
Media advertising as human capital: the attention economy and its challenges

Anastasiya Ilyina

Department of Public Administration, State University of Trade and Economics, Kyiv, Ukraine

ORCID 0000-0002-6374-7078

Abstract: The article examines how, within the attention economy, media advertising has evolved from a classical promotional instrument into a component of human capital that shapes economic opportunities, social status, and trust in both brands and the individuals behind them. The ability to attract, retain, and monetize attention is becoming a resource comparable to education and professional skills, while media visibility generates symbolic and communicative capital for market actors. This necessitates identifying mechanisms to enhance the resilience and effectiveness of media advertising as an element of human capital while minimizing ethical devaluation so as to ensure authentic interaction, drawing on a combination of system and comparative analyses, statistical approaches, content analysis, case studies, and critical analysis.

Based on a comparative analysis of the markets of the United States, the European Union, and Ukraine, the study records a growing role for video, audio, and podcast formats as carriers of “deep attention” and trust, despite differences in market scale and structure. The study identifies systemic shortcomings in all compared countries, including dependence on platform algorithms, unstable audience reach, commercialization of privacy, risks of loss of authenticity, and related ethical dilemmas. Together, these factors significantly undermine the long-term robustness of advertising strategies.

As a standard of trust and verifiability in communications, the article proposes the concept of an “advertisement passport” with a QR link to official web pages providing full details, guarantees, and transparent terms. It recommends a shift from purely quantitative indicators to “trust and attention metrics” (time in contact, depth of engagement, share of traffic to official sites), and prioritizing product-centric content over influencers’ emotional self-presentation.

The practical significance lies in outlining an updated model of media advertising as a human-capital asset, in which the combination of attention metrics, transparency, and authenticity reduces sensitivity to algorithmic volatility, improves the predictability of return on investment (ROI), and legitimizes advertising as an ethically acceptable form of public communication. The findings may be useful for entrepreneurs, individual entrepreneurs (sole proprietors), opinion leaders, and organizations seeking to combine economic efficiency with social responsibility amid information overload and attention scarcity.

Keywords: attention economy, media advertising, human capital, audience attention, advertising transparency, authenticity, video advertising, audio advertising, podcasts, personal brand, consumer trust, algorithmic dependence.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary conditions of the 21st century, attention has become one of the most scarce and expensive resources. A person constantly faces an enormous flow of information – from news feeds and social networks to digital advertising and personalized recommendations. In this environment, the struggle is no longer primarily for goods or services but for human time and attention, turning them into a special type of economic capital. This is why the phenomenon of the attention economy is increasingly being discussed, where the main resource is the ability to attract,

retain, and monetize audience interest. In this process, media advertising plays a particularly important role: it has ceased to be merely a tool for promoting products and has transformed into a component of human capital. For the modern entrepreneur, opinion leader, or even an ordinary social media user, the ability to navigate the media space is beginning to have value comparable to education, professional skills, and social connections. A personal brand, the number of followers, and the ability to influence public attitudes increasingly determine economic opportunities and social status.

The relevance of this topic is determined by several factors. First, the media space has turned into a global marketplace where human attention has itself become a commodity. Second, digital advertising blurs the boundaries between personal and professional life, creating new challenges for ethics, trust, and authenticity. Third, the development of technologies and social media algorithms creates inequality of access: some acquire symbolic and economic capital through media visibility, while others remain “invisible,” even when possessing no fewer knowledge, skills, and abilities to promote a product.

Therefore, the study of media advertising as a form of human capital allows for a deeper understanding of how the attention economy affects individuals, businesses, and society as a whole. At this point, the key question is about media visibility as a genuine resource for development, or merely a new form of illusion that substitutes the real value of a person with external indicators of popularity.

2. Object and subject of research

The object of the research is media advertising as a socio-economic phenomenon formed at the intersection of information and communication technologies (ICTs), marketing, and social communications. It incorporates a number of properties, including informativeness (the transmission of information), communicativeness (establishing connections between producer and consumer), commerciality (facilitating the sale of goods and services), and symbolic capital (creating image and reputation). Today, media advertising acquires new parameters such as interactivity, personalization, algorithmic targeting, and rapid scalability within digital networks. Its “structure” consists of distribution platforms (social networks, websites, mobile applications), advertising content (text, video, graphics), analytical and monetization tools (advertising accounts, optimization algorithms, reach indicators).

Foreign analogues demonstrate a high level of development of media advertising as an industry: in the USA and EU countries it is integrated into the business models of most corporations, while in Asia (China, South Korea) it is closely linked with the development of digital platforms and the massive use of mobile applications. In international practice, advertising is no longer perceived exclusively as a means of promotion but is interpreted as a component of human capital. In this context, the ability of a company or an individual entrepreneur to manage the attention of the audience directly affects economic performance.

The subject of the research is the peculiarities of media advertising functioning as a component of human capital in the conditions of the attention economy, particularly: mechanisms of attracting and retaining attention, methods of personal brand construction, algorithmic promotion tools, and their impact on economic and social inequality.

At the same time, excessive dependence on social media algorithms leads to result instability, when even with high-quality content, reach may decrease due to changes in platform rules. Moreover, media advertising often creates the illusion of success, where popularity substitutes real professional skills and competencies. Finally, there is the commercialization of private life, which generates risks of losing authenticity and audience trust. Thus, in the process of “exploitation” of media advertising as a form of human capital, its weak points are revealed, namely: instability, ethical dilemmas, and social polarization.

3. Target of research

The target of the research is to identify and substantiate mechanisms for improving media advertising as a component of human capital in the context of the attention economy. This involves finding ways to increase the stability of results, minimize the risks of ethical devaluation, and ensure the authenticity of interaction between advertisers and audiences.

The stated purpose requires addressing the following tasks:

- to analyze the current state of media advertising development in Ukraine and abroad as a socio-economic phenomenon;
- to determine the key properties and parameters of media advertising that shape it as an element of human capital;
- to examine the shortcomings of existing media advertising practices related to dependence on social media algorithms, instability of audience reach, ethical dilemmas, and the risk of losing authenticity;
- to identify mechanisms and tools for attracting and retaining attention that ensure stability and audience trust;
- to formulate proposals for updating the concept of media advertising, taking into account its role in the formation of human capital, with an emphasis on balancing economic benefits and social responsibility;
- to develop recommendations for entrepreneurs, opinion leaders, and organizations on more effective and ethical use of media advertising in the attention economy.

4. Literature analysis

As of today, attention has become an independent scarce resource with its own “market” logic, where platforms invest in retaining users while selling their attention to advertisers. This generates “attention scarcity spirals” and cognitive dependencies that can significantly affect both individuals and institutions [1]. Contemporary interdisciplinary studies propose updated models of attention and its exchange, including formal economic approaches as well as socio-critical reviews of the impact of platform-based advertising on society [2].

Publications in marketing and management interpret personal branding and the ability to attract an audience as a component of human capital, where linguistic strategies, narrative, social influence, and attention metrics determine the economic opportunities of a producer/brand. Research shows that the quality of creative content and “attention per impression” correlate with conversions better than traditional “viewability” [3].

Other contemporary scholars view algorithmic targeting as the core of digital advertising. It relates both to performance gains and to the risks of unstable reach, where even minor changes in platform rules can sharply “swing” outcomes [4]. Certain empirical studies on Ukraine under martial law note that advertising tools can be used as channels for socially significant messaging and, at the same time, as sources of ecosystem vulnerabilities [5].

Comparing the U.S., the EU, and Ukraine, during the period 2023–2024 the digital advertising markets have grown substantially. For instance, the U.S. reached \$258.6 billion in 2024 – about 15% higher than the previous year [6, 7], while the EU crossed €118.9 billion in constant currency for the first time [8]. The main drivers here were video advertising, audio/podcasts, and website placements [9]. In Ukraine, despite the war, the volume of digital advertising in 2024 rose to approximately 18 billion UAH (up 24%), with video content serving as the primary driver, accounting for about 46% of all media advertising [10]. These figures confirm the “institutionalization” of attention as an economic variable within business models.

Field measurements of “attention” (Dentsu/Lumen) show that podcast advertising captures twice as much attention as social media, digital video, and television, which is crucial for the stability of engagement and trust [11–14]. At the same time, economic reports (MSI/ARF) detail how

informational and non-informational content compete differently for attention in oversaturated feeds [15, 16].

In recent years, requirements for advertising transparency and influencer disclosures have significantly intensified:

- in the U.S. (FTC), the updated Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials directly address social media and influencers [17, 18];
- in the EU (DSA), updated transparency rules and ad repositories set precedents for claims against platforms for violations of disclosure requirements [19];
- in Ukraine, the Law of Ukraine On Advertising was comprehensively updated to harmonize with the EU and adapt to modern technological realities, including online advertising [20].

Separate reviews highlight the recovery of the advertising market after the shock of 2022 and shifts in media consumption, emphasizing the growing role of radio, the Internet, and local media during wartime [10]. According to Digital 2024: Ukraine, these communication channels serve as benchmarks for social media penetration and platform structure [21].

As for the contemporary studies, attention is a measurable and commercialized resource that determines the ability of individuals and organizations to attract and monetize attention, transforming it into a component of human capital alongside knowledge, skills, and competencies [22, 23]. However, within such a system, the risks of algorithmic instability, ethical dilemmas, and the commercialization of private life increase significantly [24, 25]. Consequently, regulatory frameworks and “trust metrics” become critically important for the sustainability of the market and the societal legitimacy of media advertising [26, 27].

5. Research methods

In the course of the study, a set of complementary methods was applied, namely:

- system analysis method – used to examine media advertising as a socio-economic phenomenon functioning at the intersection of ICTs, marketing, and social communications;
- comparative method – employed to compare the development of media advertising in Ukraine, the U.S. and the EU countries, as well as to analyze foreign analogues and practices of using advertising as a tool of human capital;
- statistical data method – applied to process quantitative indicators of the digital advertising market (investment volumes, share of video, audio, and podcast advertising, audience reach) in order to assess their impact on economic efficiency and social inequality;
- content analysis – applied in studying advertising materials in social networks, blogs, and digital media to identify key strategies for attracting attention and building a personal brand;
- case study method – used to consider specific examples of both successful and problematic practices of media advertising in business and socially significant communications, particularly under martial law in Ukraine;
- critical discourse analysis – applied to identify ethical dilemmas and risks of commercialization of private life in advertising practices, as well as to analyze how social media algorithms affect the social legitimacy of media advertising.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods made it possible not only to identify shortcomings in the functioning of media advertising but also to propose directions for its improvement in the context of human capital formation and the attention economy.

6. Research results

In the 21st century, media advertising has ceased to be merely a tool for product promotion and has acquired the characteristics of human capital – a resource that directly influences the economic opportunities of individuals and institutions. Its properties and parameters shape the economic value of a person or a brand, similar to education, professional skills, or social connections (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Key properties and parameters of media advertising

Property / Parameter	Characteristic	Impact on human capital
Informational value	Transmission of knowledge, facts, messages	Expands educational potential and builds the image of an “expert”
Communicativeness	Establishing connections between a brand/person and the audience	Creates social capital, networking ties, and trust
Commerciality	Sales orientation, monetization of attention	Adds economic value in the form of revenue, ROI
Symbolic capital	Image, reputation, values	Strengthens status, competitiveness, and thought leadership
Interactivity	Two- or multi-way communication (comments, reactions, shares)	Increases engagement and stimulates “emotional capital”
Personalization	Algorithmic targeting tailored to the individual user	Enhances interaction efficiency and reinforces a sense of individual value
Rapid scalability	Ability to quickly reach large audiences	Provides an “acceleration effect” for brand or personal growth
Attention metrics	Measurement of interaction time, viewing depth, and quality of attention	Long-term indicator of brand value, as attention = capital in the literal sense
Authenticity	Sincerity and alignment of personal / brand values with advertising messages	Builds trust as an intangible asset and reduces the risk of “ethical devaluation”
Algorithmic resilience	Ability of content to remain effective despite changes in platform rules	Protects “trust capital” from fluctuations in algorithmic environments

Source: developed by the author based on [1–5]

Traditional advertising used to focus on ‘impressions.’ However, media advertising as human capital takes into account trust, authenticity, and attention, which do not disappear after the end of a campaign but accumulate within an individual or a brand. Instead of short, one-off contacts, long-term interaction is formed, where production costs are higher (especially for video and podcasts), but the result is more ‘quality attention.’ This is because most resources are invested in content rather than paid promotion.

Research by Dentsu/Lumen shows that ‘deep attention’ formats (podcasts, long-form video) have twice the conversion rate, directly influencing economic outcomes. The parameters of media advertising as human capital are universal: in most countries, the key issues concern the balance between efficiency and authenticity [11]. At the same time, high dependence on algorithms contributes to unstable reach, while excessive commercialization creates a risk of losing trust [12].

Thus, the key properties and parameters of media advertising define its value as human capital, making advertising not merely a commercial tool but an intangible asset that enhances the social status and economic opportunities of individuals and organizations.

Modern media advertising operates within the attention economy, where the main resource is the ability to attract and retain audience interest [13]. On a global scale, this phenomenon has acquired the features of socio-economic capital, within which brands and individuals skilled at working with attention gain competitive advantages, market access, and opportunities for influence [14].

The analysis of the U.S., European, and Ukrainian markets demonstrates different stages of development, with a common trend being the growing role of video, social media, and podcasts as key channels of deep user engagement (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Current state of media advertising development (2024)

Indicator	United States	European Union	Ukraine
Total digital advertising volume	\$258.6 billion	€118.9 billion	≈€18 billion
Trends, YoY	+14.9%	+16.1%	+24%
Key drivers	Search (\$102.9 billion), social media (\$88.7 billion), video (\$62.1 billion)	Video (especially CTV), search; 12 out of 29 markets > 20%	Video (≈46% of all digital investments); videos/streams as the main format
Attention trends	Rising role of social media and video for brands, focus on interaction quality, the largest market	Shift toward CTV and multiplatform strategies, stronger regulation, record excess of €100 billion in constant prices	Explosive growth of video, market recovery despite war conditions
Regulatory factors	FTC: stricter rules on endorsement advertising transparency	DSA: transparency, open ad repositories	Law of Ukraine “On Advertising”: EU alignment
High-attention formats	Podcasts – twice as much attention as social media and video (Dentsu/Lumen)	Video and audio growing as stable channels	Video and local digital channels as main coverage tools
Socio-economic effect	Integration into corporate business models; attention = asset	Institutionalization of attention as an economic variable	Adaptability and resilience; attention driving business recovery

Source: developed by the author based on [6–21]

In the U.S., online advertising revenues in 2024 reached \$258.6 billion, representing a +14.9% year-over-year (YoY) increase. The largest categories were search engines (\$102.9 billion), social media (\$88.7 billion), and video (\$62.1 billion) [6]. While search continues to serve as the ‘anchor’ for monetizing intent, remaining the foundation of the lower funnel, the structural budget shift toward social platforms and video confirms a move toward formats that foster emotional connection and sustained attention [7]. A problematic factor here is the high dependence on platform algorithms, as even minor policy changes (for example, in targeting or cookie regulations) can sharply reduce campaign effectiveness.

In EU countries, the total volume of digital advertising amounted to €118.9 billion (+16.1% YoY), with 12 out of 29 markets showing growth above 20%. The main drivers were video, especially Connected TV (CTV) and search [8]. A significant influence comes from EU regulatory policy, which strengthens advertising transparency requirements [9]. This simultaneously increases trust in advertising formats but also raises advertisers’ costs for complying with new rules. A major challenge for the European market is audience fragmentation, as different countries exhibit distinct media consumption patterns, complicating the standardization of campaigns.

In Ukraine, despite the war, the digital advertising market shows signs of recovery and growth. In 2024 the market volume reached about €18 billion (+24% YoY). The main factor here is the dominance of video, which accounts for around 46% of all digital investments. This is explained by the fact that video provides the highest level of reach and emotional engagement with audiences, even under crisis conditions. However, a major challenge remains the high dependence on external platforms (Meta, Google, YouTube, TikTok), which creates risks of instability when their policies

change. Ukraine is classified among the countries with the fastest recovery rates in Europe. This may indicate business adaptability and a transition from ‘survival’ to gradual strategic planning [10].

While in the U.S. there is a balance between search, social media, and video, ensuring a synergy of intent and influence; in the EU the focus is on video and CTV, which are quickly institutionalized due to regulatory frameworks; in Ukraine video is the key driver of growth, and with relatively lower cost per mile (CPM) it increases campaign ROI.

According to Dentsu/Lumen, podcast advertising attracts roughly twice as much attention as social media, digital video, or television. This confirms that ‘deep attention’ formats provide stable engagement and trust, which can serve as an alternative channel for improving the effectiveness of business campaigns [11].

If media advertising is viewed as an element of human capital, its ‘renewal’ lies in the transition from simple impressions to the management of attention and trust. In the U.S., this is achieved through the combination of search (monetization of intent) with social media and video (engagement and reach); in the EU – through video and CTV, which are becoming the basis for long-term audience contact; in Ukraine – through the active expansion of video formats and the testing of audio/podcasts as additional carriers of sustained attention.

The growing role of video and podcasts increases production costs, but this is offset by higher-quality attention and long-term effects in the form of trust and stronger conversion rates. For Ukraine, it is particularly important that with lower CPM (compared to the U.S. and EU), video delivers relatively higher returns on investment, enabling businesses to increase profitability even under crisis conditions.

Modern media advertising, despite its rapid development and integration into business models, has a number of systemic shortcomings that weaken its effectiveness and long-term sustainability. These shortcomings relate to dependence on social media algorithms, unstable reach, ethical dilemmas, and the risk of losing authenticity (Tab. 3).

Table 3. Shortcomings of media advertising practices

Shortcoming	How it manifests	Consequences for human capital / business
Dependence on algorithms	Algorithmic changes in Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube sharply affect content visibility	Loss of control over one’s own audience, “artificial barriers” for small players
Unstable reach	Even high-quality content may be shown only to part of subscribers	Decline in ROI, constant need for “boosting” with paid advertising
Ethical dilemmas	Commercialization of private life, hidden integrations, manipulation of attention	Loss of audience trust, risk of regulatory sanctions
Loss of authenticity	Excessive “packaging” of a personal brand, replacing essence with follower counts	Transformation into an “illusion of success,” reducing the value of real competencies
Information overload	Advertising campaigns compete for attention in oversaturated feeds	Decreased user ability to focus, growth of cognitive dependencies
Algorithmic inequality	Large players enjoy privileged targeting conditions and budgets	Strengthening of “digital polarization,” reduced social mobility

Source: developed by the author based on [12–14]

If media advertising is considered an element of human capital, its improvement should move toward reducing algorithmic dependence and strengthening authenticity. This distinguishes ‘renewed’ advertising from traditional counterparts that operate only with quantitative metrics (click-through rate (CTR), reach). Due to unstable reach, more time is spent on maintaining presence.

Increasing reliance on paid advertising raises budgetary costs, while advertisers become exhausted by the constant race for ‘algorithmic loyalty.’

At the same time, stabilizing reach through the implementation of attention metrics and alternative channels provides a more predictable ROI, while a return to authenticity increases long-term ‘trust capital,’ which directly influences sales and partnerships. In the U.S. and the EU, this issue is relevant due to stricter advertising transparency regulations (FTC, DSA) [15, 16]; in Ukraine – because of the need to restore trust during wartime conditions and post-crisis market restructuring [10]. The growing role of ‘quality formats’ (podcasts, long-form video) increases production costs. However, these investments pay off through longer engagement and more resilient trust.

The shortcomings of current practice come down to algorithmic instability, ethical challenges, and the risk of substituting essence with form. Overcoming them transforms media advertising from merely a commercial tool into a balanced element of human capital that supports both business development and social trust [17].

As for the conducted study, the effectiveness of media advertising as a form of human capital depends not only on reach but also on the ability to consistently retain audience attention and build trust. In this context, trust is the key ‘intangible asset’ that determines long-term value for both the brand and the individual (Tab. 4).

Table 4. Mechanisms and tools for attracting and retaining attention

Mechanism / Tool	How it works	Effect on Stability and Trust
Attention metrics (Lumen, Dentsu)	Measure not only impressions but also depth of contact (viewing time, emotions)	Predictable ROI, reduction of “algorithmic noise”
Video content (short- and long-form)	TikTok, Reels, YouTube Shorts – quick contact; YouTube, CTV – long-form	Balance of quick and deep interactions
Podcasts and audio	“Deep attention” format, listeners are less distracted	Higher trust in brands and creators
Personalized narratives	Use of storytelling instead of dry sales messages	Builds authenticity and loyalty
Transparency and disclosure	Clear labeling of ads, honesty in communication	Increased trust in influencers
Gamification	Interactive elements, challenges, user participation in the process	Higher engagement and repeat interaction
Cross-channel integration	Combining social media, podcasts, offline activities	More resilient interaction, broader reach
Micro- and nano-influencers	Audiences trust “their own” more than macro-bloggers	Greater authenticity and trust

Source: developed by the author based on [12–14]

Unlike classical approaches, which relied mainly on quantitative indicators (reach, frequency, CTR), modern practice demonstrates the necessity of shifting toward qualitative metrics focused on attention and trust. For example, the application of attention metrics (Dentsu/Lumen) makes it possible to assess not only the fact of user contact with an advertising message, but also the depth of that contact, covering viewing duration, emotional response, and level of engagement. This ensures greater predictability of results and reduces dependence on the unstable algorithms of social media platforms [12].

The key driver of increasing attention is video content, which combines short formats (TikTok, Reels, Shorts) for rapid reach with long formats (YouTube, CTV) for building sustainable interaction. At the same time, the role of audio and podcast advertising is growing as a ‘deep attention’ format, where distraction levels are minimal and trust in the source of information rises. This allows audio to

be considered an additional tool for the long-term capitalization of attention, especially under conditions of high competition for consumer time [13].

An important element is the use of personalized narratives and storytelling, which create an emotional connection between the brand and the audience and thereby increase the authenticity of the advertising message. Research also confirms the necessity of advertising transparency (disclosure), which is particularly relevant amid tightening regulatory requirements in the U.S., EU, and Ukraine. Here, transparency acts as a critical factor in building trust, since audiences react negatively to hidden or manipulative advertising [14].

Mechanisms for retaining attention include interactive formats (gamification, challenges, and other techniques) that involve the user in the interaction process. The effectiveness of such tools increases when combined with cross-channel integration, where advertising is synchronously present across social media, podcasts, and offline environments, ensuring both broader reach and more resilient interaction. A distinct role is played by micro- and nano-influencers who, unlike macro-influencers, have narrower but more loyal and trusting audiences. Their activity demonstrates a higher level of authenticity, which directly correlates with greater effectiveness of advertising campaigns [18].

Thus, the renewed model of media advertising as a component of human capital shifts from a focus on quantitative reach to investments in the quality of interaction and trust. This not only enhances economic performance (through higher conversion rates and ROI) but also shapes new social standards, where advertising is perceived not as aggressive intrusion but as a form of authentic dialogue with the audience (Tab. 5).

Table 5. Regional examples: emotional self-promotion vs. product-centric advertising

Region	Negative examples of emotionally self-promotional seller/influencer style	Positive examples of product-centric advertising with official information, QR/contacts
USA	Prime energy (influencer brand Logan Paul/KSI): hype-driven personalized promotion targeting youth, which led to public criticism and official complaints regarding excessive caffeine content and child audiences; media reported negative coverage, regulatory scrutiny, and product removals from shelves in several jurisdictions.	Coinbase Super Bowl (2022): minimalist spot without hosts, featuring only a floating QR code leading to the official website/bonus: instant traffic surge, with media reporting the app “crash” from user influx, effectively redirecting attention directly to the product.
EU	ASA (UK): intensified actions against influencer advertising, with the regulator regularly banning/sanctioning overly “promising” or undisclosed commercial influencer posts (notably in beauty/health), highlighting risks of manipulating audience trust.	N26 (Germany): product-centric dynamic creatives (automated videos/banners) with direct links to official pages and transparent UTM tracking, resulting in reduced Cost Per Acquisition (CPA), scalable campaigns, and improved performance through content focused on product features.
Ukraine	Instagram ads with violations: The State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection issued fines for “flashy” creatives with Hollywood imagery/hints of inappropriate content, which misled consumers and violated current legislation, where emotional delivery without proper information led to legal breaches and reputational risks.	“Diia” (state app): consistent product communications through official channels (website/app), QR-based document verification, transparent functions, resulting in mass adoption (over 21 million users) as an example of trust in official information and clear product value.

Source: developed by the author based on [22–27]

Speaking about the U.S., the case of Prime energy demonstrated an influencer-driven brand with an ‘overly optimistic’ promotional tone aimed at youth, which attracted media and political attention due to high caffeine content and a teenage audience. This triggered public backlash and regulatory interventions. In this situation, the sellers’ emotional self-presentation shifted the focus away from product safety, resulting in reputational risks, product removals from certain retail chains, and a negative informational backdrop [22]. In contrast, the Coinbase QR campaign illustrated the opposite approach – no faces, only a QR code leading directly to the official website. Media reported an app ‘crash’ from peak visits, where attention was fully redirected into the product itself, with measurable results achieved under conditions of minimal ‘humanized’ interference and maximally transparent interaction with the officially presented offer [23].

In Western European countries, as exemplified by the United Kingdom, the ASA regulator consistently bans and sanctions undisclosed or misleading influencer posts, especially when an emotional tone replaces evidence (in areas such as health/beauty). According to this experience, the ‘warm’ influence of a personality without verified claims and proper disclosures leads to reduced trust and legal risks [24]. At the same time, Germany’s N26 case demonstrates that product-centric videos with clear links to official sources (and transparent performance tracking) reduce acquisition costs and increase the stability of results, without relying on the ‘charisma’ of a presenter [25].

In Ukraine, flashy emotional promotion with Hollywood-style imagery/hints, lacking proper details and accurate information delivery, led to fines and the removal of such Instagram creatives. This illustrates the audience’s vulnerability to ‘self-promotion’ and the need for official and evidence-based communication [26]. By contrast, the Diia portal quickly gained widespread popularity among users, demonstrating increased trust and adoption without the personalized ‘pressure’ of influencers, instead through product-centric communication from an official source with built-in QR verification mechanisms [10, 27].

Based on the above, the concept of media advertising requires renewal in the following context:

- content priority of the product, shifting the focus from the ‘seller’s persona’ to the verified properties of the product, such as specifications, guarantees, limitations, and service conditions;
- built-in transparency, whereby standardized QR codes in every communication direct the user to the official website containing full company details, contacts, terms, product certification, and case studies;
- trust metrics rather than mere reach, with campaigns evaluated by attention-time, brand trust lift, complaint rate, share of traffic from QR to the official site, and depth of interaction — rather than the ‘gloss’ of the presenter;
- ethical frameworks for creative, where in advertising campaigns for products in risk zones (health, finance, energy) priority is given to an informational tone and evidence-based claims, with influencers serving only as a secondary channel and required to include disclosures/links to official sources;
- modularity of formats, combining animated explainer videos, radio voiceovers, or bots with a unified structure of details and calls to action (CTAs), which reduces tonal variability and the risk of ‘personal hype’.

7. Prospects for further research development

The obtained results indicate the necessity of reorienting media advertising from emotionally personal formats based on influencer charisma toward product-centric communications with clear markers of officiality, transparency, and verification. The proposed concept of implementing ‘advertising passports’ with QR codes leading to official websites of individuals/legal entities – containing full company details, guarantees, return policies, and support contacts – may become the foundation for the standardization of advertising practices. This approach not only increases audience trust but also creates a unified system of authenticity markers, which is particularly important in the attention economy.

Further research may focus on testing ‘trust’ metrics alongside classical efficiency indicators (reach, CPM, CTR). Measuring attention-time on official pages, the percentage of users scanning the QR code, as well as retention and support inquiries, allows for a deeper understanding of advertising’s impact on socio-economic capital. Of special interest is the development of forecasting models that combine user behavior data with parameters of communication authenticity.

An important avenue for future exploration is the establishment of ethical standards for influencers and opinion leaders. In the long term, it is worth developing universal agreements that guarantee the audience’s right to receive verified information, links to official sources, and warnings about limitations or risks. This will help reduce informational asymmetries and minimize the risk of attention manipulation.

For organizations and media, a promising step is the creation of standardized official landing pages for QR campaigns, which can be unified for international use while accounting for different legal contexts (FTC in the US [17, 18], DSA in the EU [19], Ukraine’s Law ‘On Advertising’ [20], etc.). In parallel, the introduction of a ‘trust metrics’ panel alongside traditional media indicators may serve as a basis for transnational comparisons and the development of new transparency standards.

8. Conclusions

In the conditions of the attention economy, media advertising is transforming from a classical promotion tool into a component of human capital. It is no longer limited to the function of commercial communication but becomes a means of shaping image, social status, and economic opportunities. An analysis of current trends in the U.S., EU, and Ukraine has shown that despite differences in market scales and structures, all of them demonstrate the growing role of video, audio, and podcast formats as carriers of ‘deep attention’ and trust.

The key properties of media advertising as an element of human capital lie in the combination of informational value, communicativeness, commerciality, and symbolism. However, the study also revealed significant shortcomings related to dependence on social media algorithms, unstable reach, risks of ethical devaluation, and the commercialization of private life. These factors call into question the long-term sustainability of advertising strategies when they rely solely on the charisma or personal emotions of sellers.

Excessive emphatic promotion and emotional self-advertising can cause considerable harm to both consumers and brands, generating waves of distrust and regulatory pressure. By contrast, formats based on official, verified information (QR codes, official landing pages, animated or voice-over announcements) provide a higher level of trust and significantly reduce the risk of manipulation. This allows the ‘advertising passport’ and standardized channels of transparent communication to be seen as a promising direction for the advertising industry. The balance between economic benefit and social responsibility lies in shifting from quantitative indicators to metrics of trust, attention, and sustained interaction. For entrepreneurs, this means integrating transparent verification tools; for opinion leaders – mandatory references to official sources; for enterprises, institutions, and organizations – the development of unified communication standards.

At the same time, the research results reveal a certain ambiguity. On the one hand, attention is indeed becoming a measurable and commercialized resource; on the other hand, excessive ‘economization of attention’ threatens losses of authenticity and the deepening of social inequality. Therefore, future research should focus on developing methods for evaluating ‘trust metrics,’ analyzing the long-term effects of algorithmic targeting, and finding an optimal balance between technological efficiency and the human dimension.

Thus, media advertising as an element of human capital emerges not only as an economic but also as a socio-ethical phenomenon. Its future depends on the ability to transform attention not into illusory popularity, but into enduring values such as trust, responsibility, and the genuine development of individuals and society.

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