

“TV commercials: Are there personal and demographic difference for the effectiveness of this communication mean?”

An exploratory Research to measure TV advertising effectiveness based on Cyprus Realities.

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Summary

We are all living in a world where we are continuously targeted by thousands of commercial messages daily, some of them coming even from the least or not expected sources. “It is estimated that an average person comes across more than 1,500 commercial messages per day”. “The average person will see 250 television advertisements per week, 350 poster sites, and 400 press advertisements per week”. “Young people will see around 140,000 different ads between the ages of 4 and 18” (Kitchen, 1999:120).

Therefore, the role of the advertisers is very difficult nowadays since they have to fight to attract attention and interest of the consumers, create awareness about specific products, create positive attitudes and convince the audience that the particular brands presented are better than the competitive ones and of course to try to stimulate demand and consumption. All these tasks have to be implemented within the limited time restrictions of a TV commercial, or the limited space of a page advertisement, at the proper time and place. Thus the need for an in-depth research concerning the effectiveness of the messages given to potential buyers’ characteristics is more than necessary nowadays.

This survey concentrates on the television advertising messages. Always having in mind that “advertisers work to break down the commercial clutter” (Bartel-Sheehan, and Guo, 2005:79), and that “it is every company’s goal to gain the most from investments in advertising” (Zhou et al, 2003:1)-which involve really great amounts of money-this project was an effort on measuring TV advertising effectiveness and impact from different perspectives in Cyprus realities. All the influences of the TV commercials were determined based on diverse ages, genders, family statuses, residence, household sizes, and educational and income levels.

At the same research, repetition levels required were evaluated on their effectiveness to convince consumers buy the advertised products. The categories of products usually bought due to TV ads were identified too.

Furthermore, personal values and product characteristics were evaluated in their impact on yielding sales. Additionally, TV advertisements’ elements, such as the advertising scenarios, music backgrounds, pictures and photography illustrations, actors of the ads etc, were examined, to specify which of those gain consumers’ attention more easy breaking through

the clutter and influencing consumers most. TV advertising impact is then compared to alternative promotional means' impact.

The method of collecting data was through structured, standardised questionnaires, personally delivered to the 104 sample consumers. The survey concentrated on adult Cypriot residents living in the urban and rural district of Nicosia and the research findings were analysed with the use of SPSS and Excel packages.

To state some of the survey's findings, women were found not only to watch TV ads more often, but also to be more affected to buy the advertised products. Only 1 out of 4 persons, usually 18-39 years old, notice the brand names advertised, and just half of the consumers buy products advertised on TV. Convenience products are most frequently bought, with ad repetition empowering persuasion efforts. Mainly trust and usefulness issues are highlighted among the consumers that do not get convinced to buy. Children and women appeals, as well as celebrities, have a greater influence impact on the consumers, whereas creative scenarios, music, and photography illustrations also are considered enough. Pleasant and humorous ads are found to be more effective than serious ones. TV advertisements are a greater influencing force leading to purchases, compared to several alternative forms of advertising and promotion.

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Key words: Communication process, Promotion Mix, TV advertising, consumer behaviour, demographic and personal characteristics

Introduction

No doubt, today's consumers are living in a world surrounded by uncountable commercial messages and influence-persuasion efforts 24 hours daily. Those attempts are coming from everywhere, even from the least or not expected sources, and increase like a virus. Those are classified under the Promotion heading, the "communication of information between seller and potential buyer or others in the channel to influence attitudes and behavior" (Perreault, and McCarthy, 2002:392).

In such an environment, TV advertisements too give a fight to attract attention and interest of the consumers, so as to try to realize their objectives. That is, they try to inform consumers and create awareness about specific products (new or older ones, new uses of old products, price changes, discounts announcements, sales location specifications), or to create positive attitudes and convince the audience that the particular brands presented are better of the competitive ones, so they should prefer them, simultaneously stimulating demand and consumption. Moreover, TV ads play a "reminder" role to the consumers by refreshing their memory about a product/brand existence, or about a seasonal special offer, and indicate the consumers that they would probably need the product soon enough, or that they should buy it in order for them to be fashionable, etc. Those efforts are not easy tasks, especially if we consider that media fragmentation and advertising clutter grow with exponential trends, reducing the probabilities that an ad will be seen by the appropriate target markets. This reduced exposure directly indicates "noise" and failure rates in advertising effectiveness.

This research paper is an effort of measuring television advertisements' effectiveness and impact on the consumers, and exploring some of the population characteristics in relation to how specific groups of the consumers perceive, and react to, commercials. That is, it indicates some target markets/audiences where effectiveness is traced.

More specifically, this research investigates the TV ads' power in influencing purchases, giving an emphasis on ad repetition (Objective 1), and on the categories of products that are most often bought (Objective 2). Then the survey spots the degree to which advertised products' characteristics and personal values drive those purchases or other reactions (Objective 3), together with the advertising parameters' (advertising copy, actors/actresses, music background, humour, etc) impact (Objective 4). Following, comparisons among the impact that different forms of advertising and promotion have is presented (Objective 5). Last, and by collecting the information from Objectives 1-5, this survey tries to facilitate the involving decision makers by giving an overall picture regarding advertising effectiveness. Specifically, it aims at making it easier to schedule, plan, develop, and air the most

appropriate ads, at the right time, to the most absorbing audience, maximizing ad exposure to the targeted audience, maximizing influencing probabilities and response levels, minimizing costs, and saving media expenditures (Objective 6).

Literature Review

According to McKinsey and Co. (2006:1), by 2010 traditional TV advertising will be 1/3 as effective as it was in 1990, with a 37,0% reduction due to message saturation, 23,0% decrease because of switching offs, 15,0% decline coming from less purchasing power, and additional 9,0% based on limited attention resulting from multitasking. Even if those ratings were questioned by some researchers, they are not the only ones involving negative predictions concerning TV advertising and the yielding effectiveness. Together with the fact that consumers are no more the “passive victims of the 1950s and 1960s mass production and mass communication techniques” (Briefly, 2002:243), but are rather powerful, active, experienced, and educated human beings, tired and saturated from being targeted by promotional arrows asking for their money, effectiveness levels are very much questioned. Undertaking numerous kinds of research in order to identify, understand, and measure advertising effectiveness and impact on the consumers has a long history back across the years. Efforts in those fields have engaged researchers since many decades ago. Important understanding and knowledge was collectively gained, sometimes with contradicting results generating even more studies, and with new methodologies being developed continuously to toss some more light in the whole issue, and under the continuously changing relevant environments. In this section a few recent journal articles were studied deeper, emphasizing on their findings regarding advertising effectiveness.

To begin with, Tellis et al (2005) carried out a really comprehensive and in-depth research focusing on the data that are more important for the managers; they simultaneously addressed issues such as “which ad works, in which medium or vehicle, at what time of the day, at what level of repetition, and for how long”. Creative cues of the ads, as well as ad and market ages were also taken into consideration in their analysis, to find out why the ads work or not work, evaluating at the same time the sales effect of the television advertisements. Their research made a use of a “two-stage hierarchical design” model.

Key findings of that study revealed that the advertising carryover effect becomes weak and less influential very quickly, almost disappearing in 8 hours. This carryover effect maximizes on the daytime, just after the ad is aired. Moreover, advertisements’ effects form different patterns according to the time of the day the ads are aired and according to the day of the week they are broadcasted. Furthermore, and in accordance with Steward’s findings, the new creative, when it is effective, it is effective right away. Their study also indicates that even though an advertisement may be effective, this does not necessarily mean that it is profitable

too. Even in the case of the same brand's ads, their effectiveness and profitability levels significantly vary. Advertisements creative cues, media channels, and market age are important factors for this effectiveness variance. Thus, advertisements that are based on arguments, or that have "expert sources, and negatively framed messages" are more effective in new markets, whereas emotionally filled ones, with positive messages seem to be more effective in older markets.

Moving on, Norris et al (2003) have realized that survey studies usually indicate positive or encouraging findings regarding participants' attitude towards contexts and advertising effectiveness, whilst experimental studies usually end up in negative relationships. They believe that this happens due to the methodologies and research designs followed, and due to the overall situations' characteristics in which those studies take place. Their project involved setting "comfortable home-style settings" (Norris et al, 2003:596), where participants were allowed to bring friends, chat, drink refreshments, read magazines, or even exit the room while watching TV-things they could normally do in their home environment. The difference in their approach was that the participants had the chance to choose between 4 different kinds of programs to watch (they could not change their selection), therefore they had the right to selective exposure. Programs were interrupted twice for unfamiliar commercial messages. Questionnaires followed to measure recall and recognition of ads and products/brands, intentions to buy, as well as for other kinds of measurements.

Participants remembered better the ads aired in the first break rather than in the second. As the authors state, attitudes towards ads, towards brands, and towards intentions to purchase the products seen on the ads positively and significantly correlated with recall and recognition of the ads (Norris et al, 2003:601). By having the opportunity for selective exposure, that is, by choosing to watch a program that was more involving to them, participants better recalled advertisements interrupting that program. Moreover, the more "entertaining, enjoyable, and involving" a program was, the better it were the recognition and the attitudes towards the ads that followed, and the greater the probabilities of buying the advertised products. Those conclusions can be explained in the light of the more attention the participants paid to the programs in such occasions, and therefore in the maximized probabilities to watch and produce stronger memories for the advertisements shown at that time.

The research also pinpointed that the participants were more able to remember the ads for which they kept more positive attitudes regarding the brands advertised. Also, the participants' intentions to purchase the products seen on advertisements correlated with the brand/product names' recognition on behalf of the participants. Recall and recognition was not found to be affected significantly by participants' gender. Age, however, played a role, since the older participants (mostly of age 60 and above) were significantly negatively

affected concerning recall and recognition, something that can be explained by the “memory decline” phenomenon that is present specifically in older ages.

The above findings are a common place among other surveys that allowed selective exposure (though not choosing a program to watch), and with those surveys taking place in different time periods. As Norris et al report in their book, Smith (1956), Twyman (1974), Krugman (1983), and Thorson et al (1987), are some of the researchers that found equivalent results. Experimental research without selective exposure though, conducted by Kennedy (1971), Bryant and Comisky (1978), and Thorson and Reeves (1986), for instance, resulted in the opposite findings, mainly due to methodological procedures. (Norris et al, 2003:601).

Also, based on the fact that quite considerable amounts of capitals are spent on advertising campaigns, and that plenty of time and efforts are devoted on designing and developing those campaigns, as well as on spotting the more appropriate media to broadcast the ads, measuring reach and target market characteristics, the question of whether at the end all those worth it in terms of really having an impact on the consumers arises. TV advertising in Cyprus enjoys significantly highest expenditure levels compared to any other forms of advertising (£25 millions on TV ads versus £7 millions on printed ads, £4 millions on radio ads, £3 millions on street ads, and £2 millions in new means such as the internet, email advertising, banners etc; Mourettou, 2006).

Research Objectives

More specifically, this project’s focus and objectives are to:

- 1) Discover if consumers are convinced to buy products that are advertised through television and state the reasons that discourage purchases where that holds. Also, spot which level of ad repetition is usually needed to lead into purchases
- 2) Find out what categories of products are usually more possible to be bought because of this specific kind of advertisements
- 3) Determine the degree to which the advertised brands’/products’ characteristics and consumers’ personal values influence purchasing behavior
- 4) Discover which of the advertisements’ aspects (scenario/advertising copy, actors, music background, pictures and photography, etc) gain the consumers’ attention more easily and influence their buying behavior the most
- 5) Compare television advertisements’ purchasing impact on consumers with the impact of alternative forms of advertising and promotion.
- 6) Collect the information from Objectives 1-5 and present it in a way that it will facilitate advertisers and everyone else concerned to segment the markets, give a better picture regarding advertising and its effectiveness levels, and guide future schedules. Also, make it easier to plan, develop, and air the most appropriate ads at the right time, and to the

most absorbing audience, so as to maximize ad exposure to the desired target audience, maximizing influencing probabilities and response levels, and minimize costs, resulting in media expenditures' savings

Research Methodology

The method of collecting data was through structured questionnaires. Adult participants of all age range, living in urban or rural Nicosia were asked to deposit their perceptions, feelings, beliefs, attitudes behaviour, and experiences regarding the in study subject.

This research aims at measuring television advertisements' effectiveness and impact on the consumers. To achieve that, this research investigates the degree to which people as buyers are affected by the television commercials. Eight Hypothesis were set on the above mentioned six main objectives in order to help the researchers to design their questionnaires. These hypotheses were set based on the gender (Hypothesis 1), age (hypothesis 2), Place of Residence (Hypothesis 3), family status (Hypothesis 4), size of the household size (Hypothesis 5), Family Income (Hypothesis 6), Participants' income levels (Hypothesis 7), and Educational levels (Hypothesis 8).

A random sample of 104 Cyprus residents living in the Nicosia district was reached. 53 of the participants (51%) in this study were men, and 51 (49%) were women. The majority of the sample population was found to be in their 18-39 years old (41 persons or 39,4% were of ages 18-24, and exactly the same percentage was in their 25-39). 15 persons (14,4%) were 40-54 years old, 6 persons (5,8%) were 55-69 years old, and finally 1 person (1,0%) was older than 70 years old. Quantitative data was mostly selected with a small presence of qualitative data too. Quantitative data aided theory evaluation, research design, and generalization of the results. Qualitative data, though capturing respondents' words, somehow complicated the questions' analysis. Every questionnaire consisted of 25 questions-(most of them of a Likert Scale type) and each respondent devoted approximately 15 minutes of their time for its completion. The answers collected were analyzed through SPSS and Excel and presented in using yielding graphs and statistics for better interpretation and understanding of the findings.

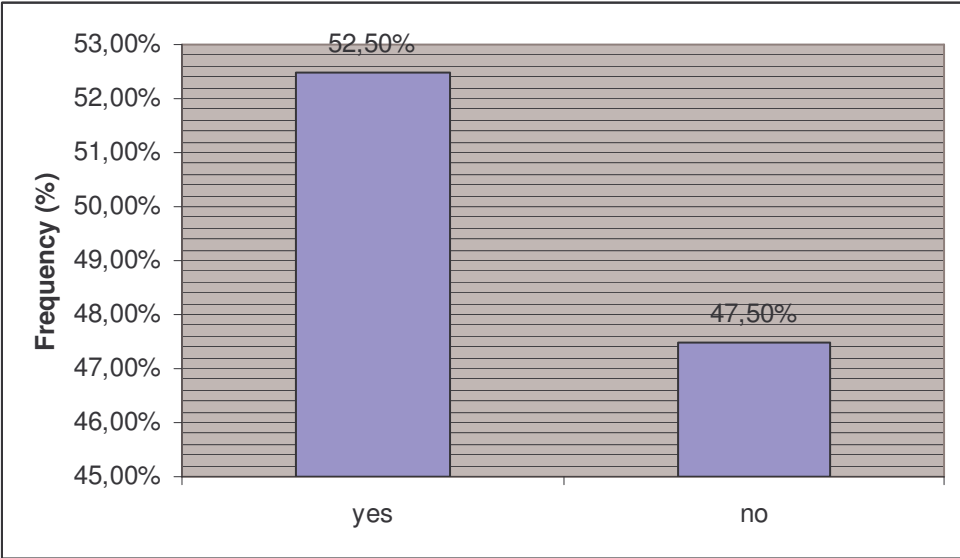
Research findings:

Objective 1: TV Advertising Effectiveness, Sales, and Repetition

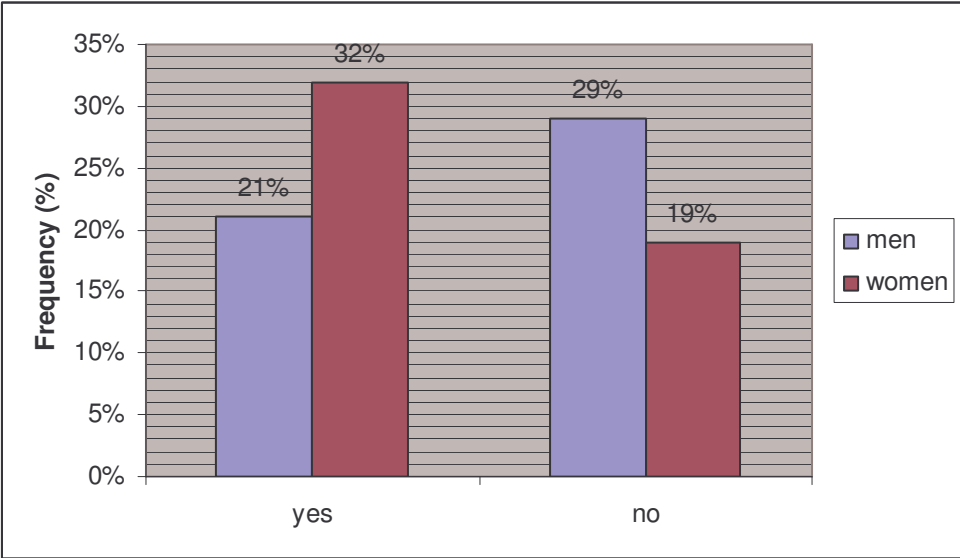
In measuring TV advertising effectiveness on sales to satisfy the 1st Objective, 52,5% of the sample population admitted that they do buy products due to TV advertisements, but a relatively close, high percentage of the sample consumers (47,5%) said they are not affected to buy (Graph1.a). Sex appeared to be a statistically significant parameter in the consumers' influence to buy something due to TV ads ($\chi^2=0,037$, Hypothesis 1 confirmed). Specifically, women tend to buy products seen on TV (32%) more often than men (21%), whilst most men

avoid that (29%, as opposed to 19% of women), as Graph 1.b shows. Age was not found to affect advertising influence on buying behavior; neither did residence era (city/village) or family status, household size or educational level (Hypotheses 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 rejected). Somehow surprisingly, income levels also do not matter (Hypothesis 7 rejected), but this is mainly because most advertised products involve low-priced items, not absorbing a great share of their incomes. On the other hand, brand notice when watching the ads did not proved to necessarily be that strong to lead to sales of those brands, coming in contradiction with other researchers' findings that people buy the products that first come in their mind-due to TV advertisements.

Graph.1.a: Do you buy products due to TV ads? (Overall responses)



Graph.1.b: Do you buy products due to TV ads? (Criterion gender)



During Christmas, Eastern and other celebration periods or seasonal happenings in particular, consumers are found to be more affected to buy products advertised, as 46,3% of the

respondents (mostly women) note, with a percentage of 19,4% (mostly men) to disagree and 20,9% (equally divided to both sexes) to remain neutral about this statement.

The high percentages of the consumers that do not buy products due to TV ads are largely explained by their “not trusting ads” feelings, as the consumers themselves state. Most of those consumers said they do not trust ads or are not convinced, since they question ads’ credibility, believing that the TV commercials are phony, unrealistic, and “designed to mislead”, “manipulate”, and “take advantage of the consumers”, for sales sake. As one consumer emphasized, “most products do not do what they claim to do-and that is tested”.

The second more important reason for not buying was that consumers tend to buy the things they really need and are useful to them and not those that are advertised well, or because the ads attract their attention and interest on products they would otherwise not buy. Moreover, many others state that they only buy the products they have bought or tested before and liked the best, or products recommended by a closed friend, and that only if there is a great special offer advertised they will be convinced to buy.

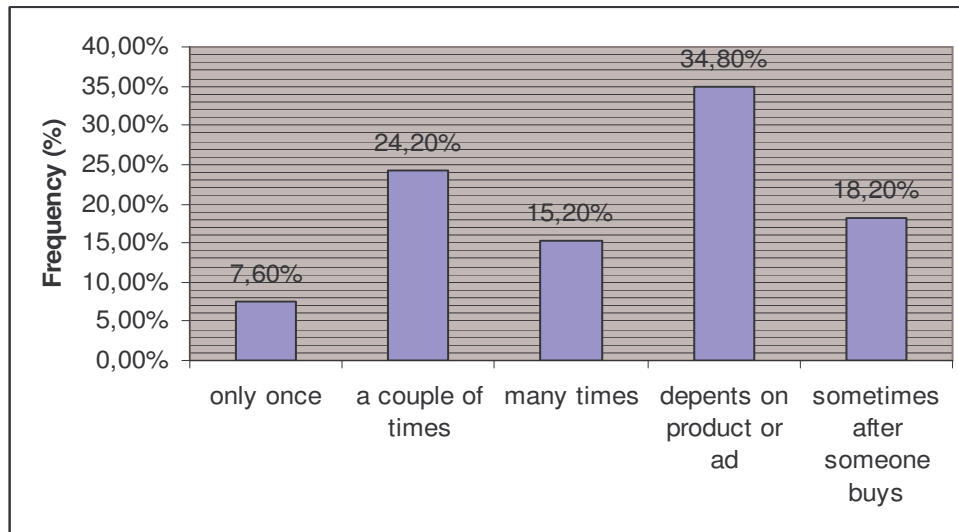
Moreover, different consumers noted that they do not perceive the information received through the ads as adequate and thus they do not get convinced to buy. Additional explanations mentioned were among others that consumers do not give a necessary level of attention to the ads, they do not notice or they do not remember product/brand names advertised so as to look for them while shopping, or even that they do not think the ads while making their purchases. A person also noticed that “because most of the TV commercials are for products that worth less than £5, I do not bother to listen to was it is said in the ads”. Moreover, ads are not a guarantee for a product to be good; therefore ads are not that important to them. Furthermore, some others said they are watching the ads just to get informed for new products, whilst some more wrote they see ads only to watch the ideas about the creative scenarios, or to get entertained. Then, some others clarified they choose products seen on the shelves-based on their own critiques they evaluate them, rank their needs and wants, and buy accordingly.

Now, as far as ad repetition frequency is concerned, a percentage of 7.6% of the consumers stated that seeing an ad only once is enough for them to be lead into a purchase if they are interested in the advertised products (Graph.1.3). That, if true in general, would be relatively important news for the advertisers and all they would have to do would be to present their products in a way that those products would be more broadly liked.

Most consumers, though, and as expected, stated that the number of times they have to see an ad before they are convinced to buy depends on the product or depends on the ad (34.8%). Information collection was the second more important reason of defining the ad repetition to them before they are convinced to try the product (24.2%), whereas 18,2% need to see an ad

some more times after they hear that somebody in their relevant environment bought a specific product advertised on TV. 15,2% does not get convinced unless it is exposed to an ad for many times-therefore for that group of consumers repeating ads' broadcasting indeed makes a difference towards buying behavior. Repetition impact is shown below.

Graph 1.3: What level of ad repetition is convincing?



This is consistent to what Braun-La Tour, and La Tour (2004:49) note on Edell's, and Koller's findings (1989), that the more the TV ads are repeated, their repetition creates a change in the consumers' memory structure. Of course those researchers study ads that were shown for years, but still, they note that this effect stands for the first airings of the ads too, prolonging their wear-out effect. MacInnis et al (2002:391) also support that ad repetition and exposure are critical in creating precursors to sales, such as favorable attitudes and associations towards brands, as well as recall and memory enhancements. Moreover, ad repetition is vital for small brands and for products in growing categories. Additionally, Zhou et al (2003) also agree that repeated advertising is crucial for building and maintaining brand image and sales.

Objective 2: Product Categories Bought Due to TV Ads

In questions revealing what products do consumers usually buy due to TV ads (Objective's 2 fulfillment), Hypotheses 1, 2, 4 and 6 hold. Most of the respondents of both sexes said they buy personal products (27,9%) with a slightly higher percentage for women and for consumers aged 18-39. Specifically, shampoos and shower gels receive a great share of those purchases. Additionally, chocolates, beauty products, sanitary towels, toothpastes, and magazines, are the personal products that most females of ages 18-39 prefer, whereas males of the same ages mentioned buying chewing-gums, magazines, and clothing. Men 40-79 years old are most influenced by TV ads that promote electrical appliances, and are usually led into radio, and TV purchases. Personal purchases are found to be highly correlated with

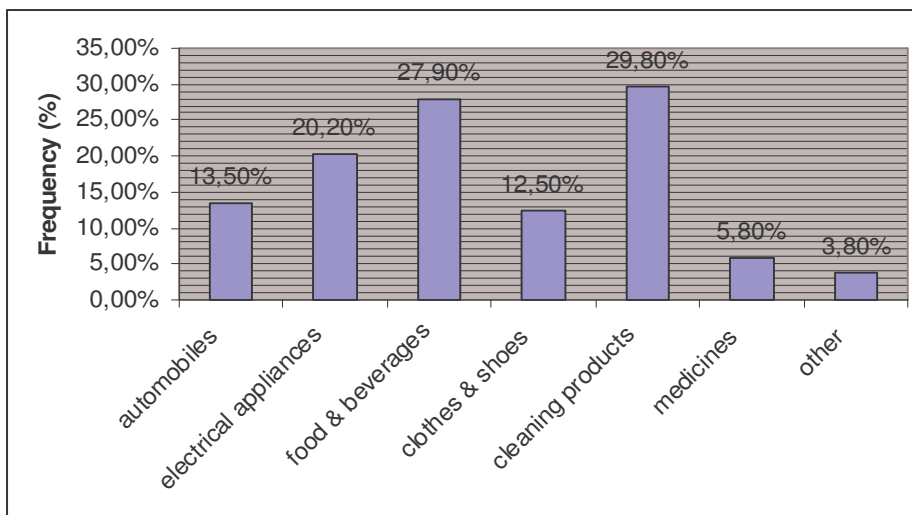
the number of persons having a job in a household; the more people having a job, the higher are the purchases for personal products ($\chi^2=0,001$), a quite logical result.

Family products follow (26%). Those are mainly bought by women (18 women, while only 9 men, $\chi^2=0,010$), and they are bought in greater frequencies when respondents are married ($\chi^2=0,010$). Family products purchased based on TV ads typically concern house-cleaning items (26.2%, with 4 out of 5 consumers buying them being women of all ages ($\chi^2=0,000$)), and products for washing the clothes-with Dixan and Comfort brands to gain the battle. Food supplies and beverages (24.5%) are also found to be one of the major product categories in which ads are effective in buying, with the purchases generated by both, men and women. Chocolates, biscuits, chips, cereals (Kellogg's' All Bran, and Coco Pops more frequently noticed), and coffees (such as Nescafé) are some related products that have been cited too. Clothes and shoes (11.01%), and medicines (5.11%), as well as bank services, restaurants, air fresheners (Ampi-Pur), and Pampers Dry were other product categories discussed (3.35%). Gift purchases, come last (18.3%), and are again mostly bought by women.

In general, most of the products pointed out to be bought due to TV ads are convenience products. They are therefore by nature bought and used more frequently in our everyday life, are found in every household, and have little involvement required, therefore little risk perceived, since they do not cost much. Some of them are bought on sight or habit that is without much thought or consideration, while there are great chances that the same products/brands have been bought before. At the same time though, and as their price is quite low too, convenience products seen n TV may have great chances to be taken for a trial, as our findings suggest.

On the other hand, our findings suggest that income is important when electrical appliances such as radios, TV sets, washing machines, and PDAs (17.8%), are bought, as well as when automobiles (11.89) are bought, whereas they are bought mostly by consumers that watch the relevant TV advertisements frequently or at least sometimes, indicating the importance of ad repetition and collective memory in the durable and higher involvement decision-demanding products.

Graph 2: What do you usually buy due to TV ads?

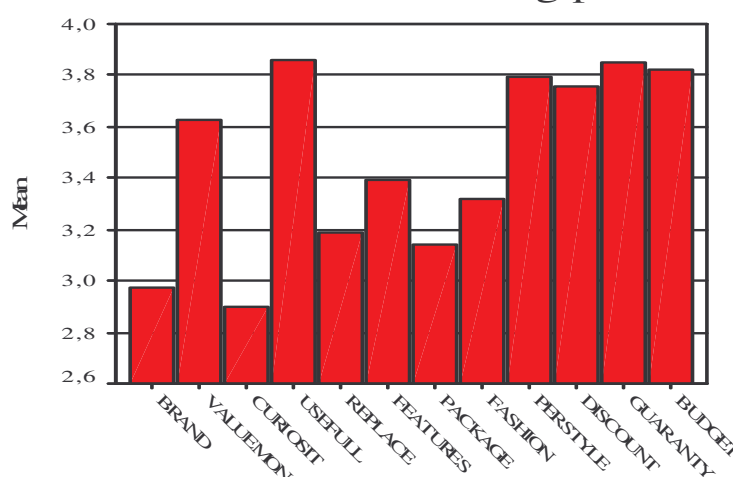


Objective 3: Factors Influencing Purchasing Behavior on the Subject of TV Commercials

In an attempt to evaluate the product characteristics and the consumers' values that influence purchases in relation to the TV commercials (Objective 3), the participants were asked to define the extent to which relevant selected factors have an impact on each one of them individually (Graph 3). Usefulness of an advertised product is one of the most important factors that affect consumers. 38,5% of our sample said that they are very much affected by that factor, and another 25,0% that they consider it enough. 22,1% buy products seen on TV somehow based on their usefulness, and the remaining 13,4% are affected little or nothing from products' usefulness.

Graph 3: Personal and advertised products' characteristics influencing purchases

Advertised products' and personal characteristics influencing purchases



It seems that products' features are of great influence too, indicating whether a purchase of the advertised products will occur or not, since 44.3% of our respondents claimed they consider those in an important degree. A lower percentage (32.7%) stated that they could be a

factor to think of, whereas 18.3% of the participants said that they are only little affected. 4.8% do not believe that the features of the advertised products would lead them to a purchase. No relationship is found to exist among products' features and any of the population demographics, indicating that independence among them is present (all Hypotheses rejected).

However, advertised products' package, dimensions, and appearance in general seem not to leave the consumers untouched. In particular, 1 out of 5 consumers state that they have a very strong influence on them (20.2%), whereas, with exactly the same frequency consumers admit they are affected enough. Somehow affected is the 24.0% of the respondents and even with little influence those factors have their impact on the important percentage of 25.0% of some other consumers. Only 10.6% state that package, appearance, and dimensions of an advertised product leave them completely indifferent.

Surprisingly, it has been revealed through this research that the latter parameters have more influence on younger consumers. That influence diminishes with age increase ($\chi^2=0,040$, Hypothesis 2 accepted). Moreover, package, dimensions, and overall appearance impact of the products increases with the consumers' income levels. That is, the consumers who receive higher income tend to more easily get influenced by the specific parameters ($\chi^2=0,041$, Hypothesis 7 accepted). This is perhaps not only due to the package but also due to the fact they have more disposable income in their hands, and they therefore have a greater comfort in spending money in buying something they liked just from its appearance.

Then, the biggest proportion of the respondents assess of a great value the guarantees and warranties behind the advertised products (34.6% stated they get very much affected, and 32.7% that they are affected enough). Important are also the percentages of those supporting they receive influence in a lower degree (18.3% are influenced somehow and 11.5% little). Only 2.9% claim they do not assess guarantees and warranties as a factor interfering with their purchasing decisions.

Consumers also confirmed that in order to acquire a product, that product has to be highly matched with their personal style (36.5%), or at least matched enough (33.7%). This is a quite expectable trend, as people choose products based on their own criteria and personal preferences. Some identification with their style is enough for 9.6% of the sample to buy a product seen on TV, while 13.5% said that it is not that necessary for a product to be matched to their style. Merely 6.7% assured they would buy something even if it did not matched with their personal style at all. Consumers most affected by this factor are those living in the city (Hypothesis 3 holds).

Consumers' disposable income, mostly for the lowered paid consumers, but for the well paid ones too as indicated by this research, plays a dominant aspect in their purchasing decisions (36.5%), or at least it affects them enough (26.9%), or somehow (22.1%). Only 11.5% stated

that they are little affected by their income. That segment of the market involves people up to an income level of £15,000 a year, but surprisingly mostly concerns people receiving up to £5,000 a year (probably due to many low-involvement products that would have been bought anyway, no matter brand names). Then, income is not an involving parameter for 2.9% of the population, and particularly for the £10,001-20,000 income levels range. The £10,001-15,000 category seems to be the least one affected by income when buying products, but people having higher than those incomes consider their money most when shopping (Hypothesis 7 accepted). People aged 25-39 are the first concerning their budgets the most, followed by aged 40-54 and 55-69 consumers. Adults 18-24 come after. Nobody aged 70 or more indicated income as an important parameter, but this may be due to the lack of more consumers of that age in our sample (Hypothesis 2 holds). Women, on the other hand are those that appear to be mostly influenced by budget levels (Hypothesis 1 holds).

Special offers and discounts advertised on TV are some additional major affection parameters too, no matter of the consumers' gender, age, or income levels (corresponding Hypotheses rejected). They are very much effective among the 34.6% of the sample population, whilst they affect enough another 28.8%. Additionally, more than one fifth of the sample (21.2%) is somehow affected, whilst 8.7% little affected, and 6.7% not affected at all.

Value for money is a crucial indicator for purchases for the 29.8% of the participants, at the moment where an additional 31.7% of them are considering this parameter enough too. A percentage of 30.8% does not really worry about that, and the remaining 7.7% claim they do not even think it as a factor for buying what they want.

Almost half of the population (45.2%) choose advertised products that follow the trends of the market or that are fashionable at the time advertised. 28.8% argue that they are just somehow affected by market trends and fashion, whereas 13.5% and 12.5% respectively say that they are little or not at all influenced. Much or less, as claimed by the results of this study, both sexes are affected by the same degree regarding fashion. Adults up to 39 years old are more possible to be biased towards fashionable products (expectable result), with people 40-54 years old following slightly below, whereas oldest ones have little concern about that (Hypothesis 2 accepted). Educated persons that have a university/college degree, a master or a doctorate are the most fashion-addicted consumers (Hypothesis 8 accepted).

Moving on, not all Cypriot residents seem to be brand loyal consumers. Specifically, only 11.5%, half men and half women, claim to be so much brand-driven that they would not really consider buying something advertised unless it is a product of a brand they prefer, confirming Zhou et al (2003) finding that "buyers tend to stick to the brands they have purchased before". In cases like those, "consumers are highly motivated to process brand information in an ad, and critically examine arguments that speak to the products' quality", as MacInnis et al (2002:392) state. Also, they continue, ads "are most effective when they

contain rational cues that credibly demonstrate the benefits of a product compared with competitive offerings”. Then, another 26.0% considers enough the product/brand names advertised, but they might buy something else too, whilst 26.0% of the participants may take into account the product/brand name but this will not be a determinant factor to exclude any competitive products. Much less importance is placed by a portion of 21.2%, whereas a considerable market share of 15.4% does not bother at all about the pre-mentioned factor.

No relation seems to exist between sex, age, income, or education levels and brand loyalty (Hypotheses 1, 2, 7, and 8 rejected). This is perhaps due to the fact that all product categories are taken into consideration. Moreover, there are products/brands preferred that do not involve great amounts of money, but on the contrary they are cheap enough that the difference they make is not that obvious. This is true especially for the convenience products, for example, which may be bought regularly and at the same time involve specific brand preferences, but this does not have an important influence on lower or higher income levels’ population, for instance.

Going a step further, 25 out of 100 of the consumers would consider replacing a product they use with a substitute one advertised on TV, whereas 15.4% of the participants would consider such a replacement very much. About one third of the rest (31.7%) would not disclose such a possibility, and 19.2% could just think of it. However, 8.7% choose to remain faithful to the products they use (or choose an alternative otherwise-not from TV ads). Again gender, sex and the other population characteristics do not differentiate the results in a specific way.

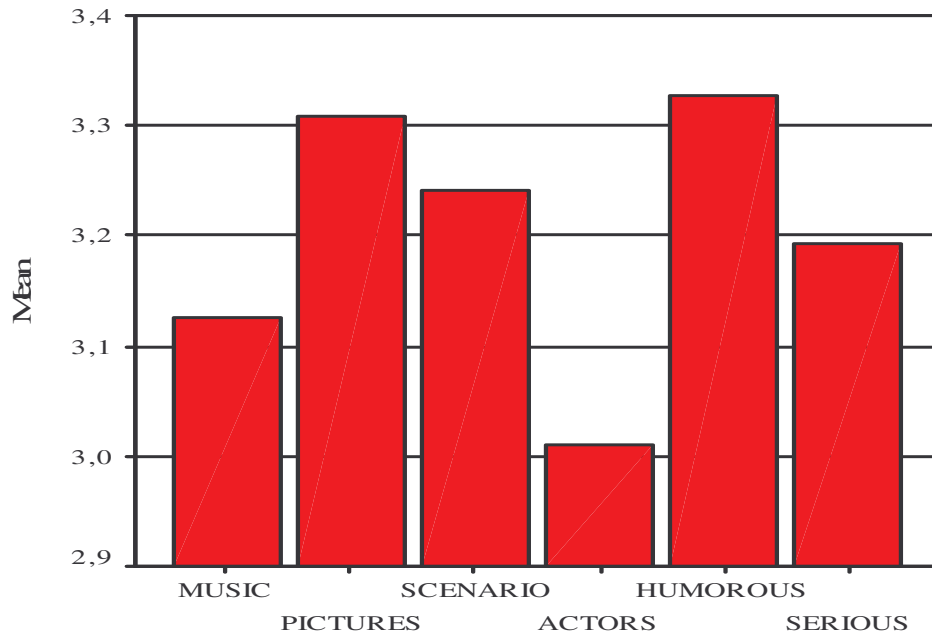
Curiosity created by TV commercials seems to be relatively in favor of the advertised products/brands, since 26.9% of the participant consumers are led to purchases because of the curiosity generated to them from the TV ads. 60.6% of the remaining consumers are also somehow or little affected to buy by curiosity. Barely 12.5% manage to stay untouched.

Objective 4: Advertisements Characteristics’ Effectiveness

Moving a step further, we went with examining Objective’s 4 inquiries, and specifically the audio-visual and other characteristics of the TV ads on how effective they are on influencing respondents’ consumption behavior (through the emotional and physiological arousal they cause-as the theory supports). Graph 4 illustrates this effectiveness.

Graph 4.: Advertisements’ characteristics’ impact

Advertisements' characteristics' impact



Analysis of the impact of each advertising characteristic

1. Advertisements' Scenario

We found that TV advertisements' scenario is crucial for 17.3% of the respondents in leading them in purchase decisions about the products/brands seen on those ads. It is also taken enough into consideration by a proportion of 29.8%, and it does not leave without an influence another 41.3%. Though, 11.5% of our sample say that advertising scenario is not a factor that would neither lead them nor keep them apart from the advertised products/brands. Advertising scenario parameter does not discriminate against sex, age, residence, family status, or otherwise (all Hypotheses rejected).

Emphasis is placed in the cases where the advertisements' scenarios are creative or have more originality, since then the 55.2% of the consumers tend to be lead into purchases, with 11.9% of them to be strongly influenced. 23.9% stay neutral in a more creative ad, whilst 20.9% say that they are not affected at all. Both sexes are more or less equally influenced, while age biases do not seem to exist (Hypotheses 1 and 2 rejected).

2. Music Backgrounds

Music backgrounds generate arousal that is much or very much possible to lead to purchases almost half of the audience (49.0%). It can also be effective in a more limited degree to another 29.8% of the consumers, even though a remaining 21.2% claims not to be influenced to buy anything due to the TV ads' music and jingle sound. City residents are most likely to be affected than village residents, although this is not a really statistically significant indication ($\chi^2=0,051$).

TV advertisements' pictures and photography are an even greater influencing parameter for the consumers, since 51.9% of them are much or very much affected. Though, 37.5% are less affected by pictures and photography, a percentage bigger than the one found in music parameter. Pictures and photography are ineffective only for 10.6% of the sample population. The single indication for a relationship existence among our variables is a weak one, among pictures and photography of the ads and the income levels of the respondents ($\chi^2=0,046$, Hypothesis 7 confirmed).

All in all, consumers tend to identify themselves with brands for which their ads give out an image that is well appreciated and admired by the specific consumers. Creative scenarios, music cues and "visually appealing pictures" target consumers' feelings-the more positive their emotions aroused are, the more favorable would be the ads' influences to the consumers, and the more positive the brand attitudes and choices that would be yielded, as MacInnis et al (2002:393) support. However, sometimes ads' music background, pictures and photography, as well as the overall advertising scenario may over-attract audience's attention, distracting it from the advertisement's message ("noise"). Therefore, those ads fail to communicate the right messages to the consumers, and consequently reduce advertisements' effectiveness. (MacInnis et al, 2002:400).

4. Pleasant, Humorous, and Serious Ads

Literature findings from many researchers support the view that TV ads that evoke positive feelings are more possible to catch consumers' attention and be encoded and remembered, making the wear-out procedure more slow (MacInnis et al, 2002:398). Moreover, when those ads are aired, greater chances exist that the consumers would watch them before changing a channel. Additionally, positive moods generated can positively bias the assessment of the advertised brands. Pleasant and humorous ads are an example of ads creating such feelings among the consumers. However, literature findings regarding humorous ads claim ambiguous effects on the consumers, perhaps due to the fact that each consumer perceives different things as being humorous (MacInnis et al, 2002:394).

In the case of this research the results point out that pleasant or humorous ads may be very much effective for almost 1 out of 4 persons (24.0%) and additionally much effective for 27.9% of the consumers. Somewhat effective appear to be for about 1 out of 5 persons (19.2%) and little effective for 14.4%-the same proportion for the rest of the respondents who are not convinced to buy as a result of the humor filling the ads.

On the other hand, though, more serious ads seem to have a really positive impact for 17.3% of consumers when buying, a percentage that is less than the pleasant or humorous ads' impact. Additionally 23.1% are much affected when ads are more serious, whereas those who are somehow or little affected reach the 28.8% and 23.1% respectively. This category of ads

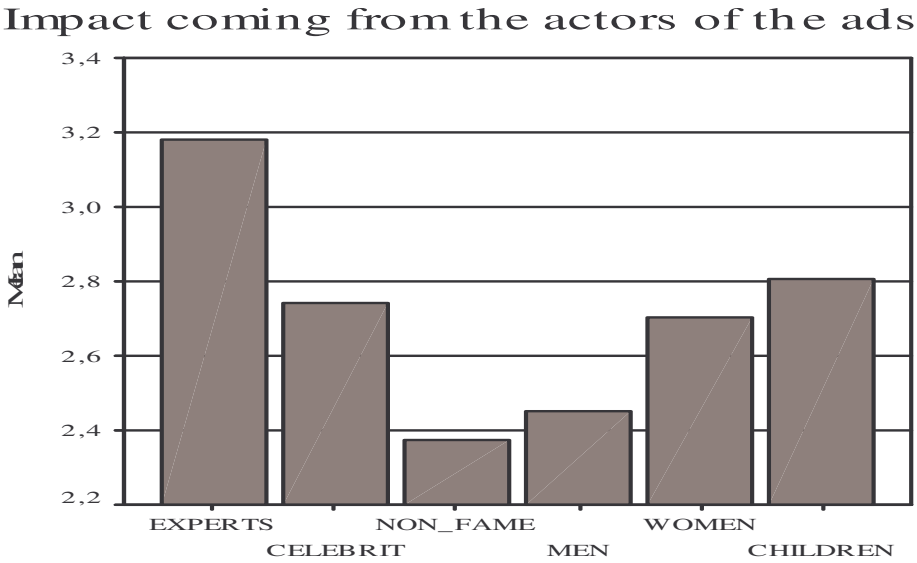
seems not to be effective towards sales for hardly 7.7% of the respondents. A relationship appears to exist among more serious ads and the district where consumers live. Specifically, a greater percentage of the population that lives in the urban region of Nicosia seems to be more affected compared with the share of the population living in rural Nicosia.

5. Actors of the Commercials

Then, in a question where the participants were asked to rate the influence they receive from the actors of the TV commercials, equally 19.2% answered they are very much or much influenced in their purchases. 23.1% and 20.2% respectively affirmed that advertisements’ actors shape their choices somehow or little, and a relatively high share of 18.3% denied being affected to buy due to the TV commercials’ actors. Again people living in the city appeared to be more affected than the village residents ($\chi^2=0,018$, Hypothesis 3 accepted).

Getting more precise about advertisements’ actors, experts or specialists on the field regarding the advertised products arouse a “credible source” feeling and yield a great amount of influence for the 43.3% of the respondents, whereas another 44.3% is sometimes affected but to a lower extend (Graph 4.a). Experts and specialists, though, do not manage to effectively promote the products to 12,5% of the consumers. Married people are the group where experts and specialists are more convincing in their interference, followed by the single ones and then by those living with a partner. Half of the divorced/separated people in this research are completely convinced and the other half is completely not affected by experts/specialists (Hypothesis 4 confirmed). Income levels do matter too, as well as educational levels, with doctorate holders being more easily convinced than the rest ones, followed by bachelor degree holders, and master graduates, and then by those that have finished primary school (Hypotheses 7 and 8 hold).

Graph 4.a: Impact coming from the actors/actresses of the ads



Celebrities on the other hand indeed appear to be an effective source of impact in making consumers to consider buying an advertised product (33.7%), compared with non-famous actors' impact (18.3%). This is also supported by Lee, and Browne (1995) on studying TV ads' effects on teenagers. These authors believe that this is because the positive feelings of respect and admiration people keep for famous people tend to be extended to the messages and the products of the advertisements. Remarkable, though, is the high percentage of people remaining apathetic by both group of actors (26.9% in both cases), especially if we consider that for music and photography elements of the ads people who were not affected were less. Celebrities have a stronger impact on the more educated people ($\chi^2=0,017$, Hypothesis 8 holds), but a more effective relation exists between non-famous ad actors and people living in the city ($\chi^2=0,035$, Hypothesis 3 accepted) rather than those living in a village. Non-celebrities mostly affect persons living with their partner, then the married ones, and then the single consumers, whereas divorced/separated people seem not to be affected by non-celebrities ($\chi^2=0,046$, Hypothesis 4 holds). Moreover, non-celebrities mostly affect the highest income receivers, a percentage that decreases among the consumers as their income decreases ($\chi^2=0,004$, Hypothesis 7 holds).

Now, as far as the ads players' gender is concerned, compared with male actors' impact, women actresses make advertisements being more effective to both, men and women consumers. This conclusion is of course quite expected. Attractive, sexy women appeals (often in a quite revealing wearing) are presented in the TV ads in order to capture consumers' attention more easily, and hoping for higher brand recall levels (Lin, 1998:463), usually fulfill the advertising objectives. Moreover, by presenting such women images, it is a way of generating more positive attitudes for the advertised brands, leading to greater communication effectiveness, and finally to sales, as some researchers indicates. Caballero, and Madden, though, in their research in 1989 ended up with little evidence supporting that purchase decisions are more driven from attractive actresses. In our survey, 31.7% of the female consumers and 33.7% of male ones believe that they are completely indifferent to the advertisements' players' gender in getting affected to buy a product.

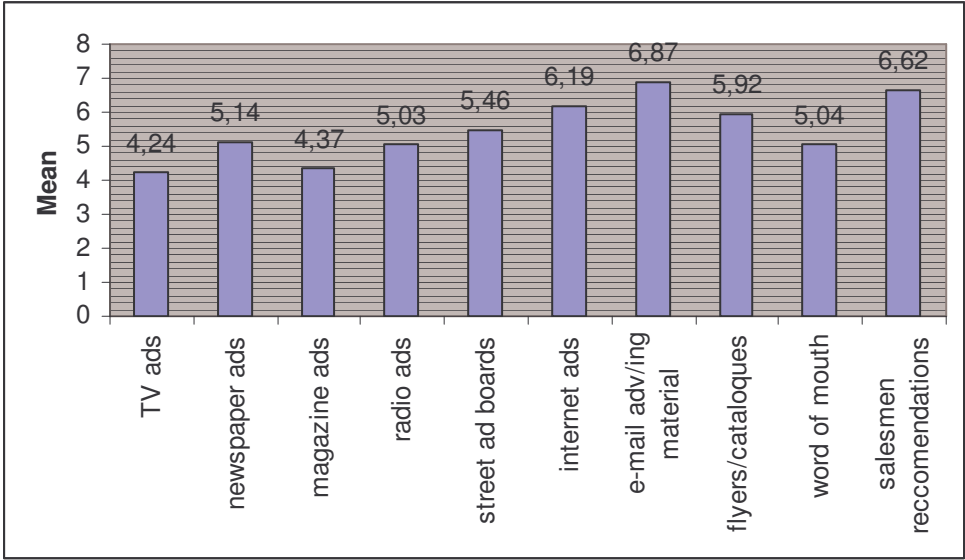
Children appeals in TV ads indeed turn to make the ads more effective. Many participants though stated being little or not at all affected to buy an advertised product due to the male or female appeals, they have admitted being affected by children seen on the ads. Advertisers take advantage of the fact that children are by nature cute and move people, and try to pass these feelings to their products, with the intend to motivate consumers buy the products. The 27.9% of the respondents declared not being influenced to buy due to children's met in ads, but we have to consider that this percentage includes single or other people that do not have children and that do not need to buy products relating to children (given that many children involving ads have to do with children products).

Objective 5: TV Commercials’ Influences compared to impact from alternative forms of Advertising and Promotion

Moving on, an effort to compare and evaluate the impact the TV advertisements and other forms of advertising and promotion have on consumers’ was made, so as to answers the research’s last Objective. A very small percentage (6.0%) declares that it is definitely more affected by TV commercials rather by any other form of advertising, followed by an important percentage (31.3%) that indeed agrees being affected most by TV ads. 1/3 of the consumers places itself in a neutral affection level (32.8%), with about 1 out of 5 persons denying such a statement (22.4%) and a small percentage definitely disagreeing that it is most influenced by TV commercials (7.5%). No important relationships are identified for those attitudes regarding gender, age, or any other population characteristic (all Hypotheses rejected).

In an additional question, an attempt was made to contrast and compare influences of advertising from different media, so as to briefly gain a very general picture about which media are more likely to give out more effective advertisements to the consumers. Thus, advertising through several media as well as some other promoting means were presented to the respondents, and the latter were asked to put those in the order they believe that they could affect them in their buying decisions (Graph 5).

Graph 5: Comparing effectiveness levels of promotional media
(The lower the mean, the higher its effectiveness)



As waiting for, but not that confirming the previously mentioned question, TV advertisements were indeed found to generate the highest levels of effectiveness and having the highest impact to the consumers’ buying behavior ($\mu=4,24$), leaving other promoting means well

behind. Being more precise, 1/4 of the participants stated that TV advertising is the number one influencing factor in their purchasing decisions, whereas 1 out of other 4 consumers admitted that TV ads come second in their impact to them. More than another fourth included TV ads in the 5 first more involving to them promotional means, and only 1 out of 10 persons claimed that TV ads is the least influencing factor for them. TV advertisements are more effective among women in generating purchases, whereas consumers 55-69 years old, followed by those of 25-39, and 18-24 years old, mainly the single ones are more influenced (Hypotheses 1, 2 and 4 hold).

Magazine advertising comes immediately after ($\mu=4.37$), and it is followed by radio advertising ($\mu=5.03$), with a very slight difference from the word-of-mouth promoting mean ($\mu=5.04$). It seems that many consumers find comments they hear from their surrounding environment to be less influencing than an ad found on the TV, or in a radio and a magazine, even though a relatively high percentage of 23.3% of the respondents indicated the word-of-mouth as affecting them the most, at a moment where only the 7.8% of the participants said that this holds for magazines ads and 4.9% for radio ads. Magazine ads are slightly more effective to women rather than men ($\chi^2=0,049$, Hypothesis 1 holds).

Newspaper ads (having the less respondents claiming they are affected the least) comes somewhere in the middle, with street advertisement boards coming after, followed by flyers and catalogues. 60.1% of the respondents have newspaper ads included in the top five more influencing for them sources of ads, whereas the analogous percentage for street advertisement boards and flyers and catalogues are 51.5% and 38.9% respectively.

Then is internet, and salespersons recommendations, with last left the e-mail advertising material ($\mu=6.87$). Not all people are fluent in internet (with older people being less or not familiar with it), whilst many people neither trust nor consider searching for products and making purchases through the internet, and thus internet advertising is found that low in this list. Specifically, results indicate that as the education received by the participants was getting higher, the greater the chances were that internet ads were more effective ($\chi^2=0,044$, Hypothesis 8 accepted).

E-mail, being even more specific and perhaps acquiring additional knowledge in handling, at a moment where advertising materials and relevant information are traced everywhere, naturally comes last in the influencing means to the consumers (29.1% are the least or not at all affected by e-mail). Those influenced, however, are mainly consumers 40-54 years old ($\chi^2=0,039$, Hypothesis 2 holds).

Salespersons' recommendations, on the other hand are found in such an order mainly because consumers believe that salespersons are there to promote sales in favor of the firms they work for, and not for telling the truth to the consumers for if a piece of cloth does not suits them,

for instance. Therefore salespersons' opinion does not really count for them, with 23.3% of the respondents receiving the least influence from them.

Regarding the Hypotheses set, it is obvious that most of them hold, not in every occasion of course, but where the demographics making a difference are mentioned. Hypotheses 5 (referred to households size) and 6 (referred to the number of the people that have a job in each household), are the two Hypotheses that are most frequently rejected, since they are not found to contribute in making significant differences in any way. Hypotheses 1 (gender) and 2 (age) on the other hand appeared to be the most important determinants in analyzing the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and behavior of the consumers.

Summary of Research Findings

Advertisements are more frequently seen by women, since they consider them informative. On the contrary, most men avoid watching the ads because they believe they are annoying or useless for them. Only one fourth of the people watching the ads frequently notices the brands advertised (usually adults 18-39 years old), whereas almost half of the audience notices the brands sometimes. The majority of the consumers claim that TV ads are effective in informing consumers and in promoting sales, but at the same time only half of them, mostly women, buy products due to TV ads. Income levels were not found to influence those sales, but this should not be that odd since most products bought due to TV ads are convenience ones, with food supplies and beverages, cleaning products, clothes-washing products, shampoos, and shower gels yielding the greater effectiveness levels, and with specific brands gaining the battle in some product categories. Ad repetition seems to convince a number of people buy the advertised products. Important reasons preventing consumers from purchases have to do with the lack of trust towards the ads, and the failure of the ads and the advertised products to generate feelings of usefulness and need to the consumers. Specific personal values, such as personal style, or product characteristics, such as features, appearance, usefulness, and guarantees, found to have a big impact on the consumers. Advertisements' photography, music, and creativity in scenarios, with the more pleasant or humorous ads evoking more positive feelings and attitudes towards the products, appeared to have strong influencing power. Then, celebrities in ads were indeed found to affect consumers, whereas non-famous actors/actresses influence city residents more. Actresses of the commercials have more impact to the audience than actors do, and children appeals move consumers considerably. Finally, TV ads compared to other media ads and promotional efforts found to have the greater impact on the consumers in convincing them buy the advertised products.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This survey was an effort of providing an insight into TV advertising effectiveness on Cypriot residents, focusing on Nicosia district. It was an exploratory study aiming to investigate the degree to which consumers are influenced by the TV commercials, in terms of perceptions, beliefs, awareness, persuasion, and attitude shifting, but mostly in respect of purchasing choices, as the consumers themselves anticipate those influences in their everyday behavior. Based on the six research Objectives and eight research Hypotheses aroused, which led to a survey design and a structured questionnaire development in order to collect the necessary data in fulfillment of the research requirements.

- 1) It was found that women watch TV ads more often, since they find them informative. Men on the other hand usually avoid them, since they consider them annoying or useless to them. Consumers having incomes up to £10,000, and/or a master degree are most likely to watch advertisements frequently. Consequently, marketing departments and advertisers should consider promoting through TV products that mostly target women. Moreover, ads with an informative role, such as those announcing discounts or special offers, or those trying to create awareness for new products, for example, are likely to be effective in informing consumers through TV. Then, ads concerning products that are addressed to the master holders' market segment, such as PhD programs advertisements for instance, have a great chance to be watched by the targeted audience if they are shown on TV.
- 2) Our findings also suggest that only 1 person out of 4, and usually 18-39 years old, regularly notices brand names advertised, whilst about half of the population sometimes notices the advertised brands. Consumers living in the city pay more attention to the brands advertised. Those conclusions indicate that advertising could be effective in the younger adults up to 39 years old, and that advertisements referred to the older adults should repeat brand names more often during an ad so as to increase the chances that it is noticed and remembered. Additionally, more creative ways need to be found in the way brands are presented in the ads, so as to attract the attention of the consumers on the brand, once if they do not notice the brands they could not prefer them either. Furthermore, if a brand/product is seeking in becoming more popular among city residents (e.g. a car suitable for driving in the city), then TV ads may be a good solution.
- 3) Most consumers support the view that TV ads are an effective way of getting informed about new products and for promoting sales, but only half of the consumers seem to be led to buy the products they watch on TV ads, with the majority of them being women. During Christmas, Easter and similar occasions consumers admitted being more affected, but the ads in such periods should be designed to break through the advertising clutter to be effective. Two very strong reasons were found for the consumers claiming they do not buy due to TV

ads. Those consumers seriously do not trust ads, and they buy products they really need and find useful-and not those that generate needs/wants because they are advertised well. Thus, advertisers should find ways to make advertisements more involving to the consumers, or at least to those believing that ads change buying habits. Ads could be designed to generate needs/wants in a smoother way so this is not perceived in a way that makes consumers adopt a defending attitude; rather, the products should be seen as useful and needed. Also, they should emphasize on convincing a greater percentage of men to buy their products, where those products are addressed to the male population.

- 4) Personal products are mostly bought by consumers aged 18-39, at a time where the more residents of a household have a job the more the purchases of the advertised products are. Therefore ads supporting personal products could be more effective if they are addressed to the younger adults. Family products on the other hand are usually bought by married people of all ages-mostly women, again indicating that money could be better invested in creating ads that are addressed to women. Most products bought are convenience ones, with food supplies and beverages, cleaning products, clothes-washing products, shampoos, and shower gels having the greater share, with specific brands gaining the battle in some categories. Therefore when the advertisers need to support convenience products they can be sure enough that income levels will not discourage consumers from buying the product, keeping the other factors constant. At the same time, ad repetition was found to be important in convincing consumers buy, coming in agreement with numerous previous researchers' findings.
- 5) Product features, appearance, and usefulness, as well as guarantees and warranties accompanying a product, and consumers' personal style and income are amongst the factors searched in products when purchasing decisions are made. Consumers also claimed that they follow market trends and fashion, but that they are not brand loyal. Those evidence lead to the conclusion that each product should be examined carefully according to the target market it aims at being adopted, before an advertisement is developed, so that the ads present the product with the more appropriate, useful and attractive image and profile in the consumers' eyes, as The Basic Communication Model also indicates.
- 6) Photography, music, and creativity in ads affect half of the consumers, again confirming the findings of previous studies. Additionally, pleasant and humorous ads more easily attract audiences' attention and evoke positive feelings, therefore influencing more effectively the audiences than the serious ads. Hence, ads targeting younger consumers could have more colorful images, more vivid music, and more unexpected-creative scenarios than ads focusing on elder adults, where a less colorful presentation might be more effective, always of course in accordance with the products.
- 7) Advertisements' celebrities, although not affecting a high percentage of the population, they lead to purchasing decisions enough consumers, especially the more educated ones. Non-

famous ad actors/actresses have a strong influence to those living in the city and to the higher income receivers. Actresses of the commercials arouse higher influence levels than the actors do, to both men and women, whereas children move consumers to a higher degree, passing these movement feelings towards the advertised products. The percentage claiming not buying due to children interference in the ads is mostly explained by the fact that they do not have children, and therefore they do not need to buy the products for children the latter (usually) promote. Those findings yield evidence that support that the players of the ads should be carefully chosen based on which population the ads want to influence. It might be less costly to advertise athlete's shoes by a non-famous person, but the ad's impact and results might be much greater if the ad employs a well known athlete. Similarly, a chocolate can give the feeling that it tastes more delicious if a woman rather than a man is presented tasting the chocolate in the ad.

- 8) Finally, TV advertising seems to be the most influencing form of advertising for a really considerable part of the consumers, as they claim comparing the persuasive purchasing impacts they receive from various promotional means. Magazines' ads come second; then radio ads, word of mouth, and newspapers' ads follow, and street ad boards, and flyers and catalogues come even after. Then are the internet ads, and the salespersons recommendations, and last come the e-mail ads. Although consumers claim they receive the highest impact levels from the TV ads, media planners and advertisers should consider the overall survey findings, as well as the products characteristics, the target markets, the advertisements' objectives, and the profile and advantages/disadvantages of each medium before they make their media decisions. TV advertising might not be the best solution for every case.

This research is important in the view that it simultaneously provides evidence on many parameters regarding TV advertising and its various effectiveness' impacts on the consumers. Moreover, it does that for Cyprus market, where no much are known, especially if we consider that previous studies illustrate that finding differ from country to country, for several reasons, such as because of cultures', family values', and legal system's characteristics and differences.

Practical Implications

This research is an alternative solution in providing information about the hours of the day/night that most people watch television. It is a means of determining the gender, age, economic level, education and other valuable demographic characteristics of the consumers in relation to the hours they are exposed to the TV. Therefore, it is a means of recognizing market segments and their attitudes and perceptions towards the advertisements. Also, this study determines the markets in which TV ads are more effective, and the product categories that are usually bought due to those ads. Additionally, the features of the products and the

characteristics of the ads that make them more effective and drive sales (specifying in which consumer groups) are also revealed.

Consequently, this research helps in segmenting the television time, facilitating media decisions, and guiding future media buying and scheduling. Specifically, it makes it easier to more effectively plan, develop, and air the most appropriate ads to the right time and to the most absorbing audience, so as to maximize ad exposure to the desired target audience, maximize influencing probabilities and response levels, and minimize costs, resulting in savings in the media expenditures.

Moreover, in case of toll-free or other direct ads, this research may give a hint on the scheduling of the call center operations (given that direct ads and responses to those follow similar to the other ads' patterns).

Additionally, if for example ads in some product categories seem not to pursue adequate levels of effective responses, then this study may perhaps give an indication that a different time-schedule should be used in airing the ads, or even that an alternative media selection could be most appropriate.

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