
Representation of Ecological Values in Russian Social Advertising

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Abstract

The relevance of the study is in the fact that the formation of lifestyles based on ecological values and their practical implementation in everyday affairs, is now an urgent task for all countries of the world. The formation of an ecologically-oriented lifestyle of the population is becoming not just desirable one, but absolutely necessary ecological imperatives of modern society. The purpose of the article by the authors' opinion is analyzing social advertising videos in the context of the relevance of the problems revealed in them by Russian society and comparing these data with statistical and sociological research data, including global ones, as well as with expert opinions. The main method of the author's sociological research is a quantitative and qualitative analysis of social advertising videos (the volume of the sample totality is 46 units). The study conducted made it possible to draw a conclusion about the clearly insufficient level of activity of social advertising in the promotion of ecological values in Russian society, which manifests itself in a small number of such videos, the narrowness of the coverage of the existing ecological problems of society, and in their low quality. The effectiveness of social advertising is enhanced if it reflects regional and local ecological problems. As measures contributing to the intensification of social advertising in creating Russians' ecologically-oriented lifestyle, the article proposed to develop not only public but also non-commercial social advertising, which could, in particular, be contributed by various contests and other events of a similar nature.

Keywords: sustainable development, risk society, social advertising, eco-centrism, ecologically-oriented lifestyle, ecological values

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development of society involves the simultaneous solution of three problems: economic development, social stability and environmental conservation. For the first time in the history of mankind, the achievement of the socio-economic goals of society is associated with their environmental expediency (Cherdymova et al. 2018, Potapova et al. 2018). It is obvious that such a statement of the issue is caused by the global environmental problems of our time, namely, climate change, pollution of the habitat, reduction of natural diversity, etc.

Awareness of environmental threats leads to the formation and adoption of an eco-centric approach to the development of modern society, which is based on the humanistic values of a collectivist nature. In particular, it involves the pursuit of human harmony with nature, the abandonment of waste, careful attitude to natural resources, monitoring the effectiveness of their use, as well as active meaningful participation in actions through which sustainable development goals of society can be achieved (Argunova 2009, Zelenkov 2011, Kuznetsova et al. 2018).

The upholding of ecological values and their practical implementation lies at the heart of the ecologically-oriented way of life of people, the

formation of which is one of the urgent tasks of modern societies.

The model of ecologically-oriented lifestyle of the population is based on the foundation of ecological values and their prevalence over consumer orientations. To complete the description of the ecological way of life, it is necessary to take into account not only value orientations, knowledge, but also concrete practical actions of citizens to protect the environment, nature conservation, taking into account the level of understanding and readiness of conscious personal participation in their decision (Ryabchenko et al. 2018, Titarenko 2011).

At present, environmental protection and the formation of an ecologically-oriented lifestyle for the population are becoming not only desirable, but absolutely necessary, as one might say the ecological imperatives of modern society (Gvishiani 2004, Meadows et al. 2007).

It should be emphasized that an ecologically-oriented lifestyle means not only the preservation of nature, but also improving the quality of life of people, implying the purity of water, air, food consumed by humans, etc.

Thus, the formation of a lifestyle based on ecological values and their practical implementation in everyday affairs is currently an urgent task for all countries of the world.

The solution of this task includes the organization of the process of ecological awareness and education of the population, including through social advertising. According to researchers, this should be part of public policy, which implies the existence of a program of action developed jointly with civil society organizations (Yanitsky 2011).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining modern society as a “risk society”, Beck (1992) wrote that “... in class societies, being determines consciousness, while in a risk society, consciousness determines being”. By applying this conclusion to the ecological risks of modern society, it can be said that the spread of ecological values in the public consciousness and the corresponding transformation of people’s lifestyles are necessary conditions for the very existence of society (Girusov 2009, Yanitsky 2013, Yanitsky 2014).

Ecological values - this is all that characterizes the relationship between man and nature, that people

should preserve in the modern world in order to maintain the balance of the ecological state of the environment. These values ensure the integration of society in resolving contradictions in the *nature – society* system and help individuals to make a choice of behavior in the current ecological situation (Lupan 2015).

Unlike traditional societies, in modern culture, ecological values are articulated, explicated, i.e. presented in explicit form and are the subject of reflection (awareness). In the structure of ecological values, it is possible to distinguish bans (on actions that cause irreparable damage to nature — harmful emissions into the environment, predatory use of natural objects, etc.) and prescriptions (respect and love for nature, etc.).

A special role in the dissemination of ecological values in modern society is given to the mass media in general and social advertising in particular.

In order to study the representations of ecological values in social advertising, in January–April 2017, a sociological study was conducted using the following methods:

- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of social advertising videos (the volume of the sample is 46 units) containing certain ecological values;
- Expert survey on the theme “Reflection of ecological values in social advertising” (the total sample size is 25 people).

The study also used data from all-Russian polls of All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (2017).

The selection of social advertising videos was based on the websites of various government agencies, social advertising competitions (All-Russian social advertising contest *New Look*, Social advertising contest among government agencies *Impulse*, Moscow International Festival of social advertising *LIME*, International Youth Festival *ART.START*), as well as the data of the largest database of Russian advertising videos *Rusreklama* of the video hosting company *YouTube*, which monthly records advertising videos posted on Russian television.

From January 2, 2014 till April 30, 2017, there were 65,407,122 views of 4837 videos in the *Rusreklama* database. Since social video clips are created much less than commercial ones, we decided to view the entire archive of social videos for 2016 as a general totality. In

total, during the study period, there were 185 social advertising videos. In the end, we selected 46 videos in which ecological values would be reflected in one way or another.

Sociological studies in the post-Soviet space show that the population of these countries, including Russia, is distinguished by a rather low level of ecological awareness and environmentally-oriented activity, considering that caring for the environment is the business of the state. Thus, having studied the ecological consciousness and behavior of Belarusian citizens, Titarenko comes to disappointing conclusions that, firstly, the level of ecological knowledge of the population and acceptance of responsibility for the environment is not sufficiently high, secondly, knowledge does not always motivate citizens to take actions corresponding to this knowledge, and therefore do not always influence their everyday environmental practices. According to the population, socialized under the conditions of state paternalism, it is this institution that should take the initiative even to force (or motivate) citizens to restructure their own lives in an ecological way (Titarenko 2015).

With regard to the participation of Belarusian citizens in ecologically-oriented actions of the city level (for example, voting for a candidate for deputies with an environmental protection program who contacts the authorities with a statement, a complaint about the violation of environmental legislation, investing in environmental support action), or in collective actions (cleaning of the territory, planting trees), then the general level of their activity turned out to be below 10%, and for some types of actions - generally almost zero (Titarenko 2015).

One of the ways out of the current situation by the researcher is considered in the revitalization of the state and civil society institutions in the ecological awareness of citizens and the promotion of ecological values and ecologically-oriented lifestyle through the media, including advertising, with which one can fully agree.

According to the World Values Survey (2018), a low level of ecological activity is observed in almost all countries in the post-Soviet space. Thus, 1% in Belarus, 2% in Russia and about 3% in Ukraine indicated participation in ecological demonstrations, and 7.9%, 3.7% and 5.2% respectively chose donating money to ecological organizations (World Values Survey 2018).

The results of studies of Russian authors also confirm the low level of ecological activity in the country (Usacheva 2011).

According to the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion monitoring data, more than three-quarters of Russians (80%) constantly or periodically monitor the expenditure of energy resources. The overwhelming majority of Russian citizens (84%) declare concern for the environment. At the same time, the share of participants in environmental protection measures is extremely small (according to the data of 2016, only 1%). Only 5% of Russians surveyed expressed a desire to take part in such events and promotions (All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center 2017).

The reasons for this ecological indifference of the population of the former socialist countries the authors denote the lack of citizens' personal initiative, coupled with the paternalistic policy of the state, which traditionally is considered by people as responsible not only for the environmental situation in the country, but also for mobilizing the population for certain ecological actions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Before we talk about the representation of ecological values in social advertising, it is appropriate to turn to topics which are most often covered in it. The data obtained on state and independent social advertising with the opinions of experts were compared. State social advertising most often focuses on such topics as racism and inequality of people (25.5%), helping people with disabilities (19.1%), fighting HIV / AIDS (17%), popularizing information about diabetes (8.5%). Participants in social advertising competitions, in their work in the format of videos, raise such serious problems of Russian society as the fight against drug addiction (8.8%), the need to popularize sports and physical activity (8%), road safety and compliance with traffic rules (7.3%), the fight against smoking (6.6%) and the fight against alcoholism (6.6%) (**Table 1**).

Table 1. The priority of reflecting Russian society's various problems in the state's social advertising, independent social advertising and expert opinions

Videos of the state social advertising	Independent Social Advertising's Videos	Expert opinions
Against racism and human inequality	Fight against drug addiction	Fight against smoking
Help for people with disabilities	Popularization of sports and physical activity	Popularization of sports and physical activity
Combating HIV / AIDS	Road safety, compliance with traffic rules	Environmental and ecology support
Promoting Diabetes Information	Fight against smoking and alcoholism	Combating alcoholism

Table 2. The number of regulatory documents adopted in Russia on various social issues on 05/15/2017

	Social problem	Number of regulatory documents, pcs.
1	Tobacco smoking	2234
2	Popularization of sports and physical culture	1301
3	Alcohol consumption	1045
4	Environmental and ecology support	436

It should be noted that, although the priority of social themes is different in state and independent social advertising, neither one nor the other has an ecological theme that appears only in the opinions of experts. Such a situation most likely indicates that neither the state nor civil society in Russia is adequately concerned about environmental issues. This, in particular, is evidenced by the rule-making activity of the Russian state in recent years (**Table 2**).

As can be seen from the presented data, the Russian government addressed the problem of limiting smoking more than 5 times more often than environmental problems. Without diminishing the importance of combating tobacco smoking, it should be noted that environmental problems are clearly deprived of the regulator's attention.

Ecological problems can be attributed to the relatively new concerns of Russian society, which have only begun to be perceived by the population, including influenced by the escalation of relevant information in the media. It is also possible that the population of the country began to feel the deterioration of the ecological situation on its own experience. Thus, according to the survey by All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion conducted in April 2017, about a third of the population of Russia (36%) emphasize the deterioration of the situation in the field of natural resources and the environment (at the end of 2016 there were 22% of these).

According to sociologists, the attention of Russians to ecological issues and landscaping can be described as quite utilitarian: they are primarily concerned with garbage (23%), roads and traffic jams (22%), a large number of cars, lack of parking lots (12%), whereas the problems of deforestation and gardening (6%), environmental pollution (5%) are much less common.

At the same time, it is noted that, compared with economic and social difficulties, the problems of ecology (including natural disasters) worry the Russian population to a much lesser extent (All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center 2017).

This sociological study showed that in the structure of Russian social advertising, videos representing these or other ecological values were in last place both in the number of such advertising units and in the number of views. They are significantly overtaken by advertising videos on such topics as *road safety*, *diabetes control* and *physical education and sports*. Hence one can conclude that in Russian social advertising the topic of preserving a person clearly prevails over the topic of preserving the environment. At the same time, it is well known that the physical and mental health of a person directly depends on the state of the environment and to promote a healthy lifestyle, keeping silent about environmental degradation, is unproductive.

Among the videos of ecological content should be allocated social advertising on the problem of forest conservation. So, in 2017, by order of the Federal Forestry Agency, the video "Save the Forest" was shot, timed to coincide with the Year of Ecology in Russia (1304 views as of 15.10.2018). It is curious to note that on the problem of intensive cutting down of the Siberian forests many amateur videos were shot with the number of views about 10,000 or more (for example, *Deforestation in Siberia from a satellite* by *Domovoi*, 93821 views on 10/15/2018 *First Russian*, the number of views on the same date - 170025). Such a difference in the number of views, most likely, indicates that the coverage of this problem in public advertising clearly loses to the independent authors of the videos in terms of the urgency of the subjects shown and the degree of civic concern about what is happening.

Analysis of the nominees of the social advertising competition among the public authorities Impulse for

2014-2017 showed that only in 2017 at the competition the advertising products of ecological content were awarded, namely the Internet advertising *It's easier to live in the Green city!*, created by the state budgetary institution *Gardening*, the advertising poster *What we breathe, What we are walking on* of the Center for Business Development *Potential* and advertising activation *Clean city begins with you! Love your Samara! Work - rest!* (Information management and Analytics of Administration of Samara city district) Moreover, these advertising products occupied third places in the competition.

During the study, it was noted that ecological values were often used in Russian commercial advertising. And this concerns not only the advertising of water and food, but also such seemingly far from wildlife products and services as smartphones (for example, 4G MTS smartphone advertising) and banking products (for example, advertising the Extra Revenue deposit of VTB24).

Special emphasis on the ecology is made when promoting construction sites (for example, advertising of the residential area A101 in New Moscow (developer *Avgur Estate*), *Buninsky Meadows* area (PIK group of companies)).

Thus, according to the results of the study, it is possible to note not only the extremely low activity of Russian social advertising in promoting ecological values, but also a kind of exploitation of ecological images in the commercial promotion of various goods and services, which indirectly indicates the relevance of this topic and its urgency to Russian society.

CONCLUSIONS

Currently, the dissemination of ecological values is one of the means of approving the model of sustainable

development of society. The most important role in this should be played by the media and social advertising.

Social advertising in Russia has a large, but yet untapped potential for promoting environmental values. So far, ecological issues are not adequately reflected in social advertising videos. The very videos of ecological content, which is created by order of state structures, as a rule, are not distinguished by social urgency or high quality of artistic performance, which significantly reduces the power of their impact on the population.

The existing videos usually reflect the nationwide level of vision of ecological problems and they are designed for simple informing of the population. Virtually no promotional videos are created that would reflect regional and local environmental issues, as well as demonstrate patterns of environmentally sound behavior. We believe that social advertising must necessarily be included in certain government and public programs for the formation of ecologically-oriented thinking and behavior of the population. For example, the program for the separation of household waste currently being carried out in many Russian cities should be supported by appropriate advertising in all possible forms (posters, video and audio advertising, etc.). In practice, this is not observed, which significantly reduces the effectiveness of the program itself.

In our opinion, it is necessary to create a social advertising of ecological values, specifically dedicated to children and young people, since the formation of ecological habits begins at this age.

It is also necessary to further develop non-profit social advertising of ecological content, highlighting, in particular, such a nomination in various social advertising competitions.

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