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The influence of advertising on consumer behaviour

Opsimou, Eleni

Business Administration Program, School of Economics Sciences and Business, Neapolis University Paphos

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NEAPOLIS UNIVERSITY

FINAL YEAR RESEARCH DISSERTATION

THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

SUBMITTED BY **ELENI OPSIMOU**

THESIS TUTOR: DR.ANDREAS MASOURAS

STUDENT ID NUMBER: **1110101814**

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Advertising is a powerful tool. Given the amount of money that is spent on this marketing medium by the major corporations, advertisers obviously feel that they can influence consumer decisions and thus behavior. Advertisements these days promise or seem to promise all sorts of things. They also rely on implications. Car advertisements generally use beautiful, successful looking people with the implication that buying the car could have the same effect on the target market. Beauty adverts are another example, many adverts for beauty products promise things, generally to make the consumer look younger. Do these really have an influence on the consumer's decision to buy? How does the advertiser decide how to approach this area? What are the influences on the consumer?

The reason for choosing this area for the thesis is that advertising and the thinking behind it is an interesting subject. There are a lot of strong opinions in this area and a great deal of issues of relevance. The field of advertising is highly competitive at times contentious and always visible in daily life and an in-depth study of this question should yield some very useful information and background to this area.

Advertising evidently works as it is employed as a means of communication by so many organizations, but what makes a successful advertising campaign? This dissertation will examine the area of advertising that contains a message, rather than advertising that aims to persuade the consumer to buy a product or service. This is known as social marketing, which is a planned process for influencing change and can play a central role in topics like health, environment, and other important issues.

Many examples of this type of advertisement are controversial in approach and aim to shock the viewer. The drink driving campaigns are one such example. Over the year these advertisements have become more and more explicit in their message of what can happen if someone drinks and then drives. The aim is to use shock tactics to try to influence and thus alter consumer behavior. The image and message contained in such adverts are very powerful and a study of this area should prove interesting as advertising impacts on all areas of our lives. To quote Solomon (1994):

'For better or worse, we all live in a world that is significantly influenced by the actions or marketers. We are surrounded by marketing stimuli in the form of advertisements, stores and products competing for our attention and our dollars.