

How socrates would view advertising for children in the 21st century

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Today in the world there is a large amount of public advertising aimed directly at youth. Many modern businesses view children as a weak target to their extreme propaganda. In 450 BC, Socrates created his imaginary utopia with caution towards false statements that he believed would harm the developing youth. He also makes sure to discuss literature that he thinks could be toxic for children. This is a problem that is raised even in the Republic, due to the fact that advertisements can be seen as the stories Socrates discusses. He spoke extensively about developing children and their education. This paper seeks to explore the extent to how Socrates would view advertising for children in the 21st century. This essay will investigate the vulnerability of kids, in other words how advertisers content can easily influence children. It will also look into the fact that Socrates explicitly states that children must first be taught with his chosen stories. Finally, it will study the correlation between advertisements and a child's chance at keeping or gaining an occupation. This paper will offer a close personal reading of Plato's The Republic in order to determine Socrates attitudes towards youth, it will also offer many 21st century sources that show modern views.

Literature Designated For Youth

Socrates believes that stories are what should be told at the beginning of a child's life. Socrates says that children must hear these stories first but if they grow up with advertisements then those stories would not be the first thing that children hear. In continuation, he believes that if children do not hear those chosen stories then they will not fit into society. Socrates says to decline most modern stories and tell the child's mother and caregivers to

shape their children by reading to them the literature that was chosen, also, stories must be cherry-picked and the creation of all literature must be watched over and pieces that are chosen must be appropriate. Children should not watch advertisements because they would not be able to understand what the actual meaning is. Also, if children grow up with these then they would not have gained everything that Socrates wanted them to because the kids would be too watching advertisements instead. Many advertisements have advanced methods that use insightful thinking which young children, age 7-8, cannot comprehend. Clearly, Socrates wanted kids to grow up with his chosen stories so they would be able to grow and develop like the rest of society. Advertisements can prove false information which greatly harms a developing child. False information can mess with a child's mind and cause them to become an outsider in the society due to the fact that the incorrect expectations that they grew up with would change how they complete their everyday tasks. A scholarly journal discusses this when they write, " Concerns about advertising's capacity to foster unrealistic expectations harms the youth". Since young kids are viewing many advertisements in their lifetime, the story-telling norm that Socrates stresses throughout the chapter is no longer visible. The stories are supposed to prepare a child for their upcoming life and growth but if there were advertisements for children then ads would replace stories. Schools, magazines, and the internet use new tech savvy media that is harmfully affecting children, kids view around 40, 000 ads per year just through TV. If the chosen stories are told to children while they are developing, the child would be prepared for their life ahead, as Socrates would have wanted them

to. Socrates would remove advertisements for children therefore children would only be able to listen to the literature that his utopian society chose. In *The Republic*, Socrates explicitly states that, “ We shall persuade our mothers and nurses to tell our chosen stories to their children”. As you can now tell, there is no doubt that Socrates would throw out the idea of advertising for children in the 21st century because he believes solely in only cherry-picked literature for young kids as they develop.

Advertisements Persuade The Gullible Modern Youth

Socrates would not agree with advertising for children because they are easily influenced and moldable into a human character at the beginning of their life. Socrates explains how children are in their age of youth so they can be changed. Furthermore, it is reasonable to infer that kids may be harmed by ads that contain bad content. In *The Republic* Socrates says that “ those who are young and tender [are in] the time when they are easily molded and when any impression we choose to make leaves a permanent mark”.

Advertising can cause confusion for a young child especially when they are developing Socrates would not like for some children to go into the world thinking one thing and finding out that what they have learned their entire life was wrong. In a scholarly journal about advertising for children the author says “ if ads present information different from a child’s actual experience confusion may result and trust in advertising may be undermined”. When a child sees a food commercial on TV or in any other source of media, they could begin to make the connection that they should choose to eat that food before they can comprehend that those may not be the best option. In doing so, kids are being wrongfully influenced because

they are very gullible at this age which affects their future before children can understand what they are actually choosing, Socrates warns against this and says children must be first taught the truth. Infants and toddlers are greatly affected in their food choices by the media and TV advertisements. If children create these opinions at a young age then they will most likely stick with their views, and if they find out that they are incorrect it would take a long time to correct what they have been doing their entire life since that is what they learned as a child. Socrates says that children cannot tell what has a hidden meaning and therefore warns that if children view advertisements they could not tell the difference between an ad that is literal or an ad that's meaning is harder to tell, kids would not be able to understand, so they would take everything as literal. Socrates says that opinions that are created at a young age are hard to amend, and also that kids cannot decide what has a hidden meaning versus what does not. Children cannot understand how the world works because they have not had enough experience through society and they have not had life experiences, which makes youth vulnerable. They become so vulnerable due to the fact that they treat everything as a fact so advertisers can easily have children believe whatever the companies want them to. In a documented essay the author explains this topic when they say, "majority of children believe what they see and hear, they also believe that the product or service advertised will actually provide the benefits and pleasures that advertising promises". All in all, a main reason that Socrates would disagree with advertising for children in the 21st century is due to the fact that youth are easily molded and their opinions are taken solely from the world around them.

Propaganda Effects Future Occupations

Socrates would also conclude that advertisements can obstruct how a child gets a job and can in the end ruin the foundation of the society's economy.

Experiences with unlawful attitudes and behaviors exhibited in some advertisements can ruin a young adolescent's chance at some jobs.

Furthermore, advertisements can change the entire life of a youth if they are physically suited for a job but they cannot join that occupation due to their prior exposure. In *The Republic*, Socrates explains the requirements for a position as a job when he says, " a judge... must not be brought up... with wickedness". A child cannot become a guardian with unacceptable physical standards, this includes but is not limited to conditions such as obesity, heart failure, and other chronic diseases. To continue, if a child was naturally fitted to be a guardian but their ideal physical goals were incorrect, the issues that arise from this problem can devour the child's job that they were naturally suited for and the aspect of specialization would disappear. A scholarly journal explains a little bit about unhealthiness when say, " advertisements also lead to unhealthy lifestyles which is one of the most serious". Drinking is not permitted in the guardian occupation and it in turn can also affect a person's chance of getting the job that they are naturally fitted for since alcohol can harm a person's mind and thinking ability. If advertisements are showing alcoholic drinks, children and other underage drinkers would be obligated to do so. Drinking when not at the legal age to do so is increasing because of alcohol advertisements, new studies show. Advertisements persuade people to purchase their product and certain items can refrain someone from obtaining a guardian position because they would not meet

the specific requirements. Socrates would not agree with this because the person would not be able to become a guardian, or whichever occupation they are specialized in, even though they are naturally suited to. Guardians must never be relaxed, drink, or in a position where they are sitting and not doing their job. When a child is kept from getting the job that they are naturally suited for, Socrates main idea of specialization would be ruined which contributes to the fact that he would not agree with advertising for children in the 21st century. All in all, it is clear that Socrates would never support advertising for children because it can negatively affect their chances at obtaining or keeping their job.

This paper examined the extent to how Socrates would react to advertising for children in the 21st century. Socrates has always advocated for children to only learn from handpicked stories, he does that so youth grow up correctly and normally. He also has discussed how youth are often very gullible and they adopt anything that they hear. To continue, he specifically states the rules for each major job which also contributes to specialization. This leads to the conclusion that he would approve of the proven claims because he agrees with all of the points stated: stories should be told first, children are too moldable to watch ads at a young age, and due to the fact that ads can ruin a child's chance at getting the occupation in which they are naturally suited for. Socrates would disagree with advertising directed at children due to the fact that that throughout the Republic he indirectly expresses his distaste toward ads for kids by discussing how he believes that a child should evolve and his thoughts informally shame advertisers. If this

paper were to be extended and include more research and the following question would be added of the opposing claim of can some advertisements benefit modern youth, this topic was not addressed in the essay although the topic was found throughout the research, the reason that this subject was not discussed was due to the fact that it contradicts the original claim. The next question that would be included is: if advertisements were to begin the process of elimination throughout society which ads must be destroyed of first because of their toxicity. Throughout this essay some advertisements were discussed about why they were harmful but it was never explicitly stated which advertisements were the most negative for a child's mind, this was not included in the essay because it would be partially off-topic and an entire essay could be written on which advertisements are the worst and why.