

## CONSIDERING ADVERTISING LITERACY FROM A METHODOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW: PAST PRACTICES AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

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The concern that minors do not comprehend commercial messages in the same way as do more mature audiences, and hence, are highly susceptible to advertising influence has led to a substantial body of research focusing on minors' development of advertising literacy and their susceptibility to persuasion attempts. Yet, the results of these studies yield mixed results and are far from univocal. These inconsistencies lie in the fact that the majority of these studies have used different operational definitions of advertising literacy. Put differently, the literature is not entirely straightforward in what instruments provide the most valid and reliable measurement of advertising literacy.

Based on this line of reasoning, the first key purpose of this article is to give an overview of the various quantitative measurement methods used in previous research and discuss their applicability and validity. In past advertising literacy research, many studies used a variety of quantitative measures to assess advertising literacy among children. These measurements require children to express their understanding in their own words, or by choosing from a set of answer options (e.g. semantic differential or Likert scales, set of pictures, etc.) presented verbally, visually or in written form. In the context of this manuscript, four principal quantitative methods will be reviewed: the (structured) interview, verbal self-report, visual self-report and game-play. In addition, a clear distinction will be made between situational and dispositional advertising literacy measures, a distinction barely addressed in past research. However, disentangling the abovementioned inconsistency in measurement methods cannot be accomplished by simply reviewing past studies and classifying them according to measurement technique. Instead, the research community investigating the topic of advertising literacy has to look forward towards future research with more systematic unity in the employment of quantitative measurement tools. Therefore, the second key purpose of this manuscript is to formulate helpful recommendations for practitioners and scholars in terms of what methods are, according to us, most appropriate to use for measuring advertising literacy, offering them useful guidance in their quest for a suitable instrument. These recommendations will be approached by a (cognitive) developmental perspective since research methods that involve children as respondents depend primarily on age. The latter will be achieved by defining certain age groups and discuss the most effective or suitable method for each group.

