A Literature Study: How Digital Advertisements Communicate with Children

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ABSTRACT

The internet provides a lot of space for advertisers to show various information related to commercial products and services. Both through websites and applications, advertisements are currently popping up a lot and even disturbing internet users. Where one of the users are children, who are very familiar with the use of digital media. This study analyzes how the attitude of the industry as an advertisement producer, the government in making rules and regulations, and the role of the global community in the development of fast and easily accessible digital media, especially for children who are very familiar with digital media on a daily basis, and briefly discusses how the developments are happening in Indonesia. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method or systematic literature review, this study wants to answer and provide views and developments in an advertisement that can communicate with underage users, namely children and adolescents, as well as boundaries that continue to evolve following developments in technology and digital media. After conducting an analysis using the Systematic Approach method from 8 international journals with the Scopus index, which the researchers obtained through searching for the keywords digital, media, advertising, and children, as well as limitations on the year of publication 2021-2023, it was found that restrictions on access to advertising on digital media are urgently needed, because advertising, among other things, can influence children's perceptions, feelings, and development. Therefore, it requires the active role of regulators, business people, and parents for the restrictions.

Keywords*: Advertising, Digital Media, Children*

ABSTRAK

Internet memberikan banyak ruang bagi para pengiklan untuk menunjukan berbagai informasi terkait produk dan jasa yang bersifat komersil. Baik melalui situs web maupun aplikasi, saat ini iklan sangat banyak bermunculan dan bahkan mengganggu pengguna internet. Dimana salah satu penggunanya adalah anak-anak, yang sangat familiar dalam penggunaan media digital. Studi ini menganalisa bagaimana sikap industri sebagai produsen iklan, pemerintah dalam membuat aturan dan regulasi, dan peran masyarakat secara global dalam perkembangan media digital yang cepat dan mudah diakses terutama bagi anak-anak yang sehari-hari sangat akrab dengan media digital, serta membahas secara singkat bagaimana perkembangan yang terjadi di Indonesia. Menggunakan metode *Systematic literature review* (SLR) atau tinjauan literatur sistematik, studi ini ingin menjawab dan memberikan pandangan serta perkembangan suatu iklan dapat berkomunikasi dengan pengguna dibawah umur yaitu anak-anak dan remaja, serta batasan-batasan yang terus berkembang mengikuti perkembangan teknologi dan media digital. Setelah melakukan analisa dengan metode *Systematic Approach* dari 8 jurnal internasional index Scopus, yang peneliti dapatkan melalui pencarian kata kunci digital, media, iklan, dan anak, serta pembatasan tahun terbit 2021-2023, didapatkan temuan bahwa batasan dalam akses iklan pada media digital sangat diperlukan, karena iklan diantaranya dapat mempengaruhi persepsi, perasaan, dan perkembangan anak-anak. Dan oleh karena itu, diperlukan peran aktif pembuat regulasi, pelaku bisnis, dan orang tua dalam pembatasannya.

***Kata kunci:** Iklan, Media Digital, Anak-anak*

Introduction

In this era, advertisements can easily be found anywhere, inside or outside household, in newspapers, on television, on the radio, on the street, in vehicles, in buildings, and more easily on personal computers and mobile phones. The story of technology and science provides various conveniences, positive benefits, and new ways humans live their daily lives (Febriyantoro & Arisandi, 2018). Technological developments also support the development of online social networks. Increasing growth and development of online is one of the most significant changes in human interaction and communication processes. This is because of the rapid growth of Internet-based platforms that support social behavior online communities online that allow the exchange of information, provide entertainment, and enable conversations between various cultures (Tiago & Verissimo, 2014).

Technology and digital media development has an important role in children's lives. Most of the activities that children do today are supported by the use of technology, even technology is an important requirement for children to socialize. Not only as consumers but, ever since the internet became commonplace in the early 21st century, the role of children as cultural producers and identity builders has been highlighted, either for the opportunity to display their creative potential and unique self-representation in public spaces, or due to increased awareness of their vulnerabilities (Livingstone, 2017). Digital media provides easy access to information, consumers and producers have entered it to the individual level so that the exchange of information is very fast and a lot. Seeing the wide market segmentation in digital media, of course entrepreneurs also take part in capitalizing various content on social media, one of which is through advertising.

According to Kunkel and Castonguay (2012), children who receive advertisements in new media may experience bad behavior, health problems, conflicts with parents and materialism. Considering that advertising is not the main goal of using digital media by children, what strategies are used by business people in advertising their products is also very interesting to know more about. Because with the rapid development of technology, of course, business people also quickly develop marketing and advertising strategies that can maximize their profits.

The internet provides a lot of space for advertisers to show various information related to commercial products and services. Both through websites and applications, advertisements are currently popping up a lot

and even disturbing internet users. Then how can these advertisements be accepted by the public and including children if their mere presence disturbs users, and how can the rules limit advertisers in communicating with digital media users, more deeply how can rules protect underage users, namely children and adolescents. Based on these questions, this study aims to examine research that has been carried out globally in various parts of the world, also discuss how it practically happen in Indonesia, and how advertising in digital media communicates with children as active digital media users.

Research Methods

The method used in this study is a qualitative method using a systematic literature review (SLR). According to Wee & Banister (2016) the literacy review method can help researchers to get an up-to-date and structured description of the literature that not only covers specific areas but also reviews added value. Literature review plays a very important role in academic research to collect existing knowledge and to check the state of the field (Cropanzano, 2009; Kunisch et al., 2018). A systematic literature review is a reliable, rigorous, and auditable methodology for evaluating previous research that is relevant to a particular phenomenon of interest. This study investigates specific

research questions on an important issue with the aim of providing a synthesized overview of the problem or topic following a transparent, systematic and reproducible procedure (Alidoost & Ruiz, 2018).

The procedure carried out by researchers to get the right literature to review is by determining keywords or keywords related to the concepts and phenomena that the researcher wants to study. Starting with determining the keywords used to find data sources from online databases, then determining the sources of the studies used, then determining inclusion and exclusion criteria, and evaluating the quality of the research. After that, the researcher enters into the planning process by looking at the predetermined research context and defining the review then entering research questions. After the questions, the researcher carried out the next stage, which was to search for data and then extract it to analyze the application of the concept and look for the results. Then the final step is to report the results.

Literacy sources used in this study are international journals obtained by researchers from database sources on the Scopus website. In collecting data the researcher applies a number of limitations by using keywords, then also the sources used as research objects are limited to journal articles that are

included in the fields of social sciences, communication and media studies. The research also limits the findings by selecting journal articles published in the period from 2021 to 2022. Furthermore, the journal articles used are only those written in English.

Restrictions applied by researchers are by determining the keywords used, namely "digital" + "media" + "advertising" + "child" in Scopus indexed journals. A search with the keyword "digital" identified 11,016 journal articles as appropriate. The limitation was then continued by screening and narrowing the search for the keywords "digital" + "media" which were then limited to 2,280 journal articles. Then from 2,280 limited journal articles, restrictions were made on topics related to advertising so that a search was made for "digital" + "media" + "advertising" which resulted in 75 limited journals. Then, according to the phenomenon raised, the restrictions were reinstated by adding the keywords "digital" + "media" + "advertising" + "child" which resulted in 8 journal articles. The eight journals were then subjected to an abstract reading test to show consistency and suitability with the keywords

used. Limitations are also applied to the year of publication for the last two years from 2021 to 2022. Journals obtained from search results have indexes Q1 and Q2. Disciplines are also narrowed specifically to social sciences. From these limitations, the researcher obtained eight journal articles for further research, all of which could be used to answer research questions and discuss the notion of the phenomenon of advertising through digital media for the children segment.

To answer the research questions as previously mentioned, this study uses a systematic approach from the systematic literature review method described by Snyder (2019). In his writings, Snyder (2019) elaborates on the stages of compiling a systematic literature review which has four phases, namely designing, conducting, analyzing, and writing the study. In the study design stage, this study is based on certain limitations in order to identify sources that are truly relevant to the research. Through the preview flow, eight articles were found that would be used to answer the research questions. Below are the titles, authors, and years of the eight articles to be reviewed.

Table 1. List of reviewed journals

No.	Title	Author (Year)
1.	Children's sexualization on the Internet: kids perceptions of digital images	Rodriguez, García, & Ventisca, M. (2021).

No.	Title	Author (Year)
2.	Minors and digital content. Rights and obligations	Maillo (2022)
3.	Attracting minors with entertainment: novel forms of brand communication on mobile phone	Sádaba & Feijoo (2022)
4.	Artificial Intelligence as an ally in monitoring commercial content harmful to children on the Internet	Rangel, C. (2022)
5.	Branding Kidfluencers: Regulating Content and Advertising on YouTube	Feller, G., & Burroughs, B. (2021)
6.	UK alcohol marketing regulation is failing: a new approach is needed to prioritise protection for all	Boniface, Atkinson, Critchlow, Jones, Meadows &Severi (2021)
7.	Parents' knowledge and skills about the risks of the digital world	Tomczyk L. and Potyrała K. (2021)
8.	Children and young people facing devices: new communicative phenomena and new product creators	Pastor M.E., Pérez R.V., & Medel L.I. (2022)

Research Finding and Discussion

Through the procedures carried out by the researchers, eight journals were obtained related to the concept of digital media advertising targeting children. The eight journals obtained are the results of quantitative and qualitative research from the fields of social sciences and business. After obtaining it, the researcher then conducted a study or review of the eight journal articles and obtained the following results in table 2.

Table 2. List of journal articles extraction

No.	Title	Goals	Method	Finding
1.	Children's sexualization on the Internet: kids perceptions of digital images	Examining how young girls perceive sexualized fashion models and celebrities	Qualitative, Interview	Sexualized fashion models and celebrities are considered normal (positive perception) by young girls
2.	Minors and digital content. Rights and obligations	Observing how the role of regulation on advertising messages to children	Qualitative, Conceptual Review	Clear rules and regulations are needed to limit advertising, especially in relation to children

No.	Title	Goals	Method	Finding
3.	Attracting minors with entertainment: novel forms of brand communication on mobile phone	Examining how children respond to advertisements packed into digital entertainment media	Qualitative, Semi-structural Interview	In responding to advertisements, children will specifically receive advertisements when the advertisements provide added value and children feel that they can control it.
4.	Artificial Intelligence as an ally in monitoring commercial content harmful to children on the Internet	Learn how AI works to protect minors from inappropriate advertising messages on the Internet	Qualitative, critical-descriptive analysis	AI can serve service providers and regulators in enhancing the protection of minors from commercial content that is harmful to their development
5.	Branding Kidfluencers: Regulating Content and Advertising on YouTube	Analyzes the emerging changes in the YouTube, advertising, and children's digital media industries through a Pocket Watch case study.	Qualitative, Case Study Analysis	Pocket Watch's branding strategy of using "kidsfluencer" to become commercial for its brand is heavily influenced by regulations made by the government
6.	UK alcohol marketing regulation is failing: a new approach is needed to prioritise protection for all	Exploring how the UK government regulates the marketing and advertising of alcohol products	Qualitative, Conceptual Review	A new approach is needed by combining comprehensive restrictions, content control, labeling, and replacing self-regulation with an independent body
7.	Parents' knowledge and skills about the risks of the digital world	Measuring the level of knowledge and literacy related to internet safety and digital literacy of parents of elementary school students in Poland	Quantitative, Questionnaire Survey	Most parents obtain low results on competency tests and tend to overestimate their level of digital literature (self-evaluation)

No.	Title	Goals	Method	Finding
8.	Children and young people facing devices: new communicative phenomena and new product creators	Explore the boundaries and rules for children as consumers and producers of social media content	Qualitative, Literature Review	Advertising takes a big role in framing communication through social media

Following the method result, from eight journals there are seven journals used qualitative methods through interviews, conceptual studies, semi-structured interviews, critical-descriptive analysis, case studies, and literature reviews and only one journal used quantitative methods, namely through surveys using questionnaires. The eight journals studied were research conducted in various countries such as Poland, Italy, South Africa, and others. In this case the researcher did not make any limitations from the countries studied. Most journals focus on social issues and phenomena, for example in article number 3 with the title Attracting minors with entertainment: novel forms of brand communication on mobile phones. Where in this article researchers raise issues related to advertising framing into entertainment content for children. In addition to social issues, researchers also conduct studies on articles in the business field, such as article number 5 with the title "*Branding Kidfluencers: Regulating Content and*

Advertising on YouTube". This is because researchers also want to know how the strategies carried out by the marketing and advertising industry in innovating in digital media.

From the description presented in the data extraction table 2, it can be seen that every issue related to advertising in digital media is closely related to regulations and rules that are still being developed in line with developments in digital media itself. To answer the first question regarding how advertising can be received by children, articles number one and three discussed innovations made by the advertising and marketing industry. In the number one article, the advertising industry in the world of fashion normalizes open clothing styles to attract young female targets, although this article focuses more on how to avoid normalizing open clothing styles. However, from the industry's point of view, this is done following the market's wishes and of course, the industry will prioritize the performance of the advertising strategy that is made. Then in

articles number three and eight related to advertisements that are framed in the form of entertainment. In the digital world, advertisements then enter into other content, say online games and social media. The two forms of digital media that are widely used by teenagers and children provide a new picture regarding advertising.

Regardless of the benefits that industry and business want to get, there are rules that limit advertising in communicating with children and young people as users of digital media. In article number one it is clear that the normalization of open dress styles still needs to be regulated thoroughly, straightforwardly and does not offend any group because dress styles can also offend a particular ethnicity and religion. In article number two it is also discussed if in addition to the rules against advertising producers, children also have the right to be protected from various advertising content, because advertising content is not the main content which is even more disturbing so that the consent of the user or "consent" is something that needs attention. by advertising producers, because children can already choose based on their needs and wants, which is the finding of the third article. Furthermore, in the fourth article, the development of Artificial Intelligence technology was also developed to maximize

the application of the rules. Article number six shows that apart from the forms of communication and marketing and advertising strategies, the products and services sold also require limiting the target market, especially in relation to children. Finally, in article seven, rules and regulations can help fulfill children's rights to be protected from advertising content, but the role of parents is still needed in guiding children to use digital media.

In Indonesia, one of the issues related to digital advertising is issues and news related to pornographic advertisements or adult content in online media which began to increase at the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic which began to spread in 2020, when school children began to carry out the learning process via the internet or online. One of the online news media, Republika (2020), published an article about the need to be aware of pornographic advertisements when children learn to use online media. These ads appear as pop-ups on several websites that can be easily accessed by children. One of them is the Gurubp.com children's learning blog page which cannot be accessed or is experiencing a block. The page cannot be accessed with a normal network after pornographic advertisements appeared on the student questions page. One of the institutions in Indonesia, namely the

Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), took part in handling this issue. One of the studies conducted by Kurniadi et al. (2021) during the pandemic also showed that there was a link between the use of gadgets and the influence of adult advertisements on the gadgets used by children, due to the increased use of devices during the pandemic. This shows that even though the websites accessed by children are websites that are used for positive things (studying as an example), inappropriate advertisements can appear anytime and anywhere when children access the internet. So this is something that needs to be considered by both parents and the government.

Closing

Digital media is quickly being accepted by people in various parts of the world, including Indonesia. And its impact on social phenomena can also be felt and occurs in various groups, both those who can use it directly or indirectly.

Business continues to grow and keep up with the digital media era, which of course has great potential because it has a large market segment and is still innovating. Advertising is a strategy that is still being used by various industries to increase their sales and brand awareness, and its development in digital media is also

increasing. Children are certainly not spared from being targeted by the advertising industry, and this is accompanied by restrictions in the form of rules and regulations that develop and are applied differently in various countries.

As one of the findings from this study is advertising takes a big role in framing communication through digital media especially social media, parents also need to be more aware to protect their children from contents that are not suitable for their children.

This article recommends to business actors in the advertising industry to pay attention to the rules of communication.

Then in terms of policy, recommendations for policymakers to be able to evaluate applicable regulations and conduct outreach to the public so that more and more people understand these regulations and can implement them properly.

For any future research, reviewing journals related to advertising regulations for children as well as reviewing journals related to parenting can also be done.

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