Ksenia Sitko, Anastasiya Morgol
Science tutor *Yu. Bulash*
BSEU (Minsk)

AI USAGE IN TARGETED ADVERTISING OF MOBILE PHONE PROVIDERS: INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is "the development of computer systems that are able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making." AI can perform diverse tasks from writing an essay to creating pictures and videos [1].

Nowadays more and more companies are embracing AI technology in their operations. According to the latest AI in workplace statistics, the industry of marketing and advertising happens to be the most to use AI and gain from it [2]. Mostly AI is used to handle such tasks as digital advertisement placement, Chatbots for customer support, inbound call analysis, and creating images for advertisements; moreover, its capabilities only expand with time.

The object of the research is the usage of AI in targeted advertisements of the mobile phone providers *MTS* and *Life:)*. The research subject is the influence of AI usage in targeted advertising of the mobile phone providers *MTS* and *Life:)* on students' perceptions.

The overall aim of the study was to analyze the attitude of Belarusian State Economic University (BSEU) students towards advertisements created with the help of AI and study specific traits of perception of these advertisements by students. The research objectives were to study targeted advertisements used by the companies mentioned above; to develop a questionnaire for students; to investigate how students' vision of services provided by these companies transformed; on the basis of the collected data reveal the impact of using AI in advertisements of the mobile phone providers.

The questions were compiled with the aim to investigate students' perceptions of AI advertisements to receive their feedback on the way it affects their views on the advertised services. These are the key questions:

1. How often do you see the advertisements of the mobile phone providers *MTS* and *Life :)* ?
2. How often do you see the advertisements of *MTS* and *Life:)* created with the help of AI?
3. Can you identify these types of advertisements? How?
4. Does the usage of AI in advertisements influence your attitude to this mobile phone provider?
5. In which direction does your attitude change?
6. Does the use of AI in advertising influence your choice of an operator?

The survey was conducted among students of the BSEU. A total of 52 students took part in the survey. Based on its results some conclusions can be drawn. 34.6% of the students spot advertisements of these providers from time to time; 30.8% claim that such advertisements appear seldom; while 25% of the respondents see them frequently.

The responses to the second question showed that the majority of 38.5% are not interested in the services provided by these particular mobile phone operators. Talking about the differentiation of advertisements created by AI and human employees, 34.6% can easily distinguish between these methods of creation, explaining that advertisements created by AI have such peculiarities as unnaturalness and imperfections of images, mistakes in proportions, and deficient details. The following 32.7% of the interviewed experience certain hardships with differentiation; however, they consider themselves quite aware of AI usage in marketing. 21.2% of the students can only suppose it, while 9.6% cannot see the difference at all.

Analyzing reviews to the fifth question containing information on the attitude to the providers mentioned above, 61.5% reckon that the usage of AI does not influence their perception of services of these mobile phone operators; on the other hand, to 38.5% of the respondents AI images do not impact their perception.

In the next question the majority of the surveyed, which is 65.4%, supported their neutral attitude, while 26.9% stated that their impression worsens, for 7.7% AI usage is positive.

Covering the last question, which considers the impact of AI implementation on the choice of a mobile phone provider, 86.5% do not consider this factor important while making a choice; however, 11.5% evaluate this criterion as significant, 1.9% hesitate while making a decision. Analyzing their points of view, for 45% advertising does not influence their choice, as many respondents expressed indifference toward advertising. They maintain that their choice depends on factors like service quality and pricing rather than advertisements. 25% perceive AI in advertising negatively. 15% consider it inevitable. 10% of the interviewed admitted that AI implementation influences their perception, but not their choice. 5% of the students claim that they do not engage with advertisements at all.

AI generated images in advertisements in Belarus are not so widespread in comparison with European countries. Summarizing the findings of our survey, most of the respondents can detect AI usage in advertisements; however, it does not influence their choice of a service provider. And yet, for some customers AI utilization is unacceptable.

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