups.

42 people took part in our empirical study: young people, representatives of Vietnam (12 people), 25 people who identify themselves as representatives of the Slavic peoples and 5 people, representatives of the peoples of the Caucasus. The study participants were interviewed individually.

The study consisted of two series. During the 1st series, the participants of the study were presented with images (pictures) of representatives of different ethnic groups: 1. A young man of Asian appearance; 2. A young Indian in a business suit; 3. A young man of Caucasian appearance; 4. A young man of Slavic appearance; 5. A young man, a typical representative of the Anglo-Saxon race; 6. A young black man. We intentionally excluded female characters to avoid being influenced by gender role stereotypes.

The participants of the study were asked to choose from the presented "actors" the main character for advertising: 1. University; 2. Computer technology; 3. Restaurant; 4. Sports goods; 5. Tourist equipment. 6. Medical equipment.

An analysis of the results showed that in all three groups there were coincidences: a young black man had to advertise sports goods; tourist equipment – a young man, a typical representative of the Anglo-Saxon race. University advertising can, according to the participants of the study, be advertised by representatives of their own ethnic group. The



same opinion on restaurant advertising. Regarding medical equipment, opinions within the groups differed significantly.

At stage 2 of the series, the participants in the study were asked to write a "script" for the commercial, in which the participants could be the characters of the presented pictures, they could choose several characters or indicate which representatives of ethnic groups the research participant would like to use. Young people had to offer a script for commercials: 1. Business training; 2. Admission to the army; 3. Ecological program to save the Earth.

The results showed that all three groups were almost unanimous when compiling a promotional video for business training – the study participant included all characters, representatives of different ethnic groups in the course of a productive business interaction.

The promotional video for enlisting in the army showed unanimity within the groups – about a third of the representatives of the "Slavic" and "Caucasian" groups suggested using representatives of the Anglo-Saxon race and black youths, writing the script for the video in the style of an army blockbuster. Two-thirds of the participants in both groups included representatives of all ethnic groups, offering a Star Wars-style scenario.

Representatives of the Vietnamese group made videos that showed the role of the Vietnamese army in the aftermath of emergencies, harvesting, and peaceful construction. The participants of the video introduced themselves as representatives of different provinces of Vietnam.

For a commercial dedicated to an environmental program to save the Earth, all participants in the study included representatives of all ethnic groups, offering interesting and diverse stories.

The conducted pilot study made it possible to identify the presence of ethnic stereo-

types among representatives of different ethnic groups, however, joint activities for the benefit of a common cause were identified as the leading stereotype of modern young people. The results obtained require further research.

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