



Model of Analysis of Advertising Concerning its Social or Commercial Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

Advertising serves as a mod that shapes social and moral values of the viewer and therefore, due attention should be paid to ensure that the content is healthy, that it positively affects the viewer and the values that inspires represent an ethical improvement of society health. This paper presents a research based on a semi-structured interview and the applying of a questionnaire. The purpose of this research is to reveal the extent to which respondents acknowledge the influence of advertising in decision-making. It can be said that in order to protect society from the harmful effects of advertising, we can create a model with a series of measures that advertising is socially responsible and even beneficial for the society.

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1. Introduction

An in-depth discussion about the influence of advertising, either intentional or unintentional, occurred since its emergence. Most of the discussion focuses on the variety of social problems perpetuated by it. Although there is no unanimous opinion on these negative effects, the concerns and protests that we encounter in research are very serious. Throughout this work we will discuss upon the ethical deviations which are practiced.

As a medium of communication, advertising is all-encompassing and pervasive. It is everywhere and assails your senses – sight, hearing, touch and even smell in some cases [Paymal, M. 2007].

2. The current state of research

In a complex market, the advertising system acts as an informative intermediary between production and consumption, between an organization and its publics. Its main characteristic is that it is a readily available source of information. The public must not make any effort to locate the message and to repress it and to understand the proposal, and does not need to pay. We can say that advertising makes all the efforts. Originated from French, the term refers to all advertising messages sent to guide the behaviour of buyers or to influence their opinion, favorably to a product or service.

What does advertising inform about? Basically about the product (service, idea or organization) and the market.

1. *Information about the product.* Examples are abundant, and thus there are provided the brand identification, the supply and the competitive differentiation. Specifically, advertising focuses on: the existence of the product, its features, news, price, functionality, quality and target audience.
2. *Information about the market.* Facilitating the access to product is an approach to the purchasing decision, recruitment and real choice in the end. Thus advertising shall also inform the public about where and how to find what it offers.

Information has two features that contribute to customize the message: partiality and independence. Advertising does not provide the same treatment as negative aspects and positive aspects, if the product has them. Information on the negative aspects is performed only when there is a legal or moral obligation, when avoiding them the brand image may be harmed or when they are transformed into positive aspects.

3. The methodology and research results

In terms of the nature of research, we conducted a qualitative and quantitative research through semi-structured interview method, i.e. a questionnaire-based survey. The interview was conducted between April 1 to 5 on a sample of 50 students. After identifying the existing issues, the next step involved applying a questionnaire during 8 to 13 April 2013 on a sample of 120 students from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

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A. Semi-structured interview

The interview consists of three fundamental themes aimed at the compliance values in advertising, regulation in advertising and advertising content - addressed in a more nuanced manner. The interview was conducted on a sample of 120 students - 40 male students and 80 female students.

THEME I. It is necessary to respect the values in advertising?

One of the interviewed respondents declares: "Successful companies do not need to comply with certain values in their activities because they have built empires." Another point of view is: "Sooner or later whoever is not ethical will face the consequences." One respondent stated: "The only responsible for decent advertising is the one that makes the end. Profit companies should not be at the expense of society." Another one says: "Our culture and awareness of society determine the good and bad publicity."

THEME II. What kind of regulation should be applied in advertising?

One of the respondents says: "I believe that governments and public control bodies should impose a stricter legal framework and stiffer penalties for companies that do not comply with the law." Social acceptability varies from one culture / country to another. Good taste is a matter of time, place and person. It would be almost impossible to establish a set of rules detailed in the era of the Internet and interactive television.

THEME III. Content of the ads.

Perhaps the most controversial issue in the field of marketing communications is the content of advertising.

1. What is your attitude regarding advertising of harmful products?

For example, advertising, sponsorship and other marketing communications are already banned cigarette manufacturers. Surprisingly, most of the responses of those interviewed were against cigarette advertising. One respondent said: "People are well informed about the consequences of smoking so it is a matter of personal choice".

Advertising dangerous products is heavily criticized when targeting an audience with a low level of individual autonomy, ie children. Two main issues in this respect are handling on cigarettes and alcohol as "the rite of passage to adulthood" and that sales of these products harmful to health grow without too much rejection.

2. What is your attitude towards advertising for children?

The responses were unanimous: "Advertising for children should be closely monitored." Similar results were obtained from surveys conducted by Rasmussen and Kaiser Family Foundation. Legal means are only part of the protection of children. The other part involves "responsibility of parents and teachers in decision making" ie "to assist children in developing a skeptical attitude on information obtained from advertising." Another opinion was: "Marketers should be involved in shaping the moral system and each brand should have its own ethics - a code of practice regarding children - rather than focus on industry codes."

C. Do you think there are too many ads misleading, exaggerated and confusing? Many advertisements promise things that can not obtain?

An extreme case is the creation of an ideal image of a person who uses the advertised product. Bishop draws our attention to two representative advertising images that attract customers design the images on them using the product: "beautiful woman" and "sexy teenager." "Instead of promoting glamour pictures of anorexic bodies posts should use those many body types and give up the idea unattainable body image," was the opinion of one of the interviewees.

To this question one respondent said: "Customers are generally those people who do not have the same physical characteristic. For me, this type of advertising aimed deliberately make people not feel complete." Another interviewee said: "Each person has her own way of assessing what is real and what is misleading you. Consumers are sophisticated enough to realize what is exaggerated."

D. What is your attitude in regard to advertising claiming guilt and praise prosperity which in most cases can not be achieved?

A more specific controversial advertising is promoting indulgence that question; one that seeks to create needs, not to satisfy them; to generate new anxieties in place to mitigate the old ones. One answer is: "It is not just a matter of advertising. It has to do with social inequality and the desire to have what you can not."

B. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was prepared following the objectives of this research. It contains 12 items with a total of 65 variables. Data were subjected to univariate analysis, bivariate and multivariate being supported by SPSS 20 and Microsoft Office Excel.

First we present the results of the analysis of relevant social - demographic indicators. The profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1. Of the 120 respondents interviewed, 33 (27.5%) were male and 87 (72.5%) were female. 117 respondents (97.5%) were between the ages of 18-24 years, two respondents (1.7%) were under the age of 24-30 years, one respondent (0.8%) was aged over 30 years. In terms of income

respondents, 25 respondents (20.8%) fall between 0-1000 lei, 47 respondents (39.3%) between 1000-2000 lei, 29 respondents (24.2%) between 2000-3000 lei, and 19 respondents (15.8%) over 3,000 lei.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of respondents

| Variable | Classification of the variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 33 | 27,5 |
| | female | 87 | 72,5 |
| Age | 18 - 24 years | 117 | 97,5 |
| | 24 - 30 years | 2 | 1,7 |
| | Over 30 years | 1 | 0,8 |
| Income | 0 - 1000 lei | 25 | 20,8 |
| | 1000 - 2000 lei | 47 | 39,2 |
| | 2000 -3000 lei | 29 | 24,2 |
| | Over 3000 lei | 19 | 15,8 |
| Environment | Urban | 91 | 75,8 |
| | Rural | 29 | 24,2 |

In order to choose as the main topic - TV advertising - we felt that the hierarchy of preferences regarding the various ways which ensure the advertising, we show that the direction in which we headed effort is appropriate given that 47.5% of respondents said that TV ads have a greater effect upon them.

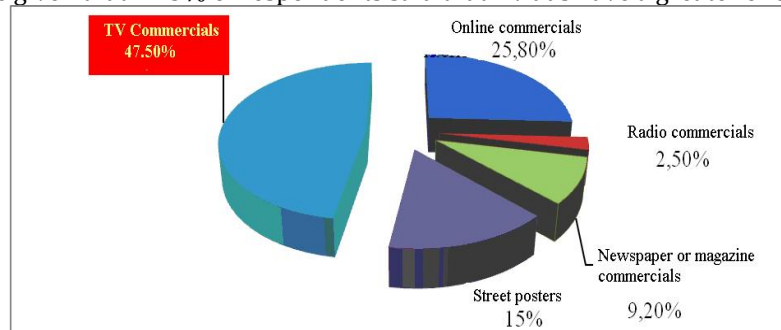


Fig. 1 Hierarchy preferences channels through which the advertising is obtained

The following is the graph illustrating the time slot in which respondents choose to spend time watching TV, and the number of hours associated with it, resulting in scheduling with the highest concentration of the public. As can be seen, 7.00-12.00 and 12.00-17.00 time intervals are irrelevant because the share allocated to them is quite low between 0 to 0.8%.

17.00-22.00 interval shows increasing importance as it is scheduling the television enjoys a prime, so-called prime time, when the impact of advertising messages broadcast in this period is the highest As shown in our study, 17.00-22.00 interval gathers the largest share, of which the most numerous - 20% of respondents choose to spend between 2-3 hours watching TV.

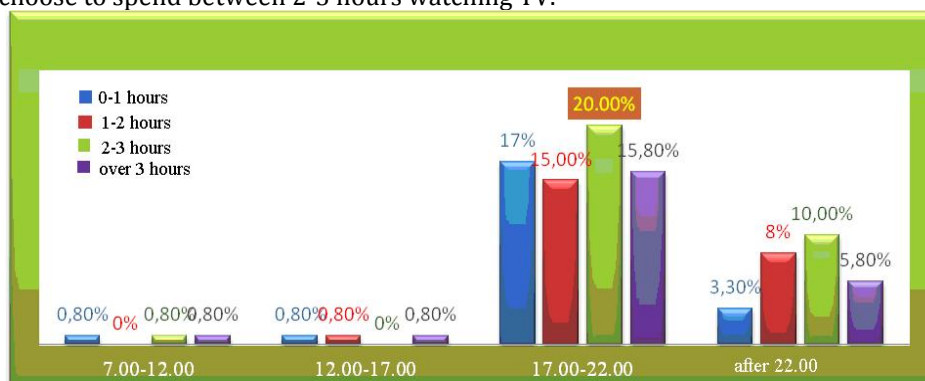


Fig. 2 Time interval with the highest concentration of public

Since the respondents chose to spend most of the time on TV, in the interval 17.00-22.00, we considered it important to highlight their reactions when broadcasting advertising spots. Thus, we found that only 1% of all respondents said they look forward, 14% say that they leave the TV, and the trend of the changing station has a share of 57%. However a 28% claim that choose to look upon with indifference, what they do not realize is that there is an urgent need to look at an advertisement of interest to unconsciously react to certain stimuli.

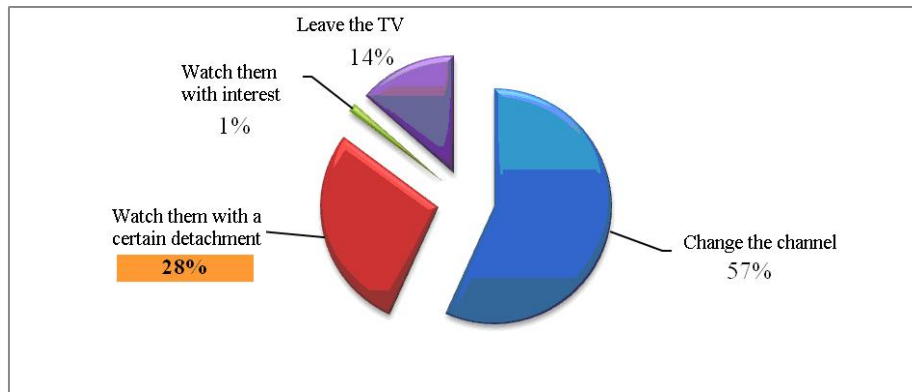


Fig. 3 Respondent reaction during the advertising spots between 17.00-22.00

4. Model of proposed measures for ethical advertising practices

The data reduction technique for analyzing factors was used to analyze the perception of respondents on the measures proposed to advertise respecting the moral and ethical values. The extraction method was the analysis of the main components, while the rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser. As suggested by the Kaiser criterion, only those elements with Eigen values greater than 1 were retained. Also, only those variables that clearly loaded on a single factor and that had loads greater than 0.45, were retained.

F1: Maintaining a values system and eliminating social problems.

This is the most important factor that emerged from the analysis. It has an Eigen value of 3.251 and has four variables loaded on it.

The first variable loaded on this factor "Advertising must be used to raise awareness and discourage social evils." is a .711 load. This high figure indicates that respondents attach great importance to this variable. It is followed by the second variable, "Advertising can be used to discourage the consumption of alcohol and tobacco and to combat drug problems." and had a .698 load. The third variable to be loaded on this factor is "advertising must be designed keeping in mind the cultural and traditional context of the country." and has a load of .666. The last variable loaded on this factor, "advertising must adapt to the moral and religious values." is a .629 load. All variables loaded on this factor have high loads indicating a high level of association with the factor.

F2: Empowering advertising control bodies and restricting unhealthy products.

This factor has an Eigen value of 1.855 and has four variables loaded on it. The first variable loaded on this factor, "It should be mandatory to highlight the negative effects of the products being advertised." has a load of .680 and is followed by the variable "Advertisements for products that have been declared unfit for human consumption should be interrupted." with a load of .603. The next variable to be loaded on this factor is "Advertising on cigarettes and alcohol should be banned." and has a load of 0.587. With a load of 0.521, the last variable loaded on this factor is "Advertising control bodies should be given judicial powers."

F3: Editing advertisement content by the authorities.

With an Eigen value of 1.497, the third factor that emerged from the analysis has been called "Editing advertisement content by the authorities." This factor has three variables loaded on it and tests if the public accepts violations of ethics and sexuality in advertising. "In Romania advertising regulatory bodies are not effective." is the first variable loaded on this factor. It has a load of .742, which makes it an important variable. The other two variables loaded on this factor, "Violation of ethical values in advertising should not be allowed." and "Sexuality implied through advertising should be banned." have loads of .689, .663 respectively.

F4: Improving self-control.

This factor has an Eigen value of 1.256 and has three variables loaded on it. The first variable loaded on this factor, "If a TV commercial is inappropriate for a particular audience, it must display a warning signal at its beginning." is a .677 load. The second variable loaded on this factor is "Campaigns against advertising began to cancel the adverse effects of some advertising campaigns." and has a load of .535. The last variable loaded on this factor is "Parents, not government, should regulate what is exposed on TV to their children." and has a load of .515.

F5: Repressing social irresponsibility.

This factor has an Eigen value of 1.050, and two variables loaded on it. The first variable loaded on this factor is "A certain part of advertising, for example, the hygiene products for women, cannot be seen together with the whole family and, therefore, should be prohibited." and has a load of .807. The other variable loaded on this factor "Advertising intended for children under the age of twelve should be prohibited." has a load of .528.

5. Conclusions

In preparing this paper I originally used qualitative research, and based on the results obtained we developed a quantitative research, that helped us to achieve the objectives of the research. Respondents as well as some authors have taken different positions.

Marketers should understand their responsibility for the developing image of the future society. One of the biggest challenges is to avoid creating a consumer happy in the short term, because in the long term both consumers and society may suffer because due to the actions of the marketers.

But after all said and done, the correction of the given situation depends entirely on whether the advertising industry is ready to make the necessary compromises or not. In response to public expectations, is it ready to put its social responsibility prior to the commercial one?

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Annex

QUIZ

1. How much time do you spend watching TV?

- 0-1 hours/day
 1-2 hours/day
 2-3 hours/day
 over 3 hours/day

2. In what time frame do you use to watch TV?

- 7.00 - 12.00
 12.00 - 17.00
 17.00 - 22.00
 după 22.00

3. What do you usually do when there are commercials on TV?

- I avoid them by changing the TV channel
 I watch them but with a certain detachment
 I always watch them with interest
 I temporarily leave the TV for another activity

4. Which of the types of commercials, depending on the means of communication, you think have a greater persuasion effect on yourself?

- Online commercials
 Radio commercials
 Newspaper and magazine commercials
 Street posters
 TV commercials

5. When you make a decision, you count on:

- Reason
 Emotion

6. Express your attitude about the following statements:

| STATEMENTS | Totally disagree | Disagree | Neither agree, nor disagree | Agree | Totally agree |
|---|------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-------|---------------|
| I gave up a product that I used to buy in favour of a product promoted in a commercial. | | | | | |
| Commercials with/for children give me a positive mood, really making me buy that specific product. | | | | | |
| After purchasing a product seen in a commercial, it wasn't up to my expectations. | | | | | |
| Advertisements with women motivate me and improve my image. <i>(to be filled in by women only)</i> | | | | | |
| Beer commercials induce me the idea of a night out with friends/fun. <i>(to be filled in by men only)</i> | | | | | |
| McDonald's creates a sense of integration in the group of friends. | | | | | |
| I would be willing to work for hours to purchase the desired product promoted in a commercial. | | | | | |
| I attach great importance to ads that tell us what is better to consume and what is better to avoid. | | | | | |
| I pay attention to information related to the features of a product presented in an advertisement. | | | | | |
| The information in advertisements helps me better know the advantages of using that particular product. | | | | | |
| It rarely happens to read the nutritional information on the back of a chocolate bar. | | | | | |

| STATEMENTS | Totally disagree | Disagree | Neither agree, nor disagree | Agree | Totally agree |
|--|------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-------|---------------|
| The presence of public figures in an advertisement gives me a quality guarantee of the promoted product. | | | | | |

7. What is your position in relation to the following statements? (1 – Totally disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neither agree nor disagree, 4 – Agree, 5 – Totally agree)

| STATEMENTS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Advertising must be used to raise awareness and discourage social evils. | | | | | |
| 2. In Romania advertising regulatory bodies are not effective. | | | | | |
| 3. Campaigns against advertising began to cancel the adverse effects of some advertising campaigns. | | | | | |
| 4. A certain part of advertising, for example, the hygiene products for women, cannot be seen together with the whole family and, therefore, should be prohibited. | | | | | |
| 5. Advertising must adapt to the moral and religious values. | | | | | |
| 6. If a TV commercial is inappropriate for a particular audience, it must display a warning signal at its beginning. | | | | | |
| 7. Parents, not government, should regulate what is exposed on TV to their children. | | | | | |
| 8. Advertising on cigarettes and alcohol should be banned. | | | | | |
| 9. Advertising must be designed keeping in mind the cultural and traditional context of the country. | | | | | |
| 10. Advertising can be used to discourage the consumption of alcohol and tobacco and to combat drug problems. | | | | | |
| 11. Sexuality implied through advertising should be banned. | | | | | |
| 12. Advertising control bodies should be given judicial powers. | | | | | |
| 13. Advertising intended for children under the age of twelve should be prohibited. | | | | | |
| 14. It should be mandatory to highlight the negative effects of the products being advertised. | | | | | |
| 15. Advertisements for products that have been declared unfit for human consumption should be interrupted. | | | | | |
| 16. Violation of ethical values in advertising should not be allowed. | | | | | |

8. Where do you live:

Urban environment

Rural environment

9. Frame your family monthly income in one of the following ranges:

0 – 1000 lei 1000 – 2000 lei 2000 – 3000 lei over 3000 lei

10. Your age is in between:

18 – 24 ani

24 – 30 ani

peste 30

11. Sex:

Male

Female

12. Major:

Management

Marketing

E.C.T.S.

Statistics

Finance