

# Message Strategy and Information Content of Advertising in Women's Magazines in Poland

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*The primary purpose of this study is to answer the question of how companies construct their advertising message. Hence, in the article its authors attempt to analyze informative content and message strategies as they appear in advertisements posted in Women's magazines in Poland. As a framework for the analysis the authors apply Resnik and Stern information content categories, Taylor's Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel, and the message strategies of Laskey, Day, and Crask. The study analyzes 311 advertisements across different segments of magazines published in October of 2015. The results show that the information content of advertising is related to the category of advertised product and target audience of the magazine. Similarly, message strategies applied differ depending on the products and are linked to the informative content of the advertisement.*

**Keywords:** advertising, marketing communication, message strategy, content analysis.

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## Strategia przekazu oraz treść informacyjna reklam w czasopismach kobiecych w Polsce

*Podstawowym celem pracy jest odpowiedź na pytanie, w jaki sposób przedsiębiorstwa konstruują przekaz reklamowy. Autorzy podejmują próbę przeanalizowania treści informacyjnej oraz strategii przekazu reklamowego pojawiających się w reklamach zamieszczonych w czasopismach kobiecych w Polsce. Jako ramy dla analizy autorzy stosują kategorie treści informacyjnej zaproponowane przez Resnik i Sterną, sześciu-segmentowy schemat strategii przekazu według Taylora oraz klasyfikację strategii przekazu przedstawioną przez Laskey, Day i Craska. W badaniu poddano analizie 311 reklam w różnych segmentach czasopism opublikowanych w październiku 2015 roku. Wyniki wskazują, że treść informacyjna reklamy związana jest z kategorią reklamowanego produktu i docelową grupą odbiorów czasopisma. Podobnie, zastosowane strategie przekazu różnią się w zależności od produktu i są związane z treścią informacyjną reklamy.*

**Słowa kluczowe:** reklama, komunikacja marketingowa, strategia przekazu, analiza treści

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## **1. Introduction**

Traditionally, marketing communications, consisting of advertising, promotional activities, public relations, and direct marketing. It serves to create a positive tendency among consumers to make choices based on presented brand product or service, idea or person (Kotler, 1997). Thus, the key task of communication is to influence the consumer and his or her purchasing decisions. Consequently, the central figure of the business of an enterprise is the consumer.

According to the marketing concept of enterprise activities, consumers are not a homogenous group, but form different segments of the market (Belch and Belch, 2003). Consumer reaction to an advertising message varies, depending on the represented segment (group of buyers). For this reason, proper identification of the segment of buyers to which the marketing message is directed plays a crucial role in making effective decisions with regards to adapting advertising communication to the unique needs and expectations of the consumer group. At the same time, the content of messages addressed to customers must be understood by them (e.g., through the use of thinking and motivation specific to a particular group of customers). Therefore, promotional activities should refer to the point of view of the recipient and reflect their perception, taking into account the diversity of consumers.

This article consists of two parts. The first is theoretical in nature and provides an introduction to issues related to marketing communication, along with a discussion on dimensions that can be used for its analysis. Subsequently, a reference to the information content of the advertisement is made (including methods used to measure it). Part two – the empirical section – makes a reference to and characterizes the researched market – i.e. advertisements placed in magazines targeted at women. A description of the methodology of the study is provided. Finally, based on the results of the study, the authors analyze the advertisements published in magazines targeted at women in the context of the information content of applied advertising and marketing communication strategies. Thus, the purpose of this article is to draw attention to the customization of the infor-

mation content in advertising used for the purpose of marketing communication from both the target audience and advertised product perspectives.

## **2. Communication Strategy**

The communication strategy is defined as a plan or method for delivering a certain statement. Thus, it is a basic creative challenge for advertisers making possible the reaching of consumers who are most vulnerable to the impact statement. Within the communication strategy, advertisers decide “what to say,” “how to say it,” “where to say it,” and “to whom to say it.” Hence, communication strategy refers to a company’s approach to communication style used to offer the products and services best suited to the target group of consumers in the wider market context (Lee, Taylor, and Chung, 2011).

Marketing communication in advertising has been the subject of much research and numerous studies as found in marketing literature (Puto and Wells, 1984; Rothchild, 1987; Lee, Nam, and Hwang, 2001; Clow, James, Kranenburg, and Berry, 2009). Many classification systems have been developed in order to support analysis of communication strategy as used in the advertising of consumer goods, including both simple dichotomous divisions and very complex typologies (Carey, 1977; Frazer, 1983; Vaughn, 1986; Laskey, Day and Crask, 1989; Taylor, 1999).

The basic division of communication methods includes two approaches: transmission (also referred to as informative) and ritual (also referred to as transformational) (Carey, 1977). Communication viewed in terms of transmission provides information, knowledge, or ideas, which refer mostly to the logic and cognitive skills of recipient. The message viewed from a ritual perspective attempts to appeal to the beliefs, attitudes, and perception of the world by the recipient and thus focuses on the emotions and senses of the recipient (Puto and Wells, 1984).

Using the above-mentioned dualistic approach to the communication process, the relationship between advertising and situational context, understood as a kind of advertised product, the nature of the target group, motivation to buy, and the importance of specific purchasing decisions for

consumers has drawn attention in literature (Vaughn, 1986).

Message strategy (also known as creative communication strategy) is defined as a combination of informative content of the marketing message and the way in which it is presented to the consumer, including situational context (Laskey, Day, and Crask, 1989).

One of the first models used for the classification of message strategy was developed on the basis of historical order in the development of consumer goods. The model identifies seven types of message strategy: general, preventive, unique offering proposition, brand image, positioning, resonance/importance, and affective/emotional (Frazer, 1983).

The primary classification of the creativity of the advertising message is a typology developed by Laskey. Its starting point is the distribution of message strategies between transmission (informative) and ritual (transformational) views (Laskey, Day, and Crask, 1989).

Five groups of message strategies are distinguished within the transmission view:

- Comparative – The advertised product or brand is presented in comparison to other, directly identified competitive products or brands,
- Unique selling proposition – The communication addresses the unique attributes or benefits arising from use of the advertised product,
- Preemptive – The communication objectively shows the attributes or benefits arising from use of the product,
- Hyperbole – The advertisement contains statements and assurances from the advertiser with regards to effects related to product use, and
- Generic information – The message refers to the product category in an informative manner, without focusing on any specific manufacturer or brand (e.g., social campaigns).

Message strategies are classified into four segments within the ritual view:

- User image – The advertisement focuses mainly on showing users of the product or brand and their lifestyle,
- Brand image – The advertising focuses primarily on the image and personality of the brand,
- Use occasion – A statement on the experience of using the advertised product

and the situational context in which the use of the product seems appropriate, and

- Generic transformation – The message refers to the product category in an emotional manner, without focusing on any specific manufacturer or brand (e.g., social campaigns).

The classifying of advertisements as containing an emotional or informative appeal is no easy task in the practice of communication strategy. The commercial nature of advertising requires the achieving of a certain marketing goal (in relation to a product or brand). As a result, it has happened in past studies that no investigated advertisements contained any message that fitted into a generic information or generic transformation category (Kim, McMillan and Hwang, 2005).

Another issue in the context of advertising communication is to set goals and choose the relevant marketing communication method. Taylor declared that there is no uniform method of marketing communication based on the type of product and consumer attitudes. He proposed a model for marketing communication strategies relating to components affecting the behavior of buyers. The Six-Segment Message Strategy Model was created by dividing the transmission and ritual views into six detailed categories (Taylor, 1999). This model is expressed in the form of a circle that consists of six parts. The left side of the wheel represents the transmission (or information) view of a communication strategy, while the right side shows the ritual (or transformation) view. The directions designated by the arrows on the Taylor model point towards a strengthening of transmission or of the ritual nature of the segment.

Transmission view in Taylor's model consists of three segments:

- Ration – Consumers need a lot of information before deciding whether to purchase products in this segment. The consumer focuses on the product's features, additional services, warranty, and price.
- Acute need – The consumer is forced to purchase the product due to a sudden and unpredictable necessity. The process of making the decision to purchase is limited in time and the need for information about the product is low.
- Routine – Customers make purchasing decisions in this segment in a habitual

and routine way. The consumer does not think much about the product before making a purchase decision.

Ritual view covers three segments:

- Ego – Purchasing a product is related to the need for self-determination and emotional fulfillment. By making a purchase customers answers the question: "Who am I?"
- Social – The purchasing decision is based on the need for association and social approval from family, partner, or other people present in the life of the consumer.
- Sensory – Consumers make a purchase in order to achieve small pleasures that are noticeable with the primary senses. It was found in past research that by referring both to the physical attributes of the product and brand image, the information content of the message and the creativity of the communication simultaneously satisfy the criteria for several categories of communication strategies (Laskey, Fox, and Crask, 1995). Similarly, lack of clear borders between some communication strategy or creativity segments (e.g., between unique propositions and utilities) impede the process of coding and carry the risk of a lack of consistency in the classification of the advertisements (Laskey, Day and Crask, 1989)

Additionally, literature has highlighted the presence of differentiation as to the interpretation of the information content or differences in perception of the same advertisement by different consumers (Puttoni, Schroeder and Ritson, 2010).

### **3. Information Content of Advertisement**

Measurement and analysis of the information content in advertising has been a subject of numerous works and publications. The first comprehensive approach to study the information content of an advertisement was presented by Resnik and Stern. In their work, they undertook the operationalization of the concept of information content of advertisement. They defined fourteen criteria for the assessment of information content in television advertising (Resnik and Stern, 1977). Their list of proposed criteria includes independent research studies by the manufacturer, use of an innovative idea, price, quality,

application and functionality, product composition (ingredients), availability, special offer/promotion, taste, nutritional value, packaging and design, guarantees and product safety, and energy consumption. Examination of the level of information content in any advertising was conducted by checking to what extent the fourteen defined criteria were met in a given advertisement. Information content measured in this way was then summed up, giving a total information content score. The Resnik and Stern information classification system has been subsequently used in numerous studies relating to, *inter alia*, the relationship between the information content of the advertisement and the type of product being advertised (Chou, Franke and Wilcox, 1987; Abernety and Franke, 1996; Akkan, 2007; Manganello, Clegg Smith, Sudakow and Summers, 2012; Anderson, Ciliberto and Liaukonyte, 2013), culture of the recipients of the advertising message (Biwas, Olsen and Carlet, 1992; Rajaratnam, Hunt, and Madden, 1995; Herpen, Pieters, Fidrmucova and Roosenboom, 2000; So, 2004), and the medium used (Abernety and Frank, 1996). In parallel, the researchers turned their attention to changes in the content of advertising in time (Pelsmacker and Geuens, 1997; Lawson, Borgman and Brotherton, 2007). It was also shown that the amount of information contained in the advertisement is not associated with its physical size (Stern, Krugman and Resnik, 1981).

### **4. Research Methodology**

The use of an advertising message based on emotions is a common practice in printed advertisements. Use of this kind of advertising can lead to a positive attitude towards the brand and has a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions (Baird, Wahlers and Cooper, 2007). Moreover, studies have shown that appealing to emotions in advertising can affect the memory of the recipient. Due to the fact that advertising messages are stored in human memory and thus affect subsequent purchasing decisions by consumers, the appropriate construction of the advertising message is crucial for a successful advertising campaign (Ambler and Burne, 1999).

Both the impact of the gender of the advertising recipient and differences in the

response of men and women to advertising materials have been the subject of many studies in the past (Baird, Wahlers and Cooper, 2007). Similarly, it has been shown that women respond more positively to advertising than men (Cramphorn, 2011). Thus, although advertising aimed exclusively at women has not been the subject of extensive research, there is extensive literature on the relationship between gender and type of advertising communication used.

Hence, in this study a decision was taken to focus on information content, communication strategy, and message strategy as it appears in advertisements published in magazines targeted at women in Poland.

In order to obtain a representative batch of advertisements, the choice of the analyzed magazines was made on the basis of the number of customers and the target audience. Surveyed magazines were selected based on the segment of women readers they represent and the criterion of total sales (according to the level of monthly sales in each target audience segment). Based on the past research on the press market in Poland, two segments were distinguished for the purposes of the analysis: lifestyle magazines and domestic advice magazines (Dąbrowska-Cendrowska, 2013). Hence, each segment is represented by the top three titles by the monthly sales volume. Additionally, in order to select magazines to be surveyed, frequency of publication (monthly) was taken into account. As a result, the analysis covers

advertisements published in the following magazines: *Twój Styl* [Your Style], *Avanti*, *Women's Health*, *Kobieta i Życie* [Woman & Life], *Świat Kobiet* [The World of Women], and *Dobre Rady* [Good Advice] as published in October of 2015. The survey sample covered 311 advertisements (N=311). The summary of the surveyed magazines is presented in Table 1.

Content analysis was applied in order to evaluate the information content of advertising, marketing communication strategy, and advertisement creativity. This enabled the full assessment of the communication message contained in the advertisement. Traditionally, content analysis is considered a quantitative research method. However, in the case of information content of advertisement it also includes a qualitative assessment (Stern, 1989). Using the methodology proposed in literature (Berger, 2000), a list of examined items and developed operational definitions intended to operationalize the study was prepared.

Each advertisement posted in the studied magazines, regardless of subject, was considered a unit of measure analysis. In order to examine the content of those advertisements, it was necessary to define the essential elements of information in the advertisement. Hence, each advertisement was analyzed from the point of view of two dimensions:

- Informative – based on the widely used Resnik–Stern classification system for advertising information content as previously described in this paper, and

Table 1. Summary of Surveyed Magazines

Title	Magazine segment	Monthly sales	Surveyed advertisements	Advertising space share
<i>Twój Styl</i>	Lifestyle	193.226	87	29%
<i>Avanti</i>	Lifestyle	99.949	50	28%
<i>Women's Health</i>	Lifestyle	79.351	37	13%
<i>Kobieta i Życie</i>	Domestic advice	347.433	42	21%
<i>Świat Kobiet</i>	Domestic advice	318.915	53	22%
<i>Dobre Rady</i>	Domestic advice	298.580	42	27%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,337.454</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>23%</b>

Source: Prepared by the authors based on monthly sales based on data for the first half of 2015 as posted on the <http://www.virtualnemedia.pl>.

- Communicative – which covers marketing communication (both style and strategy, as proposed by Carrey and Taylor, respectively) and message strategy applied in the advertisement (as proposed by Laskey, Day and Crask, 1989).

For the purpose of this study, the above-mentioned methodologies were adapted by eliminating irrelevant categories (in the

opinion of the authors), where, in some cases, they were replaced additional criteria or a merging with other categories. A full list of variables applied in characterizing an advertisement is presented in Table 2.

The entire advertisement coding process was carried out by the authors of this study. During the coding process, there were

*Table 2. Summary of Examined Dimensions of an Advertisement*

Informative dimension of an advertisement*		
1	Subject of the advertisement	Advertised product category
2	Price	Information about the price of a product/service
3	Quality	Information about the product/service quality (e.g., the quality of the ingredients used)
4	Performance	Information on the use of the product and its features
5	Components	Information on ingredients used
6	Availability	Information on the purchase location
7	Special offer	Information about any special promotional offer
8	Research	Both company performed and independent consumer research and its outcome
9	Taste and Nutrition	Information on the nutritional value or taste of the product expressed via a sample of the product, for example
10	Warranties and Safety	Information on product safety and warranties provided by the seller
11	New ideas	Information as to whether a product or service is an innovative concept

Communicative dimension of an advertisement		
1	Communication style	Transmission, ritual, or mixed type of communication used in advertising
2	Communication strategy	Taylor's categories (Ration, Acute Need, Routine, Ego, Social, and Sensory) – a maximum of two categories simultaneously
3	Message strategy	Applying Laskey's categories (Comparative, Unique selling proposition, Preemptive, Hyperbole, Generic information, User image, Brand image, and Generic transformation) – a maximum of three categories simultaneously

\* The Resnik and Stern (1977) method for measuring advertising information categorizes the information provided in advertisements into fourteen information categories. The category research applied in the study combines two categories from Resnik and Stern (1977) similar to the Warranties and Safety category. An additional category named Subject of Advertisement was introduced in order to distinguish between advertisements that do not indicate the product that is advertised. The minimum information content of advertisement is zero and the maximum is eleven.

*Source: Prepared by the authors.*

occasions when the same advertisement fell into more than one category of communication methods used (with regards to the type of communication, communication strategy, and message strategy). In such situations, pursuant to the approach taken in past studies, advertisements were assigned to a maximum of two categories from the point of view of communication strategy and up to three categories from the perspective of message creativity (Kim McMillan and Hwang, 2005). Doubts regarding classification of individual advertisements were discussed on a regular basis between the authors in order to achieve uniformity of coding. It should be noted, however, that research using content analysis allows researchers to use a certain degree of intuition (Kassarjian, 1977). A summary of examined magazines, including published advertisements, is presented in Table 3.

Keeping in mind the objectives of this study, the following research questions were developed:

- RQ1. Does information content of advertising differ depending on the subject of the advertisement (i.e. advertised product category)?
- RQ2. Does information content of advertising differ depending on the magazine segment where the advertisement is published?

- RQ3. Does the message strategy applied in the advertisement differ depending on the subject of advertisement (i.e. advertised product category)?
- RQ4. Does the message strategy applied in the advertisement differ depending on the magazine segment where the advertisement is published?
- RQ5. Does the information content of advertising differ depending on the communication and message strategy applied in advertisement?

## 5. Results and Discussion

Based on the data presented in Table 3, it is possible to notice a distinct difference in the categories of products advertised in magazines representing various segments. Namely, while in case of both the Lifestyle and Domestic advice magazine segments, Cosmetic products were one of the most commonly advertised categories (28% and 23% advertisement share, respectively), one can observe visible differences with regards to Medications and supplements (34% of advertisements posted in Domestic advice magazines compared to just 3% of advertisements in Lifestyle magazines), Clothing (26% of advertisements posted in Lifestyle segment compared to just 2% in case of Domestic advice segment), and Luxury articles (12% of advertisements posted in

*Table 3. Summary of Advertisements Published in the Surveyed Magazines*

Advertised product category	Surveyed magazines		Lifestyle magazines		Domestic advice magazines	
Cosmetics	80	26%	49	28%	31	23%
Clothing	48	15%	45	26%	3	2%
Medications and supplements	53	17%	6	3%	47	34%
Services	29	9%	16	9%	13	9%
Groceries	24	8%	8	5%	16	12%
Luxury articles	22	7%	21	12%	1	1%
FMCG	19	6%	8	5%	11	8%
Appliances and décor	14	5%	4	2%	10	7%
Other	22	7%	17	10%	5	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Prepared by the authors.*

*Table 4. Comparison of Informative Content of Advertisements in the Surveyed Magazines*

	Surveyed magazines				Lifestyle magazines				Domestic advice magazines			
	Min.	Max.	Average	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.	Average	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.	Average	Std. dev.
Cosmetics	1.0	7.0	3.8	1.3	1.0	6.0	3.7	1.2	2.0	7.0	4.1	1.4
Clothing	–	6.0	2.0	1.4	–	6.0	1.9	1.3	3.0	4.0	3.3	0.5
Medications/ Supplements	1.0	5.0	3.4	0.9	3.0	5.0	4.2	0.7	1.0	5.0	3.3	0.9
Services	–	4.0	2.4	1.0	–	4.0	2.2	1.0	1.0	4.0	2.6	0.9
Groceries	1.0	4.0	2.7	1.0	1.0	4.0	2.6	1.0	1.0	4.0	2.7	1.0
Luxury articles	–	5.0	1.8	1.3	–	5.0	1.8	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0	–
FMCG	1.0	4.0	2.1	0.9	1.0	4.0	2.4	0.9	1.0	4.0	1.9	0.8
Appliances and décor	2.0	5.0	3.3	0.7	3.0	4.0	3.5	0.5	2.0	5.0	3.2	0.7
Other	–	6.0	2.0	1.5	–	6.0	2.2	1.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	–
Total	–	7.0	2.8	1.4	–	6.0	2.6	1.5	1.0	7.0	3.1	1.3

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Lifestyle segment compared to just 1% in case of the Domestic advice segment).

A summary comparing the information content of the advertising in the studied women's magazines, by advertised product category, was prepared in order to answer Research Questions 1 and 2 (RQ1, RQ2) (see Table 4).

Analysis of the results of the study demonstrated a clear difference in the information content of advertising in different segments of magazines. The average information content of advertisements posted in Lifestyle magazines (an average of 2.6 information content per advertisement) was slightly lower than in the case of Domestic advice magazines (an average of 3.1 per advertisement). These differences were most noticeable for such product categories as Clothing (1.4 less information content in Lifestyle magazines) and Other (1.2 less information content in Domestic advice magazines). It is important to notice that advertising content was rather similar for different segments of magazines for the remaining product categories. Differentiation of the information content of advertisement within the Lifestyle and

Domestic advice segments was, however, similar (standard deviation at 1.3–1.5 of information content). On the other hand, the informativeness of advertisements differed significantly depending on the subject of the advertisement (i.e. advertised product category). The Cosmetics, Medications/Supplements, and Appliances and décor categories (3.8, 3.4, and 3.3, respectively) were accompanied by the most information, while the least accompanied Luxury articles and Clothing (1.8 and 2.0, respectively).

Subsequently, the relation between the message strategy applied in the advertisement and the subject of advertisement (i.e. advertised product category) as well as women's magazine segment (RQ3 and RQ4) were examined (see Tables 5 and 6). The percentage of advertisements in which it appears is presented for each message strategy category represented in the sample. The percentages in the table do not add up to 100%. This is due to the fact that, in accordance with the objectives of the research and relevant literature (Laskey, Day and Craske, 1989; Kim, McMillan and Hwang, 2005), a single advertisement can simultaneously apply several message strategies.

*Table 5. Message Strategy in Lifestyle Magazines*

	Comparative (%)	Unique selling proposition (%)	Premptive (%)	Hyperbole (%)	Generic information (%)	User image (%)	Brand image (%)	Use occasion (%)	Generic transformation (%)
Cosmetics	2.0	32.7	44.9	34.7	–	63.3	40.8	2.0	–
Clothing	–	2.2	17.8	4.4	–	88.9	48.9	37.8	–
Medications/ supplements	–	33.3	100.0	33.3	–	33.3	–	16.7	–
Services	–	18.8	31.3	31.3	–	62.5	6.3	12.5	–
Groceries	–	12.5	87.5	12.5	–	12.5	25.0	–	–
Luxury articles	4.8	4.8	28.6	23.8	–	71.4	28.6	42.9	–
FMCG	–	12.5	87.5	25.0	–	25.0	25.0	–	–
Appliances and décor	–	–	75.0	–	–	25.0	25.0	–	–
Other	–	29.4	17.6	17.6	–	23.5	41.2	23.5	11.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>60.9</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>

Source: Prepared by the authors.

*Table 6. Message Strategy in Domestic Advice Magazines*

	Comparative (%)	Unique selling proposition (%)	Premptive (%)	Hyperbole (%)	Generic information (%)	User image (%)	Brand image (%)	Use occasion (%)	Generic transformation (%)
Cosmetics	3.2	16.1	58.1	54.8	–	71.0	22.6	–	–
Clothing	–	–	66.7	33.3	–	100.0	–	33.3	–
Medications/ supplements	–	2.1	97.9	19.1	–	59.6	–	12.8	–
Services	–	23.1	53.8	23.1	–	30.8	38.5	15.4	–
Groceries	–	6.3	100.0	6.3	–	18.8	–	25.0	–
Luxury articles	–	–	–	–	–	100.0	–	100.0	–
FMCG	–	–	100.0	–	–	18.2	–	–	–
Appliances and décor	–	–	100.0	10.0	–	–	–	–	–
Other	–	20.0	40.0	40.0	–	20.0	–	40.0	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>46.7</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The predominant message strategies applied in Lifestyle magazines were User image followed by Preemptive message, and Brand image (60.9%, 38.5%, and 35.1% of advertisements, respectively). In the case of Domestic advice magazines, the leading message strategies were Preemptive, User image, and Hyperbole (81.8%, 46.7%, and 24.8%, respectively). The least common message strategies were Comparative, Generic information, and Generic transformation. Results were similar for both magazine segments. Certain general regularities can be observed when approaching different advertised product categories. For Cosmetics, the most commonly applied message strategies are User image and Preemptive, regardless of magazine segment. At the same time, it is possible to notice the more common use of the Brand image message for such products in the case of Lifestyle magazines. This may be due to different types of cosmetics being advertised in such magazines. A similar observation with

regards to the Brand image message strategy can be made for the Clothing product category. Moreover, in the case of Clothing, Domestic advice magazines often apply the Preemptive message strategy. The same is true for Medicines/Supplements. Both magazine segments apply a similar message strategy. As to the remaining product categories, a general difference that may be observed is the stronger focus on Brand image and User image in the case of Lifestyle magazines than in the Domestic advice segment.

Hence, the overall difference between general message strategies applied in Lifestyle and Domestic magazines may originate from differences in the mix of products advertised in those magazines.

A matrix was built in order to investigate the relation between the communicative dimensions of an advertisement and its information content (RQ5), and to show the various combinations of communication and message strategy (see Tables 7 and 8).

*Table 7. Communication and Message Strategy and Information Content in Lifestyle Magazines*

Communication strategy/ Message strategy		Transmission view			Ritual view		
		Ration	Acute need	Routine	Ego	Social	Sensory
Transmission view	Comparative	–	–	–	1.1%	1.1%	–
		–	–	–	3.0	3.0	–
	Unique selling proposition	4.0%	2.9%	4.0%	9.8%	4.6%	3.4%
		5.0	4.4	4.4	3.3	2.0	1.5
Ritual view	Preemptive	4.6%	9.2%	23.6%	10.3%	9.2%	5.2%
		3.6	3.8	3.3	3.4	3.0	2.8
	Hyperbole	4.0%	4.6%	4.6%	13.2%	6.3%	1.1%
		5.1	3.6	3.5	3.9	3.3	4.5
	Generic information	–	–	–	–	–	–
		–	–	–	–	–	–
	User image	7.5%	4.6%	9.2%	43.7%	28.2%	3.4%
		4.1	2.9	3.2	2.2	2.0	2.7
	Brand image	5.2%	2.9%	5.7%	21.8%	16.7%	2.3%
	Use occasion	3.4%	–	0.6%	12.6%	16.7%	1.7%
		4.0	–	2.5	1.6	1.8	2.3
	Generic transformation	–	–	0.6%	–	1.1%	–
		–	–	1.0	–	1.5	–

*Source: Prepared by the authors.*

*Table 8. Communication Strategy and Information Content in Domestic Advice Magazines*

Communication strategy/ Message strategy		Transmission view			Ritual view		
		Ration	Acute need	Routine	Ego	Social	Sensory
Transmission view	Comparative	– –	– –	– –	0.7% 3.0	0.7% 3.0	– –
	Unique selling proposition	1.5% 5.5	0.7% 5.0	3.6% 4.2	3.6% 4.6	3.6% 2.2	1.5% 1.0
	Preemptive	10.9% 3.3	24.8% 3.4	65.7% 3.1	7.3% 4.1	10.2% 2.6	10.9% 2.7
	Hyperbole	2.9% 6.3	7.3% 3.6	12.4% 3.2	11.7% 4.1	9.5% 2.9	1.5% 3.0
Ritual view	Generic information	– –	– –	– –	– –	– –	– –
	User image	5.8% 5.0	16.8% 3.3	30.7% 3.2	17.5% 4.2	13.9% 2.9	1.5% 3.0
	Brand image	1.5% 4.0	2.9% 3.0	4.4% 2.5	2.2% 4.3	2.9% 2.8	– –
	Use occasion	0.7% 4.0	1.5% 4.0	9.5% 2.6	0.7% 1.0	8.8% 2.5	1.5% 2.0
	Generic transformation	– –	– –	– –	– –	0.7% 1.0	– –

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Information about the average information content of advertising is presented directly above the share of advertisements with a certain communicative dimension for a combination dimension of communication.

The combinations that were most commonly observed in Lifestyle magazines were Ego-User Image (43.7% of advertisements), Social-User Image (28.2% of advertisements), Routine-Preemptive (23.6% of advertisements), and Ego-Brand Image (21.8% of advertisements). Such a distribution may indicate that in publishing advertisements, advertisers pay special attention to the promotion of the image and personality of the brand and its user while building consumer emotional attachment to the brand. The combinations that were most commonly observed in Domestic advice magazines were Routine-Preemptive (65.7% of advertisements), Routine-User Image (30.7% of advertisements), and

Acute Need-Preemptive (24.8% of advertisements). Those visible differences may be attributed to the fact that different product categories are advertised in different segments of the magazines (most likely to different target audiences) and as a result different needs are addressed. At the same time, similar combinations of communication strategy and advertising message creativity carried similar amounts of informative content regardless of magazine type. This confirms that, in terms of providing the transmission of information and knowledge, the message looks to the cognitive skills of the intended recipient of the advertised merchandise.

It is important to point out the limitations of this study. Most importantly, it may be difficult to spot the differences between the various strategies of marketing communications. Additionally, the analyzed advertising involves a limited period of time, number of magazines, and advertise-

ments. Thus, in order to thoroughly investigate the phenomenon, the survey should be repeated for a larger sample of advertisements and a longer period of time.

## 6. Summary

The conducted study makes possible the observation of how an advertised product type and segment of magazine affect the information content, communication strategy, and message strategy in an advertisement. These dependencies point to the customizing of advertising communication so they target a market segment and audience.

Reaching consumers in an effective way and providing them with complete, yet relevant information about the benefits of a product or service determines the success of the company. Equally important is the need to create brand identity and build a relationship with the consumer. Marketing communication plays a key role in achieving these objectives.

Hence, this study provides a starting point for further discussion on advertising content, including the possibility of comparative analyses of advertising and integrated marketing strategies.

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