Research Article

Religious advertising in Ukraine and the problem of managing social intentions

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ABSTRACT

Ukrainian religious advertising is analyzed as a media phenomenon and at the same time as a tool for managing social energy. The complementarity of the modern advertising genre with Ukrainians' religious views was conceptualized on the basis of statistical data. The research is based on sociological arguments that the religious beliefs of Ukrainians are characterized by an intuitive type of faith and a subjective perception of the religious canon. Peculiarities of Ukrainian religiosity are used in mass media practice to activate socially important changes in secular Ukraine with an ancient atheistic past. Religious advertising can fulfill special social functions in the conditions of political reformation, pandemic and full-scale war, according to the analysis. The study has shown that religious advertising acts as a cognitive tool, converting believers into loyal consumers of a wide range of socially significant data

Keywords: Ukraine; Religiosity of Ukrainians; Religious Advertising; social functions

1. Introduction

In general, today the Ukrainian experience is in the centre of attention of specialists in very different fields. Emphasis is placed on the symbolism of the war in Ukraine. The war created a liminal space as a structure where many crisis processes are objectified. Media push tools are gradually becoming available for scientific analysis against the background of these processes. Particularly, the inclusion of religious advertising campaigns in Ukrainian social transformations became a new topic for study.

In Ukrainian realities of the first decades of the 21st century, advertising as a peripheral genre of religious communication demonstrated an unexpected ability to influence the electorate and direct its energy to socio-political changes. Hybrid genres of advertising, in which different types of convergences are present, are interesting research objects for scholars. The emergence of religious media in the first decades of the 21st century has become a logical event, as a new framework for the interaction of religion and politics had being formed in the country after a long period of atheism. At the same time, the mental specificity and peculiarities of the religiosity of Ukrainians played an important role. The interaction of ethno-specific factors with the trend of global mediatisation creates favourable conditions for the soft implementation of certain incentives for social change. In our study, religious advertising was used to analyse this specificity. Religious advertising

passionately responds to socio-cultural changes in the state and the attitudes of individuals. On the one hand, advertising activates changes, and on the other, it reacts to them and offers certain solutions. This ability determines its evolutionary vector.

According to our expertise, we investigated how the formal-semiotic space of the advertising text interacts with referential situations of an extra linguistic nature, in particular, with the mental models of the Ukrainian population and its religious beliefs. This makes Ukrainian experience interesting for other researchers of media phenomena and determines the novelty and relevance of the scientific analysis proposed in the article.

2. Data and methods

The purpose of the article is to study the social functions of religious advertising, which ensure its passionate character in the secular Ukrainian state at the stage of dramatic escalation of the struggle for its political independence. The discourse of religious advertising is analysed as an interaction, following the approaches of Teun A. van Dijk [1], Talbot [2], and Fairclough [3]. Categorization of its characteristics is carried out by relating religious advertising to macro- (state events of special importance) or micro categories (local specificity, relevant properties of the target audience, cognitions, confessional differences). The research was conducted on the materials of advertising representations relevant to religious picture of the world, the system of religious values, and religious marketing activities. The analysed advertising samples belong to the period 2000 – 2024. Some part of the samples of the initial period of religious advertising discourse formation have already been analysed regarding the nature of political convergence [4]. In this study, context models are studied especially from a sociolinguistic and cognitive perspective, following the approaches of Teun A.van Dijk. These samples have interpretation related to personal and social cognitions that have not been considered before.

In turn, this study analyses political, social and marketing convergences on samples representing the next evolutionary stages of religious advertising discourse in Ukraine. According to the approaches of Teun A. van Dijk [5], the analysis is carried out in three interrelated planes: group perception, the discourse of the authorities, which forms this perception, and the discourse of the mass media, which popularizes the necessary frames.

The evidence of the author's conceptualization is based on statistical indicators of religious self-determination of citizens of Ukraine, studied in the period of 2000-2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 by the Razumkov Centre [6-10]. The Razumkov Centre permanently monitors the church and religious situation in Ukraine, including sociological monitoring of the state and trends of religious commitment in Ukrainian society, public confidence in the Church as a social institute, as well as the public opinion on the role of religion and the Church in civic life, relations between the state and churches, among different churches and confessions. However, the continuation of hostilities, the population's need for rescue outside Ukraine, internal migration, evacuation measures, etc. do not allow for the complete objectivity of certain surveys.

Statistical data of the peculiarities of religious views of Ukrainians were taken from open access materials. However, some differences were found between the Ukrainian-language reports and the English-language materials. That is why in some cases we provide links to the Ukrainian text rather than the English version. These data were conceptualized by the author by using media linguistic and sociolinguistic approaches, which permit to examine the contemporary connections between media phenomena and social realities and to enhance our comprehension of the discourse of Ukrainian identity.

The objective of the research is to analyse mainly the efficiency potential of religious advertising as a hybrid genre objectified through different intentions, including political and strategic, religious and marketing ones. It also applies the theory of argumentation with the analysis of topoi (for example, benefit, expediency,

advantages, threat, humanism, reality, culture, etc.) as components of a causal argumentation scheme. In addition, this approach is applied to analyse latent stimulation when an audience's attitude to an object of advertising is shaped with the help of various preconceptions (stereotypes, worldviews) that automatically evoke reaction in mass consciousness.

At the current stage, pilgrimage tourism has taken over the representative functions of religious advertising. The research methodology of this type of advertising is based on a complex linguistic analysis of the message and considers the cognitive specificity of its text creation and perception. The main attention is paid to the impact of language means on the addressee of religious tourism advertising. The analysis is based on the theory of verbal influence.

In particular, the analysis covered semantic components of media conceptualization of pilgrimage, text intentions and factors determining the choice of language material. The analysis is not limited exclusively to internal text structures: the backdrop of their research was discourse of Ukrainian religious advertising viewed as a unity of linguistic form, meaning and action, in accordance with the approaches of Teun A.van Dijk [11-12]. Within the framework of the approaches of pragmatic linguistics, we analysed the use of stylistic specificity as a tool of social actions and interaction in specific communication situations, when language representation is a kind of calling card of a person in society.

3. Results

3.1. Ethno-specific features of religiosity of Ukrainians

First of all, we note that for a secular state, Ukrainian society traditionally demonstrates high level of religiosity: in particular, during 2010-2020, the part of believers among adult citizens of Ukraine was an average of 70% [13-14]. During the war years (starting from 2014), the percentage of believers in Ukraine increased. With the outbreak of full-scale Russian aggression, it jumped to 74% but then dropped slightly again to 70.5% in 2023 and 68% in 2024 (from 85% of respondents in the West to 55% in the East) [15].

In addition, taking into account the full-scale war that has been waged in Ukraine and the crisis state of the economy, the part of such people will not significantly decrease. Stress will contribute to this tendency, according to Seleznova et al. [16]. Such specificity contributes to the implementation and mental consolidation of certain innovative ideas with the participation of the religious value system.

Another feature is that the majority of citizens are convinced that belief in the existence of God is not connected with the constant fulfilment of religious rituals and obligations. Religious identity is often combined with socio-cultural or ethnic identity without distinguishing them. "Respondents' declaration of affiliation with a religious organization or church is not always associated with self-identification as a believer and may be caused by the socio-cultural or ethnical identity" [17]. Actually, religious identity has much less importance for citizens than civic and local identity [18]. C. Wanner, professor of history, anthropology, and religious studies at the University of Pennsylvania, believes that faith in God is emphasized in the mentality of Ukrainians, and not religiosity as a type of activity [19].

In these conditions, the religious ideas of Ukrainians are formed by subjective perceptions and not by canon. Politicians use it in their own way. Numerous variants of the expression "God is with us!" regularly used for political influence of certain initiatives.

Ukrainians have a tolerant attitude towards other religions, including those that are quite "exotic" compared to Christian doctrine. In addition, such religious specificity complementarily interacts with mass media culture, impartially reacts to its genre diversity. In this approach, a large amount of data is omitted and only relevant data is taken into account. Perception focuses on the emotional and volitional aspects of data,

while value emphases correspond to a personal or sociocultural paradigm. The conative intentions or action intentions embedded in the text serve as clues for the behavioural reflections of the respondents. At the same time, mediatisation of religious communication is allowed.

3.2. Religious advertising in national security narratives

Strategic semiotics determines the communicative codes of religious advertising. It is worth noting that in the 10s of the 21st century, religious advertising, which suddenly filled the streets of Ukrainian cities and villages (see **Figure 1**) and promoted the idea of National Church, had a significant number of similarities with political banner advertising and demonstrated a propagandistic character: "Army, Language, Faith!", "The Church is our civilization right!", "The Army defenses our land. The language defenses our heart. The Religion defenses our soul. Petro Poroshenko", "The Ukrainian Church provides the Ukrainian language!", "Study the new orthography!" etc.

Figure 1. We are Ukraine! The Army defenses our land. The language defenses our heart. The Religion defenses our soul. Petro Poroshenko [20]

It was aimed at performing strategic tasks, including security tasks. We investigated this phenomenon from the perspective of people's reactions to political events in Ukraine, which became an independent state in 1991 and soon showed the political will to create a national church independent of Russia. This advertisement possessed a remarkable social resonance, rendering it into media phenomenon [21, 22].

According to Ch. Kaftandjiev's terminology, the codes of advertising communication of this period are defined by the concept of "totalitarianism"[23] due to their characteristic manifestations of influential aggressiveness. This modality of communicative interaction between the church and the population was determined by the process of attracting religious resources to the political reformation of the country, which was new for Ukraine and in which advertising was used as the primary means of relaying a strategic narrative.

In 2000, the majority (53%) of Ukrainian citizens were against the Local Church in Ukraine. Only 29% supported this position, according to statistical indicators [24]. The powerful imperative of advertising influence was supposed to change such priorities of the population.

Currently, 42.2% of Orthodox Ukrainians belong to the newly created church headed by Metropolitan Epiphany (OCU). Statistics show that the majority of believers of UGCC (70%), OCU (60%) and a relative

majority of believers of Protestant and Evangelic churches (50%), «just Orthodox» (38.5%) believe that the Church should have a national character [25].

After completing the task of institutional reorganization, banners with appeals such as "We are Ukraine. The Local Church is a guarantee of Independence!" disappeared from the streets of Ukrainian towns and villages. As a result of the embodiment of President P. Poroshenko' political intensions (2014 -2019), Ukraine acquired the status of a full subject of Ecumenical Orthodoxy. It should be noted, that already in 2021, the share of those who identified themselves as the OCU faithful increased to 24%, further growing to 36% in 2022, and 42% in 2023. However, in 2024, this share decreased to 35% [26].

Despite the controversy, such results confirmed the powerful effectiveness of combining political and religious narratives in the discourse of the government of President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who positions himself as an opponent of Petro Poroshenko. However, a trend of value heredity was revealed.

It should be noted that against the background of the war with Russia, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is gaining more and more sympathizers. According to Ukrainian legislation, the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) is banned in Ukraine as strategically dangerous. But the image characteristics of the newly created OCU remain unformed. In the media field, they are quite often objectified as conflict-causing, rooted in the sacred struggle for Ukrainian statehood or too deep immersion in social and political issues, which destroys the church (for example: "The UOC is on the brink of collapse: a lost chance – Archpriest Serhii Prokopchuk" [27]). Following 2014, there has been a downward trend in the proportion of people who identify as Orthodox (from 70% in 2014 to 55% last year), according to the Razumkov Centre [28].

The logic of such positioning is formed by the fact that the antagonist is "truly Orthodox nationalism and the Russian Orthodox Church as a rather energetic supporter of this war," according to the definition of C. Wanner [29]. Russian Orthodoxy is an important component of the so-called "Russian world." This label is used in Ukrainian media to denote various manifestations of hybrid hostile activity by the aggressor state. In addition, Ukrainian historian and professor at the Ukrainian Catholic University Hrytsak[30] notes that Putin is replacing Christianity with a mixture of Orthodoxy and nostalgia for communism. Previously, we analyzed some Islamic aspects of Russia's war against Ukraine [31,32].

Despite the fact that 74% of all respondents support the banning of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, only 58% consider the banning of the activities of other churches or religious associations acceptable in individual cases, according to the Razumkov Centre statistics [33]. Supporters of banning the Russian Orthodox Church consider it a propaganda structure operating under the guise of a religious organization. Calls to recognize the Russian Orthodox Church as a terrorist organization at the state level are posted on the RISU website [34], social reflection is presented in **Figure 2** [35], according to the Razumkov Centre statistics.

CONFESSIONAL AND CHURCH IDENTITY						
	OCU	UOC-MP	Just Orthodox	UGCC	Just Christians	I do not belong to any religion
Propaganda of the Russian World ideology, both directly by a religious organisation and its governing bodies, is grounds for banning such a religious organisation						
Support	87.5	38.4	70.5	92.9	83.5	73.6
Do not support	2.7	32.1	9.7	0.8	4.5	6.7
Hard to say	9.8	29.5	19.8	6.3	12.0	19.7
A religious organisation operating in Ukraine cannot have a governing centre in a state that carries out armed aggression against Ukraine						
Support	88.6	34.8	69.4	95.9	79.8	71.5
Do not support	2.5	35.7	9.4	0.8	5.6	9.4
Hard to say	8.8	29.5	21.2	3.3	14.6	19.1
A religious organisation operating in Ukraine cannot be part of a foreign religious organisation whose activities are prohibited in Ukraine						
Support	84.4	40.2	64.3	88.3	77.9	67.7
Do not support	2.9	25.9	10.1	1.3	7.0	7.0
Hard to say	12.6	33.9	25.6	10.4	15.1	25.3
Activities of the Russian Orthodox Church are prohibited in Ukraine						
Support	84.0	24.1	58.8	95.9	72.4	70.4
Do not support	3.9	50.9	16.2	0.4	10.6	10.8
Hard to say	12.1	25.0	24.9	3.7	17.1	18.8

Figure 2. In August 2024, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law «*On the Protection of the Constitutional Order in the Field of Religious Organizations*». Do You Support the Following Provisions of This Law? (% of respondents)

Source: Religion and Church in Ukrainian Society: 2000-2024. The Razumkov Centre

In this approach, politics and religion converge, but the idea of a state church remains controversial, although Ukrainian Christians mostly support the idea of political independence. This position is implemented in various types of activities. During wartime, religious communities take care of displaced persons, the wounded, provide material assistance, help with housing, etc. In particular, they directly help the Ukrainian army. At the same time, society is better informed about the activities of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which is a leader in the development of various segments of the Ukrainian media space through advertising representations.

According to the Razumkov Centre, after 2014, there has been a trend towards a decrease in the number of those who consider themselves Orthodox (the share of such people decreased from 70% in 2014 to 55% in 2024). During this time, the share of Greek Catholics has become slightly larger (it has increased from 8% to 12%) [36].

To the question: "Does the church need advertising?", Catholics in Ukraine have been answering for over 10 years: "Yes, it does!" Their credo is as follows: the trademark is the Church, the logo is the cross, the product is salvation in Jesus Christ, the price of the product is free [37].

Almost all denominations use advertising. However, unlike the Ukrainian Orthodox churches, Catholics media strategies are determined primarily by informing society, rather than by forming a political image. This is confirmed by **Figure 3** [38].

	OCU			UOC-MP			Just Orthodox		
CONFESSIONAL AND CHURCH IDENTITY									
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Providing assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine									
They do their best	20.5	21.7	**22.3**	27.5	25.4	**30.4**	12.5	11.0	**15.5**
They do a lot	34.7	32.4	**36.1**	29.8	40.4	**29.5**	23.0	23.5	**22.4**
They do little	14.4	13.9	**11.6**	10.7	9.6	**10.7**	21.1	16.1	**14.1**
They do nothing	1.9	4.4	**1.4**	3.1	3.5	**2.7**	2.9	10.2	**4.7**
Hard to say	28.4	27.5	**28.6**	29.0	21.1	**26.8**	40.5	39.2	**43.3**

Figure 3. Do you think that religious communities (of any church) do enough of the following since the onset of Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine (24 February 2022)? (% of respondents)

Source: Religion and Church in Ukrainian Society: 2000-2024. The Razumkov Centre

As a component of the Ukrainian agenda, the religious narrative is primarily emotionally interpreted within the framework of social reflection. At the same time, the prospect of Ukrainian churches' entering the sphere of planetary ethos, which Traer [39] wrote about, remains quite remote. In our opinion, although the religious behaviour of Ukrainians has signs of conformism, it confirms the relevance of faith in the value paradigm of citizens and the persistent trend of dissociation from the atheistic ideology left in the past.

Consequently, new social frameworks for legal religious activity continue to be forming. After the declaration of political independence in Ukraine, religious activity resumed. According to the Razumkov Centre, the church is trusted by the majority of Ukrainian citizens. However, compared to 2010, when the level of public trust in the Church reached its maximum (72.5%), now it is lower – 62,5% [40].

Preparation of the Concept of State-Church Relations in Ukraine has begun at the highest state level. The goal is to propose a working model of partnership interaction of the state government and local self-government at various levels with religious organizations and modernization of the legal field of functioning of churches and denominations. This indicator objectified by social reality, despite the fact that the church remains autonomous from the state [41].

The topoi "Benefit", "Historical justice", "Value", "Danger, threat from Russia" offered in advertising representations played an important role in the media coverage of these processes. There were no other influential religious mass media in Ukraine in the period 2000 –2020. On the other hand, the weakened religious identity contributed to the fusion of political and religious worldviews. Emphasis on political intentions did not become an obstacle for the use of the religious electorate in the processes of socio-political transformation. After a long period of criticism of old church doctrines, a radical revision of established moral and ethical norms, and the rise of atheism, such hybrid religious advertising was perceived by Christians as an act of religious revival.

The analysis of the period of formation of religious advertising made it possible to clarify the essential characteristics of the processes related to the transformation of religiosity in the new socio-cultural conditions of the post-communist era.

In many respects, modern religious advertising is different from the samples of the period of the triumphant entry of religious advertising into the information space of Ukraine. It is important to clarify that the religious advertising develops under the pressure of a social crisis, when human life is being devalued, health care system is deficient, all moral and ethical paradigms are undergoing drastic changes. However, the

crisis processes in the society stimulate the search for new resources for recovery. In this sense, advertising discourse develops the liminal potential of Ukrainian society.

Recently, the representative function is embodied in the advertising of pilgrimage. Today tourism has emerged as the most effective tactic for soft power in the context of globalization [42]. However, pilgrimage in the Ukrainian format is weakly correlated with optimistic modern trends in religious tourism. At the same time, problematic aspects are gaining strength, in accordance with world trends, when "the intensification of geopolitical competition, the rise of geostrategic tourism, and the reimagining of tourism" are objectifying new threats: "(i) the securitization of borders, which may lead to decreased global mobility; (ii) a decrease in the flow of information, where technological decoupling could alter patterns of religious tourism; and (iii) renewed nationalism, where religious tourists may preference travel within their country's sphere of influence" [43].

In turn, we note that Raj and Griffin [44] are studying the experience of religious tourism development in conflict periods, note the politicization of this communicative phenomenon, Raja [45] emphasizes the specificity of religious tourism in a non-religious states, Bozonelos [46] analyses the lessons of the pandemic period and considers the perspectives in the post pandemic period.

At the same time, the problem of advertising promotion of religious tourism in certain social contexts remains on the peripheral positions in these studies. Unfortunately, even the works of

Mahesh [47] and Tsangaris [48], which have explored the relationship between different genres of communication and tourism, reveal this approach.

However, the analysis of pilgrimage and religious tours made it possible to investigate the socio-cultural perspectives of religious tourism in the processes of harmonization of social interaction in Ukraine and international communication.

3.3. The process of national cultural revival and religious advertising

Within the framework of the soft power strategy, religious advertising was used to promote the prospect of a gradual exit from the limitations of the mass atheistic worldview and the revival of the Ukrainian mentality of organic, rather than ritual, religious devotion.

According to sociological monitoring, the level of self-declaration of religiosity fluctuates during the years of independence, but there is a steady trend towards its growth. In turn, this specificity also contributed to maintaining a high level of trust in the church and restraining the negativism of the public reaction to the church conflicts. Banners with sayings from the Bible, the Koran, the Jewish Torah, Buddhist texts as well became a part of the urban landscape. Interfaith dialogue in public space is also encouraged by the practice of local administration.

Since religious advertising became increasingly virtual in the 2020s, the possibilities of networked communication have stimulated various forms of influence related to the free religious identity choices. Other Christian communities began to explain the essence of their doctrines on newly created religious websites (for example, Protestantism [49]). In particular, the voice of Islamic advertising became louder in the media field (Islam [50]). Baha'ism offered a sermon on love for people, principles of justice and the common good, and educational programs that develop abilities and talents for serving society (Gromada Bahai [51]). The Jewish narrative was developed with gender connotations, combining the principles of Judaism, feminism, and pluralism into a single valuable concept relevant to the Euro-Atlantic political vector of Ukraine's development (Project Kesher Ukraine [52]). The Buddhist community called for "Let's create a Buddhist shrine together" that will serve as a place for learning, meditation and cultivating wisdom" (Jangchub Choling [53]). Numerous

players quickly filled the space of religious communication primarily for the purpose of attractive self-presentation.

Thanks to advertising rhetoric, small denominations have been able to shape successfully their image in the country dominated by the Orthodox Church, with the help of influential methods of "magic of numbers", "appeal to authority", semantic objectification of power with the help of similar enumerations, intensification of positive semantics, etc. For example: "The founder is the Ukrainian Pentecostal Church, that has more than 1,731 churches and 25 associations, including Ukrainian churches in Spain, Belgium, Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic and other countries" or "We connect those who can help with those who need help trough social projects and provision of humanitarian response. We also involve and direct humanitarian, financial aid to places where it is most needed" (Project e-Dobro) [54]. Or: Ukrainian paganism "inherited ancient religious cults and traditions that existed on the territory of Ukraine in previous historical eras" [55]. Here, a positive image is formed by the authority of historical antiquity, the idea of primacy.

These and other examples indicate that, under new conditions, religious advertising gradually began to develop its own narrative. Its important concepts were used as tools to program consciousness and regulate the behaviour of individuals, usually by giving religious concepts a special emotional and evaluative status.

To a certain extent, Ukrainians respond to the emotional rhetoric of such narratives. For a limited number of adherents, it is convincing and inspires them to seek their own religious identity in new formats. Because of this, the peripheral segment of religious landscape is characterized by stable "diversity". Ukraine is a multi-confessional state.

In general, Ukrainians show absolute loyalty to the practice of other religions. We would like to note that the ban of the Russian Orthodox Church from August 20, 2024 was motivated by strategic motives and aimed at protecting Ukraine's security in the conditions of a full-scale war with Russia. Ukrainians believe that a religion that promotes the ideals of goodness, love and mercy, without endangering human existence, has the right to exist. Inter-religious, inter-confessional and inter-church conflicts are limited, because the religious and church identity is of little importance for Ukrainian citizens.

Subsequently, the communicative components of religious marketing, which are related to religious identity and are taken into account in the technologies of production and consumption of various religious goods and services, began to develop. They also affect the criteria for the selection and purchase of both commercial and informational religious goods. Commercial religious advertising appeared as a consequence of these procedures. At the same time, the audience of consumers of religious goods in Ukraine is not limited to religious adherents.

In addition, the number of educational sites with religious content has increased. Religious organizations began to provide socially oriented services, such as educational programs for various age groups and specializations, medical care, employment, etc., and to advertise themselves accordingly. As a result, the religious market began to develop a reference request for effective speech formation for the attractiveness of religious goods and services, for religious naming, for studying the communicative psychographics of various segments of the audience of consumers of religious goods and services, etc. This advertisement gave Ukrainians the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the many aspects of SALVATION, both material and existential. The development of consumer culture and spiritual stabilization of society were both influenced by this. People have been given the opportunity to plan their lives in new value coordinates.

Subsequently, the COVID pandemic also spurred advertising activity. Among the new advertising objects are remote ritual services, interactive sermons, remote spiritual training, religious consultations, confession by phone or Skype, etc. The ADS presents various forms of spiritual assistance that the church provides in the

face of pandemic restrictions. The communicative peculiarities of such advertising was based on the influential power of verbal objectification of the value concepts GOD, HOPE, FAITH, and LOVE. Such advertising played a significant role in overcoming crisis processes of a global nature and correcting behaviour patterns of believers regarding safety priorities in social interaction [56].

Thus, the idea of spiritual salvation, traditionally promoted by leaders of religious thought, was supplemented by various forms of socially beneficial practices that saved many people. This became the next act of convergence between religious and social value paradigms in the picture of the world of Ukrainians.

3.4. Genre specificity of pilgrimage advertising and the value paradigm of Ukrainians

During the pandemic period virtual religious tourism and virtual pilgrimage were also offered to Ukrainians. Therefore, advertising for these marketing offers has appeared. The ability to obtain virtual access to religious shrines, to perform rituals, and to get existential contact with the Absolute saved people's lives.

In the following period, taming the threat of the pandemic and lifting restrictions on movement became a powerful incentive for the activation of tourism throughout the world. Instead, for Ukraine, this period is characterized by the escalation of the war with Russia. A full-fledged vacation, full of entertainment and bright impressions, has become impossible for the vast majority of Ukrainians. Instead, a demand for pilgrimages began to form as an adequate alternative. Rather quickly, the main representative message of religious advertising became offers of pilgrimage. It is important to recall that there are differences between the functions of pilgrimage in countries bordering Ukraine and its pragmatic use in conditions of social instability. For instance, according to Moldovan President Maia Sandu, pilgrimages now serve to "instrumentalism religion – to spread fear and radicalize different segments of the population" in accordance with Russian religious doctrine. She urged Moldovan priests to plan pilgrimage tours in a morally and ethically responsible manner [57].

Although Ukraine is a predominantly Orthodox country, the influence of other religions, including Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam, is so visible in its various regions. However, advertising activity is primarily demonstrated by Catholic institutions.

The Pope gives certain recommendations regarding the tasks of the Catholic mass media, the specifics of advertising, etc. in his speeches. Therefore, Catholic Ukrainian advertising of pilgrimage tourism is regulated by the mass media communication trends of Western European countries. European advertising standards perform a certain prototypical function. Such advertising is characterized by the integration of content into various value systems and eclecticism in their verbalization. Catholic practice promotes such an approach, when sufficient attention is paid to the utilitarian, aesthetic, normative, emotional, taste, social status and other characteristics of the pilgrimage proposal. This approach makes it possible to increase the audience of consumers of pilgrimage offers. Catholic actors often offer pilgrimages in combination with various forms of recreation. Therefore, 'Christian vacation'; 'Christian family vacation'; 'Religious and recreational trip to shrines' etc. become verbalizers of the concept. The intention to make one's own spiritual contribution to the return of peace to Ukraine through sincere prayer is one of the motivating factors for many people to participate in the pilgrimage (see **Figure 4** [58]).

Figure 4. An advertising poster from the Caritas agency offering a pilgrimage

Source: Vinbazar.com

The expressive power of this advertisement is also realized by the active use of "hedonistic" recreational words. According to Maslow, in the value paradigm, it appeals to biological needs. There are also verbalizers of life-giving values, primarily health. Compared to Orthodox advertising, Catholic representations of pilgrimage are characterized by the frequent use of evaluative vocabulary in an influential strategy of positivity. In this approach, existential and religious values do not have self-sufficiency, although their verbalizers are also present in advertising. The advertisements tend to contain syncretism of secular and religious images of the world. This diverse positivism serves the purpose of formation axiological summary. Catholic advertising is a means of soft power through religious diplomacy and ecumenical dialogue, a tool of secular and spiritual influence. The ecumenical component makes it a transnational tool that quite effectively prepares the Ukrainian electorate for full accession to the EU.

Orthodox denominations also actively use the advertising option. However, the ideological split of Orthodoxy affects advertising. The texts usually contain markers of political orientation (names of patriarchs, the Tomos, etc.) and at the same time emphasize the ritual components of the tour program (for example, daily participation in Divine services, attachment to icons and relics of saints, communication with elders and confessors, etc.).

It was revealed that the influence of precedent names is strongest in Orthodox advertising. The saturation of the text with the names of saints, sacred places, unique events, etc. ensures the attractiveness of the tourist

offer. Evaluative pragmatics is also provided by descriptive predicates. Such advertising conveys a sense of exclusivity to recipients. Other means of expressiveness of the text are not used. This approach is rooted in the Orthodox concept of pilgrimage.

At the explicit level, advertising is represented by informational dominant. For example: «Moving to Rafailovici (resort district within Budva). Accommodation in apartments (first line). Rest». Information about other aspects of the trip is often missing. At the same time, implicitly it objectifies the patterns of specifically religious communicative behaviour. Therefore, the function of religious doctrinal influence is active. Historically, the Orthodox pilgrimage is characterized by its participants' simplicity and unpretentiousness to the conditions of living and food. Therefore, in predominantly Orthodox Ukraine, pilgrimage tourism is considered a relatively inexpensive option. Advertising texts are often a simple message about the route and dates of a tour. Existential, religious, and recently political values characterize the value paradigm of Orthodox pilgrimage tourism. This is verbalized mainly by theonyms, theophoric names, sacronyms, names of sacred places, religious terms, etc.

At the same time, in all types of Christian advertising, sacralisation also extends for Ukrainian soldiers, so the programming aspects of the tours include protective prayers, prayers commemorating the memory of the dead, pleas for peace, etc.: «We invite you to join this special journey at this time, no less special for the entire Ukrainian people, to pray before the shrines, to ask the Lord for our speedy victory and the achievement of a just peace. And also about spiritual support and God's blessing for all those who suffered and suffered losses during this brutal Russian aggression» ("Pilgrimage to Medjugorje for our soldiers, refugees, displaced persons and for our victory over the enemy!" (RAFAIL) [59]. Together with advertising materials, symbols of support for the state and the army are placed on the sites, which indicate the solidarity position of the churches with people of Ukraine in this dramatic period [60].

Pilgrimage advertising complements social perceptions of the church's wartime mission. Answering the question "What are the priority tasks for religious organizations in war time?", respondents the most often mentioned psychological assistance, assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and assistance in solution of social and living problems of citizens [61].

Discounts for families of military personnel, ritual services with prayers for soldiers, Ukraine, peace in the state, rehabilitation for victims of aggression, the sinfulness of the feeling of losing interest in life, etc. determine the social intentions of religious advertising now. Pilgrimage advertising promotes religious ways of coping with life's crisis as a universal means of spiritual recovery in peacetime, during and after war.

Regarding the nature of the war, all confessions of Ukraine expressed a united position about its invasive nature and incompatibility with spiritual values. The corresponding statement of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations was supplemented by an advertising representation. In addition, convergence with social advertising is increasing. In advertising representations, Churches demonstrate their solidarity position regarding the protection of traditional family values, natural childbirth, the rights of the innocently convicted, and victims of domestic violence, protection of the environment, lobbying of the game business, etc.

4. Discussion

4.1. Religious tourism and pilgrimage are mostly recognized as different activities

In the professional scientific field and websites of specialized Ukrainian agencies also distinguish meticulously religious tourism (educational activity) and pilgrimage (religious service, ritual practice) as different activities [62]. Accordingly, target audiences and worldview dominants of users are defined differently.

The moral and ethical potential of pilgrimage expectations is quite often implicitly objectified with the lexeme pilgrimage as a stratification label. However, in the context of Ukrainian market practice, actors with limited experience in the field of tourism often ignore this clarification.

At the same time, some approaches consider this division to be false and unfounded. For example:

Only when a visitor can "look beyond historical and architectural detail and begin to share the liturgies of the faithful, can religious tourism take on meaning" [63]. In other words, there is no religious tourism as an attractive offer for everyone who wants to learn something new, but there are different forms of involvement in religious practices.

The European tendency to develop religious tourism is also recognized, as it is a cognitive activity that is implemented in the humanitarian space of secular countries. It is "a tool for improving cultural relations. Helping to form culture and society worldwide, faith plays a vital part in cross cultural conflict resolution and opening dialogue across peoples (…) faith and activism can respond to the common challenges of peace making and coexistence both within and among the world's many traditions" [64]. Scholars discuss a mechanism for creating stronger community cohesion through religious and faith organizations [65,66].

As a part of this approach, various aspects of this position were discussed by the participants of the International Scientific Seminar on Religious Tourism (October 26 and 27, 2023) in Paphos [67]. It was a forum where leading scholars gathered to discuss and research issues related to the sustainable development of religious tourism, the contribution of religious tourism towards reconciliation and peace as well, and the issue of religion as a tool for promoting cultural and religious heritage. During the meeting, diverse opportunities were deliberated to facilitate religious travel for diverse age groups, individuals with diverse health conditions, individuals with distinct medical requirements, individuals with specialized diets, and others. Unfortunately, even in the countries with developed economic systems, this tourist option needs a lot of improvements. Communicational support for marketing tourist offers also has many weak points. Religious doctrine determines the semantics of religious advertising. This constitutes a retelling within the framework of tradition. Particularly, excursions are often based on commercial mythology, and besides participants are not informed about the level of complexity of the route or its accessibility for children, older people, or people with disabilities. Clearly, these services have the potential to be used as motivational elements in tour advertising. But now important information is replaced by attractive visualizations. Marketing elements lack qualifications.

According to Ukrainian experts [68, 69], religious tourism has marketing prospects in Ukraine. After all, in a peaceful secular country, religious tourism has better prospects both for market realization and for the influence of "soft power". However, now there are no conditions for safe religious tourism in Ukraine. But pilgrimage is a possible option, because people's living conditions are difficult, budgets are limited, the psychological burden is very high, and the need for means of psychological relief is very acute. Given this consideration, the therapeutic stylistic characteristics utilized in diverse approaches to the formation of the influential power of pilgrimage advertising must be given priority.

Churches fill a market niche precisely with offers of pilgrimage, because they meet the expectations of the target audience. However, confessional ritual practices are different, and in order to avoid inter confessional conflicts, it is not practiced to unify target audiences. For example, the difference in the narratives between Catholic and Orthodox agencies latently contributes to the identification function of pilgrimage advertising.

It is noteworthy that the academic dictionary definition of 'pilgrimage' in the Ukrainian religious tradition almost fully overlaps with other religious approaches: 1. In Christianity, Islam and other religions – a trip to so-called shrines. Owing to the introduction of Christianity in ancient Russ in the $11^{th} - 12^{th}$ centuries those pilgrimages to various religious centres ranging from Constantinople, Athos monasteries and particularly to

Palestine became popular [70]. The semantic component of the lexeme 'pilgrimage' also takes into account the emphasis on the spiritual purpose of the journey rather than on its comfort and conveniences. Indeed, it differs from the approach which suggests that pilgrims 'can drift fluidly between the sacred and secular motivations' [71]. In advertising texts, this difference is objectified by the use of different stylistics.

Therefore, in the Ukrainian approach, the semantic aspects of the offer clearly identify the service provider as a member of a certain religious community. This is a contemporary characteristic of religious advertising and its marketing stylistics. Perhaps such a feature is formed by the heightened need for self-presentation, which is a natural consequence of the age of atheism.

However, most citizens express an opinion that religious faith does not require mandatory religious affiliation («a person can be just a believer and not profess a particular religion») [72].

Respondents' declaration of affiliation with a particular religious' organization or church is not always related to their identification as a believer and may be due to their socio-cultural or ethnic identity. Religious identity as such is far less important to Ukrainians than civic or local identities, a sociological survey shows [73] (p. 24).

In addition, there is a significant difference between the declared religiosity (70.5% of respondents call themselves believers, and 61% – Orthodox) and their identification with a particular religious community – only 24% admitted to being a member of a community [74] (p. 24). In this approach, the concepts LORD, PRAYER, CLEANSING, HEALING, MIRACLE, GOD'S GIFT, GRACE, etc., are able to attract a larger audience and build trust in the message. The recipient's expectations serve to objectify their existential semantics.

According to Borysova [75], in religious approaches, the product as an element of the spiritual complex "is the least flexible element, it cannot be modified, since it corresponds to predetermined and stable goals, values, dogmas, ideas that make up the core of a religious product, appear in the form of fundamental religious teachings and are not subject to change". However, the communicative dynamism of advertising increases opportunities for the development of the pilgrimage market and, ultimately, religious tourism. Even though pilgrimage advertising is rooted in a religious worldview, its inherent intention of spiritual recovery after the trauma of war and exit from the life crises that Ukraine is currently experiencing contributes to its social appeal and market relevance in a secular country.

4.2. Religious advertising in the paradigm of solving the problem of national unity

Atheists*,* Muslims, Jews, Christians, and representatives of other religious traditions are all enlisted in the army during mobilization. Websites of religious communities often contain content about Ukrainian defenders, chaplains, and volunteer activities, which resonates with the intentions of religious advertising aimed at social and military assistance. By recognizing the religious diversity of defenders*,* a new spiritual development vector is formed, moving from the idea of the ecumenical victim to the ecumenism of heroes as the contemporary dominant of this historical moment. "We are all familiar with the trauma of war, but we don't deserve to be its victims" [76].

Similar connotations are used to support the Institute of Chaplaincy, which was established in 2021 (see **Figure 5** [77]). For example, *"*The wounded Ukrainian soldier united us " is the slogan used to promote the Law of Ukraine "On Military Chaplaincy Service" (No. 1915-I*X*) when it comes to helping wounded soldiers on the battlefield. As is well known, the attitude of the Ukrainian people varies significantly depending on where they live. However, religious advertising develops a tendency toward consolidation as a response to the trauma of the war.

Figure 5. Chaplain's chevron with the inscription: God and Ukraine. Military Chaplaincy Service

Source: Pravda.com

5. Conclusions

A review of media tools for the implementation of social transformations using the example of religious advertising in Ukraine revealed its significant transformational potential. This potential is activated by the mass media genre nature of advertising, complementary to the ethnic specificity of the religiosity of Ukrainians. It was found that the use of religious advertising to form social intentions has the following vectors: political, spiritual-cultural, and humanistic (social support). There is an opinion that the mentality of Ukrainians emphasizes intuitive type of faith in God, and not religiosity as a form of activity. Religious identity of Ukrainians tends to assimilate with other identities (political, cultural, etc.) and to be partially absorbed. This specificity is rooted in the secular nature of the modern state, but with ancient religious tradition. It is also manifested in the simplification and primitivization of the values inherent in the spiritual tradition, which is often objectified as polysensory subjective mythology. It means that the values of religion function as subjective representations with a weaker or stronger connection with the canon. At the same time, religious stylistics, formed by patriarchal cultural tradition, serves as a bridge that ensures such a connection in secular social and informational conditions.

Active advertisers are primarily Catholic and Orthodox communities. By combining informational, evaluative, and imperative intentions, religious advertising develops a religious worldview, broadcasts a religious value system, and prompts recipients to religiously regulated patterns of behaviour. The clichéd language of religious advertising ensures its identification by representatives of various religious communities. Orthodox advertising is characterized by informational conservatism with an emphasis on the ritual component. Contrary to this trend, Catholic religious advertising does not ignore the infrastructural realities of transportation, hotels, food, etc., in addition to the logistical features of routes. This changes the stylistics of

advertising. At the same time, information about the ritual activity is moved into the implicit space of the message. Instead, the verbalizers of the COMFORT concept are used to represent an explicit representation of the text.

We assume that these divergent trends are not conducive to success in the market. Studying this aspect in the conditions of war is impossible.

However, the humanitarian goals of such advertising are achieved. The advertising of various denominations has an isomorphic type of connection with the Holy text. Religious advertising embodies the function of implementing sacred knowledge into the value paradigms of contemporaries of the 21st century. In general, the specific religious outlook of Ukrainians and the genre innovation of modern religious advertising complement each other.

Religious advertising is also a passionate phenomenon that distributes people's energy and directs it to socially significant goals. At the initial stage, it was a departure from Russian Orthodoxy and establishment an autonomous Local Church (OCU). At the next stage, the development of advertising contributed to clearing the field of media interaction for all subjects of the confessional landscape of Ukraine, with a wide range of communicative intentions, from competition to solidarity initiatives. Now, in particular, the advertising of pilgrimage stimulates activity corresponding to the anti-depressive states of society. The advertising of pilgrimage trips contributes to the processes of spiritual and physical rehabilitation of Ukrainian society in the conditions of prolonged military conflicts, massive human casualties and unclear social prospects. Even in social crisis, the functions of such advertising are relevant for the ecumenical concept of protection and development of human rights. Because the role of military chaplains is a movement of heroes from various Churches and traditions, a movement with an ecumenical character, the media's promotion of the law on chaplains also helps to raise public awareness of the importance of ecumenical ideas. This approach opposes radical secularist tendencies and supports the heredity of the spiritual tradition.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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