

## Social Media and Advertising Literacy of the Older Adults

Eudmila Čábyová<sup>1</sup>, Alena Hrušková<sup>1</sup>, Martina Rybníkárová<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Trnava, Slovak Republic

Correspondence: Eudmila Čábyová, Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Trnava, 917 01, Slovak Republic.

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### Abstract

In their study on advertising literacy, the authors focus their attention on the target group of the older adults. This is a very attractive target group that is always eager to shop and try new products. They also have sufficient financial resources to meet their interests and needs. This target group is also very attractive to advertisers, but their ability to understand advertising may be impaired compared to younger target groups. This is due to the use of new digital forms of advertising, which may not be as comprehensible to older adults. In their study, the authors surveyed the level of advertising literacy in a sample of older adults. The aim was to determine whether older adults understood the intent and objectives of advertising and whether they were able to identify the advertiser (advertiser). The authors also investigated the advertising literacy of older adults in relation to other marketing communication tools, such as public relations, product placement, and social media advertising.

**Keywords:** media literacy, advertising literacy, social media, advertising, product placement, public relations, older adults

### 1. Introduction

Advertising literacy is a specific form of media literacy, the goal of an advertising literacy intervention is similar to that of a media literacy intervention, which is to enhance knowledge and criticism for media use (Martens, 2010). Bačová et al. (2018, p. 21) consider advertising literacy as the “ability to critically evaluate advertising and to be able to distinguish its functions, especially to be aware of its effects and the ways in which it influences us, how it imposes itself on us, how it makes us dependent on the consumption of a product”. They also stress the need to be aware of the adverse effects of advertising, to detect them and to know the reasons why it is necessary to understand and be aware of the possibilities and limits of independent decision-making, which are greatly influenced by advertising. According to de Jans et al (2017, p. 2157) advertising literacy refers to “capacity to recognize advertising, understand its selling and persuasive intent and use this understanding to evaluate the advertised product.”

By advertising literacy we mean the ability to understand the content of advertising, to identify it, to detect its intent and to be able to resist it. As defined by E. Čábyová and V. Hudáková (2022, p. 149) the aim of companies' communication strategies is to “communicate in such a way that advertising is not identified or recognised.” Especially in the digital environment, advertising literacy can be significantly weakened. According to Verdoodt (2018, p. 12) the “commercial intent of digital advertising is often unclear because the commercial message is fully embedded in the entertaining content.” This can most often be identified in native advertising, which blends visually, content-wise and functionally with its environment (Laursen, 2017). Native advertising and sponsored content represent any paid content that mimics the form and appearance of editorial content from the publishing medium (Wojdyski, 2016). Paid forms of promotion also include teleshopping, which Kotler and Keller (2007, p. 649) define as “the ordering of goods from TV presentation by customers using a telephone or direct computer link”.

The advertiser uses and buys a third-party distribution channel - media, platforms and social networks. In an online environment, native advertising can take the form of PR articles, interviews, blogs, podcasts. According to V. Hudáková (2022, p. 69) “the most well-known form of native advertising is undoubtedly brand promotion through influencers.” Rozendaal et al. (2012, p. 201-206) defines three important characteristics of these new advertising formats: longer exposure time to commercial content, the integration of commercial content into the media content and the interactive engagement of the user with the commercial content.

In the offline environment, native advertising can be identified under product placement, sponsorship or paid advertising,

paid interviews in the press. An earlier definition of product placement was given by Balasubramanian (1994, p. 30) when he defined it as a „paid message about the product communicated through intended but inconspicuous input of a branded product into a movie (or a television programme).“ Product placement can also be used online and offline in digital games, literary and theatrical plays. Its use is also very common on social networks (Ghos, 2021, Garza Segovia & Kennet, 2022).

The boundaries between commercial and non-commercial online content (e.g., information or entertainment) are blurred (Campbell & Evans, 2018). The lowest levels of advertising literacy can understandably be observed among children and seniors (Carenzio, 2021).

### **Theory background of advertising literacy**

According to Bačová et al. (2018), advertising literacy has three phases, namely, recognizing advertising, understanding the selling intention of advertising, and understanding the persuasive intention of advertising. In order to understand these phases, an individual must have gained experience from advertisements and from the purchase and consumption of products and services.

Repetition of advertising is important for advertisers so that consumers can register and remember the advertising message.

Advertising literacy can be generalised as conceptual knowledge about advertising (Rozendaal, 2011), with several theoretical models providing insights into specific types of knowledge. (for an overview see: Wright, Friestad, & Boush, 2005).

Using these models, Rozendaal (2011, p. 335-345) identified seven knowledge components of advertising literacy:

1. Recognition of advertising - this involves distinguishing advertising from other media content (e.g., television programs, editorial content, or web content),
2. Recognising the source of advertising - understanding who is the payer (advertiser) for advertising messages;
3. Perception of the target audience - understanding the concept of targeting a defined audience and the segmentation process (i.e., dividing the market into heterogeneous parts that are internally homogeneous and selecting the target market)
4. Understanding the selling intent of advertising - understanding that advertising is intended to sell products; ad creators use various advertising gimmicks to attract attention, their ultimate goal is to sell the product)
5. Understanding the persuasive intent of advertising - perceiving the advertising influence on consumer behaviour by changing mental state in the form of knowledge and attitudes about the product;
6. Understanding the persuasive tactics of the advertiser - understanding the specific strategies used by advertisers to both enhance and idealize the product;
7. Understanding advertising bias - perceiving discrepancies between the actual product and the advertised product.

Each individual possesses different advertising literacy, which is influenced by their own experience (Choudhary & Sharma, 2021). Adults have the most developed advertising literacy as they have experience and sufficient knowledge. It is therefore necessary to educate children and adolescents in this area. (Estrada, et al., 2014). The media environment greatly influences an individual's development in childhood and builds his or her advertising literacy, which enables him or her to understand the various contexts and the relationships between them. Rozendaal et al. (2016, p. 80 - 92) presented the results of research that showed that children under the age of 5 have difficulty distinguishing advertising from television programs and, for this reason, perceive advertising as a type of entertainment. They also state that children around the age of 8 can tell the difference between programmes and television advertising. Only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of children around 11 years of age can formulate the real intention of an advertisement after it has been aired. Children aged 13 show a significant increase in their understanding of advertisers' persuasion tactics and advertising bias. Research shows that the conceptual knowledge acquired through commercials includes both relatively simple and more abstract competencies accumulated during childhood. Children as young as 13 years old may already have a variety of knowledge and some experience of advertising because they are influenced by it from a young age, but they also go through different phases of learning in media environments.

Since the most advertising operate in a digital environment, advertising literacy is influenced by the level of digital literacy (Čábyová, 2022). The studies have concluded that while older people exhibit a variety of digital media practices, they typically use digital technologies and media less and somewhat differently than younger age groups. (Ofcom, 2019 a, Ofcom, 2019 b, Rasi, 2018).

In Europe, there is a lack of thorough research on the advertising literacy of older people (Rasi et al., 2019, Carenzio, 2021). The most studies concentrate on older people's *access* and *use* of digital technologies and media.

In the case of the elderly, educating seniors in media literacy and advertising literacy is more challenging. Older people do not like new things, information, they do not show enough interest, they do not understand it (Asante & Tuffour, 2022)

and therefore it is more difficult to get them to the required level of advertising literacy than for adults (Carenzio, 2021). Older people often trust the reliability and credibility of information from the advertising environment. (Rasi et.al., 2019) There are various projects in Slovakia (University of the Third Age, Educational Senior Network, LoGaSET) that try to develop literacy among seniors, but more often they focus on financial literacy or technological literacy. Education in media and advertising literacy is low.

Older adults are not “digital natives” and may have less experience using contemporary media technologies and platforms as they were not as large a part of their professional and personal lives (Friemel, 2016). The new coronavirus pandemic has increased the number of seniors using the internet. (Eurostat, 2021). Aged 55 and above who utilize the internet has consistently increased. Nevertheless, approximately 16% of individuals aged 65-74 and over 50% of individuals over 75 have not used the internet in the past three months. According Gálik and Vrabec (2022) the usage of the internet by the oldest age group has significantly risen over the last eight years, it will still take several years for their digital inclusion rate to approach that of younger age groups at the current rate.

Many older people are actively seeking new information and are open to learning and adopting new technologies. (Carenzio et. al., 2021). Furthermore, studies have shown (Velšic, 2022) that older individuals can be highly competent and skilled in using new technologies, especially when they have a strong motivation and interest. Thus, it is important for businesses and marketers to avoid assuming that older people are not interested in new things and to instead tailor their advertising and marketing efforts to meet the diverse needs and preferences of all age groups.

Seifert and Schelling (2018) state, that any older people are tech-savvy and open to new ideas, and just like any other age group, their interest and understanding of new information depends on their individual experiences and preferences. According Daniluk and Borkowska (2021) using modern possibilities of electronic communication, older adults had to get new skills, as well as change their habits regarding communication (digital literacy).

Access to the internet gives older adults the opportunity to improve communication skills, develop their awareness, educational potential and commitment to self-development (Khosrawi et.al, 2016).

Activity on social networking sites can also allow them to expand their social interactions beyond the sphere of family and close friends and make new acquaintances (Wright, 2000, Zhang &Li, 2022). In addition to offering more opportunities for social inclusion, social media can help in reducing depression, loneliness, as well as increasing feelings of control, which would provide seniors with significant benefits in the areas of happiness and well-being (Nakagomi et al., 2022). The increasing use of social media by seniors, their growing affinity for digital media as a whole, and demographic trends offer many opportunities for marketers who wish to explore this segment.

STEME/MARK's results on a sample of 1010 people older than 15 show that older people prefer Facebook. Up to 74% of people over 60 use it, 44% use YouTube and only 13% use Instagram. This is natural, as older people tend to stick to traditional social networks. Conversely, young people are looking for more dynamic and visually focused content, which favours the social network TikTok, for example. Although it has been in use for a relatively short time, it is visited by one in five young people and has fans mainly in eastern Slovakia.

Most people use social networking sites to connect with friends, then for entertainment or to search for information. For example, the average Slovak has 270 contacts on Facebook, and 39% of users post at least once a week. On Instagram, the average number of contacts is 225 and the frequency of posting is also lower. (<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/>)

Older adults represent the fastest growing portion of the human population, and social media can help satisfy some of their social needs (Moschis, 2022). Khoo and Yang (2020) found that social media use for interactions with broader social networks (e.g., friends) is as beneficial as social media use to connect with family for improving middle-aged and older adults' perception of social support. This study, therefore, attempts to address this gap by focusing on Facebook and Instagram use among older generations. In doing so, we subscribe to the paradigm that life-position indicators guide strategic media use.

However, this potential of the older generation requires brands to identify the characteristics of older users, especially since older adults should have more time and disposable income to devote to brands that are presented in social media (Khoo & Yang, 2020). Although marketers are still reluctant to sell products targeted at them, they are aware of the fact that they differ in their emotional behaviour from younger generations (Ractham, et al., 2022). During aging, needs and consumption habits become increasingly different, and as a result, there is no other age group in which segmentation is more difficult (Moschis, 2022). To effectively target by segment in social media, it is first necessary to analyze the behaviour of older adults toward new media.

As already mentioned, Szmigin, I. and Carrigan, M. (2000, p. 165) state that “advertising also has a negative impact on them, it is necessary to recognize these influences.” Related to this is the development of advertising literacy, as identifying the negative impact of advertising, especially in an online environment, can be much more challenging.

## 2. Research Methodology

The researchers organized a interview with thirty respondents ranging in age from 55-60 years. Half of the sessions were in the form of face-to-face meetings at the Faculty of Mass Communication, the other half were online via google meet with the camera on. The respondents were from the Trnava region (Slovak Republic). 17 respondents were male and 13 respondents were female. None of the respondents were retired, all were employed. Respondents self-reported to the qualitative research, which was posted on the faculty's website and on social networks. The interviews were conducted in the months of April and May 2022, the average length of the interview was 44 minutes.

We use the term older adult to refer to the target group of our research (55 – 60 years old). Many researches confirm that the key marketing target group is people over 50, they are still active, curious to try new products (Myslivočková, 2003). The World Health Organisation believes that most developed world countries characterise old age starting at 60 years and above. (Ageing and health, 2022). We used the classification of older people by Haškovcová (2010, p. 23), according her opinion into the following groups can be also used: middle age (55-59 years), older age (60-74 years), old age (75-81 years).

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer first explained the nature of the interview. As none of the interviewees had a background in marketing communications or worked in the field of media and advertising, the basic terms that were part of the interview and research were explained to all interviewees. These were the terms: public relations, product placement, native advertising, teleshopping.

The intention was to find out whether the selected respondents recognize the basic objectives of advertising and can identify the advertiser. The authors investigated whether they are able to distinguish PR content from editorial content. In their investigation, the authors of the study focused on the social networks Facebook and YouTube. The choice of social platforms was no accident. Facebook has long been one of the most used social media in Slovakia. In December 2022, 81.4% of users of internete were active on Facebook. Conversely, YouTube is among the least used social platforms. In December 2022, only 1.84% of Slovak users used youtube. (Social Media Stats Slovakia, december 2022)

They conducted research on advertising literacy of marketing communication techniques namely advertising, teleshopping and product placement. In selecting these techniques, we draw on the insights of Čábyová (2012), who lists 4 basic ways of using commercial space in the media (advertising spot, teleshopping, sponsorship and product placement)

Resarchers followed the methodology of Hyman et al. (2017), who measured the ability to distinguish paid from unpaid content. All respondents saw 18 images (in random order) and then two videos. In their study, most respondents were unable to identify native advertising as paid content.

The topics of the interviews covered three main areas: 1) paid publicity and editorial content, 2) attitudes, perceptions and knowledge about advertising and the other communication techniques and 3) advertising on the social networking sites Facebook and YouTube.

Inspired by the facts described in the text, we set the following research questions:

1. Can the selected target group recognize PR content from editorial content in articles?
2. Are 55 to 60 year olds able to recognize the difference between advertising and teleshopping?
3. Does the target group know product placement and its basic principles?
4. Do older adults understand the principles of creating advertising on Facebook and YouTube?

During the interviews, the respondents were first shown 3 articles. Respondents were asked to answer whether they noticed differences between paid and unpaid content. The articles were published on the most visited online news portals cas.sk, aktuality.sk and on the news portal of the Press Agency of Slovakia.

Subsequently, the differences between paid and unpaid content were explained to the respondents and they were shown three more articles.

**Article 1:** *Zľavové kódy sú známe aj pod názvom reklamné kódy, kupóny alebo vouchery.* [Discount codes are also known as promotional codes, coupons or vouchers.] (Source: aktuality.sk)

**Article 2:** *Krásny odkaz susedom Ukrajincom: Bratislavský hrad sa rozžiaril modrými a žltými farbami.* [A beautiful message to our Ukrainian neighbours: Bratislava Castle was lit up with blue and yellow colours.]. (Source: cas.sk)

**Article 3:** *Legenda zo špajze: Zlatý klas oslavuje 75 rokov.* [Legend from the pantry: Zlatý Klas celebrates 75 years.]. (Source: aktuality.sk)

**Article 4** *Krásna a zdravá zároveň? Notino vám s tým pomôže!* [Beautiful and healthy at the same time? Notino can help you with that!] (Source: aktuality.sk).

**Article 5** *Na opravu kaštieľa v Rusovciach dozrú pozorovatelia: Úrad vlády zriaďuje špeciálnu skupinu.* [Observers will oversee the repair of the Rusovce manor house: the Government Office establishes a special group] (Source: TASR.sk)

**Article 6:** *Urban gardening: Pestovanie pre každého.* [Urban gardening. Growing for everyone.] (Source: aktuality.sk).

In the second part of the interview, the aim was to find out how knowledgeable the respondents were about advertising, PR, teleshopping and whether they were able to define and see the differences between them.

The last topic of the interview was product placement. Respondents were asked to characterize product placement, tell the basic reasons for its use and give examples.

### 3. Results and Discussion

In the first part of our research, the authors investigated whether the respondents were able to distinguish between a PR article and editorial content. Up to 87% of the respondents read articles on the Internet on a regular basis. Respondents also answered overwhelmingly in the affirmative when asked whether they can distinguish between paid content and editorial content. 60% of respondents are aware that articles can have paid or unpaid content. The remaining 40% of respondents do not distinguish between editorials and paid PR articles. However, it was very difficult for all of them to give examples of paid content; respondents were not able to give reasons or basic objectives of paid content at all.

The findings were preceded by a face-to-face individual meeting in which respondents were presented with three web articles that they had read. After reading them, they determined whether the article was paid for by another entity (the advertiser) or whether it was an editorial article. More than half of the respondents, 57%, correctly identified the articles and were able to distinguish between a PR article and an editorial article.

Subsequently, the researchers verified in more detail the ability of the respondents to recognize articles that have paid content from articles that have unpaid (editorial) content. They presented 3 articles in front of the respondents. For these first three articles, the difference between paid advertising and unpaid content was not explained to respondents.

**Article 1:** *Zľavové kódy sú známe aj pod názvom reklamné kódy, kupóny alebo vouchery.* [Discount codes are also known as promotional codes, coupons or vouchers.] (Source: aktuality.sk) This was a PR article that had paid content. The article was focused on websites and apps that offer discount coupons with possible click-throughs to the sites and apps. It highlighted popular Slovak shops such as Notino, Alza, eObuv and Aboutyou with possible redirection to the mentioned sites.

**Article 2:** *Krásny odkaz susedom Ukrajincom: Bratislavský hrad sa rozžiaril modrými a žltými farbami.* [A beautiful message to our Ukrainian neighbours: Bratislava Castle was lit up with blue and yellow colours.]. (Source: cas.sk) This is an unpaid content, i.e. an editorial article, written in the form of a report, which informs about the solidarity of the Slovak Republic affected by the war with Russia.

**Article 3:** *Legenda zo špajze: Zlatý klas oslavuje 75 rokov.* [Legend from the pantry: Zlatý Klas celebrates 75 years.] (Source: aktuality.sk) This is a PR article. Its aim was to raise the profile of Golden Cob cream powder, which has been on the market for 75 years. The article contained a redirect to the Dr. Oetker website and a disclaimer that it was a PR article.

The basic difference between PR and editorial articles was then explained to all those questioned. Next, the researchers checked whether they had understood our explanation using specific examples of other articles.

After explaining the differences between a PR article and an editorial article, 3 more articles were placed in front of the respondents:

**The article 4** *Krásna a zdravá zároveň? Notino vám s tým pomôže!* [Beautiful and healthy at the same time? Notino can help you with that!] (Source: aktuality.sk). This was a PR article with paid content and its subject was to raise the profile of Notino, the largest online cosmetics and perfume store. The article focused on the store's growing offer. It redirected to the Notino website and the new product range.

**The article 5** *Na opravu kaštieľa v Rusovciach dozrú pozorovatelia: Úrad vlády zriaďuje špeciálnu skupinu.* [Observers will oversee the repair of the Rusovce manor house: the Government Office establishes a special group] (Source: TASR.sk) This is unpaid content, i.e. an editorial article written in the form of a report informing about the repair of the manor house in Rusovce.

**The article 6:** *Urban gardening: Pestovanie pre každého*. [Urban gardening. Growing for everyone.] (Source: aktualita.sk). It is a PR article because it has paid content. The article was focused on growing plants on balconies or terraces, offering various tips and advice with clear labelling, redirecting to the Möbelix shop.

After explaining the differences between a PR article and an editorial article, up to 70% of respondents identified the correct classification of articles and 30% of respondents identified the incorrect classification. Respondents who had also previously correctly identified backed articles were able to correctly identify all but one respondent in the second round of questioning. Overall improvement after explaining the differences occurred for only 4 enquirers. Consequently, 9 enquirers could not correctly identify the submitted articles even after explanation.

The biggest problem for them in the first round was the second article *Krásny odkaz susedom Ukrajincom: Bratislavský hrad sa rozžiaril modrými a žltými farbami*. [A beautiful message to our Ukrainian neighbours: Bratislava Castle was lit up with blue and yellow colours.]. This was editorial content in the form of a report. The respondents thought that we were trying to make Bratislava Castle more visible and popular.

In the second round, they had a problem with the sixth article: *Urban gardening: Pestovanie pre každého* [Urban gardening. Growing for everyone.]. It was a paid article by Möbelix. The article focused on growing plants on balconies or terraces, offering various tips and advice on how to grow plants using appropriate products with clear labelling, redirecting them to the Möbelix shop. However, it was necessary to click on the labelled products in order for the reader to find out which shop it was. This activity was not performed by 27% respondents, so they made a mistake in labelling the article even though they had read the whole article. This may also be due to the fact that the respondents were not motivated to click on the labelled products. Many were not interested in the topic and had no reason to look into it further.

The second part of the face-to-face questioning was aimed at finding out knowledge, experience and perception of advertising, hidden advertising and understanding the difference between advertising and teleshopping. Respondents' acquired experiences were verified and their own knowledge and associations related to these concepts were ascertained, without influencing the respondent with the chosen sample. The older generation of people aged between 55 and 60 years can explain the difference between the terms advertising, teleshopping, up to 97%, which is 29 respondents. However, it is interesting to note that out of the 29 respondents, only 40% respondents mentioned any other form of advertisement apart from television advertisement. These 40% respondents perceive advertising on the radio, in newspapers, on the Internet, in shops, and are particularly attracted by advertising from well-known personalities. The most frequently mentioned advertisements were on the radio and on the Internet. All respondents perceive advertising negatively, it bothers them. They perceive it most often on television. Interestingly, advertising on the Internet is not so disturbing for them and does not bother them. Here we see room for the use of native features that can be used in advertising.

Knowledge of the concept of product placement was already much lower. Only 20% of respondents are familiar with the term product placement as paid placement of advertising products and 80% of respondents do not know what is meant by this term. After this question, the concept of product placement was then explained to them as the paid placement of advertising products, brands, names in works of art, e.g. in films, series, TV shows, reality shows, whether depicted in live broadcasts, etc. It is a form of native advertising and is contracted according to set terms and conditions. After explaining the concept of product placement, the respondents were asked to identify the reason for the depiction of advertising products, up to 77% of the respondents were able to justify it correctly. Only 23% of the respondents thought that the products are backdrops and are meant to complete the plot. Interestingly, after explaining the concept of product placement, up to 87% of the respondents could not think of any examples and only 13%, namely four respondents, could think of specific films, series and reality shows. Two women mentioned *Rajo* brand milk and these were in the series *Oteckovia [Dads]* and in the series *Búrlivé víno [Stormy wine]*. In the Slovak reality show *Svadba na prvý pohľad [Wedding at the first sight]*, a female respondent spotted a hidden advertisement for the travel agency BUBO and the last respondent identified Adidas clothing in the film *Ženy v behu [Women on the run]*. Based on the above, it can be concluded that women are more perceptive in spotting hidden advertising products in film, TV series, broadcast, reality shows and other media products. The last question under this heading focused on paid placement in advertising and its advertiser. The majority of respondents indicated that companies use advertising placements in artwork to promote their products, name, brand, and logo. A smaller proportion of respondents thought that film companies or audiovisual production companies pay to have their product used in their works. And only 17% of the respondents, representing 5 respondents, knew the correct answer. These 5 respondents thought about both options. The discussion tended towards the fact that product placement can be beneficial for both parties. The brand of the product can be made more visible and if combined with a good story, sales can be increased. Conversely, for producers and creators of films, series, reality shows, etc., product placement can account for a significant portion of income.

The third set of questions focused on the use of Facebook and the social networking platform YouTube and the advertising that appears on them. Up to 90% of our respondents use Facebook, of which up to 73% of respondents recognize ads on

this social network, know the reason for displaying ads and also know who pays for them. The ads that are shown to female respondents aged 55 to 60 focus on travel, accommodation, clothing, jewellery and cosmetics. Advertising that is shown to male respondents aged 55 to 60 focuses on electronics, cars (including parts, car equipment) and technical tools.

The social platform YouTube is used by 90% of our respondents, 64% of whom know the reason for displaying the ads and also know who pays for them. Four respondents are aware that YouTube ads are paid for, but do not know who pays for them. Three respondents think YouTube ads are free. 40% of respondents understand the algorithm for displaying ads. They know that, based on various indicators and signals, the algorithm evaluates the relevance of a particular post and then displays it.

More than a quarter of respondents claimed that they are shown adverts with content that is not at all interesting or relevant to them. Respondents who are not interested in the advertisement at all and click through as soon as possible make up 23% of those surveyed. Our respondents are familiar with teleshopping, can identify it and recognise it from advertising. On the contrary, for product placement we observe already weakened advertising literacy of the elderly.

#### 4. Conclusion

The survey results indicate that although respondents are very active on social media, more than 60% of them do not see and are not aware of the difference between paid and unpaid content, especially for PR articles and native advertising. Respondents do not think about the possibilities of commerce use of space on social networks, they could not mention practical possibilities at all what their experience. After repeated research and explanation of the concepts, their interest and knowledge improved. Based on the above, it can be concluded that education can have an impact on their level of advertising literacy. The same is true for offline forms of promotion such as product placement and teleshopping. However, their knowledge was higher for off-line forms. Although the respondents knew the basic characteristics of social media advertising and its basic features, their knowledge was very low when it came to the functioning and algorithm of social media advertising. The qualitative research was only conducted on a sample of 30 respondents and the results cannot be generalised to the whole group of older adults.

To improve advertising literacy among older adults, it is important to provide targeted education and training that takes into account their unique experiences, cognitive abilities and digital literacy levels. This may involve providing simple and clear information about advertising techniques and common scams, as well as offering practical advice on how to protect oneself from deceptive marketing practices. It may also involve encouraging older people to stay engaged with new technology and media, and helping them to develop the skills they need to navigate online advertising and marketing.

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