

Research of socio-psychological characteristics of the modern young audience's consumption via the Internet: regional aspect

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Abstract — Developing effective strategies of the effects on consumer choice is a priority for any company presented in online environments. Today's Internet-consumers increasingly prefer virtual communication to face-to-face interaction with people around, at that, proportion of young people has reached the limit values. The main goals of the Internet-consumption are: socialization, self-presentation, entertainment, access to relevant information on request. To design the strategy of interaction, it is necessary to formulate the definition of the Internet-consumer, to reveal his (her) socio-psychological characteristics, which determine the choice of Internet products for achieving the desired objectives. A recent empiric study made it possible to identify the categories of the up-to-date Internet-consumers according to three attributes: sex (male, female), occupation (students, young people at work, those combining work and study); purposes of consumption (interpersonal communication, access to information, business, self-presentation and entertainment). The results obtained showed that the most important aims of Internet-consumption for the young people in the region are access to information and communication, whereas the least significant one proved to be self-presentation. It means that while promoting Internet-products for young audiences rational approach to describing a product should be used, in this case the notion "rational approach" contains focus on functional properties of a product and its ability to solve any problem. At the same time, it is important to pay attention to the environment of the target audience, the necessity of communicating with one another (including about the product), the need to share impressions; make the assessment about the used product. The strategies aimed at promotion focused on status, image or self-actualization through the use (possession) of a product seem irrelevant.

Keywords — goals of Internet-consumption, young audience, study of Internet-behaviour.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of effective strategies for influencing consumer choice is a widespread need for any company presented in the online environment.

Currently, Internet-users in Russia account 81% to 90% of the country's population, in the Southern Federal District monthly Internet segment comprises 71% (average value for all Districts is 72%) and daily Internet audience is 63% (average value for all Districts is 64%) [1]. The percentage of the Internet-users aged 18 to 24 years is 97%. Today's advanced Internet-users are accustomed to the full access to information from any device; the main communication channel for them is social networks: 27% of users at the age of 13 to 25 spend more than 5 hours a day on social nets [2] choosing virtual communication instead of face-to-face interaction with others. In this region, 'VKontakte' (14%) and 'Instagram' (13%) are especially popular with the audience between the ages of 18 and 24[3].

87% of the Russians regard the Internet favourably: 63% of respondents mention the possibility of a faster finding necessary information, 31% note boosting of communicative capacities, 8 % consider the Internet a source of entertainment, one more way of spending free time [4].

Growing market of the Internet advertising (last year it increased by 22% while the value of the TV advertising market only rose by 12%) [5] reflects the interest towards the advertising content from users. According to 'Nielsen' company, 62% of the audiences are interested in advertising actions and promotional offers, 33% seek proposals of that kind [6]. With that, consumers are more often dissatisfied with the manner of the advertising effect since it frequently rather aggressive and persuasive.

All mentioned above makes it essential to create a marketing strategy which would ensure comfortable Internet-consumption for users and be profitable for producers of advertising content. Before the design of advertising content it is necessary to depict the portrait of a typical Internet-consumer, reveal his/her socio-psychological features which influence the choice of a particular Internet-product aimed at achieving the desired objectives.

Studies made by R. Davis [7] and D.V. Bogdanov [8] bring to light the following goals of the Internet-consumption: 1) socialization, communication with other people; 2) self-presentation (self-expression, self-development), comparing oneself with other Internet-users; 3) entertainment, leisure; 4) business purpose (obtaining relevant information upon request).

The notion of consumer behaviour and characteristics of its manifestation were discussed in works by E.P. Ilyin [9], Zh.Zh. Lamben [10], N.B. Pochinok, M.V. Vinogradova [11], A.L. Zhuravleva, A.B. Kupreichenko [12], E.N. Kiseleva, D.V. Gardina [13], O.S. Posypanova [14], A.E. Gnezdiliva, A.A. Volkova [15], C. Warren, A. Barsky, A.P. McGraw [16], M. Ben-Akiva, D. McFadden & K. Train [17], K. Sobol, M. Cleveland, M. Laroche [18]. Specific features of Internet-consumption were considered by L.N. Fedotova [19], A.A. Alimova [20] and Yu.V. Loginova[21].

Studies on activities and communication of people on the Internet were undertaken in Russia (A.E. Voiskunsky[22], G.V. Soldatova [23], A.B. Kholmogorova[24], M.S. Ionova[25] and others) and abroad (K. Young[26], C. Montag, Z. Zhao. C.Sindermann[27] and others).

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

As a part of study, the following methods were used:

1. Theoretical: analysis of the sources on the research topic;
2. Empirical: survey (questionnaire containing basic information: sex, age, occupation as well as scaling of frequency of using the Internet resources and the purpose of their usage);
3. Methods of mathematic-statistical processing of the data obtained: descriptive statistics, one-dimension variance analysis. In carrying out the study we were interested in the combination of social determinants of consumption: sex and occupation (two independent variables which have an impact on the dependent variable — consumption goals).

One-dimension variance analysis calculates average amounts for every factor and then determines their common weight (F-power of influence of independent variables on the dependent one). Statistical significance is defined as indicator p which must be less or equal to 0.050. If the value exceeds that number, the risk of error in average amounts increases.

Consumers were to choose those of the proposed goals which were in accordance with their consumption and to assess their significance. For the research we used the seven-figure scale (1 to 7) where 1 means minimum values ('don't

use the Internet at all for this purpose') and 7 means maximum values ('use the Internet for this purpose constantly').

The description of the sampling. 102 Internet-users between the ages of 18 and 30 years took part in the research (survey). The sampling was based on three main criteria: sex (male, female), occupation (students, young people at work, those combining work and study), all respondents are residents of the Volgograd region. Detailed information concerning categorization of the respondents on the basis of the selected characteristics is presented in table 1

TABLE I. CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE TEST SUBJECTS SAMPLE

Variables and their levels	Characteristics	Number of people
Sex	1,00 мужской	49
	2,00 женский	53
Occupation	1,00 учусь	42
	2,00 работаю	37
	3,00 учусь и работаю	23

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Consider all the results which reflect peculiarities of Internet-consumption by today's young audience.

A. The main goal of Internet-consumption is interpersonal communication.

The extent of the use of online products for the purpose of communication is higher with women than with men (averages for women are higher 5.333).

Among male consumers, surfing the Internet with the purpose of communication is characteristic for the group of the sample who currently study at higher educational institutions (average amount is 5.000). Employment reduces interest in consuming Internet-resources in order to communicate. Differences among consumers are illustrated with the following graph. (Fig.1).



Fig. 1. The extent of average amounts of Internet-consumption for the purpose of communication among male and female groups of users with different types of occupation

B. The main goal of the Internet-consumption is entertainment

From the graph (fig. 2.) it may be seen that using Internet resources is particularly the case with male users studying in higher educational institutions.

Among female users, either students (5.000) or employees (4.667) search the Internet for entertainment. Reconciling study and work helps to reduce interest in entertainment provided by the Internet resources.

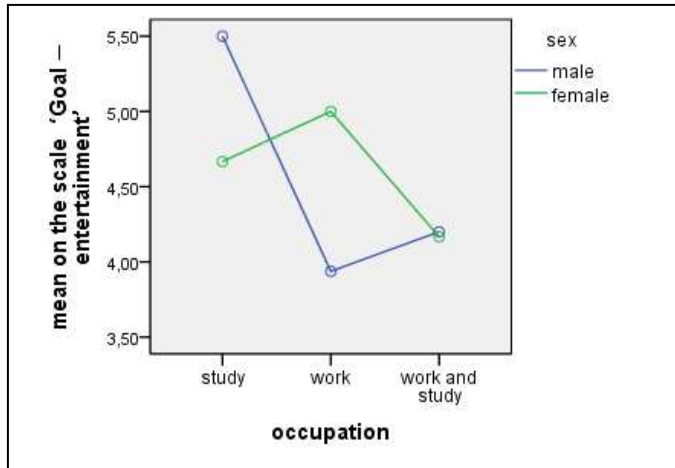


Fig. 2. The extent of average amounts of Internet-consumption aimed at entertainment among male and female users with different types of occupation..

C. The main goal of the Internet-consumption is information

In the course of the research, the highest average amounts for the entire sample were obtained on the scale of consumption aimed at searching for required information.

Drawing upon the data of Fig. 3. we can claim that using Internet resources for the purpose of obtaining information is more typical for the male sample (average values range from 5.400 to 6.340). However, when compared in the type of occupations, consumers combining learning and work are more likely to use the Internet for the sake of obtaining information (it is true either for male or female sample). Probably, it is the necessity of carrying out various tasks that increases the users' need for information.



Fig. 3. The extent of average amounts of Internet-consumption aimed at obtaining information among male and female users with different types of occupation.

D. The main goal of Internet-consumption is self-presentation.

Using the Internet as a resource for self-presentation is characteristic for both men and women who combine learning and work (Fig. 4.). This may reflect the desire and need to form a brand on the market, to create the image of a successful person who has advantages over competitors. This goal may be pursued by those users whose activities depend on their rating in the Internet, the number of podcast views and the amount of friends in social nets. Successful self-presentation has an impact on ratings of bloggers, users of social nets, as well as ad placement, and also rating and amount of resources in the field of gaming (A.E. Voiskunsky calls this goal 'reputational up-levelling').

Female students also have an interest in the Instagram as a means of self-presentation. Rather, it is an issue of demonstrating oneself through the social nets like 'Instagram'

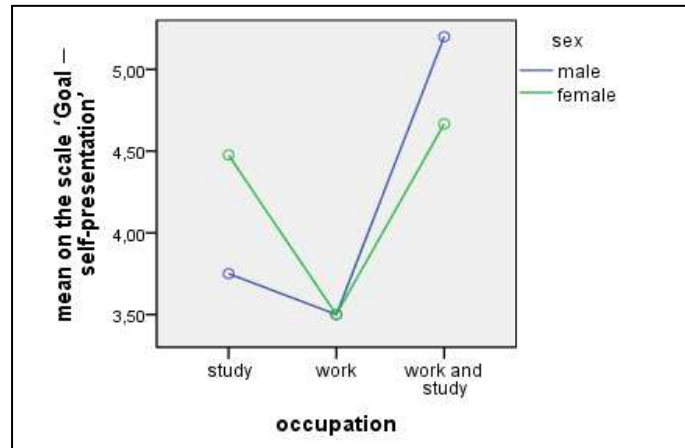


Fig. 4. The extent of average amounts of Internet-consumption aimed at self-presentation among male and female users with different types of occupation.

E. The main goal of Internet-construction is business(practical)

From the graph (Fig. 5) it is gathered that it is men, especially those classified as working youth (average value is 5.224), focus on using Internet-resources for business (practical) purposes (work/study/doing business). Girls undergoing training also admit using the Internet for practical reasons, but average amounts on the sample do not exceed 4.500.



Fig. 5. The extent of average amounts of using the Internet for business (practical) purposes among male and female users with different types of occupation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The research results in a series of categories of today's Internet-consumers based on combination of three characteristics: sex (male, female), occupation (students, young people at work, those combining work and study); goals of consumption (interpersonal communication, information, business, self-presentation and entertainment).

A. Today's Internet men-users

Users of that kind are apt to searching information, developing business contacts, finding ways of tackling difficulties connected with their professional activities. If currently they are mostly busy studying (they are students and are not employed), their need for recreations which can be found on the Internet increases dramatically. The opportunity to communicate with peers, exchange emotions and news (via social nets and forums) is also a subject of a considerable interest.

When describing the product of the given target group, it is necessary to place emphasis on its functional specifications, opportunities to benefit from using it. In the marketing strategy, it is possible to make use of involving consumers themselves in the process of promoting a product as well as focus on value of communication for any group or community. The promotion itself can be of entertaining, playful nature.

B. Today's Internet women-users.

Users of that kind are keen on interpersonal communication and self-presentation through the use of Internet resources. In case a woman is classified as a working youth, her interest to self-presentation and communication via the Internet falls sharply, but her passion for computer games and other recreations which serve as the way of organizing her leisure time increases.

If a representative of this target audience isn't yet working, special attention when promoting in this group should be paid to the ideas of opinion leaders, motivational success stories and content enabling her to evolve. In the event that a woman is already working, the engagement strategy should contain components concerning leisure, possibilities for maintaining balance between work and private life, the necessity to pay attention to herself, her personal needs.

C. The most significant goals of consumption in the whole sampling

General trends in Internet-consumption in the region are as follows: for today's young people such goals of consumption as information (M = 5.14) and communication (M = 4.9) are of utmost importance, whereas self-presentation (M = 4.1) is the least important. It means that when promoting products for young audience, a rational approach to describing a product, focus on its functional characteristics and its capacity to resolve any problem should be used. In this connection, it is important to devote attention to the environment of the target audience and also to the need for their communicating with one another, including about the product, as well as the demand to exchange impressions and make their own assessment of using the product. Irrelevant are the strategies orientated towards promoting with an emphasis on status, image or self-expression through the usage (possession) of a product.

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