



MAIN DETERMINANTS OF THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING ON BULGARIAN YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

The influence of advertising by mobile operators in Bulgaria on youth at the ages of 18 to 25 is largely important in the context of the rational use of various mobile products and services. The main thesis of this study is that the components of company advertising can influence a customer's decision for purchase. On the basis of this hypothesis, the aim of this study is to investigate the attitudes towards advertising components, and the degree of their impact on young consumers through conducting anonymous surveys. The obtained results show that younger recipients living in Sofia have greater trust and are more likely to be influenced by the messages of mobile operators' advertising, than those from Plovdiv and Stara Zagora. All of this allows the discovery of dependencies between certain demographic factors and influential advertising components.

Key words: advertising components, enhancing influence, benefits.

INTRODUCTION

In our closely-knit global society the importance of advertising influence is on the rise due to changes in the communication relationship of *organization-client*. Global companies such as mobile operators are building organizational relations among their branches on a global scale by combining various elements of integrated marketing communications into a single communication campaign. A large part of these users are youth at the age of 18-25 who are likely to follow various fashionable trends that lead to their involvement in competitive battles among different companies. The result from the strategy for influencing this target is expressed through the change of consumers' thinking, biases and attitudes to the relevant mobile companies, as well as to their products and services.

A premise for the successful penetration of mobile operators in Bulgaria is the evolving

necessity for mobile products and services, as well as the successful communication with young users. The three mobile operators – A1, Telenor and Vivacom – have established their presence on the Bulgarian market since 2001 by actively launching their advertising campaigns. Moreover, the innovative direction of the organizations addresses young, intelligent users with a stable mobile orientation.

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF STUDY

The present report offers a gradual and purposeful definition of the concept of advertising by focusing on its main specifics. First, we shall look at the most popular definitions of various associations (**Table 1**).

Other definitions may also be added, however, this is not necessary because the associations have emphasized on the following aspects: **the paid nature of advertising, non-personal representation of the commissioning source and the universal character of the advertised object.**

According to the American Marketing Association advertising is seen as part of marketing, or more specifically it is the

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advertising–encouraging subsystem. This is completely reasonable because the other two associations deal with advertising and the key concepts in their definitions are “controllable”, “convincing”, “influence”,

“mass communication”, “reaching a potential buyer”. A specific trait of modern advertising is influence, i.e. making contact with a potential buyer from which psychological efficiency ensues.

Table 1. Basic definitions for advertising by different associations.

Nº	Author	Definitions
1	European Association of Advertising Agencies(11)	Advertising is all paid form of controllable influence realized through mass media through offering and promoting goods and services for the benefit of a known source.
2	American Marketing Association (12)	Advertising is each form of non-personal presentation and launching of ideas, goods and services paid by a specifically known source.
3	British Trade Association of Advertising Agencies(13)	Advertising is the most convincing message that can reach potential buyers of products and services aiming to initiate a purchase at the lowest possible cost.

“Controllable” influence and “convincing” influence are also main terms because advertising is a very important mechanism for controlling presentation and formation which aims to convince the user in the truthfulness of a certain message.

In most scientific literature, there is an attempt to differentiate advertising from public relations, propaganda or other

communications, however, the common ground is that they all belong to persuasive communication. A more important feature of advertising is that it has preceded the appearance of public relations and compared to propaganda, it can realize corporate goals as well. Here we look at the following definitions whose character is hybrid, yet very rich in possibilities (Table 2).

Table 2. Basic definitions for advertising by different persons.

1	Philip Kotler – marketing researcher (4)	Advertising is a non-personal form of communication realized through paid broadcasting media with clearly stated source of funding.
2	Claude Hopkins – advertising expert (9)	Advertising is the skill to sell. It does not aim to produce a complete effect to keep your good image in society. It is the multiplied skill to sell; therefore each advertisement should be a super seller.
3	Rosser Reeves- advertising executive (6)	Art for implementing ESO (exceptional sales offer) in the minds of the largest number of people at the lowest possible cost.
4	Dimitar Doganov – advertising specialist (2)	Advertising is every non-personal transferred piece of information, usually paid, that has persuasive character on the part of a known communicator.

If we compare the definitions, we shall see that different specialists interpret the concept of advertising from the viewpoint of their own specialty. The common component is “multiplied skill to sell”, however, many of them find not only the commercial aim of advertising but also its directed influence. It not only has a specific and limited satisfaction for the addressee but also aims to engage the moral, social, religious, political, or philosophical views of various audiences. These definitions refer to the observation of consumers’ behavior and its influence ability,

as well as the concurrent psychological processes. An extremely important contribution to this matter is Rosser Reeves’ understanding of advertising as “implementation of exclusive sales offer” (6). It is formed as such because the consumer has been influenced, i.e. they can be influenced. The **implementation** of the object of advertising is a purposeful act of influencing the pre-existent biases of consumers. In practice, it has been found that advertising may speed up the decision-making process for a purchase, due to the upgrade of

consumer's knowledge, stimulation of their interest, and incitement to take action. Afterwards, inferences about its psychological, social and economic efficiency are being made.

In the 1950s, with the development of Bulgarian advertising, more and more conditions for researching its role were created. Scholars, such as Dimitar Georgiev, Svetozar Krastev, Dimitar Doganov, Hristo Kaftandjiev, Elena Marinova, etc. (2) have contributed to their studies. Each author has distinguished the separate types by using different criteria.

On the basis of the presented theoretical framework, we have formulated two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There is a link between the separate determinants of advertising influence and the act of impact on the target group.

Hypothesis 2: The age and affiliation to a certain educational institution may influence the choice of a mobile operator.

The presented hypotheses shall be tested through single factor disperse analyses ANOVA as a part of the conducted surveys.

MAIN METHODS OF RESEARCH

A survey on **the main elements of advertising influence was conducted among youth at the ages of 18 to 25, and some demographic characteristics of groups of respondents** were traced. The author of the model R.A. Fisher has observed more than two groups (8). The results from the single factor analyses regarding the elements of advertising and the formed factors have been presented.

Mathematically, the formula may be presented in the following way:

$$F = \frac{MS_A}{MS_{S/A}}$$

Where S_A is the observed variation due to factor A, while $S_{S/A}$ is the expected variation of factor A – calculated if we accept the null hypothesis as available. The null hypothesis can be formulated as: **“Separate demographic characteristics are not such variables which may have a significant effect on the scale levels of separate factors.”** Due to the fact that significant results have been found in the present study, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Single factor disperse analyses were made to test if **the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study can differentiate significantly several of the formed factors**. It has become clear from the study that the age, **the affiliation to a certain educational institution, as well as the choice of a mobile operator**, have a significant impact on the values of participants with respect to the formed factors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the basis of the first significant single factor intergroup disperse analysis it was found that age had a statistically significant effect on the factor **Perception of advertising**, where ($F_{(2, 297)} = 3.317$; $p < 0,05$). After performing comparison techniques, it was found that the studied persons from the third age group over 25 years had significantly higher levels on the scale ($\bar{x}_3 = 1.86$) than participants comprising the age group of 18 to 20 years ($\bar{x}_1 = 1.63$). Thus, participants over 25 years found the advertising of their mobile operators nonsensical and limiting compared to the other age groups. A significant difference was observed between the group of 18 to 20 versus those over 25. Therefore, with the advance of age, young respondents would be less likely to be influenced by the advertising of mobile operators.

1. Factor **Perception of advertising**, where

$F = 3.317$; $p < 0.05$

18-20 years – $\bar{x}_1 = 1.63$

21-24 years – $\bar{x}_2 = 1.73$

over 25 years – $\bar{x}_3 = 1.86$

As for the second significant single factor intergroup disperse analysis it was found that age differentiated significantly the levels of participants on the scale **Reasons for greater attention** ($F_{(2, 297)} = 5.762$; $p < 0,01$). After comparing the obtained data it was found that the studied persons from the third age group over 25 years had significantly lower levels on the scale ($\bar{x}_3 = 2.10$), compared to the participants comprising the age group of 18-20 years, where ($\bar{x}_1 = 2.37$). That is, participants over 25 years thought they were less likely to be influenced by the advertising in question. Thus, respondents were influenced by the low prices, product brands, demonstrations, as well as the combination with other communications. A significant difference between these in the group of 18 to 20 and those over 25 years was

noted. **Therefore, a stronger influence was imposed on youth at the ages of 18 to 20.**

2. Factor **Reasons for greater attention**, where:

$F=5.762$; $p<0.01$

18-20 years – $\bar{x}_1=2.37$

21-24 years – $\bar{x}_2=2.25$

over 25 years – $\bar{x}_3=2.10$

On the basis of the third significant single factor intergroup analysis, where each participant belonged to only one group, with disperse analysis it was found that age had a significant effect on the factor: **Elements of advertising influence** ($F_{(2, 297)} = 4.045$; $p<0.05$). After the performed techniques for comparison it was found that the studied persons from the second age group from 21 to 24 years had significantly higher levels on the scale ($\bar{x}_2 = 2.41$), compared to the participants in the age group over 25 years ($\bar{x}_3 = 2.21$). The question contained 10 items, and 8 of them

formed a factor with respect to the components of advertising influence. Thus, participants between 21 and 24 years paid more attention to the components of advertising by various mobile operators, when the elements indicated in the said scale were present versus the other two groups. There was a significant difference between the 21-24 group and the 18-20 group, as well as those over 25.

3. Factor **Elements of advertising influence**, where

$F=4.045$; $p<0.05$

18-20 years – $\bar{x}_1=2.29$

21-24 years – $\bar{x}_2=2.41$

over 25 years – $\bar{x}_3=2.21$

In order to find and compare the established significant dependencies between the separate disperse analyses, which were formed in three of the factors, the following data was summarized in the **Table 3** below:

Table 3. Single factor disperse analyses ANOVA with demographic data – age.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Degree of independent variable	\bar{x}	F, p
Demographic characteristic: Age	Factor: Perception of advertising	18-20 years 21-24 years over 25 years	$\bar{x}_1=1,63$ $\bar{x}_2=1,73$ $\bar{x}_3=1,86$	$F_{(2, 297)}=3,31$ $p<0.05$
Demographic characteristic: Age	Factor: Reasons for greater attention	18-20 years 21-24 years over 25 years	$\bar{x}_1=2,37$ $\bar{x}_2=2,25$ $\bar{x}_3=2,10$	$F_{(2, 297)}=5,76$ $p<0.01$
Demographic characteristic: Age	Factor: Elements of advertising influence	18-20 years 21-24 years over 25 years	$\bar{x}_1=2,29$ $\bar{x}_2=2,41$ $\bar{x}_3=2,21$	$F_{(2, 297)}=4,05$ $p<0.05$

The demographic factors indicated above include different educational institutions, as respondents from three universities were interviewed – **Sofia University, Plovdiv University and Trakia University**, because we think that their regional location may presuppose different financial abilities, as well as a different degree of activity in the use of products and services of mobile operators in Bulgaria. The following significant results were noted.

On the basis of the first significant single factor intergroup disperse analysis it was found that age had a significant effect on the factor **Perception of advertising**, where ($F_{(2, 297)} = 9.603$; $p<0,01$). After the performed

techniques for comparison it was found that the studied persons from the first group – Sofia University – had significantly lower level on the scale of ($\bar{x}_1 = 1.5$), compared to the participants comprising the other two groups: PU ($\bar{x}_2 = 1.8$) and TRU ($\bar{x}_3 = 1.75$). The statements for this factor are negative, i.e. respondents characterized advertising as nonsensical, or untrustworthy. SU respondents gave more answers up to 1, i.e. negative answers regarding the indicated statements, therefore they were more likely to find meaning in advertising and not to reject it. PU and TRU respondents did not differ significantly, while youth at Sofia University differed significantly from Plovdiv University and Trakia University.

1. Factor **Perception of advertising**, where

$F=9.603$; $p<0.01$

Sofia University $-\bar{x}_1 = 1.5$

Plovdiv University $-\bar{x}_2 = 1.8$

Trakia University $-\bar{x}_3 = 1.75$

In the second significant single factor intergroup disperse analysis where the behaviour of youth during advertising campaigns of mobile operators of their choice was studied, it was found that the affiliation to a separate educational institution had a significant effect on the factor **Behaviour under the influence of advertising**, where ($F_{(2, 297)} = 3.057$; $p<0,05$). The studied persons from the first group – SU, showed significantly lower levels on the scale ($\bar{x}_1 = 1.54$), compared to the participants comprising the other two groups: PU ($\bar{x}_2 = 1.69$) and TRU ($\bar{x}_3 = 1.75$). A significant difference between students from Plovdiv University and Sofia University was observed. The factor was formed by the following items: “*I turn off the sound of TV*”, “*I switch to another channel*”, “*I leave the room*” and “*I never listen to advertising by mobile operators*”, through which respondents indicate what their behaviour is influenced by the advertising by mobile operators. SU respondents more often express negative attitudes to these items, and more often reject them. That is, the behavior of SU students under the influence of advertising is reverse, which shows that they are more likely to view them, or at least allow some kind of contact with them.

2. Factor **Behaviour under the influence of advertising**, where

$F=3.057$; $p<0.05$

Sofia University $-\bar{x}_1 = 1.54$

Plovdiv University $-\bar{x}_2 = 1.69$

Trakia University $-\bar{x}_3 = 1.75$

On the basis of the fourth significant single factor intergroup analysis, where the components of advertising influence are studied, it was found with disperse analysis that the affiliation to an educational institution had a significant effect on the factor **Components of advertising influence** ($F_{(2, 297)}=6.193$; $p<0,01$). After the performed techniques for comparison, it was found that the studied persons from SU had significantly higher levels on the scale of ($\bar{x}_1 = 2.47$),

compared to those of the participants comprising the group of PU ($\bar{x}_2 = 2.25$), which showed that the reviewed statements could influence to a greater degree the biases of SU youth, compared to the respondents from the other two universities. The factor was formed by 8 out of 10 possible items, amongst which were: “*To stimulate pleasant/ pleasurable sensation*”, “*To have pleasant music*”, “*To provoke me to see it again*”, “*To create a sense of freedom*”, “*To release the tension from the day*”, “*To differ from the rest*”, “*Not to irritate me with its content*”.

3. Factor **Components for advertising influence**, where

$F=6.193$; $p<0.01$

Sofia University $-\bar{x}_1 = 2.47$

Plovdiv University $-\bar{x}_2 = 2.25$

Trakia University $-\bar{x}_3 = 2.32$

On the basis of the fifth significant single factor intergroup analysis, which addressed disappointment from an online purchase under the influence of advertising, it was found that affiliation to an educational institution significantly influenced the factor **Disappointment from an online purchase** ($F_{(2, 297)}=4.914$; $p<0,01$). After the performed techniques for comparison, it was found that the studied persons from TRU had significantly higher levels on the scale ($\bar{x}_3 = 1.86$) compared to the SU group ($\bar{x}_1 = 1.47$), which showed that disappointment from the performed activity was higher with TRU respondents who experienced negative sensations. This explained the higher degree of influenceability with the youth from Sofia, because they would be more likely to make such a purchase. There was a significant difference between students from Trakia University and Sofia University. The factor was formed by the statements “*I felt disappointed*”, and “*I felt robbed*”.

4. Factor **Disappointment from an online purchase**, where

$F=4.914$; $p<0.01$

Sofia University $-\bar{x}_1 = 1.47$

Plovdiv University $-\bar{x}_2 = 1.68$

Trakia University $-\bar{x}_3 = 1.86$

The data obtained from the performed disperse analyses for independent samples, with respect to the formed significant factors are presented in the table below, where only eight of them

are listed. The affiliation to an educational institution has been noted as a demographic factor, which has a direct relationship to the

region inhabited by young respondents at the ages of 18-25 years.

Table 4. Single factor disperse analyses ANOVA with demographic data – educational institution.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Degree of independent variable	\bar{x}	F, p
Demographic characteristic: Educational institution	Factor: Perception of advertising	SU PU TRU	$\bar{x}_1=1,5$ $\bar{x}_2=1,8$ $\bar{x}_3=1,75$	$F_{(2, 297)}=9,603$ $p<0.01$
Demographic characteristic: Educational institution	Factor: Behaviour under perception of advertising	SU PU TRU	$\bar{x}_1=1,54$ $\bar{x}_2=1,69$ $\bar{x}_3=1,75$	$F_{(2, 297)}=3,057$ $p<0.05$
Demographic characteristic: Educational institution	Factor: Components of advertising influence	SU PU TRU	$\bar{x}_1=2,47$ $\bar{x}_2=2,25$ $\bar{x}_3=2,32$	$F_{(2, 297)}=6,193$ $p<0.01$
Demographic characteristic: Educational institution	Factor: Disappointment from online purchase	SU PU TRU	$\bar{x}_1=1,47$ $\bar{x}_2=1,68$ $\bar{x}_3=1,86$	$F_{(2, 297)}=4,914$ $p<0.01$

CONCLUSION

The process of perception and reflection on advertising by mobile operators is complex and continuous. Young respondents at the ages of 18 to 25 years are influenced in a different way, as with the advance of age they tend to be less influenced. In the study, the results from surveys conducted in three towns - Sofia, Plovdiv and Stara Zagora – have been noted. The group most strongly influenced by advertising is from the city of Sofia. The other respondents do not declare such strong impact, and therefore, show less behavioral changes.

We can conclude that studies on the components of influence in mobile operators' advertising in Bulgaria, as well as the investigation of their relationship to main demographic characteristics may determine the degree of involvement of young consumers. This necessitates continuous and intentional study of these relationships, as well as establishing any relevant influential factors.

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