Increasing the Advertising Literacy of Primary School Children in Ireland: Findings from a Pilot RCT

# Details

## Year

2019

## DOI

10.20533/ijds.2040.2570.2019.0183

## Issued

2019

## Language

English

## Volume

10

## Issue

2

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

International Journal for Digital Society

## Publisher

Infonomics Society

## Topics

* Literacy and skills
* Learning
* Digital and socio-cultural environment

## Sample

"A mixed methods approach with a predominantly quantitative focus was employed. The research was conducted in two phases. Phase one was quantitative, and comprised a pilot randomised controlled trial (RCT) (n=324) carried out between the months of January and May 2018. Phase two, a process evaluation, employed qualitative methods to explore perceptions of delivering media literacy lessons in the classroom. It consisted of interviews with six teachers and two focus groups with 17 children, carried out during the months of April and
May 2018"

## Implications For Parents About

Parenting guidance / support

## Implications For Educators About

Professional development

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Creating a safe environment for children online

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Industry

# Abstract

"This study reports the effect of four lessons of a recently developed Irish media literacy teaching intervention on the advertising literacy of children aged 8-11. Covariates of age and gender were also considered. Alongside this, a process evaluation was completed. The results of this pilot RCT show that children aged between 8 and 11 are capable of increasing their knowledge regarding the persuasive intent and the selling intent of marketing messages. The intervention had a statistically significant positive impact on advertising literacy. This study
finds no evidence to suggest that advertising literacy is gendered. Qualitative discussions indicate that the teaching materials were well received by both teachers and children. The need for regular advertising literacy lessons for children was unearthed. The challenge of attempting to include more content in an increasingly crowded curriculum was cited as the main barrier to delivering regular media literacy lessons. Recommendations for increased media literacy education in primary school are discussed. These findings are of interest to parties including educators, parents, policymakers and marketers"

# Outcome

The findings demonstrate that the MediaWise teaching intervention is effective in increasing children’s advertising literacy. Those who received the media literacy intervention experienced a greater increase in their advertising literacy scores than those who did not. The findings show that the intervention does not have a greater effect on those with lower pre-test advertising literacy scores, demonstrating that the average benefit observed is universal for children in the treatment group. It is argued that boys and girls are socialised differently, this study finds no evidence to suggest that advertising literacy is gendered. Though children evidently learn to become consumers as they mature, it should not be assumed that consumer attitudes and skills develop in a linear fashion alongside maturity. Advertising literacy rather than age has a greater impact on consumer behaviour. Children aged between 7 and 12 are well positioned to acquire advertising literacy skills [29]. This analytical stage is key in the development of consumer behaviour as children learn to engage in a variety of decision making strategies, evaluating multiple product attributes simultaneously. This study confirms that it is possible to increase the advertising literacy of children aged 8-11 and it finds no evidence to suggest that it is necessary to delineate this age grouping further. Having the same media literacy curriculum for third and fourth class is a suitable option. Scope exists to revise and realign the intervention teaching materials so that each lesson time is shortened. A streamlined version of the MediaWise intervention materials will enable teachers to incorporate the intervention into their pedagogy with ease. A smaller set of core activities and worksheets could form an essential booklet, with options for extensions of extra activities or worksheets contained within the overall lesson pack"