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# The influence of selected factors on the effectiveness of print media advertising

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# THE INFLUENCE OF SELECTED FACTORS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRINT MEDIA ADVERTISING

*LUDMILA CABYOVA, PETER KRAJCOVIC*

## **Abstract:**

Advertising effectiveness and efficiency are one of the basic criteria which affect the selection of the particular type of media to be used. Both criteria are closely related, although they both speak of different objectives. The research into efficiency of advertising focuses on its communication effect, whereas the research into effectiveness focuses on its ability to fulfil economic objectives. Therein lies the biggest difference between effectiveness, i.e. the ability to remember the advertising message and efficiency, i.e. the influence on the buying behaviour of consumers. However, advertising must be efficient in order to be effective.

The authors of this paper direct their attention to effectiveness of advertising in print media. In doing so, they analyse the ability to recall advertising in magazines and the factors which influence this ability. They compare the effect of the size and position of advertising, the reasons for recall and they also focus on the influence of buying intention and the stage of the buying process on advertising effectiveness. As a part of the survey, there is also a comparison of the influence of particular types of media on selecting or buying products and services and their role in the buying behaviour of the respondents. The survey involved 30 respondents, who had 12 magazines and 286 advertisements at their disposal.

## **Keywords:**

Magazines. Advertising. Print media. Effectiveness.

**JEL Classification:** D12, M30

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## Introduction

The theoretical background to the concept of effectiveness is ambiguous and vague. In scientific literature, we come across several explanations of this term. For the needs of this paper, we understand effectiveness in connection with the communication objectives of a company (brand knowledge, brand awareness, improved brand loyalty), whereas efficiency is linked with economic terms such as sales, profit and costs. One of the main reasons for assessing campaign's effectiveness is to find out whether it met the set objectives and whether the return on investment in advertising was ensured (Čábyová, 2012).

There are several reasons why measuring effectiveness is a very difficult process: a) advertising evolves in time and its effect might be delayed; b) when combining several marketing communication tools, it is not possible to determine which tool has the decisive influence on the effectiveness and efficiency of the campaign, nor its extent; c) there is a problem of the human perception of advertising which is due to people's selective attention (they usually perceive only certain impulses), selective bias (the danger of selective perception) and selective retention (which is often influenced by personal ideas and preferences). In this paper, the authors direct their attention to advertising effectiveness in print media, which have shown a trend of declining readership figures and lower profits over a long period.

According to Nagyová (2014), the decrease in advertising revenues is not only linked with the readership of periodicals and the move of readers to the internet. She claims that it is also connected with the increased effort of advertisers to cut advertising costs and to better appreciate the financial means invested in advertising. Increasingly, advertisers pose the question of how much and where they should invest their media budgets so that these would manifest themselves in the form of increased sales of goods and services (Volko, 2013).

## 1 Effectiveness and efficiency of media advertising

In the effort to make their mark in the growing competition, advertisers spend significant financial resources to promote their brands in the media. This spending ranges from simple promotion of their products to complex communication campaigns using several types of media (Mendelová, Zaušková, 2015). Effectiveness and efficiency of a particular type of media constitute the basic factors with the most significant influence when choosing from different types. Therefore, when research into effectiveness and efficiency is conducted, it is necessary to determine the communication effect of the campaign, i.e. whether it had any effect on the subconsciousness of consumers.

Another factor to consider is whether the campaign led to an increase in the sales inasmuch as an advertising campaign may be deemed creative and interesting; however, if it fails to meet the objectives which have been set, it is ineffective and inefficient (Mendelová, 2014).

Although many authors consider the terms effectiveness and efficiency to be synonymous, some sources use terms like non-economic and economic effectiveness, or qualitative and quantitative effectiveness. Vysekalová and Mikeš (2007, p. 85) state that they *'gauge the quantitative and qualitative indicators of advertising effectiveness or marketing communication. The quantitative measurement can be divided into two large groups depending on what is measured – the reach or the effect of the campaign.'* For the needs of this paper, we shall speak of two different terms. According to Kusá (2007, s. 147), *'we speak of advertising effectiveness when we want to cover its complex effect. To describe the partial effects, we use the term 'effect of advertising' as the relation between the costs and the outcomes.'* Tellis (2000) sees differences between effectiveness and efficiency mainly in meeting the basic goals. In his view, *'an advertising campaign can be considered effective if it changes the internal emotional state of the end consumer in a certain way and it guides them to a positive change (Tellis, 2000, s. 155).* While assessing effectiveness, we can find out whether people took notice of the campaign, whether they connected it with a particular brand or whether the brand awareness and image have been improved.

In determining the effectiveness of an advertising campaign, it is possible to use quantitative and qualitative methods of marketing research. The most frequent quantitative methods used are written, oral or electronic questionnaires. Other quantitative methods include hall tests, polls and omnibus surveys. As far as qualitative research methods are concerned, the most frequently used ones include group interviews (focus groups), in-depth interviews and projective tests. Kotler (2007) classifies 3 basic groups of pretesting: 1) consumer feedback method; 2) portfolio testing, in which consumers assess a portfolio of ads with a subsequent attempt to establish the level of recall and understanding; 3) laboratory testing, whose main aim is to find out the extent of people's physiological reactions to advertising, i.e. their heart rate, sweating, blood pressure, dilation of pupils, etc.

However, the research into advertising effectiveness says nothing of its effect on the sales or the efficiency of investing financial resources in the campaign. In practice, we often come across the paradox of an ad having low efficiency although it is highly effective.

In other words, even if the respondent recognizes and recalls an ad (meaning the ad is effective), they do not necessarily buy the promoted product or service. The main objective of the company which launched the advertising campaign is to maximise the effect of the campaign, i.e. to ensure that the economic objectives are met. *'When finding out the level of efficiency, it is necessary to establish how much in terms of turnover there is for every euro invested in the advertising campaign'* (Pelsmacker, 2003, s. 289).

The relation between these two quantities is expressed by the following formula:  $S = 1,5 + 0,2 \times A$ , where  $S$  expresses the sales in € and  $A$  expresses the communication costs in €. Based on this formula, we can assume that every euro invested in the advertising campaign will bring 0.2 EUR of turnover. As communication activities are known for their delayed effect, meaning the effect of the campaign will now manifest itself in the sales figures immediately.

If we work on this assumption, then  $S(t) = 1,5 + 0,2 \times A(t) + 0,8 \times S(t-1)$ . That means, in the long run, every euro invested in advertising will bring 0,25 EUR of sales turnover, which is 0,05 EUR more than with the short-term perspective (Pelsmacker, 2003).

Having clarified the basic theoretical concepts effectiveness and efficiency, we shall direct our attention to the effectiveness of advertising in print media.

It can be stated that the significance and influence of print media on the society and public opinion is getting weaker as is their influence and power to shape people's lifestyle. This trend also affects the significance and the effect of advertising in particular advertising campaigns (Čábyová, Krajčovič, 2014). Print media are changing from one of the main bearers of advertising messages into mere supplementary bearers. Additionally, advertisements and their overall graphic design have changed, too. In less recent literature on advertising, one can find a lot of recommendations on the form of advertising, with the text playing the main role and illustrative images and advertiser's logo having only minor significance. Nowadays, it is quite the opposite; the image is the dominant feature with the text being suppressed to the minimum necessary. As a proof that advertising is becoming only a supplementary feature of advertising campaigns is the fact that an advert in print media is often a mere adaptation of the visual presented on a hoarding (Lipták, 2014).

Despite the gloomy outlook for the development of print media, there is still a stable target group which prefers them because of the great deal of advantages they offer compared to other media types. The main characteristic feature of newspapers is their flexibility and topicality. Furthermore, newspaper advertisements can be viewed several times and they are focused on a particular geographical area and magazine adverts can be targeted on a certain specialized group of readers. Compared to TV advertising, print advertising is cheaper and it is able to convey more detailed information about the product.

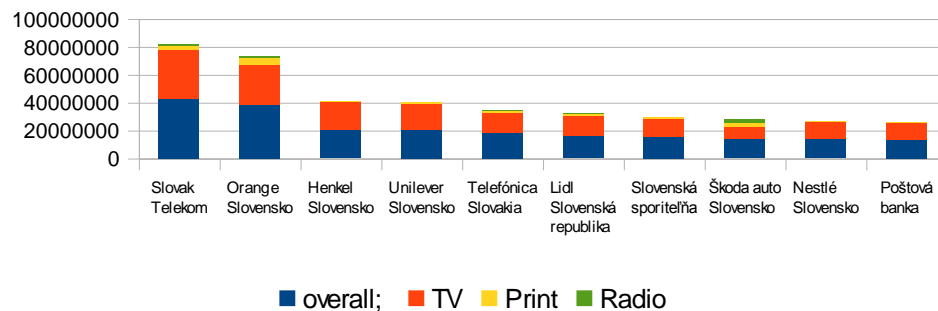
## 2 Media advertising market in Slovakia

The media advertising market in Slovakia is characterized by an uneven representation of particular types of media. This misrepresentation regards not only their number but also the total volume of sold advertising expressed in absolute figures (Čábyová, Krajčovič, 2013). As far as the representation is concerned, TV, which has long belonged to the most used types of media when it comes to ad placement and thus the sale of advertising space,

occupies the dominant position. It has a large margin over print media which rank second with radio on the last position.

Although the internet is becoming increasingly attractive, there are no accurate measurements or monitoring of the sales of advertising space within this type of media. The following figure compares the distribution of advertising expenditures which major advertisers spend to advertise in particular types of media in 2013.

**Figure 1. Distribution of expenditures of major advertisers in particular types of media in 2013.**

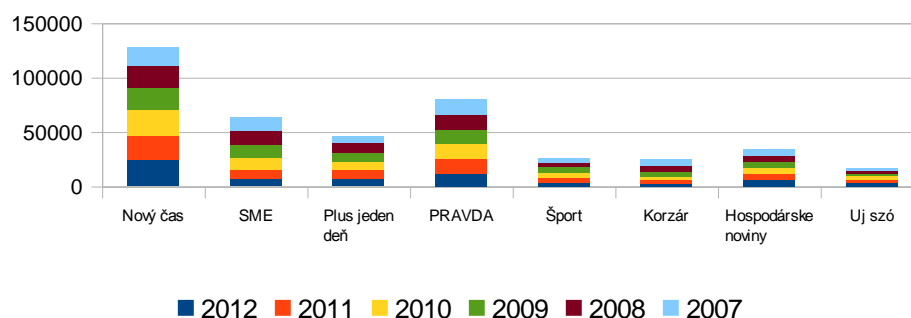


Data: TNS Slovakia. Values in €.

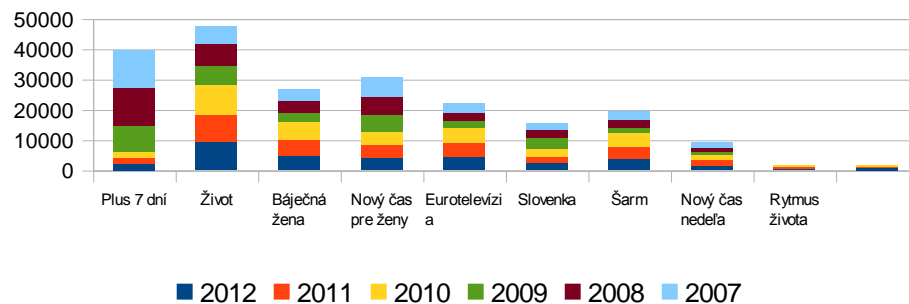
Another interesting observation is that within the sphere of periodicals, there is a rather high concentration of individual titles in a relatively small market. Moreover, we can state that there is competition not only among particular types of media but it is also intense within each of the types themselves. In their fight to gain advertisers, particular periodicals become competitors to each other (Krajčovič, 2014).

The following figures show an overview and comparison of monitored revenues from the sale of advertising space in selected periodicals.

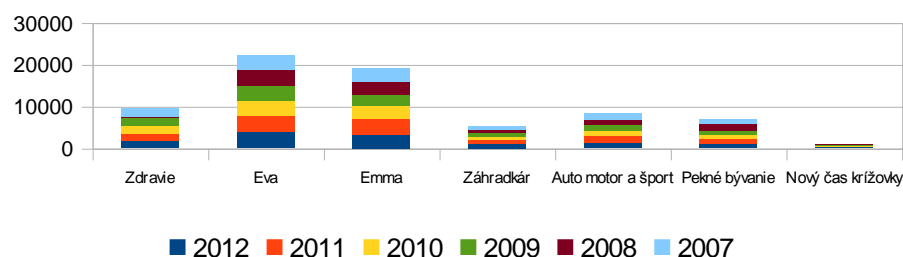
**Figure 2. Monitored revenues from the sale of advertising space of selected daylies.**



Data: TNS Slovakia. Values in €.

**Figure 3. Monitored revenues from the sale of advertising space of selected weeklies.**

Data: TNS Slovakia. Values in €.

**Figure 4. Monitored revenues from the sale of advertising space of selected monthlies.**

Data: TNS Slovakia. Values in €.

### 3 Perception of print media advertising

Perception of media advertising has long been of interest for advertisers and media agencies.

Independent associations and professional organizations, too, carry out their own research and interviews.

In February 2012, the Association of Newspaper publishers in Slovakia commissioned a survey to find out the significance and power of advertising used in print media in comparison to other types of media (Čo dokáže print?, 2012). The survey was carried out by GfK Slovakia on a sample of 2000 respondents in the age of 15-69. The data collection was conducted in the form of personal interviewing and by the method of CAPI from 20 January to 10 February 2012.

The results suggest that in a typical week, most of the respondents watched TV (98%) and listened to the radio (95%), followed by print media with a 90% readership. This data includes both the classical (paper) and electronic (online) version of periodicals, with the

ratio of 86% of respondents reading the print version and 44% reading the online version. This means that 9 out of 10 respondents read periodical press.

As far as the influence on the buying process is concerned, newspapers and magazines ranked second after the internet, which has the biggest influence on consumers and their buying behaviour. In fact, newspaper and magazine advertising even influenced consumers to shop online more than advertising in any other type of media.

Newspaper and magazine advertising had the biggest influence on consumers in the following product categories: housing, furniture, construction; cosmetics and perfumes; fashion and jewellery. Readers gained most information from print media advertising about: health and dietary supplements; housing; travelling and holidays; pharmacy goods; cosmetics and perfumes; fashion and jewellery. Print media advertising inspired consumers most in the product categories of: housing; cosmetics; fashion and fashion accessories. Consumers claimed they were most motivated to purchase by print media advertising in the product categories of: housing; cosmetics; fashion and jewellery.

Another interesting finding is that readers considered newspaper and magazine advertising as the third most trustworthy source of information (after the so-called recommendation by an acquaintance and TV advertising). Newspaper and magazine advertising was rated as a meaningful source of useful information about new products and services and as a valuable source of information about a good purchase.

Moreover, the survey implies that print media still have a substantial share in following the media in general. Newspapers were the first choice in the effort to stay informed and understand the current affairs. Newspapers and magazines overall had the power to inspire and provide good tips better than TV and they were almost as successful as TV when it comes to final buying decisions. In several areas, they clearly set the trends for the purchase of products and brands.

A similar survey was carried out in the Czech Republic by the Millward Brown company, which was commissioned by the magazine section of the Union of publishers of the Czech Republic (Reklama v časopisech, 2011). The study focused on the readership of magazines and the perception of advertising placed in them, the role of magazines in the context of other types of media. The research was conducted in 2010 and 2011 on the sample of 1026 respondents aged 18-65 applying the method of personal interviews and CAPI. It also included the so-called in-hall tests with the use of eye trackers, supplemented with follow-up interviews with the respondents. 170 ads from 20 categories in total were tested.

The results of the survey suggested that an average reader devoted 94 seconds of their attention to magazine advertisements. The graphic context of the page where the adverts were placed influenced the readers' attention to a great extent. This means that magazines played the leading role as a source of inspiration and they were the third most important factor influencing buying. For regular readers, magazines served as motivators for buying



particular goods and services. Furthermore, magazines served as sources of information for more than a third of the respondents.

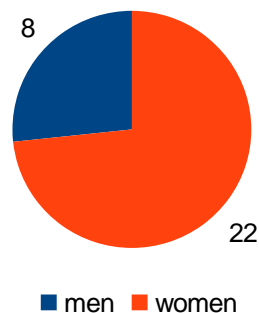
Both pieces of research demonstrated that print media are able to influence consumer behaviour of their readers. As far as trustworthiness is concerned, this type of media ranked third (right after the internet and TV). When it comes to the final buying decision, magazines and newspapers were nearly as successful as TV and it seems that print media advertising definitely sets the trends for the purchase of several products and brands. Consumers were most influenced when buying within the product categories such as housing, furniture, construction, cosmetics, perfumes, fashion and jewellery.

#### 4 Advertising effectiveness and influential factors

The results of the pieces of research mentioned above motivated us to our own research into the effectiveness of print media advertising. We were trying to find out the level of recall of advertising placed in magazines and the factors which affect it, as well as the role of print media in the respondents' buying process.

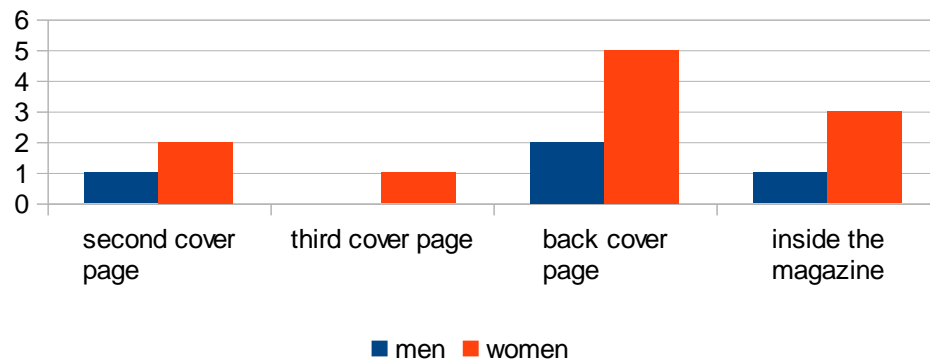
The target group was made up of respondents in the 18-25 age group. The data collection lasted from 4 to 18 May 2015. We used the qualitative method of personal interviews and observational methods. In total, we worked with 30 respondents who had 12 magazines and 286 advertisements at their disposal. The structure of respondents is shown in figure 5.

**Figure 5. Structure of respondents.**



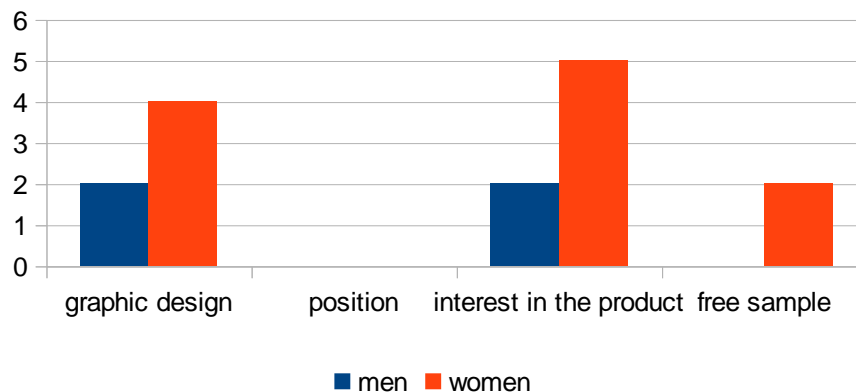
*Source: Own data processing. N = 30 respondents.*

The results of the survey showed that half of all the respondents spontaneously recalled particular advertisements upon reading the magazines. Therefore, we may consider the effectiveness to be 50%. A4 sized advertisements (full page) placed on the back cover (the fourth cover) seem to be the easiest to recall. An interesting fact is that in women, advertising placed inside the magazine had better levels of recall than those on the second or third cover. The results are shown in figure 6.

**Figure 6. Influence of format and place on ad recall.**

Source: own data processing.  $N = 15$  respondents.

The most common reason for ad recall was the interest in the product or service which was being promoted (46% of the respondents), followed by the graphic design of the advertisement (40% of respondents) and the combination of an advertisement with a free product sample giveaway (14% respondents). Interestingly, the ad position within the magazine did not seem to have any influence on the ability to recall the advertisement. The results are depicted in figure 7.

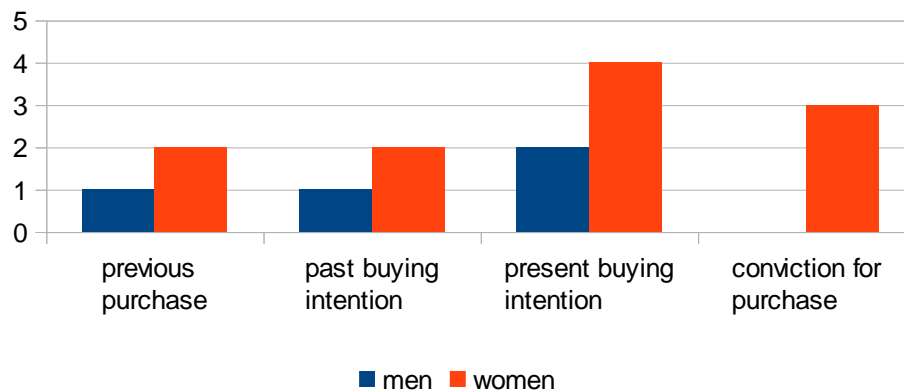
**Figure 7. Reasons for ad recall.**

Source: own data processing.  $N = 15$  respondents.

The next thing we studied was the influence of buying intention or buying decision on the ability to recall the advertisement. We hypothesized that respondents are more likely to recall the advertisement if they were considering or have decided to buy the promoted product or service.

The buying intention seemed to have the biggest influence. 40% of the respondents who had been considering the purchase of the promoted product or service recalled the advertisement for such product. Previous purchase, previous buying intention and buying decision had the same share of influence on the ability to recall the ad. However, we registered significant differences between the respondents of the male and female sexes. The results are shown in figure 8.

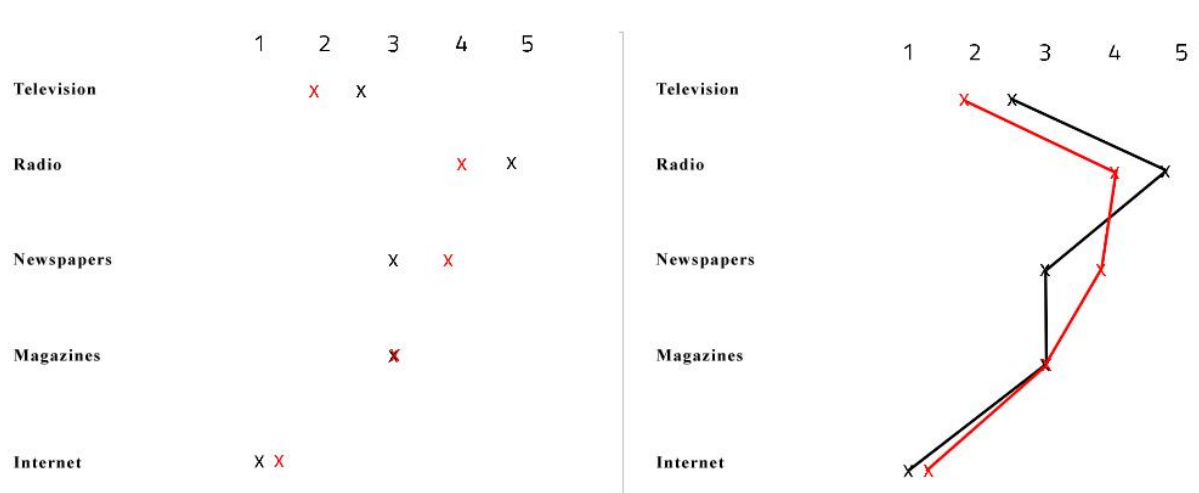
**Figure 8. Influence of buying decision and buying intention on ad recall.**



Source: own data processing.  $N = 15$  respondents.

In the following part of our survey, we were comparing which media type (TV, radio, newspaper, magazines, and internet) influences respondents most when buying products or services. The results suggest that the internet and TV had the biggest influence on choosing and buying products and services. On the contrary, radio and newspapers had the smallest influence. The results are shown in figure 9.

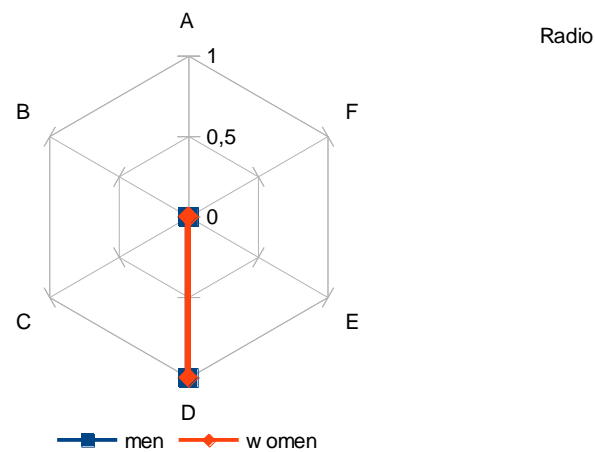
**Figure 9. Influence of particular media types on the selection and buying of products and services.**



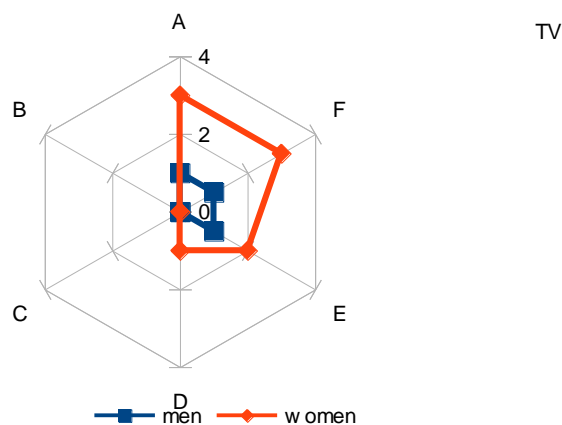
Source: own data processing. 1 = influences me most; 5 = influences me least. N = 30 respondents.

In the final part of our survey we were trying to find out and compare the role of particular media types in the buying behaviour of respondents. We compared the influence of TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and internet in the fields of respondents' inspiration; use of these types of media in case the respondent searches for information about products and services; use of these types of media in case the respondent compares particular products or services. We were also trying to find out which types of media are most trusted by the respondents and which media most influence respondents' choice and eventually the buying itself.

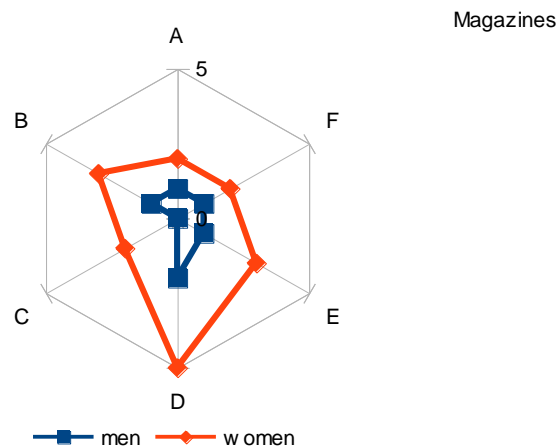
The results imply that the media type with the biggest influence in all the fields was the internet. Secondly, magazines dominated the sphere of trust in all the categories. They even surpassed TV, but overall, along with the rest of the media types, magazines ranked after the internet with the internet having a considerable margin. Radio and newspapers had the smallest influence in all of the categories mentioned above. The results are shown in detail in figures 10 to 14.

**Figure 10. Influence of TV on the buying behaviour of respondents.**

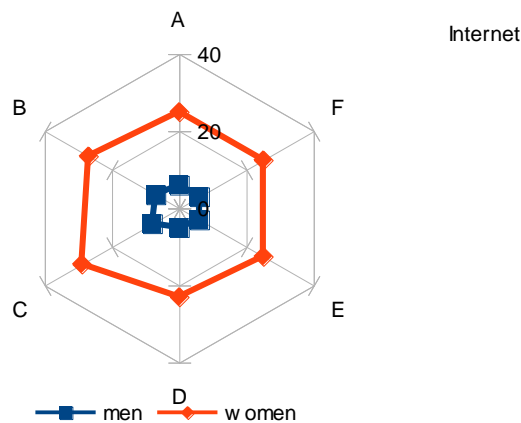
Source: own data processing. A = Inspires me (by offering tips); B = When I look for information about goods and services; C = When I compare particular offers; D = I trust most; E = Influences my choice; F = Influences my buying.

**Figure 11. Influence of radio on the buying behaviour of respondents.**

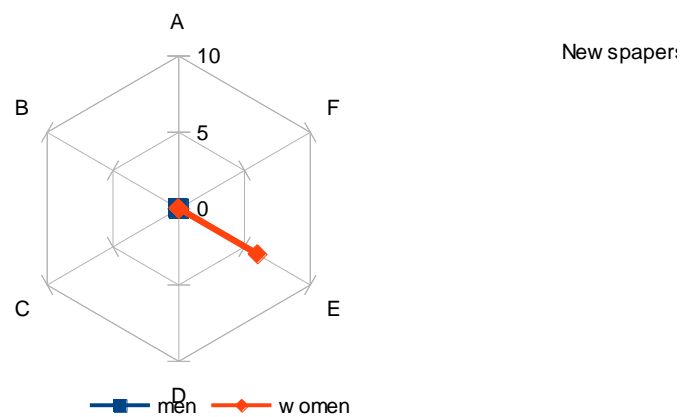
Source: own data processing. A = Inspires me (by offering tips); B = When I look for information about goods and services; C = When I compare particular offers; D = I trust most; E = Influences my choice; F = Influences my buying.

**Figure 12. Influence of newspapers on the buying behaviour of respondents.**

Source: own data processing. A = Inspires me (by offering tips); B = When I look for information about goods and services; C = When I compare particular offers; D = I trust most; E = Influences my choice; F = Influences my buying.

**Figure 13. Influence of magazines on the buying behaviour of respondents.**

Source: own data processing. A = Inspires me (by offering tips); B = When I look for information about goods and services; C = When I compare particular offers; D = I trust most; E = Influences my choice; F = Influences my buying.

**Figure 14. Influence of the internet on the buying behaviour of respondents.**

Source: own data processing. A = Inspires me (by offering tips); B = When I look for information about goods and services; C = When I compare particular offers; D = I trust most; E = Influences my choice; F = Influences my buying.

## 5 Conclusion

The Slovak media market is rather saturated and it involves a relatively high number of entities whose activities are confined to a fairly small market. In the field of print media, there are currently 1780 registered titles of periodicals registered with the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. They all (minus the scientific, religious or other financially independent ones such as municipal newspapers) court the favour of potential advertisers. As a result, there is strong competition not only among particular types of media, but there is also quite strong rivalry within each type of media.

Advertising revenues have been on the decline since 2009 and the total volume of funds invested in media advertising is also decreasing. Due to limited marketing budgets and thus advertising expenditures, marketing agencies, which represent their clients in the field of media buying, act more prudently. Instead of the ability to reach the target audience, which is not so decisive any more, the way in which particular media are able to appeal to their target group is becoming key. However, the most important factor is whether advertising placed in the particular type of media is able to convince consumers to buy (Krajčovič, 2015). Therefore, effectiveness and efficiency are the decisive factors when choosing the media types for an advertising campaign.

Although periodical press belongs to the most frequently used types of media within the world of advertising, we can state that in this country, the sphere of periodicals and radio are the ones where there is significant cutting back on advertising expenditures. Several pieces of research and studies confirm the ability of print media advertising to influence consumer behaviour of its readers and also its influence on the buying decision.

The results of our own survey validated that the effectiveness of print media advertising is affected by several factors. The biggest one is the stage of buying process of respondents, where the interest in the product and the buying intention most influence the ability to recall advertising. This ability is less influenced by the graphic design of the ads with the position of the ads having the smallest influence. A4 sized advertising placed on the back cover of magazines is the easiest to remember. Surprisingly, we identified considerable differences between respondents of the different sexes.

Another important finding is that print media advertising is trustworthy for all respondents, although it does not influence the buying decision very much. As far as this factor is concerned, the internet has the biggest influence on respondents, who are also influenced by it when it comes to providing inspiration, searching for information and comparing products. The internet dominates all the categories which we focused on.

Despite this finding, we can conclude that print media do play their role even though it might be smaller compared to the internet and so do all the other media types. Taking into account that our survey was conducted on a sample of respondents who use the internet extensively, we observed the role of traditional media in the context of marketing communication and in the selective approach in the area of product promotion to particular target groups of consumers. Especially magazines seem to be an extremely suitable type of media in this regard, as they are able to directly target advertising on a particular target group of readers.

Despite the fact that the young generation does not specifically seek print media and tends to prefer the internet, the results of our survey confirmed that magazine advertising is a trustworthy source of information even for this segment. Moreover, the 50% effectiveness of advertising speaks a lot about the ability of print media to affect this group of consumers and influence their buying behaviour.

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