

REVIEW

on the dissertation of Lyubomira Venkova Spasova

on the topic: THE IMPROVING IMPACT OF ADVERTISING CARRIERS OF MOBILE OPERATORS IN BULGARIA ON THE YOUNG GENERATION (Ages 18 to 25 years)

for awarding an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in a professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications)

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Peycheva

Structural characteristics of the dissertation

The structure of the dissertation meets the formal requirements. It consists of four chapters with a balanced ratio, conclusion, and bibliography, including 176 sources: 86 are the titles in Bulgarian and 90 - in foreign languages. Attached is a list of the author's scientific contributions, a list of the publications, and the participation of Ph.D. students in scientific forums on the topic of the doctoral thesis. The main text includes questionnaires from the research conducted by the author, 14 tables, and 43 images, and 40 diagrams. Relevant Indexes (lists) of tables, figures, and abbreviations are also included. The total volume of the dissertation is 279 pages.

The dissertation starts with an extensive foreword, atypically long for a dissertation. It sets out the arguments of the Ph.D. doctoral student for choosing the dissertation topic, its relevance, object, and subject of the dissertation. Included is a scientific thesis, working hypotheses, the purpose and tasks of the dissertation, the restrictions, the scientific problem, etc.

In addition to these mandatory attributes, the foreword discusses the topic's place in contemporary scientific discussions; the public and practical need to develop the subject; the degree of theoretical development, the theoretical basis of the dissertation problem, etc. The issues of the research methodology, the conceptual apparatus, sources of theoretical and empirical information, the expected research results, and the applicability of the results are also discussed.

The four chapters in which the dissertation is developed theoretically and empirically are relevantly titled and comprehensive. The conclusion is consistent with what has been achieved in the dissertation.

Content evaluation of the dissertation

The dissertation **aims** to "establish" the convincing impact of mobile operators' advertisements, how it is achieved, the attitudes towards the products and services of the respective companies as part of the evaluation of the youth groups. " One wonders whether it is possible to adopt different beliefs about specific fashion trends that will influence the final purchase decision. Is there mass behavior, and what is the reason for its appearance.

The following sub-goals are presented:

- Determining consumer attitudes towards mobile operators;
- Establishing lasting views and those that are prone to change;
- Defining the role of heuristic thinking, the appearance of cognitive dissonance, the part of deficit and contagion (conformism);
- Considering some of the components of the value system of young people that can determine their behavior;
- Identifying the reasons for changes in consumer attitudes, beliefs, and practice. (p.22-23)

As an additional sub-goal is presented, the search for a new way to achieve persuasion through advertising of these mobile products and services, as the impact is again central and peripheral. (21 pages)

To make the set goals, as well as to test the presented hypotheses, the following tasks and subtasks are set:

- To study the general attitude towards the advertisements of mobile operators in Bulgaria.
- To check whether preferences to the organization are formed through advertising, and whether positive attitudes towards the advertised goods or services are built.
- To find the connection between the attitude towards the product (service) and the belief about the usefulness of its long-term use, as well as the perception of other people's beliefs under the influence of advertising.

-To trace the impact peripherally and centrally, as a result of which the different consumer reactions are observed.

-To establish which are the components of the respondents' value system that determine their behavior.

The object of the dissertation is the youth groups in Bulgaria, which the advertisements of mobile operators - A1, Telenor, and Vivacom - strive to reach.

The subject of the dissertation is "the convincing impact of advertising media of mobile operators in Bulgaria, whose influence is aimed at youth groups to position themselves in the minds of young people in the most pleasant way, to emphasize and build individuality of their products and services. In front of the target, as well as to maintain a positive image.

Provided research fields are related to the search for attitudes towards advertising (determinants of positive and negative attitudes), giving rise to the presence or absence of consumer interest; reporting of pre-established attitudes (pre-attitudes), as well as opportunities for their change; revealing the ways to build beliefs through advertisements of mobile operators; taking into account the possible change of behavior under the influence of advertising; disclosure of persuasive impact through advertising of a mobile operator.

The thesis of the dissertation: "the main communication element - advertising, presented in all its media, has not lost the leading aspects of substantial impact on youth groups, which are considered to have insufficient life experience and can be more easily affected. (p.19)

Methods. An extensive arsenal of research methods has been used, but in the dissertation and the abstract, they are not collected in the otherwise available section. The sociological methods I have discovered are:

Focus groups (Group discussion)

- Individual direct questionnaire on the principle of those who responded to establish youth attitudes to the advertising of mobile operators;
- Individual direct questionnaire on the principle of respondents to develop the knowledge of young people about the types of advertising of mobile operators;
- Individual direct questionnaire on the principle of those who responded to determine some of the values of young people according to the Schwartz methodology to identify trends in consumer behavior of young people;

- Individual direct questionnaire on the principle of respondents to identify the main components of the value system of the young generation, influencing their thinking and behavior when using products and services of mobile operators offered through various advertising media.
- Comparative analysis of the results in a study of young people from different universities - Sofia, Plovdiv, and Thracian universities.
- T-tests for independent samples between different demographic characteristics - gender, financial status, and higher education- highlight the relationship with the statistically significant factors.
- One-way analyzes - ANOVA or analysis of variations - checks whether the variability of the formed dependent variables is affected by demographic and other characteristics
- Correlation analysis for digital evaluation of the strength of the relationship and direction.

The number of respondents consists of 300 people. The survey was conducted in two stages through an individual direct questionnaire among the respondents aged 18 to 25, using mobile operators' products and services in Bulgaria.

From the internal audiences (employees of the companies) are analyzed those who are aged 18 to 25 years and answer the above questions as external audiences

- A secondary analysis of research by other researchers in the country and abroad was conducted (Alpha Research, etc.)

The surveys aim to identify the attitudes and pre-attitudes of young people aged 18 to 25 who deny the presence of advertising influence on them, the formation of beliefs, and the existing relationship between attitudes towards products and services of mobile operators and evaluation of their ads. The aim is to determine why there are changes in the respondents' views and behavior.

The methods used are an attempt to establish what are the elements of the strong impact of advertising, which can influence the change of consumer attitudes, thinking, and behavior. The youth value system components are also presented, which are defined as "a straightforward target for the communicator, who seeks to establish the conditions under which young respondents tend to change their attitudes towards mobile products and services in line with modern trends."

The dissertation is the first comprehensive study of the convincing impact of mobile operators' advertisements on the young generation in Bulgaria. The research on mobile phones by D. Peycheva and Iv. Evtimov at NBU in 2007 was one of the first in Bulgaria, but in a sense away from the advertisements of the operators. This dissertation identifies the main reasons young people aged 18 to 25 tend to change their attitudes and beliefs towards advertising and the conditions under which it is influenced.

In the **first** chapter, "Convincing impact of advertisements of mobile operators," the dissertation has focused its efforts on presenting the essence of the problem of having a convincing impact through advertising of a mobile company. The object of theorizing is the conceptual dimensions of attitudes, types, and changes. Emphasis is placed on the psychological principles of influence of Robert Cialdini: Principle of reciprocity, commitment, and consistency, social approval, power and authority, a deficit the object of theorizing are also the processes of persuasion: prejudiced perception, belief, and manipulation, including the psychological principles of persuasion according to Dave Lacany: the principle of support on the outcome, the principle of focus on the best interests, the principle of credibility, the principle of reference to the goal and time, the principle of the personal, the principle of the ethical. Basic psychological models for the impact of advertising and for changing attitudes and persuasion are also presented, namely: Yale method for changing attitudes; Model of the highest probability of persuasion; (R. Petti and D. Kachiopo); Model of persuasive influence according to Chavdar Hristov and proposed and developed by Lyubomira Venkova Spasova - Extended model of persuasive influence.

The **second** chapter: "Advertising communication as part of mobile promotion" focuses on the concepts of advertising, types of advertising, types of advertising on the Internet: Web banner; Text link; Email footer; Paid article or publication, Advertising space; Paid advertising on Google; Full page animated advertising; Package advertising; Corporate advertising; Product advertising. Also included is the emergence and development of mobile operators in Bulgaria - A1, Telenor, Vivacom, and advertising.

Chapters 3 and 4, respectively, "Empirical study of attitudes and behavior towards mobile operators' advertisements" and "Results of the study on the persuasive impact of mobile operators' advertisements," examine consumer attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of young people at the specified age. 18 to 25 years, to establish the convincing impact of advertising on young respondents. Based on the respondents' consent or disagreement with specific statements, their cognitive, affective, and conative attitudes towards the individual advertising media are highlighted. The connection with the socio-demographic characteristics of the target groups and

the ways of influencing centrally and peripherally through advertising is revealed, the influence of the main components of the value system of young people on their manifestation under the influence of advertising is described.

Some changes regarding the value system of young people for the period from 2005 to 2007 are explained. For this purpose, a secondary analysis of data from the sociological survey of Magdalena Garvanova, conducted in 2013 to change the values of the younger generation and the research agency Alpha Research, on consumer attitudes and beliefs of young people in Bulgaria.

The one-factor analyzes and analyzes the conducted T-tests for independent samples between the separate demographic characteristics and the variance analyzes of the variations regarding the components of the youth value system and correlation analyzes for establishing the main dependences between statistically significant factors are developed here.

Chapters three and four are concerned with specific empirical interests - exploring the reasons for changing consumer attitudes of young people, ways to build trust in a mobile company through advertising, and the circumstances in which young people demonstrate specific behavior towards a particular mobile company.

My assessment of the dissertation's development as a whole and of the chapters included in it is positive. Theorizing is the result of in-depth and multifaceted field research and skills for analysis and proposing solutions.

Contributions

I agree with the following proven contributions of the dissertation:

Advertising has not lost the leading role of a powerful impact on youth audiences. Based on the conducted empirical studies and analyzes are proposed

- Guidelines for successful impact through advertising and for changing consumer attitudes and beliefs are provided.
- A new research field has been outlined concerning the change of attitudes, ideas, and behavior of some young people under the influence of advertising.
- Modern types of advertising and advertising media are classified.

- A connection has been established between the attitude towards a mobile company's products and services and the evaluation of their advertisements as a result of which different reactions of consumers are observed.
- It is established that persuasive influence is achieved both centrally and peripherally.
- Developed and presented an author's "Extended model of persuasive influence" of advertising according to the possible final consumer reactions of mobile products and services.
- The main elements of the powerful impact of advertising can be applied by modern mobile companies in Bulgaria to achieve the longer-term involvement of young consumers in their products and services.

As a contribution, I also define the use of statistical techniques - one-factor analyzes, ANOVA - analysis of variance, and correlation analyses to establish the main relationships between statistically significant factors, T-tests for independent samples, etc.

The dissertation work is highly valuable, showing the enviable erudition of Lyubomira Venkova Spasova in the field and beyond. There is academic precision in theorizing, in the search for relationships and determinations and the implemented analytical approaches. Lyubomira Spasova shows high analytical skills both in terms of theory and interpretation, as well as in terms of empiricism. The language in which the dissertation is written is extremely accessible and, at the same time, highly academic. A rich literary arsenal from Bulgarian and foreign sources was used.

The abstract corresponds to the dissertation.

Her **publishing activity** is enviably good. Spasova has not only the required number of publications on the topic of the dissertation and participation with reports at scientific conferences but also far more – 8.

Notes

My main note is to the abstract and the foreword. The abstract corresponds to the maximum extent to the dissertation, but is too large and repeats texts from the dissertation itself. The foreword is also extensive, and it would be scientifically more fitting to refer specific parts of it to the first theoretical chapter. On the other hand, the foreword to the dissertation grabs the readers with the erudition of Lyubomira Spasova, with the skills to pose problems, connect them with the present, offer alternatives, etc.

My note does not diminish the qualities of the dissertation.

In conclusion, I declare that I will vote with Yes for the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications) by Lyubomira Venkova Spasova and I suggest that the Scientific Jury members also vote Yes.

Reviewer:

Prof. Dobrinka Stancheva Peycheva

Sofia,

August 22, 2020