

ROMANIAN CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS TV COMMERCIALS

Lecturer PhD Raluca BĂBUȚ (COMIATI)

Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Email: raluca_comiati@yahoo.com

Abstract:

As advertisements are broadcast on a daily basis, Romanian consumers are subject to an intensive media bombardment designed to influence them, trigger certain emotions, and make them develop an attitude to a particular brand or product. When designing the advertisement, great care must be taken so that it conveys positive feelings and emotions and fosters favourable attitudes to a brand. The object of the current research is to determine how consumers are able to assess the advertisement phenomenon in general and the TV commercials in particular. Based on a representative sample of 550 Romanian consumers from the urban population, the study highlights the Romanian consumers' attitude to various types of advertisements, endorsers and creative strategies used to design and execute the advertisements. The managerial as well as the scientific implications are considered by means of the correlations made according to the respondents' social and demographic characteristics.

Key words: TV advertising, advertisement, attitude, message format, endorser, empirical study

Introduction

Given that attitudes play a central role within most behavioural models, the study thereof is a highly important part of social psychology and, by implication, of consumer behaviour. According to Schiffmann and Kanuk (2004, p. 253), attitudes are predispositions learned by an individual which allow him/her to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way with respect to an object (product, brand, store, person). Attitudes are thus the result of psychological processes which are not directly observable. They can, however, be inferred from an individual's actions or statements or highlighted by observing his/her behaviour (Dobre, 2005, p. 59). Unlike preferences, attitudes are much more complex as they make up a synthesis of feelings, opinions, judgments, interests, beliefs (Dabija, 2011, pp. 158-161).

Literature review

Over the last decades the marketing communication researchers and other researchers as well have attempted to discover and understand how advertising affects the consumers' attitude to the promoted performance (products, services, brands). The underlying premise was that the favourable or unfavourable assessment of advertisements is transferred upon, or associated with, the promoted brand. Thus, a direct casual relationship is likely to be created between the attitude to an advertisement and the attitude and behaviour toward the brand being promoted in that particular ad (Mitchell, Olson, 1982, p. 318-332).

Being defined as the predisposition to respond (react) in a favourable or unfavourable way to a particular advertisement, the attitude toward the ad consists of two distinct components, namely: the affective

component reflecting the emotions triggered by the ad and the cognitive component reflecting the extent to which the message is perceived as well-designed and useful in terms of the information provided (Shimp 1981, p. 9-15).

In order to understand how the attitude toward a brand is influenced by the attitude toward an ad it is necessary to determine the consumer's general attitude to the ad. When the emotions triggered by an ad are positive and its design and the information provided are assessed favourably then the attitude to the ad should be favourable as well (Greene 1992, p. 65-68). An ad or message may appeal to the audience because it is funny, useful, interesting, and new, triggers emotions or arouses favourable feelings in the user. The consumer's attitude toward the ad can be influenced by a number of specific factors, among which the most important are (Greene, 1992, p. 65-68; Solomon, 2004, p. 230):

- the general attitude toward advertising;
- attitude toward the source of the ad (the promoted company);
- the mood and emotions triggered by the ad;
- assessment of the ad presentation (message format);
- assessment of the ad in terms of content credibility and truthfulness;
- ability of the ad to elicit a reaction from the consumer.

A significant factor in shaping the attitude toward the ad is how the ad/message is executed. By using different strategies to design advertisements, the same effect on consumers can be achieved (Batra, Myers, Aaker, 1996, p. 299). For instance, consumers can express a similar attitude toward three different ads. The first ad/message may use humor, the second may provide relevant information, and the third may be loaded with deep affection so that the

consumer is positively influenced. These ads may exert a totally different influence on the consumer as s/he may even feel repulsion toward one of the ads, dislike it because it is boring or irritating. In this context, it is essential to identify the elements of the ad that contribute to its being accepted as enjoyable and assessed as favourable by the audience.

In addition to the positive effect exerted on the attitude toward the brand, the favourable attitude toward the ad has also a positive impact on the ad memorability (Ray, Batra, 1983, p. 543-547). Thus, an ad that is highly favourable in the eyes of consumers is remembered for a longer time.

Research Purpose

Based on the premise that the attitude to a product, service or brand is a major element of consumer behaviour, the purpose of the current research is to highlight how Romanian consumers assess the advertising phenomenon and the TV commercials. In other words, the goals of the current research focus on:

- assessing the influence exerted by consumers' perception of the advertising phenomenon on their attitude toward advertising in general;
- assessing the attitude of different social and demographic consumer segments toward the source of the ad (TV stars, sportspeople, artists, experts, regular consumers, animated and fictional characters);
- assessing the attitude of different social and demographic consumer segments toward the ad/message format (life scenes, demonstrations, testimonials, animated and fictional scenes);
- assessing the attitude of different social and demographic consumer segments toward the creative strategy underlying the ad.

Research methodology

Collection of data was carried out in one major Romanian city, by means of face-to-face interviews at respondent's home. The sample frame included 550 people above 18 years old who watch television programs. As a sampling method the author applied quota sampling on age and sex (according to the Romanian National Institute of Statistics for the selected city) due the lack of any database with potential respondents. Using random sampling would have been more expensive and harder to achieve.

Due the fact that similar studies have not been carried out yet on the Romanian market, no prior information

was available regarding relevant or possible variables of interest.

Results

The analysis of the influence of advertising began by determining the consumers' attitude toward advertising in general. Thus, 48.5 percent of interviewees stated a favourable or highly favourable attitude to advertising in contrast to only 15.5 percent who feel advertising is annoying and, consequently, expressed an unfavourable or highly unfavourable attitude toward it. It is noteworthy that quite a large percentage of respondents (35%) stated their indifference to advertising (Figure 1).

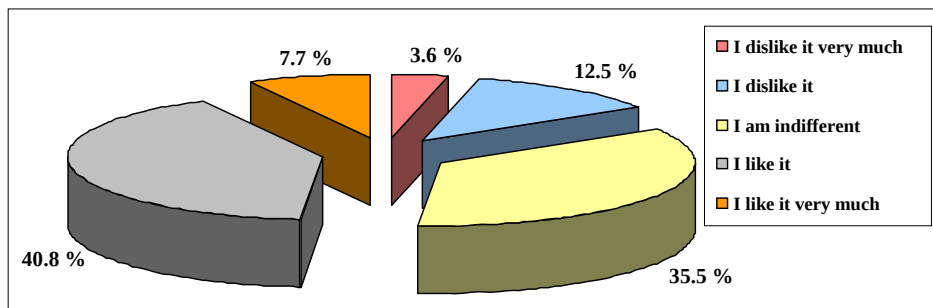


Figure 1. Consumers' attitude toward advertising

Source: own research

The analysis of the attitude toward advertising according to the interviewees' gender and age reveals that the youth and women have a more

favourable attitude to advertising in general while the correlation is not very strong (Table 1).

Table 1
Correlation between consumers' attitude toward advertising in general and the demographic characteristics

Attitude toward advertising	Pearson Chi-Square	Kendall's tau-b
	Gender	Age
	8.990**	-0,112***

Legend: n.s. – not significant, * $p < 0,1$, ** $p < 0,05$, *** $p < 0,01$, **** $p < 0,001$

Source: own research

In order to understand the reason underlying the consumers' attitude to advertising, we deemed appropriate to assess the consumers' perception of the advertising phenomenon as they were asked to express their

agreement/disagreement with the following five statements (on a five-point Likert scale):

- "advertising is a source of information about products and services"

- “advertising is a form of manipulation”
- “advertising represents artistic work”
- “advertising is a source of psychic discomfort (it annoys me, it tires me out)”
- “advertising is a form of entertainment”.

According to the answers given, advertising is a source of information for 75.1 percent of interviewees as well as a form of manipulation and a source of psychic discomfort for 62.7 percent and 38.3 percent of respondents, respectively. In terms of artistic work and entertainment, advertisement is viewed as such by about 50 percent of interviewees (Figure 2).

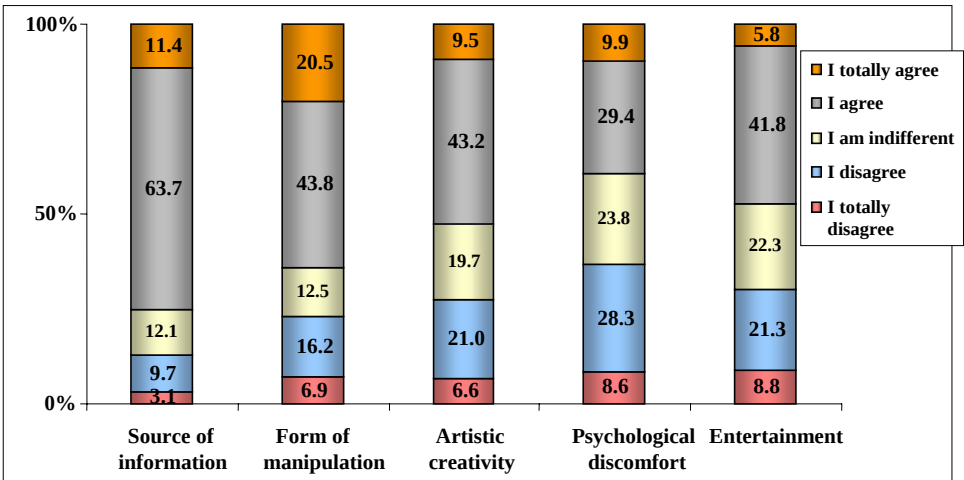


Figure 2. Consumers’ perception of the advertising phenomenon
Source: own research

The correlations between the attitude to advertising in general and the consumers’ perception of the advertising phenomenon are significant. Thus, consumers who view advertising as a source of information, an act of artistic work or a form of entertainment reveal a more favourable attitude to

advertising in general. On the other hand, individuals who perceive advertising as a form of manipulation or a source of psychic discomfort are more inclined to adopt an unfavourable attitude to the advertising phenomenon (Table 2).

Table 2
Correlation between the attitude to advertising and the consumers’ perception of the advertising phenomenon

Attitude to advertising	Source of information	Form of manipulation	Artistic work	Psychic discomfort	Entertainment
	0,237***	-0,108***	0,269***	-0,358***	0,321***

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01; ****p<0,001
Source: own research

The analysis of the significant correlations between the respondents’ social and demographic characteristics

and their perception of the advertising phenomenon reveals that women view advertising as a significant source of

information whereas for men advertising is a source of psychic discomfort. For the youth, advertising is a form of entertainment while the elderly

associate advertising with the psychic discomfort. The lowly educated respondents believe that advertising is a form of manipulation (Table 3).

Table 3
Correlation between the consumers' perception of the advertising phenomenon and their social and demographic characteristics

	Kendall's tau-b			Pearson Chi-Square
	Age	Education	Monthly income	Gender
Source of information	-0,010 ^{n.s.}	-0,009 ^{n.s.}	-0,043 ^{n.s.}	7.973*
Form of manipulation	-0,060*	0,171****	0,118***	5.206 ^{n.s.}
Artistic work	-0,093***	0,090**	-0,005 ^{n.s.}	5.218 ^{n.s.}
Psychic discomfort	0,101***	0,004 ^{n.s.}	-0,046 ^{n.s.}	13.435***
Entertainment	-0,136****	-0,035 ^{n.s.}	-0,036 ^{n.s.}	1.954 ^{n.s.}

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01; ****p<0,001

Source: own research

The assessment of the attitude to the source of the ad took into account the main categories of endorsers used in advertising campaigns, namely, TV

stars, professional sportspeople, Artists (actors, singers), experts, regular consumers, animated and imaginary characters.

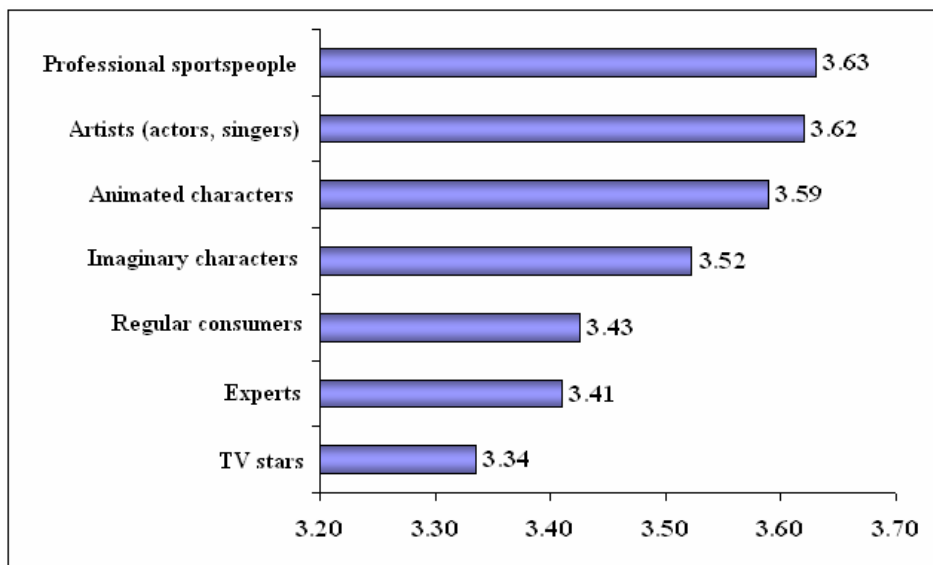


Figure 3. Rankings of endorsers used in commercials according to their average assessment

Source: own research

Among the endorsers appearing in commercials (according to the average assessment), professional sportspeople are on top of preferences. They were assessed favourably by over 62.7 percent of respondents whereas only

9.5 percent stated they dislike much or very much the sportspeople's presence in commercials (Figure 4). Artists (actors, singers) enjoy a favourable attitude as well. Thus, 62.9 percent of interviewees appreciate much or very

much the presence of artists in commercials while only 9.6 percent are not satisfied with it (Figure 4).

The third position in the rankings is held by animated characters, enjoyed by 63 percent of respondents of which 17 percent state that they like these characters very much. The percentage of those who dislike animated endorsers is 15.9 while 21 percent stated their indifference. Imaginary characters are fourth in the rankings and are mainly liked by 21 percent of respondents. As some respondents found difficult to permanently identify themselves with this kind of characters, a great percentage of respondents (19.8) state

that they dislike imaginary characters to a great or very great extent (Figure 4).

The attitude of interviewees to the use of regular consumers in commercials is neutral, 33 percent of them expressing indifference (fifth position in the rankings). The lowest positions are held by experts and TV stars whose presence in commercials is assessed positively by about 50 percent of interviewees (Figure 4). We notice a different assessment of artists in contrast with TV stars. Thus, whereas the attitude toward the presence of actors and singers in commercials is favourable, the same does not hold true with respect to TV stars.

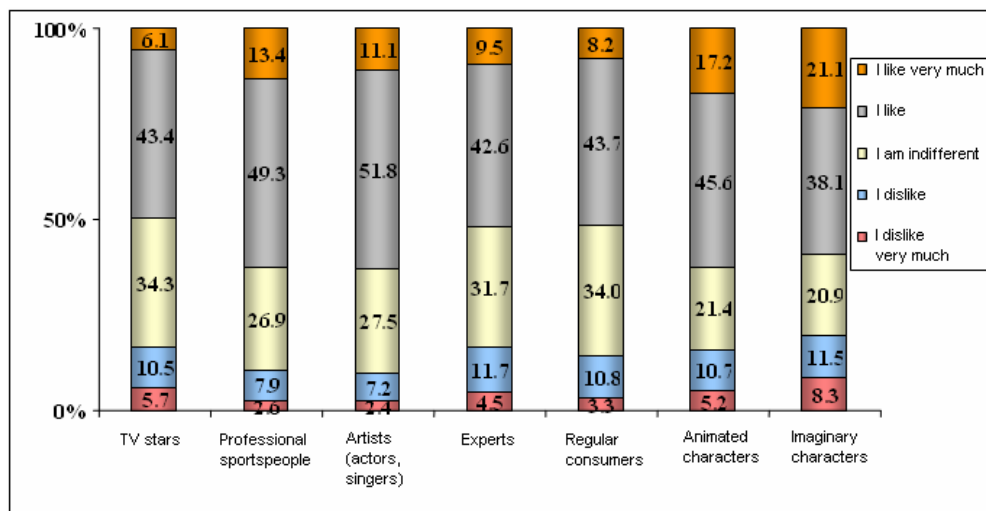


Figure 4. Consumer's attitude toward endorses appearing in commercials

Source: own research

The consumers' social and demographic characteristics affect their attitude toward the source of the commercial. Thus, women are more inclined than men to express a favourable attitude toward artists, TV stars, imaginary and animated characters or experts (Table 4). Age is the most powerful factor influencing the attitude to imaginary characters. As expected, the youth prefer them to a larger extent than do the elderly. According to the results obtained, the

elderly respondents have a more favourable attitude to artists and experts (Table 4).

Education is the socio-demographic variable featuring the greatest number of strong correlations with the attitude to various sources used in commercials. Thus, lowly educated consumers express a favourable attitude to artists, professional sportspeople and TV stars while consumers with a low income prefer artists, TV stars and experts (Table 4).

Table 4

Correlation between consumers' attitude toward the source of commercial and the socio-demographic characteristics

	Pearson χ^2	Kendall's tau-b		
	Gender	Age	Education	Monthly income
TV stars	15.125***	0,067*	-0,146****	-0,130****
Professional sportspeople	4.866 ^{n.s}	0,066*	-0,156****	-0,068*
Artists (actors, singers)	22.222****	0,122***	-0,206****	-0,136****
Experts	16.151***	0,093**	-0,063*	-0,102***
Regular consumers	2.285 ^{n.s}	0,072**	-0,056 ^{n.s}	-0,033 ^{n.s}
Animated characters	9.516**	-0,011 ^{n.s}	-0,051 ^{n.s}	-0,048 ^{n.s}
Imaginary characters	25.558****	-0,157****	0,063*	-0,031 ^{n.s}

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01, ****p<0,001

Source: own research

The consumers' general attitude to advertising affects their attitude to the advertisement endorsers. Therefore, one can notice that respondents expressed a favourable attitude to advertising as well as to any source of the commercial (Table 5).

Consumers' perceptions of the advertising phenomenon also affect their attitude to the source of the

commercial. Thus, perceiving advertisement as a source of information or an act of artistic work is on a par with a positive attitude to the endorsers used in commercials whereas the perception of advertisement as a manipulation tool and a source of psychic discomfort reveal an unfavourable attitude toward any type of endorser (Table 5).

Table 5

Correlation between consumers' attitude to the source of the commercial and their perception of advertisement (Kendall's tau)

	Attitude to advertisement	Source of information	Form of manipulation	Artistic work	Psychic discomfort	Entertainment
TV stars	0,180****	0,226****	-0,134****	0,083**	-0,075**	0,115***
Professional sportspeople	0,133****	0,165****	-0,084**	0,069*	-0,076**	0,108***
Artists (actors, singers)	0,184****	0,181****	-0,146****	0,060 ^{n.s}	-0,061*	0,106***
Experts	0,178****	0,168****	-0,061*	0,066*	-0,057 ^{n.s}	0,123***
Regular consumers	0,123***	0,128***	-0,069*	0,083**	-0,099****	0,075**
Animated characters	0,231****	0,132****	-0,058 ^{n.s}	0,211****	-0,102***	0,138****
Imaginary characters	0,201****	0,097***	-0,027 ^{n.s}	0,261****	-0,100***	0,174****

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01, ****p<0,001

Source: own research

In order to assess the consumers' attitude to the message/advertisement format, they were required to state their

appreciation of different possible formats such as life scenes with regular consumers, demonstrations of product

effectiveness, testimonials of some consumers, recommendations of experts, animated scenes and characters, and fictional scenes and characters.

The analysis of the distribution of variables measuring the consumers' level of preference of various formats used in commercials reveals that a favourable attitude was generally expressed toward any message format, the concentration of answers being centered around "I like" and "I like very much" (Figure 5).

The top of preferences among the advertisement formats (based on

average assessment) is held by animated and fictional scenes as 63 percent and 54 percent of respondents, respectively, expressed a favourable attitude to these formats. About 13 percent and 12 percent of them, respectively, state that they like these scenes very much (Figure 6). This is the highest percentage for the "I like very much" category. In the case of the other four types of formats (life scenes, demonstrations, testimonials and recommendations) the percentage of respondents having a favourable attitude ranges between 3 and 8 percent.

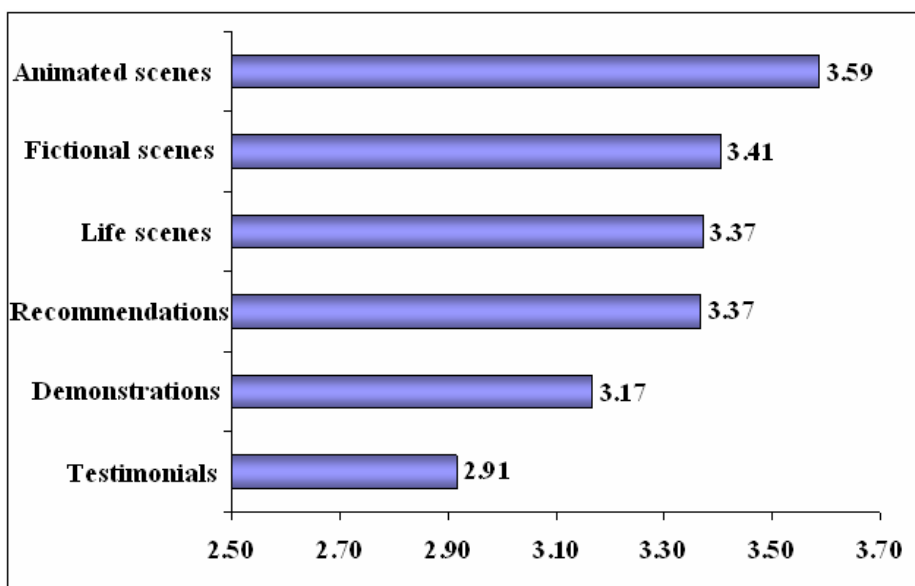


Figure 5. Rankings of formats used in designing commercials according to average assessment

Source: own research

Life scenes enjoy popularity as 50 percent of respondents state they like them much or very much while a quite high percentage of respondents (35.3) stated their indifference (Figure 6). The same holds true with respect to experts' recommendations as these are assessed positively by more than half of interviewees. Only one fifth of respondents expressed a negative attitude to this type of format while one

third of them were indifferent to this format (Figure 6).

Demonstrations hold the last but one position in the rankings as 28 percent of respondents expressed their dislike for this format. The commercials featuring consumer testimonials are viewed as repulsive by over one third of respondents. However, quite a good number of respondents have a favourable attitude toward the commercials featuring demonstrations

(45 percent) and testimonials of other people (33 percent) (Figure 6).

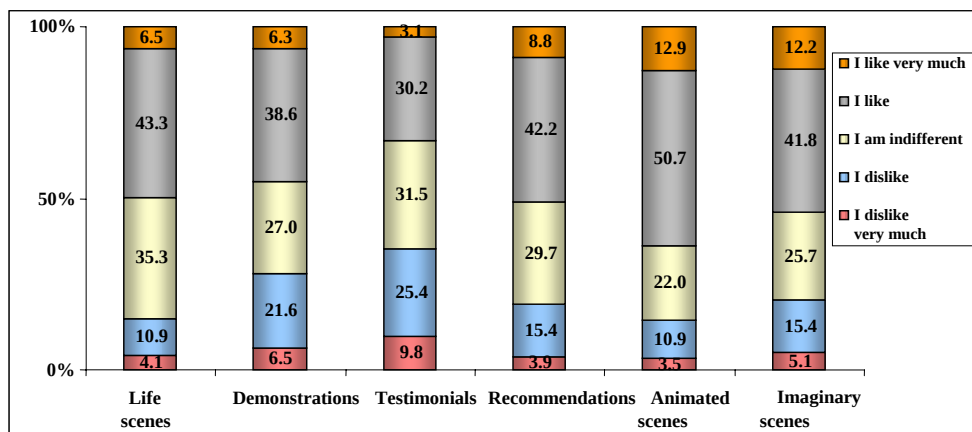


Figure 6. Consumers' attitude to the formats used to design commercials/ads

Source: own research

The analysis of correlations between consumers' socio-demographic characteristics and their attitude to the commercials' format reveals that the latter is affected by consumers' age. Therefore, commercials featuring recommendations, testimonials or demonstrations are preferred by elderly consumers whereas the young people are more favourable toward animated and fictional scenes (Table 6). Gender only affects the attitude to commercials

which display "consumer testimonials" and "animated scenes". As the chi-square coefficient does not allow the assessment/measurement of the direction of relationship, contingency tables have been used to highlight the notable difference between women's and men's attitudes. Thus, women's answers tend to be centered on "I like it much" or "I like it very much" whereas men's answers revolve around "I dislike it much" or "I dislike it very much" (Table 6).

Table 6
Correlation between consumers' attitude to the commercials' format and the socio-demographic characteristics

	Kendall's tau-b	Pearson Chi-Square
	Age	Gender
Life scenes	0,063*	6,719 ^{n.s.}
Demonstrations	0,095***	3,417 ^{n.s.}
Testimonials	0,106***	9,473**
Recommendations	0,150****	7,839*
Animated scenes	-0,134****	12,940**
Fictional scenes	-0,123***	6,766 ^{n.s.}

As was the case with the source of the commercial (type of endorser), those who express a favourable attitude to advertising in general have also a favourable attitude to the format of

commercials (Table 7). At the same time, consumers who perceive advertising as a form of entertainment, an act of artistic work or a source of information are more prone to assess

positively the commercials' format. On the other hand, those who view advertising as a form of manipulation or a source of psychic discomfort usually

provide a negative assessment of commercials, regardless of their format (Table 7).

Table 7
Correlation between consumers' attitude to the commercials' format and their perception of advertising

	Attitude to advertising	Source of information	Form of manipulation	Artistic work	Psychic discomfort	Entertainment
Life scenes	0,160****	0,174****	-0,069*	0,056 ^{n.s.}	-0,135****	0,121***
Demonstrations	0,226****	0,221****	-0,142****	0,119***	-0,107***	0,116***
Testimonials	0,123****	0,203****	-0,151****	0,069*	-0,073**	0,123****
Recommendations	0,177****	0,213****	-0,126****	0,044 ^{n.s.}	-0,103***	0,083**
Animated scenes	0,261****	0,132****	-0,067*	0,242****	-0,150****	0,150****
Fictional scenes	0,195****	0,077**	-0,029 ^{n.s.}	0,218****	-0,103***	0,150****

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01; ****p<0,001

Source: own research

The assessment of the attitude to the showcasing humour are much or very emotional triggers used in advertising much liked. Only 3.8 percent of focused on humour, sexual overtones, respondents stated that they dislike positive feelings (joy, pleasure, pride etc) humour in advertising (Figure 7). and negative feelings (fear, shame, inferiority etc.). Positive feelings (joy, pleasure, pride, respect, etc) are ranked second, with 78

Among the emotional triggers (based percent of respondents preferring on average assessments), humour is far commercials imbued with this kind of high on top of preferences. 91 percent of feelings in contrast to only 17 percent of interviewees state that commercials indifferent respondents (Figure 7).

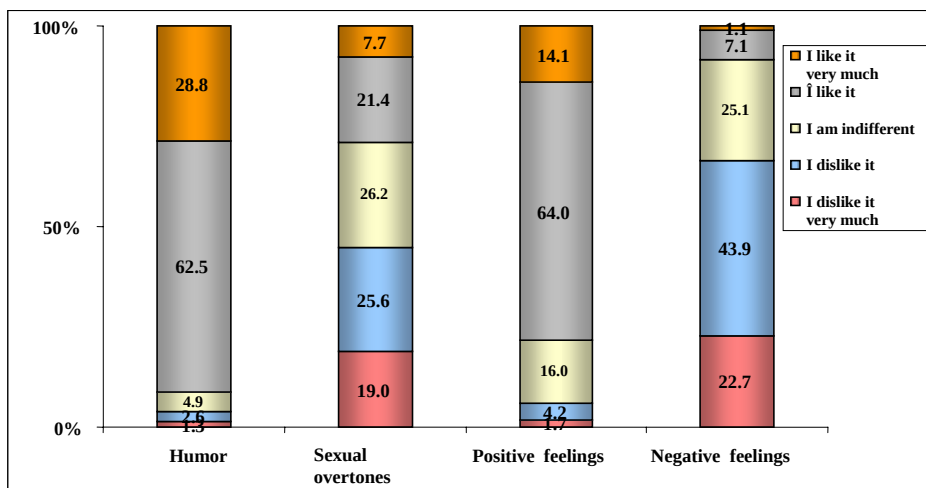


Figure 7. Consumers' attitude to emotional triggers in advertising

Source: own research

28 percent of interviewees find sexual overtones appealing while 26 percent state they are indifferent. 44.6 percent state that they dislike much or

very much the commercial which resort to sexuality. It should be noted that the distribution of this variable is quite close to the normal distribution. The negative

Kurtosis coefficient, however, shows that respondents avoided extreme assessments such as "I dislike/dislike it very much" (Figure 7).

Consumers' attitude toward the use of negative feelings in advertising (fear, shame, inferiority) is unfavourable. Two thirds of interviewees stated their strong aversion to commercials resorting to negative feelings (Figure 7).

Although humour is an emotional trigger usually preferred by most consumers, the young people have a more favourable attitude to humorous

commercials than do the rest of respondents. Interesting is also the fact that positive feelings are assessed positively by women, likely owing to the higher sensitivity of the fair sex (Table 8).

As far as the attitude to sexual overtones is concerned, commercials resorting to sexuality are mostly liked by men and particularly young men. Highly educated consumers and those with high incomes exhibited a strong preference for sexually-suggestive commercials (Table 8).

Table 8

Correlation between consumers' attitude to the commercials/ads format and the socio-demographic characteristics

	Kendall's tau			Pearson Chi-Square	
	Age	Education	Monthly income	Gender	Current occupation
Humour	-0,120***	0,001 ^{n.s.}	0,003 ^{n.s.}	3.770 ^{n.s.}	23.082 ^{n.s.}
Sexual overtones	-0,245****	0,075**	0,076**	60,466****	76.833****
Positive feelings	-0,036 ^{n.s.}	-0,043 ^{n.s.}	-0,067*	15.710***	32.978 ^{n.s.}
Negative feelings	-0,032 ^{n.s.}	0,048 ^{n.s.}	0,058 ^{n.s.}	4.775 ^{n.s.}	28.829 ^{n.s.}

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01; ****p<0,001

Source: own research

Interpretation of results should be made with some cautiousness because sexuality is a delicate, even taboo, topic for many Romanians. For that reason, there's every likelihood that some individuals or even entire consumer segments should not admit they enjoy sexually-allusive ads/commercials.

The analysis of the relationship between the attitude to advertising and the attitude to emotional triggers reveals a correlation between the two characteristics, which applies exclusively to positive emotions (humour, positive feelings). Therefore, it is impossible to highlight/determine the attitude to advertising of the consumers having a favourable opinion about

commercials with sexual content and negative feelings (Table 9). Consumers having a favourable attitude to humorous commercials conveying positive feelings perceive the advertising phenomenon as a source of information, an act of artistic work or a source of entertainment. Seldom, if ever, do they view advertising as a source of psychic discomfort. On the other hand, commercials imbued with sexual overtones are assessed favourably particularly by consumers who associate advertising with an act of artistic work or a form of entertainment (Table 9).

Table 9

Correlation between consumers' attitude to emotional triggers and their perception of advertising

	Attitude to advertising	Source of information	Form of manipulation	Artistic work	Psychic discomfort	Entertainment
Humour	0,143****	0,116***	0,000 ^{n.s.}	0,139****	-0,088**	0,148****
Sexual overtones	0,027 ^{n.s.}	0,018 ^{n.s.}	0,037 ^{n.s.}	0,096***	-0,009 ^{n.s.}	0,101***
Positive feelings	0,231****	0,256****	-0,089**	0,198****	-0,210****	0,239****
Negative feelings	-0,004 ^{n.s.}	-0,057 ^{n.s.}	-0,060 ^{n.s.}	-0,026 ^{n.s.}	0,048 ^{n.s.}	0,084**

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01; ****p<0,001

Source: own research

In order to assess the extent to which commercials manage to elicit emotional responses (feelings), consumers were required to state how happy, touched, proud, annoyed, dispirited or guilty they feel whenever they watch commercials. The analysis of the data reveals a reduced ability of commercials to elicit emotional responses from the audience. Thus, 70 percent of interviewees state that they seldom or very seldom feel proud,

satisfied, touched, dispirited or guilty when they watch TV commercials/ads (Figure 8).

A significant difference, however, was noticed in relation to the feeling of irritation and tension generated by exposure to commercials. 43 percent of respondents state that they seldom or very seldom feel this feeling whereas 33 percent state that they often or very often feel irritated and annoyed (Figure 8).

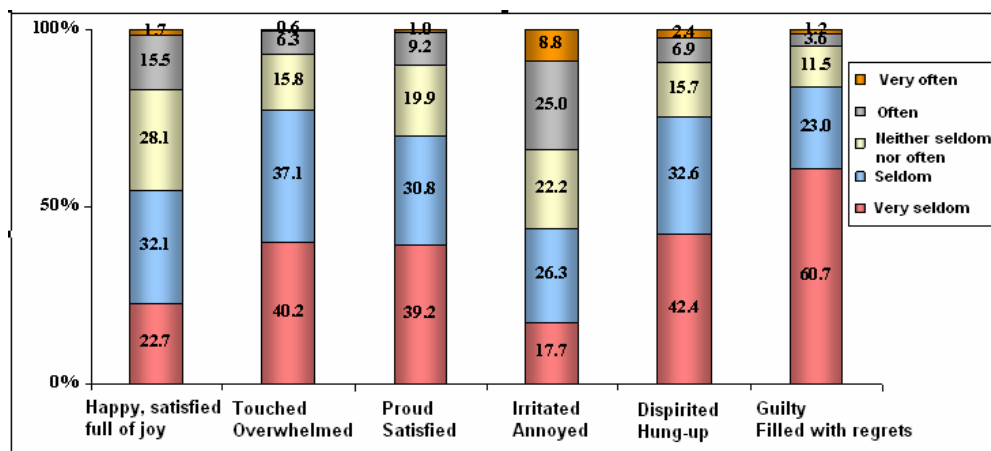


Figure 8. Ability of commercials to elicit different emotional responses

Source: own research

The second notable difference is in relation to the feelings of joy, happiness or satisfaction. 54 percent of interviewees hold the opinion that they seldom or very seldom feel happy and

satisfied when watching commercials (Figure 8).

The following ranking of averages summarizes the above-mentioned data. The low averages (considering that the scale used was from 1 to 5) stresses

the fact that commercials in Romania seldom or very seldom manage to elicit

emotions as the audience is more often than not indifferent (Table 10).

Table 10
Rankings of emotional responses elicited by commercials

Emotional response (feeling)	Average
Irritated, annoyed	2.81
Happy, full of joy, satisfied	2.41
Proud, satisfied	2.02
Dispirited, hung-up	1.94
Touched, overwhelmed	1.90
Guilty, filled with regrets	1.62

Source: own research

One should not overlook the fact that these results reflect consumers' statements with regard to what they consciously feel. It is not only possible but also very likely that consumers do not recognize or are not aware of some emotions and feelings.

The analysis of correlations between consumers' socio-demographic characteristics and the emotional responses elicited by watching commercials reveals a reduced number of relationships. The intensity of relationships is low, a fact accounted for by the concentration of answers in the "seldom" and "very seldom" area.

The correlations between the emotions triggered by watching commercials and the consumers' attitude to advertising in general are significant. They actually reveal a favourable attitude to advertising on the part of those people who very often

experience positive feelings. On the other hand, those who frequently experience negative emotions are more prone to develop a less favourable attitude to advertising. The strongest reverse correlation, that is, the decrease in the attitude to advertising, can be noticed in the case of irritation or annoyance. Thus, consumers who feel often or very often irritated when watching commercials have an unfavourable attitude to advertising in general (Table 11). Although of a lower intensity, a similar assessment holds true for those who feel "dispirited" or "hung-up". For them, these feelings also contribute to developing an unfavourable attitude to advertising. Interestingly, consumers' assessment of the advertising phenomenon has no significance for those who feel "guilty" or "filled with regrets".

Table 11
Correlations between emotions triggered by commercials and consumers' attitude to advertising in general

	Happy, joyful, content	Touched, overwhelmed	Proud, satisfied	Irritated, annoyed	Dispirited, hung-up	Guilty, filled with regrets
Attitude to advertising	0,384****	0,207****	0,243****	-0,318****	-0,136****	-0,049 ^{n.s.}

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01, ****p<0,001

Source: own research

The analysis of the relationship between the emotions triggered by

watching commercials and consumers' perception of the advertising

phenomenon reveals that those who often or very often feel “happy” “joyful” or “content” when watching commercials view advertising as a form of entertainment, a source of information, an act of artistic work and not a form of manipulation by any means. Similar results were also obtained in the case of “pride” and

“satisfaction”. Therefore, consumers experience the strongest (most intense) correlation when they view advertising as a source of information. Likewise, a very strong correlation was noticed between “irritation”, “annoyance” and the perception of advertising as a source of psychic discomfort (Table 12).

Table 12

Correlation between the feelings triggered by watching commercials and consumers' perceptions of advertising (Kendall's tau)

	Happy, joyful, content	Touched, overwhelmed	Proud, satisfied	Irritated, annoyed	Dispirited, hung-up	Guilty, filled with regrets
Source of information	0,205****	0,117***	0,221****	-0,169****	-0,056 ^{n.s.}	-0,003 ^{n.s.}
Form of manipulation	-0,187****	-0,102***	-0,127****	0,146****	0,033 ^{n.s.}	-0,074*
Artistic work	0,170****	0,125****	0,124****	-0,099***	-0,063*	0,019 ^{n.s.}
Source of psychic discomfort	-0,283****	-0,092**	-0,140****	0,424****	0,158****	0,129****
Form of entertainment	0,317****	0,161****	0,201****	-0,210****	-0,053 ^{n.s.}	-0,019 ^{n.s.}

Legend: n.s. – not significant, *p<0,1, **p<0,05, ***p<0,01, ****p<0,001

Source: own research

In order to make a synthesis of all these relationships, the correspondence analysis has been used as it is particularly useful when the analysed variables are or can be viewed as categorical/nominal variables. According to this analysis, consumers can be divided into the following categories:

- (1) consumers who dislike advertising very much (a very unfavourable attitude);
- (2) respondents who dislike advertising (unfavourable attitude);
- (3) individuals indifferent to advertising;

(4) people who like advertising (favourable attitude);

(5) respondents who like advertising very much (very favourable attitude).

Moreover, this type of analysis sums up the existing relationships/linkages between the variables and places them in a bi-dimensional graphical representation, thus making easier the interpretation of results. Instead of the analysis of correlations performed on groups of two variables, the cloud of points resulted by applying the correspondence analysis can be interpreted based on the distances on the chart (Figure 9).

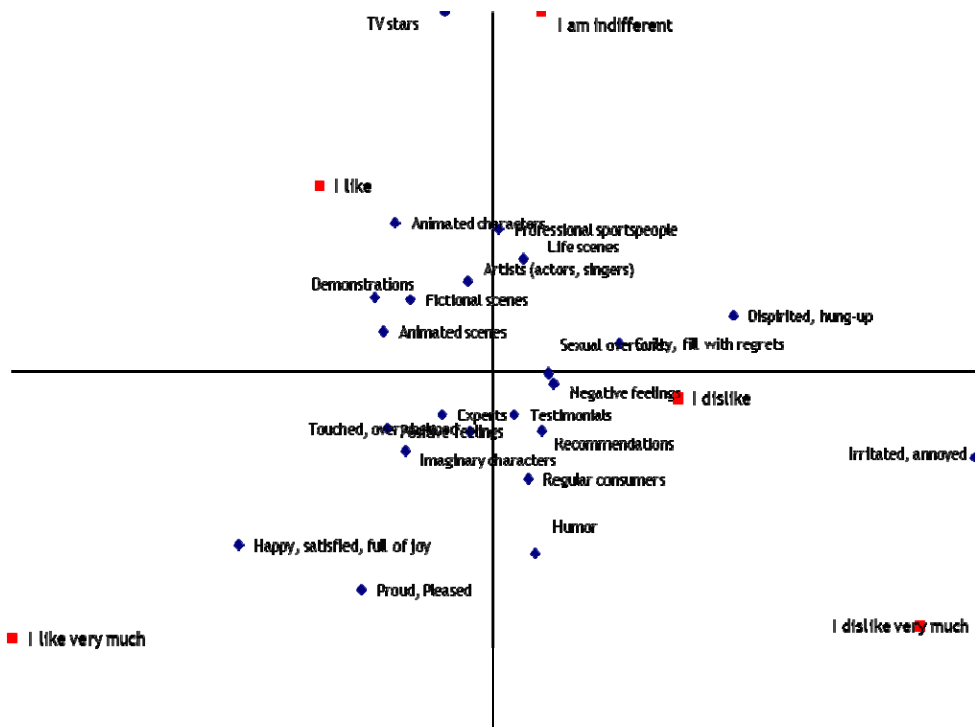


Figure 9 The influence of the attitude to the elements of commercials on the attitude to advertising

We notice that those who express a very unfavourable attitude to advertising more often than not feel irritated and annoyed when TV commercials are broadcast. It is worth noticing, however, the favourable attitude of these consumers toward humorous commercials. Discouragement, regret, guilt and irritation are most frequently felt by consumers who have an unfavourable attitude to advertising. These consumers prefer commercials featuring sexual overtones and negative feelings (fear, shame, inferiority) and view with favourable eyes the recommendation format and the use of "typical" consumers as advertisement endorsers. At the opposite end are consumers who have a favourable attitude to advertising. Whenever they watch commercials, they feel happy, content, touched or proud and have a favourable attitude to the commercials featuring humour and positive feelings (joy, pleasure, pride etc) and promoted by experts and

animated characters. According to the answers given, most consumers (40.8 percent) have a favourable attitude to advertising. As far as they are concerned, their preference goes to demonstration and life scenes formats as well as to those where animated or illusionary scenes are presented. At the same time, these consumers also have a favourable attitude to sportspeople and artists.

Conclusions

Based on the empirical research, the following conclusions may be emphasized:

- Consumers' attitude to advertising is relatively favourable, women and the young people having a more favourable attitude to advertising than other consumer segments;
- Whereas women believe advertising is a source of information and an act of artistic work, men perceive it as a source of psychic

discomfort. The young people see advertising as a form of entertainment while the elderly people believe it is a source of psychic discomfort.

- Among the endorsers appearing in commercials, professional sportspeople and artists (actors, singers) are on top of preferences. Women are more inclined than men to express a favourable attitude toward artists, TV stars, imaginary and animated characters or experts. The young people prefer imaginary characters while the elderly have a more favourable attitude to artists and experts.
- Recommendations, testimonials and demonstrations are preferred by elderly consumers while the animated and illusionary scenes are mostly liked by the young people. At the same time,

Testimonials and animated scenes are preferred on average by women.

Limitations

The main limit of the present research consists in using information gained from quantitative research as it hinders an in-depth analysis of the studied processes and phenomena. Moreover, other limits of our empirical research are also represented by the use of a non-probabilistic sampling method and the fact that the data were collected in a single Romanian city. However, given that the city where the research was conducted is the second largest city in Romania, we can state that the research results may have a certain general application as they are representative of a particular share of population.

REFERENCES

- Batra, R., Myers, J. G., Aaker, D. A. (1996), *Advertising Management*, Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Dabija, Dan-Cristian (2011), *Behaviour Analysis Model Applied in Retailing*, în C. Brătianu, G. Brătucu, D. Lixândroi, N. Al. Pop, S. Văduva (Ed.) Proceedings, of the 6th International Conference on Business Excellence, 14-15 October 2011, Volume I, pp. 158-161
- Dobre, C. (2005), *Comportamentul consumatorului și practica de marketing*, Ed. Mirton, Timișoara
- Greene, W. F. (1992), "What Drives Commercial Liking?", *Journal of Advertising Research*, 32, no.2 (March/April), p. 65-68.
- Mitchell, A. A., Olson, J. C. (1982), "Are Product Attribute Beliefs the Only Mediator of Advertising Effects on Brand Attitude?", *Journal of Marketing Research*, no. 18, p. 318-332
- Ray, M. L., Batra, R. (1983), "Emotion and Persuasion in Advertising: What We Do and Don't Know About Affect", *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 10, p. 543-547.
- Schiffman, L. G., Kanuk, L. L. (2004), *Consumer Behavior*, Eighth Edition, Pearson Education Inc., p. 253.
- Shimp, T. A. (1981), "Attitude toward the Ad as a Mediator of Consumer Brand Choice", *Journal of Advertising*, 10, no. 2, p. 9-15.
- Solomon, M. R. (2004), *Consumer Behavior. Buying, Having and Being*, Sixth Edition, Pearson Education Inc., p. 230.