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## The Impact of Advertisements for Romanian Food Products on Consumers

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### Abstract

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The advertisement, regardless of its object, implies a symbiotic relationship between image, text and product, it is amplified by the media used to promote, it meets the manufacturer's needs regarding promotion and it must also overcome prejudices in order to form the consumer's decision to purchase. Analysing the sociological studies about publicity and advertising in the material, we invariably find that the psycho-social approach observes the way in which the group membership determines specific consumer behaviour and a specific way of perception and evaluation of advertisements. We aim at carrying out an exploratory research about promoting Romanian food products through advertising in the past two decades and aim at identifying the type of consumer to which advertising and the evolution of advertisements has caused the change of consumer behaviour. Through the case study of media market in Romania in recent years, we analyse the evolution of advertisements for food, aiming how social values and needs of the individual physiological influences consumer behaviour. And because more and more often in the advertisements to food products of the domestic manufacturers, we encounter elements regarding the geographical origin of the products, in the context in which the advertisement promotes a healthy lifestyle, we have analysed the expected impact by the Romanians producers of food products using the slogan *Made in Romania*.

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**Keywords:** Consumer; advertisement; food products; mentality; decision.

## **1. Introduction**

The current consumer, more sophisticated and with diverse needs, claims more and more elaborated food products, which involves a series of processing in order to market them, changes that will be reflected in the final price, but on the other hand differentiate between the products. And the food products are currently subject to certain processing before reaching the final consumer on the evolved markets, respectively they are subject to certain preparation operations such as storage, sorting, packing, processing, transport, so that the food product go through a real food chain from the moment of production and up to its purchase for consumption. Thus, the food industry has become an engine of agriculture, because of the procedures for processing food products are becoming more attractive, if only in terms of presentation / packaging of the product, they acquire added value through the technological innovations and the publicity given to them in order to convince the consumer of the product qualities with a view to it being purchased for consumption.

From the present consumer's perspective, we are in a new era - the era of hyper consumerism (Lipovetsky, 2007: 84-88), where the consumer is evolved, his/her natural / physiological needs are minimal as the social needs are growing significantly and influence the consumer's behaviour. Currently, the motivation for the purchase is no longer the traditionally connection with the social position and living standard of the consumer, the consumption becoming a subjective one, focused on the pursuit of the pleasure felt by consumers from using a certain product and the novelty inciting to purchase the product. Thus, the manufacturers and marketers understood that the link between the product qualities and the consumer's needs is very important, and the chances of selling increase proportionally to the extent to which the advertisement message for the product promotion directly corresponds to the current needs and aspirations of the consumer.

These rules are applicable in the field of food products, even if the physiological need of the current food consumer has not disappeared, but it is enhanced and amended in today's society either by the social need regarding the environmental protection by the consumption of biological products, or the need of belonging to a group of consumers that promote a healthy lifestyle, and even the need for esteem through the use of products that ensure a physique appreciated by those around him/her, namely the need for esteem by using the same products by people belonging to different social groups.

Another hypothesis from which we start in the present study is that beyond the financial aspect desired by advertising or sales growth, maintaining and increasing the market position by expanding the target group, the ads induce new behaviours, change social statuses and manage the conflict of the multiple roles assumed by one person - the professional, the family, the social one - by promoting an appropriate substitute product.

From this perspective, based on the case study of media market in Romania in the past two decades, we aim at carrying out an exploratory research about promoting Romanian food products through advertising in the past two decades and aim at identifying the type of consumer on which advertising and the evolution of advertisements has caused the change of consumer behaviour, identify and group the most often used symbols in advertising in Romania, depending on the category of food products in order to determine the expected impact and the consumer group responding to the advertising symbol

by changing their behaviour. The case study seeks local food advertising from Romania, from dairy to meat products and products for children, broadcast commercials on media market.

## 2. Publicity. Advertisement. Advertising

Advertising is ubiquitous, and following the explosion of publicity, intensified by the marketing of the late twentieth century, we have become a society that communicates excessively, Al Ries and Jack Trout found in 2004 (2004: 20). Currently, the individual is subjected daily to hundreds, even thousands of advertising messages through various media channels, from TV and radio ads to visual advertisements, like banners, posters, billboards, leaflets, mashes and internet advertising, voluntarily and involuntarily. Thus, it was estimated in 2004 (Heath & Potter, 2011: 163) that the citizens of Canada and the US watch daily between 700 and 3,000 advertisements, while in 2008, the estimates (Pringle, Field, 2011: 165-168) showed that Britons receive every day between 3000 and 4000 messages through dozens of media channels. In 2014, Alexandra Iavorschi asserted in a conference on the consumption of audio-visual by the Romanians ([www.descopera.ro](http://www.descopera.ro)) that in Romania, a country in a top position in Europe concerning the number of hours spent watching television, on average, 17,000 advertisements run every day, while the Romanians watch TV on average six hours per day.

In this media context, having to satisfy new and / or sophisticated needs and new habits, addressing some consumers with an increased level of education and culture due to the higher purchasing power of the consumers with high living standards, and last but not least, having to cover all the media channels developed by current technologies, advertising has evolved from its primary economic function to sell the product, to educational and artistic functions, so that we are witnessing an improvement of the messages and techniques of approach consistent with the consumer group to whom an advertisement addresses. However, in the current conditions of the advertising industry, we observe the increasing influence of the advertising message on the consumer behaviour, the information conveyed by the emotional advertising message seeking to convince the consumer by symbol and sensuality, and less by potentiating the characteristics of the product, the advertising message having an increasingly higher influence in forming the consumer's decision in relation to the consumer's experience, knowledge and personality.

### 2.1 Terminological specifications

Invariably, advertising is present in our lives constantly as it has become a complex social phenomenon, often not being aware of the presence of advertising in our activity, because not infrequently, on becoming aware of it we experience a feeling of suffocation and revulsion when faced with it if it is a wild, aggressive publicity, or on the contrary, to seek it voluntarily in order to obtain information about the product and how the product can meet our needs.

In an attempt to define the term *advertising*, references must be invariably made to the notions of *advertisement* and *advertising*. Etymologically, the word *advertising/publicity* comes from Latin, from the verb *publico (-are)*, which means to inform the public and from the noun *publicatio* that means addressing the public, thus capturing the communication element which is found in the advertising activity. Going beyond the status of communication, advertising asserts itself in the recent years and as

a distinct economic sector with its specialists, engaging a large number of artisans, artists, production companies and suppliers of all kinds, a real advertising industry.

And if etymologically, the concept of advertisement derives from the French *réclame* - designating a small article which praises a book or an object, in the current semantics (Academia Romana, 2012), the notion of advertisement falls within the scope of publicity, the publicity preceding modern advertising. The advertisement being defined (Academia Romana, 2012: 929) as the (trading) activity seeking the elicitation, winning of the public interest on certain goods, on the use of a service, the message getting to the public on any media channels - print, radio, television, etc. the concept of advertising has a wider semantic content, for it includes both the materialization and the transmission of the advertising message, as well as the consumer's feedback.

Considering both the product and the process, both fall within the notion of advertising, and considering that the current common language does not distinguish clearly, even maintaining a confusion between advertisements and advertising (Coman, 2000: 26), we disagree with the distinction introduced by Rodica Cîrnu (2004: 36) meaning that *advertising means in particular the process, the science of disseminating the advertisements, the advertisement representing the actual product of the process*, but we believe that in the historical evolution, the advertisement preceded advertising, representing an important part of the history of the latter, and the use of the two notions is relative to the context.

Starting from the difference in terminology in English between advertising - the communication paid by a clearly identified sponsor and publicity - *the message in favour of a product, a brand, it is not paid, and thus from the advantages and disadvantages of both forms of promotion*, the marketing professor Siva K. Balasubramanian (1994) (Southern Illinois University) in 1994 identified the so-called hybrid-messages, as a distinct style of marketing communication. The category of hybrid messages included the practices influencing the audience for commercial benefit, so that the audience does not realize the commercial influence and processes the communication content differently from the way commercial messages are processed, the message of the sponsor being more credible because it is not perceived by the consumer as a direct advertising message and the sponsor has control over communication and content, in that s/he pays this communication. The placement of product, a hybrid message type appeared in the 80's in the US, although the practice dates back to the cinema era when the American film studios used the idea of advertising through the film and involves the deliberate and paid introduction of a brand, a product or service in order to promote them and influence the consumer, in a commercial context through visual or hearing means. This type of promotion is currently used in both films, the products furthered appearing as part of the props used by actors (visual promotion) or by indicating the product / service by the lines of actors, as elements of the script (auditory promotion), as well as in TV broadcasts, explicitly or by the presence of that product during the show, integrated in the development program.

## 2.2 *The psycho-sociological approach of advertising*

Both praised and blamed, sometimes regarded as a source of information for the consumer, other times considered suffocating by the same consumer, annoyed by the presence of advertisements in all

forms - TV spots or radio, billboards, advertising spaces, distributed leaflets, etc.- from a psycho-sociological perspective, it may be considered that advertising is a complex social phenomenon (Chelcea, 2012: 21-22), which is present in our lives without us always being aware of its presence or influence on our behaviour. In this regard, the author Septimiu Chelcea shows that we hurry past a billboard in the same way as we pass by a tree on the sidewalk without stopping expressly in order to collect the information in that message, unaware that the panel and the message are there for us or that its absence would affect our life, although through the visual perception we capture the information, we store it and we will use it when we decide on the purchase (when purchasing a product, certain images, symbols, slogans come back to our minds which influence us in the consumption decision).

Aggressive advertising can also have up to a certain limit a positive effect, for repeating an image of a product in a certain context and inoculating us a slogan associated with that product as the essence of its quality, at a certain time, the consumer will decide to purchase that product either to convince her/himself of the truth in the message, although currently s/he is faithful to another type of product or brand, or because the information transmitted persuasively and inoculated involuntarily, in a specific context corresponds to our needs at a certain moment. From this perspective, analyzing, for example, the advertisements for dairy products destined to children from Danonino brand using slogans of the type "*Strong bones, healthy growth*" or "*Keep the cold away*" (the latter promoted especially in the autumn-winter season), we find that the purchase of this product is higher in winter than in summer, namely that consumers-parents with children under 12 years are those who mostly purchase this product compared to its consumption in families with children over 12 years.

We can say that the direct purpose of advertising is to create a positive image of the product and the company that produces / distributes it, and indirectly to try to sell that product, because if the consumer is convinced by the advertisement of the benefits brought to her/him personally by the qualities of that product / brand, s/he will undoubtedly be convinced to purchase that product and even to change her/his consumption behaviour. Thus, although the individual is rational, s/he is largely suggestive, Walter D. Scott asserted in the early years of the twentieth century; when he exposed his conception on the implications of personality factors in advertising and the psychological processes involved in advertising, such as suggestion, illusions, mental images, emotions (Scott, 2006). For Walter D. Scott, advertising should be based on the suggestibility of the potential buyers who will react non-rationally, as in a hypnotic trance, our senses being exploited maximally by the product subject to the advertisement: if a musical instrument is advertised, the target audience needs to hear its sound and to make the undeniable connection between the sound and the product; if food products are advertised, the consumer must feel the taste and pleasure; if the advertisement is for a perfume, the target audience must be enveloped in the specific smell of the product (Benjamin, 2007: 102).

Thus, psycho-sociologists Terence A. Shimp and L.G. Gresham (1983) having attention as a central element and processing the advertising message, identified eight steps that are made by a consumer up to the purchase of the product due to the advertisement: 1) exposure to advertising; 2) attracting attention / selectivity in case of focused attention, respectively the subconscious processing in case of the involuntary attention; 3) understanding the message; 4) evaluation of the messages according to certain criteria (most often being pleasant / unpleasant, or the common / luxury type, affordable /

exclusive); 5) encoding the information in the long-term memory for future use; 6) recalling the stored information after a while; 7) opting for one of the variants offered; 8) purchasing the product. Throughout this process various social stimuli occur and are exploited by the advertisement, one must take into account the individual factors of the consumer (personality, social category, own values, motivation), but also the environmental factors as the advertising message must be adapted to the culture the consumer is part of, even if the product is found on many consumer markets.

In the case of food products, since the need of consumption is a physiological necessity common to all consumers, these products being used and consumed the most frequently, with a permanent and defined budget in the economy of any household, the advertisement must exploit the novelty of the stimuli, to meet the consumer's need of information about the product qualities (what percentage of the product involves natural products, and how much are additives and artificial food supplements), to meet the needs of security and respect for the environment and not least to shock by the stimuli exploited (e.g. the advertisement for Milka chocolate, feelings of tenderness and love are induced using the slogan "*Dare to be tender*", or in the advertisement for the dairy product Zuzu - Max yogurt, visual stimuli are associated with the term creamy used in the advertisement, which ends with the slogan "*The yogurt that men were expecting*").

It turned out in the psycho-sociological research (Chelcea, 2003: 132-135) that the consumer's trust in the advertisement increases with the frequency of its recurrence, this repetition increasing the familiarity of the promoted product and strengthening the consumer's confidence in that product, the advertisement being perceived as true, after a while, even if there are signs warning on the falsity of the message. Analysing the advertisements for the local food, we identify advertising messages that suggest the idea that by eating regularly, usually for breakfast, a given product, the consumer gets rid of obesity or bloating, ensuring a healthy nourishment if we replace breakfast with the consumption of that product (we see that in time, products whose name inoculates the idea of using the product have appeared, e.g. Activia breakfast).

Also, having examined the relationship between culture (defined as all modes of thinking, feeling and acting learned and shared by a significant number of people or a given community - people, nation (Chelcea, 2003: 102-105)) and publicity, it was concluded that advertising as a type of communication is influenced by different elements of culture, in the same way as advertising influences the consumers' values (Chelcea, 2012: 31-35; Mooij, 2010: 89-112). So, the happy family is the leitmotif of the advertisements in the societies where the family is in crisis, for which, given that the European and American sociologists speak presently more often about the family crisis in the modern society, we are not surprised by the increased frequency in the national publicity of the images with happy families or the emphasis on the family members' role in the TV advertisements (e.g. the advertisements to meat products - Meda sausages or those from Caroli - the commercials to dairy products - Actimel, Hochland cheese or Zuzu milk in which happy families and generations gathered at the table are presented, or the image of mother in the kitchen preparing the meal for the family). Having identified a link between the Romanian people's culture, relating to our masculine-feminine cultural values and their enhancement in the society as features impregnated to the society, not as gender domination or respectively defining a female-oriented society as the one in which values like the well-being, the

quality of life and concern for others prevail, and advertising, in terms of the content of advertising messages, we currently place Romania in the category of feminine societies, although in the evolution of the Romanian society, there were moments in which the labour division in the family was pronounced, impregnating from this social perspective a male character to the interwar Romanian society ([www.historia.ro](http://www.historia.ro)). Thus, in the interwar period there were no food commercials and the advertisements to shops presented only clothing stores or non-food products, on the one hand due to the conjectural economic situation - the Great Depression 1929-1933, on the other hand it was deemed appropriate to promote by written advertising the products destined to a privileged social category, having the financial means to purchase, especially luxury goods. From Vlad Mihăilă's material ([www.historia.ro](http://www.historia.ro)), we observe the influence of the written advertising on the values of the Romanian interwar society, related to the social status of the print readers, but also the social trends of Westernization of the society through the products advertised, most of these products being imported. The conclusion of the aforementioned study is that through the advertisements in the interwar written press it was aimed to bring the preferences, tastes and values of the Romanian public to Western standards, inserting these values into the traditional society in Romania.

### **3. The advertisement on food products and the evolution of the consumer behaviour**

Whether it's a TV ad or a billboard, the advertisement has two reinforcing elements which should be complementary, forming a whole: the textual message (verbal or written) and the iconic message (the illustration). As mentioned previously, the immediate purpose of the advertisement is to sell the product, to persuade the consumer to buy that product because it will meet her/his needs, raise the consumer's interest and to influence his/her consumption behaviour, thus meeting the two functions of advertising: informing the consumer regarding the quality of the product and persuading the consumer to purchase the product. In the long term, advertising and hence the advertisement aims to create a certain image of the product, be identified on the market, namely to create and maintain a certain image of the company or brand in question, and in relation to the consumer's attitude towards the product and company, it targets customer loyalty and even to attract new customers just by changing the consumption behaviour of the latter.

In relation to the purposes of advertising and its functions, the advertising message, regardless of the channel it is transmitted on must draw the consumer's attention, raise his/her interest and desire to purchase that product in a staged process of persuasion proposed as AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) by the American advertising specialist Elmo Lewis E. St. 1898 (Chelcea, 2012: 158-159). Basically, by covering chronologically the stages mentioned, the consumer as a rational being seeks to support the decision to purchase through the interest created by the advertisement regarding the enhanced qualities of the product and respectively, the desire to meet his/her own needs with that product. And if the consumer does not watch an advertising message on a voluntary basis, in the current context in which the advertising is omnipresent in our lives, the involuntary reception of the advertising message will act in time on a stimulus, which in time will either generate the consumer's desire to purchase the product out of curiosity (to what extent the new product, inoculated by the advertisement, responds to his/her own needs, and in this case we can witness a change in the

consumer's behaviour) or will generate the desire to buy because while the consumer has grounded his/her interest in that product rationally (in this case, either the loyal consumer upholds his/her faith in the product to which s/he remains faithful, or we see a change in the attitude and behaviour through the consumer's decision to purchase a new product because it meets the superior needs of the consumer).

Regarding food products, the issue being related to comparative products responding to the same type of needs - the physiological needs of food - offered by different companies (whether we are on the dairy market, that of the meat products or on the vegetables and fruit market), the battle fought by advertising is to maintain the consumer's interest for that brand by strengthening the belief that that type of product is suitable for his/her needs, reminding through advertisements modified over time in terms of concept, in order for the consumer's monotony and boredom not to intervene, the specific qualities of the product that satisfy the consumer's needs. For example, the taste of yogurt is similar regardless of the producing company, but what makes the difference for the consumer and is boosted by the advertisement is the creamy taste of the yogurt from Zuzu Max brand of Albalact Company, compared to the too good, too "countryside" tastes of Covalact company products.

### 3.1. *Symbols and stereotypes used in advertisements for food*

Although in today's society, the media has increased and improved, and hence the possibilities for broadcasting advertising messages through TV commercials that combine the visual stimuli with the auditory ones, thus providing a complex stimulation of the consumer's attention, as opposed to billboards, the consumer often feels annoyed by advertising and tries to avoid the voluntary perception of the message by watching them. With reference to the consumer's attitudes that avoid watching the commercials voluntarily (either watching non-commercial channels or during commercial breaks switches to another channel, reduces the TV sound volume or does other things) in conjunction with the advertising agglomeration (from billboards to TV commercials, from flyers distributed at different events or in the street to the commercials sent by post) and the existence in the market of hundreds of messages seeking to capture and hold the attention of the customer, we find that the task of advertising specialists is to find messages that grab the consumer's attention while motivating him/her at the same time to respond either behaviourally (purchases the product) or perceptually (recommends the product because he heard that it has certain qualities).

Before making an analysis of the symbols and ad techniques found in the current advertisements for food products in Romania, we will make an analysis of the words used in advertising, whether they are found in the lines of the actors present in the TV ads, or they are found in the slogans dedicated to products and in the billboards. As David Ogilvy (2009: 138) remarked the most powerful words in advertising are *free* and *new* because the impact reverberates on the financial interest of the consumer, respectively on the curiosity of the human being and openness to innovation (excluding the conservative people for whom inducing the existence of a new product must be persuaded). And in the case of food, the use of these words may generate the impact expected by the producers who offer when purchasing a number of products, a number of products for free - generally one or two to create packages of four products, or eight products (see the promotion to Danonino packages, the cottage cheese from Covalact), respectively when purchasing a product, a percentage between 25 and 50 is

offered for free for the second product of the same type purchased. Regarding the novelty that could be brought to food products, most often this takes the form of product presentation, by changing the colour, the design of the packaging for example, or the inclusion of certain products in a new range, a new brand individualized on the market by the same producing companies (e.g. the products from the brand Traditions in Romania of the company Danone or the brand ZUZU MAX of Albalact Company).

Other words and / or phrases with a strong impact on consumers of food products, words found in the national advertisements are *tasty, even more, sensational, miracle, magic, truth about, happiness, to / with / from you, family, guaranteed, success* while by words like *natural, healthy, health*, it is desired to induce the idea of biological, natural food, to inform the consumers that the products are processed without the use of preservatives and / or food additives. Using the slogan or motto in advertising starts on the one hand, from the fact that the recommendation of a product by an acquaintance who uses that product is made orally, the one recommending it trying to recall some qualities of the product in order to justify why s/he uses the product and to persuade others to use it, on the other hand, associating a concise sentence, easy to remember and capturing the qualities of the product is as an element of individualisation of the product, along with the brand name, contributing sometimes decisively in building a brand. Slogans do not change often and are built directly related to local values of the market segment to which the product addresses, having the ability to position a product in the market assuring a segment of consumers and its own image, because as they are internalized, routines mental and behavioural reactions are formed.

Building on the features of a viable slogan, meaning that according to the communication studies (Thoveron, 1996: 129-130) the slogan must be short, sound, original, credible, complete, current and sustainable, analyzing the slogans used to promote meat products, we find that the central idea of building the slogan is taste: Cris-Tim products - *the favourite taste of small celebrities*, Elit products - *the perfect taste*; Meda products - *All that is tastiest in meat* or Fox cold meats - *For distinguished tastes*. We found that most slogans for meat products highlight a technical characteristic of the product (Matache Măcelaru products - *masterly cold meats*), a benefit of consumption (e.g. *tasty, inexpensive, healthy*) or advantages offered to the consumer on the overall (Caroli products - *Keep Romanians in motion*) and this advertising tactic is addressed in recent years due to the scandals on the European market of meat products which have decreased meat consumption and the placement of these products last in the basket of consumer goods.

On the dairy market, the central idea of slogans to the products promoted is the link between consumption and the consumer's health (products from Danonino range - *Strong bones, healthy growth*, Dorna products - *Health from the milk* or Activia products - *Well-being comes from the inside*) meaning that the benefit from the consumption of dairy products, ranked first in the Romanian consumers' preference, according to the statistics on product sales.

The presence of the product images or its features, of the images that show how it is used, in the case of food products, suggestive in this regard being the images presenting the product being consumed by the whole family, of the images with people from certain social categories (artists for Activia products or common characters, such being the case of Covalact products) and of the images with the result of using the product (e.g. the products from Actimel range that strengthen the children's

immunity and they no longer become sick or Napolact products with the slogan "From the Transylvanian goodness", the use of the products bringing a good disposition and joy to the consumer) ensure the functions of advertising in visual form, these images also promoting the advert, which sometimes involves the creation of connections between the consumer's knowledge about that product and the message the advertisement renders.

The power of suggestion and the repetitive images, the high degree of spreading and the persuasive language largely built from expressions, clichés (slogans) have outlined the role of advertising as stereotypes generator (Tuica, 2007). Analysing the stereotypes, we obtain data about the mentality of the respective society, in a certain period, about the values promoted. At the same time, stereotypes reach almost all spheres of life - lifestyle, philosophy of life, social status of women and men, social groups, communication, concepts such as good associated to comfort, happiness equated with pleasure, beauty with the agreeable physical image (Tuica, 2007).

From the perspective of stereotypes, advertising is conservative, because we find traditional stereotypes in advertising - the image of woman, of the children and celebrities. Associated to these stereotypes, particularly to food advertising, the image that appears in recent years is that of the family consuming together the respective product, which supports our previous statements on the link between advertising and the culture of the society.

The stereotype of physical attractiveness and celebrity is fully exploited in advertising, including in the advertising of food products. On billboards, in magazines and undoubtedly in the TV ads, beautiful women and attractive men appear, who consume the products with pleasure, respectively celebrities who induce the idea that their social status is ensured also due to the consumption of that product, whose supporter they claim to be directly or indirectly. In this regard, the commercials for the products in Activia range are well known, which feature artists like Stela Popescu and Emilia Popescu or television star Mihaela Radulescu, the latter's image also being associated with Elit cold meats, celebrities confirming visually and verbally the fact that they include those products in their daily diet because they ensure a healthy lifestyle and energy, which induces the consumer that s/he may have the same benefits by using that product, associating their social status and lifestyle to that of the celebrities.

Also, the stereotype of the woman housewife who takes care of the family needs, and lately to ensure a healthy lifestyle for the children is exploited in the advertisements to food products that start with the image of mother doing the shopping or in the kitchen along with the respective product and ends with the image of the family that consumes the products prepared by mother (e.g. the Hochland cheese advertisements or those for Caroli products). The anticipated message of the advertisement is the joy felt by the family through the consumption of that product, as well as the fact that being verified in advance by the mother, the product provides healthy eating for the whole family, especially for the children, even in the case of cold meats, meat products considered by the nutritionists as unsuitable for the children in particular. While we found that the role of housewife is just one side of femininity exerted by a playful and untiring conduct, thanks to the saving food products responding to the consumption needs of today woman, whose activities are no longer concentrated exclusively on household - see the commercials for Activia products or the Cappy range products associating the female image and the slogan "*Your savoury moments.*"

The fact that other women or mothers encourage from the advertisements the consumption of that product, bringing as an argument their own satisfaction in case of a celebrity or a healthy diet promoted by a caring mother, has made the marketers to believe that in the case of food products, the impact on customers, especially the female ones, is maximum, also inducing the idea of credibility of the message that comes from a qualified and credible person. If the same advertising message had had as the main protagonist a man, even a celebrity, the advertisement could enjoy an increased audience, but when it comes to the consumption of that product, the sales would decrease, because no matter how attractive the protagonist of the advertisement would be, it would seem implausible that a man promote healthy eating.

Studies on the impact of advertising to food products on the consumer and changes in the consumer behaviour have revealed the fact that advertisements containing children consuming the product have a greater impact on consumers, especially the female ones than the ones presenting adults consuming the same product, for which we encounter more and more often children in the current advertisements. This result should not surprise given that in case of the commercials with children actors to food products, the maternal emotion of the female consumer is enhanced, whether the consumer has children or not.

And since we brought up the image of children in advertising, the established stereotype envisages their tenderness, delicacy and the need for protection and care, for which the presence of children in advertisements is not associated necessarily to the idea that the product is intended for children or their consumption. Regarding food commercials for products specifically designed for children's consumption, products such as Danonino products of Danonino company abound in cheerful colours, brisk pace, funny and concise slogans (e.g. "*Nino, nino Danonino*" or "*We learn and grow with Danonino*"), images of animals or the nature, cartoon characters and happy children who consume the product. Regarding the evolution of the advertising message in time, we have found that the shift from promoting the food product by focusing exclusively on the child's image moved to the idea to promote the product as integrated to family consumption, in which sense we highlight the commercials to Danonino products that at the beginning of the XXI th century presented only children, without their parents' presence, inducing them the idea that this is their product, children's product, presently parents appear together with the children who consume that product, because the message delivered is directed to the parents who are thus encouraged to include the product in their children's diet and buy it to ensure the healthy growth of their children.

However, the presence of children in advertisements for food products, be it fruit and fruit juices, dairy products or meat products, the consumption of those products taking place in a family environment, presenting the whole family sitting at the table, induce the consumer the idea that the products are also intended to be consumed by the children, the most affected by the decline in consumption being meat products which the consumer associates with the image and presence of industrial additives and preservatives that affect the nutritional quality of products. Thus, the use of children in advertisements to cold meats seeks to eliminate the consumer's conception that the processed meat products are unhealthy, that the producers use excessively preservatives, additives and genetically modified products, cheaper in terms of expenses, the image of children often being

complemented by the presence of the written message *"Without additives, without preservatives!"*, while the adverts for dairy products generally aim at strengthening the consumer's belief that the presence of dairy in their children's diets provides a healthy and harmonious development in time, which is the responsibility of parents.

### 3.2. *Indicating the place of provenance of the food product in order to stimulate the consumption of domestic products*

Defined by the EU Regulation. 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on informing the consumers regarding the food products as *any place indicated to be the place of origin for a food product, but it is not the "country of origin"*, the place of origin of the product is an element exploited in the recent years by advertising, because mentioning this location has a major impact on the consumer in terms of credibility in the qualities of the food product thereby promoted. As mentioned above, the advertisement must also convince through the reliability of the information that it brings about the product so that the visual combination of the landscapes in certain geographical areas - for example Transylvania in a commercial for meat products associated to the slogan *"Goodies from Transylvania"* or in the TV commercial of dairy products from Napolact company and its slogan *"From the heart of Transylvania!* or the Alps promoted in the advertisements to Milka chocolate - indicating the place of origin of the ingredients used in the product (such as the above-mentioned chocolate) respectively the location where the products are produced strengthen the consumer's faith that the information is true and verified, thus using the induction "I do not believe until I see!"

Thus correlating the image of the meat products of Sergiana-Poiana Mărului company having its headquarters in Transylvania but with outlets nationwide, with the slogan *"Goodies from Transylvania!"* induces the idea of the consumer's confidence in those products that are produced following recipes specific to the region of Transylvania, a Romania geographical area renowned for its tradition in livestock and processing of meat products.

On the Romanian food market, promoting the local products by emphasizing their origin in advertising aims at, apart from individuating new brands of food products on the market known to the consumers for years and strengthening the image and market share of the product / brand, stimulating consumers to buy local products though sometimes imported products are cheaper due to advanced technologies and fiscal policies of the countries from which the agricultural food imports originate

When the indigenous product is compared with the imported one, the consumer must be persuaded by the advertisement that s/he will get the same satisfaction from the consumption of the local product, both products having similar characteristics, such as the ingredients used and manufacturing processes, the difference being given by the fact that satisfying their own physiological needs is associated with the satisfaction to contribute to supporting the economic activity of the domestic producers.

Emphasizing the Romanian origin of the food products is felt by the local producers as a need to change the mentality of the Romanian consumer who is convinced that the imported products are of a superior quality compared to those indigenous, a conception inoculated on the one hand by the consumer over 45 who has been denied certain products for a long time until the 90's, on the other hand this view is endorsed both by the consumers of younger age, and by the elderly, on the assumption that

the technologies of the Western countries are more advanced and that Western producers are more responsible in complying with the legislation on food safety and consumer information. The feeling of patriotism is boosted in the advertisements to food products to stimulate the increased consumption of domestic products in the context in which the locations selling traditional local products (fairs and urban markets) are replaced by hypermarkets and supermarkets, and on the other hand, the presentation of the imported products, regardless of their degree of processing is better in terms of information about the product and the visual appearance than that of the domestic products (in this sense, we consider imported fruit and vegetables which are labelled, sorted and packaged individually or in quantities of 500 grams, one or two kilos, unlike local vegetables and fruit presented in bulk in general, without paying attention to the visual aspect of presentation, the label lacking in most cases).

The Romanian consumer society is characterized by a substantial conservatism, an aspect speculated maximally by the marketers in the promotion of local food products, the advertisements linking visually and auditory Romania with specific traditional lands, with authentic rural households (location, costumes, characters) and the local product that satisfies the physiological need of hunger and the need for social anthropological belonging to the Romanian people. So although the international company that also opened lucrative facilities in Romania, Danone promotes its products through the slogan "*Romanian Tastes!*", while the company Napolact created a new brand, with the same products entitled "*Traditions from Romania*" borrowing for the package elements specific to the Romanian popular costume and using brown as the background of the pack, given that in the symbolism of colours, psychologists associate the colour brown to warmth, a state of comfort, a sense of stability and fully belonging to a certain individualised group.

Similar to the label *Made in China* found on most products even if they are promoted by American or Western European companies, label that induces the consumer the idea that the product is acceptable in terms of quality / price ratio due to the lower costs of production in the factories in the Republic of China, the label *Made in Romania* attached to the food product aims at inducing both the local consumer and the European one the idea that they purchase for consumption and to satisfy their own needs a biological, traditional product, obtained from natural ingredients, specific to the production area.

Also, promoting the slogan *Made in Romania* attached to food products intends to individualize the domestic products on a consumer market packed with imported products, whose differentiating feature is a lower purchase price due to the lower costs of production, and with consumers more confident in the imported products than in the local ones, consumers whose mentality and behaviour must be refocused towards domestic products.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Advertising is part of everyday life, it is adapted to all media channels, it is detested and captivating in equal measure, it is persuasive through the repetitive information transmitted and engaging through the techniques used in order to attract the public's attention, prospective buyer, it is old, relating to the date of apparition, and innovative, relating to the stimuli and emotions entailed. Whatever product or service it is promoting, currently the leading role in advertising is occupied by the customer whose

loyalty the company wants to secure, respectively the consumer whose conduct the company seeks to influence, causing him/her to purchase that product convinced being that it meet his/her needs, that it certainly satisfies him/her unlike a similar product on the market of another company, being even able to change his/her lifestyle (e.g. a healthy and energizing diet).

Although man is a rational being, central idea of the AIDA model presented in the paper in order to understand the mechanism of action of the advertising message on the consumer behaviour, the reality and the psycho-social studies (Ross&Nisbeth, 1991) demonstrated that not infrequently, the consumer acts according to the social group s/he belongs to (we purchase and consume certain products as our friends and / or colleagues), other times according to the cultural values of the people we belongs to, respectively according to the context in which the individual is at a certain time (the situational theory supported by professors Iacob Cătoi and Nicolae Teodorescu according to which the same TV commercial may have a different effect as an individual was alone when s/he saw it or in a group of friends, was at home or at work, s/he was happy or stressed, was alone shopping or together with children (Cătoi&Teodorescu, 2004: 54)).

Involving the visual stimuli, in most cases, and the auditory stimuli or combining them into a single unit, generating emotions and changing mentalities, the advertisement message aims at influencing the consumer behaviour, building his/her loyalty to a specific product against the competing products, or prompting him/her to change his/her habit by purchasing the advertised product to the detriment of the traditional one they used, even if the product promoted in this way is not new on the market.

Advertising has evolved from promoting the product to promoting the consumer and his/her needs. In today's society which is constantly moving and expanding technologically, the advertisement message must evolve continuously, to break the old patterns and to shock through the approach and slogan, without exceeding the legal framework regarding subliminal advertising or the misleading one, to use a language common to all the categories of consumers addressed. Regarding the advertising of products for children, including and especially on food products for children, the advertisement message must be perceptible to the child and credible for the parent, entertaining but not harmful to the child, convincing but not annoying for the parents.

And because the focus of advertising is the consumer, who identifies him/herself with the actors in the advertisement or aspires to their social status, we find that the testimony technique alternates with the ordinary people technique in the advertising of domestic food products. Thus, the testimony technique is used in the TV ads or billboards promoting the products of the company that adopts the idea that it is enough for X star to assert that s/he uses that product, showing us how they use it and what results s/he has to increase the credibility of the potential buyers, while the technique of ordinary people (the happy family sitting at the table, the mother caring for her children's diet and play or the image of the simple countryside woman who cares about what her "stylish" niece eats) is to be found in the adverts of the companies which suggest the idea that the type of consumer for that product is the ordinary person like him/her, and if this category of consumers appreciate that product as being useful and of an excellent quality at an affordable price, they must be believed, thus becoming credible.

Based on the statistical reality regarding the considerable import of food (70% of the fruit and vegetables in the domestic market are imported, and also 65% of the meat on the Romanian market is

imported and respectively 20-30% of the dairy products) and the complementary export of the unprocessed agricultural products, because the cost of processing these in Romania generates food products not raising up to the standard of the competition of the imported food products, the Romanian government policy since 2000 and up to the present moment focuses on supporting the resumption of domestic production of food products through projects based on grants and tax policies favourable to small local producers, while promoting the Romanian products through topical and modern tools (involving the Ministry of Agriculture in organizing the participation of local producers to international fairs), the certification of Romanian products for their individualization on the international market and not least protecting and stimulating the domestic consumers and redirecting them towards domestic products, in which sense we mention the non-governmental programs *Made in Romania* launched in 2000 or the one launched in 2010 - *Buy in the Romanian style*. Amid the efforts supported by the policies and strategies on a medium and long term on the agricultural sector and food products, indicating the provenance of domestic food in the TV commercials and the advertising slogans are expected to have an impact on increasing the credibility of the Romanian consumer in the domestic products with a view to changing their consumer behaviour and shifting towards the purchase of local food products.

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