

"ACTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION AND ADVERTISING OF TOURISM IN NATIONAL LEVEL AND DEFINITION OF THEIR IMPACT"

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Abstract

Determining the nature of the tourist product constitutes a precondition of any research aiming at providing propositions for effective tourism management strategies. Different approaches have been implemented in this direction, based on different criteria and viewpoints. Composing all these approaches, the "tourist product" encompasses a wide spectrum of products from different sectors of production as well as a number of services, while it is affected by a series of distinguishable state policies. An important feature of the tourist product is its immaterial nature. Buying a tourist product actually means buying sentiments which contribute to the creation of an experience.

The promotion and advertising are basic parameters for introducing and making familiar a tourism destination; therefore, they are important for economic and regional growth.

The area examined by this research is the policy implemented for the promotion of Greek Tourism. The research was conducted using two directions:

- the analysis of advertising expenses in order to reveal the strategy that was followed diachronically regarding the selection of markets, the evaluation of their significance and the level of the advertising expenses and*
- the analysis of the advertising messages promoted through the advertising campaigns of the Greek Tourism Organisation.*

Two research methods were applied: firstly, a semiotic analysis in order to reveal the creative strategy, the meanings of images, the operation of individual elements and the way they were composed; it was supplemented by a content analysis, that is, the isolation and count of selected elements.

The findings from these two analyses were composed in order to form the final conclusions.

Keywords: Greek National Tourism Organisation, advertising campaign, advertising expenses, semiotic analysis, content analysis.

Introduction

Tourism advertising is an area that has been researched intensely in international level. However this has not been the case in Greece. The Greek National Tourism Organisation has approached this aspect of tourism with an occasional and fragmentary way without preserving consistent and credible archives that could be used by future re-

searches. A long-range strategy is absent and the policy decisions have not been based on quantitative and qualitative research. Regarding the advertising message, there has not been an explicit and integrated strategy, due to the lack of substantial researches for the effectiveness of the advertising campaigns. Therefore, the criteria for the relative decisions are unclear. Moreover, the reports on the advertising of the Greek tourist product were mainly focused on the subject of advertising expenditure, ignoring or underestimating the importance of the advertising message. In the present study, an attempt was made to overcome the difficulties arising from the lack of archived information and formulate a more comprehensive approach on the subject of Greek tourism advertising, by examining the advertising campaigns of the Greek National Tourism Organisation through a semiotic analysis.

Main findings of other studies

Advertising of tourist services

The particular character of the tourist product causes restrictions and imposes certain directions, regarding the type of communication and the means which can be used. The determination of the nature of the tourist product also indicates the way it will be managed and advertised.

It concerns a special type of private consumption which includes a line of individual products and services and is influenced by distinguishable governmental policies. A major characteristic of the tourist product is its intangible nature. The provision of services does not concern the transferring or the acquisition of natural objects (Berry Leonard L., 1980). Thus, consumers cannot see, touch or picture what they are buying in any way (Bateson, John E. G., 1977, George William R. and Leonard L. Berry, 1981). Therefore, it is not possible for someone who wants to buy a service to estimate its quality before this service is provided (Parasuraman, A., Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry, 1985, Bateson, John E. G., 1995). The intangible character of services decreases the ability of the consumer to distinguish the differences between providers (Hoffman, K. Douglas and John E. G. Bateson, 2002) and leads to "generalisation" (Breivik Einer and Sigurd Villads Troye, 1996, E. Wilson and J. Hair, eds. Miami). That means that the consumer tends to conceptualize all services in a similar way (Judd, Robert C., 1968, Knisely Gary, 1979, Thomas Dan R. E., 1978).

In order to deal with this problem, there have been propositions that could help a product-service acquire a more "tangible" character when a particular offer is presented to the consumer (Cutler Bob D. and Rajshekher G. Javalgi, 1993, Murray Keith B. and John L. Schlacter, 1990). Four methods were proposed (Berry, Leonard L. and Terry Clark, 1986): 1. Visualization 2. Association 3. Physical Representation, and 4. Documentation. Only "Visualization" and "Documentation" will be examined in this paper.

"Visualization" is the creation of a live picture of the service, its qualities, utilities and benefits to the customer. "Association" refers to the connection of a service with an object, person, place or fact. "Physical Representation" is a form of association aiming at the main characteristics of a service and especially at those that reveal its benefits to the consumer. "Documentation" provides specific information which proves the value, the quality, the virtues and the benefits of a service to the customer.

"Visualization" is the depiction of a service, so that its values are clearly presented to the consumer. With "documentation", the presentation of several data about the service strengthens the statements of advertising, concerning the quality and the value of a service and helps to attenuate the indefiniteness that the intangible nature (Mittal Banwari, 1999) of services creates.

The visualization aims at giving a "live" picture of the service so that customers can cognize its benefits by imagining themselves "living" it. "Lively" pictures strengthen the effectiveness of a message, since they are strongly impressed on the memory of people and influence their behaviour (Dobni, Cornelia and George M. Zinkhan, 1990, Robertson, Kim R., 1987, Rossiter John R. and Larry Percy, 1978, 1980, Shostack G. Lynn, 1977, McInnis Deborah J and Linda L. Price, Werner Kroeber-Riel, 1998). According to Werner Kroeber Riel, "liveliness" is "the clearness and clarity with which the picture is presented to the 'internal' eyes of the consumers" (Werner Kroeber-Riel, 1998). "Liveliness" is created with the use of pictures and a more "realistic" and less "abstract" text, as far as the terms and the words in general contained in it are concerned.

It is obvious that pictures are more effective means in creating "liveliness". The effectiveness of pictures regarding their memorization is stronger when a sort of action is depicted. That is to say, when there is interaction between the elements that are portrayed. The static pictures are less effective (Werner Kroeber-Riel, 1998). The element of "narrative" in the picture, in other words, when the picture "tells a story" enhances the "engagement" of the spectator and accordingly the memorization and the positive evaluation of an offered service, particularly when this service is about "living experiences" (Aval R. and R. Wyer, 1998, Mattila, Anna S., 2000).

"Documentation" concerns the provision of information regarding the characteristics, the benefits, and the virtues of a service. It can be applied in three forms (Mittal Banwari, 1999):

- Documentation regarding the consumption (e.g. statements, or testimonies of consumers that tried the service).
- Documentation regarding the provision of a service (e.g. the number of planes of an air company, the number of rooms of a hotel, etc).
- Documentation of the efficiency of a service (e.g. various statistical data).

An important finding is that "documentation" is very effective when advertising services are related to the enjoyment of experiences (Stafford Marla Royne, 1996), like tourist services (Stafford Marla Royne, 1996).

Generally, "visualization" and "documentation" are two methods which are very effective in the advertising of tourist products or services, especially if these methods are combined, since they are complementary. With "visualization", the consumer is provided with a lot of information about the service and its quality, and therefore the probability to accept the offer is increased. However, "visualization" alone does not increase the "uniqueness" of a service and does not effectively differentiate it from the services offered by competitors. "Documentation" can solve this problem providing information in a way that the uniqueness of a service is highlighted (Donna J. Hill, Jeff Blodgett, Robert Baer, Kirk Wakefield, 2004) and its qualities are promoted.

A very important finding of other studies regarding the advertising of services is that people are more concerned in searching information when the motive for the purchase and consumption of service is the amusement or pleasure (Hirschman, Elizabeth C. and Morris B. Holbrook, 1982, Mano Haim and Richard L. Oliver, 1993, Albers-Miller Nancy and Marla Royne Stafford, 1999, Legg Donna and Julie Baker, 1987, Mittal Banwari, 1999, Stafford Marla Royne and Ellen Day, 1995). In the case of "hedonic" services, people have a higher level of involvement (Wakefield Kirk L. and James Barnes, 1996, Wakefield Kirk L. and Jeffrey G. Blodgett, 1999). Travels and tourism are included in this category of services (Johns, Nick and Szilvia Gyimothy, 2002). People participate in tourism mainly in order to enjoy physical, mental and intellectual experiences (Grove, Stephen J., Les Carlson, and Michael J. Dorsch, 2002).

A useful model in order to analyze the meaning and value of tourist products and services for the consumers as well as draw conclusions that could be implemented in the advertising strategy is the FCB grid (Vaughn, 1980, 1986). This model categorizes products in low involvement and high involvement and presents the significance of certain criteria and incentives for the purchase. Also, it provides directions for the use of the appropriate media for each case, as well as for the creative approach.

In this model, products evaluated as of high importance, have a long life, are expensive, are considered as an investment by the consumers, and are placed in the first quadrant. The purchase of these products is based on decisions mainly with rational criteria. Products of high importance and price are included in the second quadrant, and the decision for the purchase of these products is made mainly with psychological criteria. In this case, pictures are suitable for the formation of the advertising message. In the third quadrant there are products of low importance and involvement, with a low price, and the purchasing decision is made without serious thinking, but usually it is a matter of habit. The message should create an attractive offer and should be repeated regularly. In the fourth quadrant, we find products of low importance, involvement and price. The decision for the purchase is determined to a large extent by sentimental criteria, because these products are considered to be short "pleasures".

However, the question of involvement is more complex. The degree of involvement is not determined only by the attributes of the product but also by the attributes of each individual's personality, the conditions under which the individual receives the advertising message, the media and the advertising means (Werner Kroeber-Riel, 1998).

People process the stimuli-message with two systems: the linguistic system and the non-linguistic (iconic) system. The processing of information by the linguistic system mainly the reasonable, analytic thought and the rational guidance of behaviour. The processing via the "iconic" system (Werner Kroeber-Riel, 1998) mainly stimulates sentiments and the emotional, non rational behaviour. Images are processed rapidly with minimal mental effort. Therefore, they are more suitable for influence in conditions of low involvement (Werner Kroeber-Riel, 1998). Thus, television is considered to be a medium of low involvement, and more suitable for messages aiming mostly at the emotions of the recipient, while, for example, newspapers are a medium of high involvement and more suitable for messages targeting the rational thinking of the recipient. This difference is determined by the domination of image in the first case and the domination of text in the second case.

When people are looking to buy tourist products-services, they have a higher degree of involvement. The consumers with high involvement do not make their decisions based only on impressions or emotions, but, mainly on information related to essential attributes of the product or service. They process this information analytically, that is to say, in a "central" way, in contrast to the consumers with low involvement who process the information, more fleetingly and superficially, in a way which is characterized as "peripheral" (Petty Richard E. and John Cacioppo, L. Perry and A. G. Woodside). Based on the above, the suitable area in FCB for the categorization of the tourist product appears to be the second quadrant. Indeed, as it is confirmed by relative researches (Mortimor Kathleen, 2002), tourist products/services, such as "tourist packages", are placed in the second quadrant (Sentimental), which is defined by high involvement and the predominance of feelings. In this group of products, consumers are initially drawn by feelings, in a secondary phase they seek information and finally they act (Feel-Learn-Do). Conclusively, the intangible nature of services defines the means and the methods which can be used in order to advertise or offer tourist products/services to the consumer. Consumers, in order to distinguish the differences between services offered, but also to minimize any reservations and fears concerning the purchase of an intangible product, need more and better information. Specifically, regarding tourism services, which are about pleasure and recreation, consumers have a higher degree of involvement and consequently a motive to seek information, which they process more consciously and analytically (centrally).

Review of the approach of tourist product advertising concerning the Greek case

Consumers follow first their emotions and then they seek completed and analytic information. They are interested in the reliability of this information as well as the reliability of the source of the information. That explains the important effect of interpersonal communication (word of mouth) (Kiki Kaplanidou and Dr. Christine Vogt) in the formation of their decisions concerning the purchase of tourism products/services. People, who have visited a tourism destination and have a positive experience, are very likely to visit this place again and develop a "devotion" to this destination. In this case, even if they have a negative experience visiting this destination, this fact would have minimum effect on their "devotion". On the contrary, for the people who are visiting a tourism destination for the first time, a negative experience can lead to the decision not to visit this place again (Joaquin Alegre and Magdalena Cladera, 2006). Repeated visits and "devotion" to a destination characterizes particularly tourism during the summer holidays (sun-sea-beach) in the Mediterranean tourist destinations (Joaquin Alegre and Magdalena Cladera).

Advertising is less effective in convincing people to visit a tourism destination for which they have little or no knowledge/experience at all, and even less effective in convincing people to visit a place from which they have negative experiences or a negative opinion in general. However, advertising can impel the undecided ones, remind the tourism destination to those who have a previous knowledge/experience and also help those who do not know anything about it, to form in their mind an initial picture of this destination. Furthermore, advertising is always useful in changing possible negative views about a destination through a well-planned communication strategy.

Therefore, the profound knowledge of the targeted market is necessary. If the destination has a good reputation, advertising is the most economic and effective way to promote it. In the other cases, the best method is to provide information for the destination through all available channels. In any case, it is necessary to utilize mass media for advertising and news diffusion, which enrich the knowledge about the tourist destination in a positive way, within the framework of an integrated strategy. As it is described emphatically in the Proposal of SETE (Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises) for a Marketing Plan on Greek Tourism, "It is our obligation to inform regularly and consistently the international Mass Media. If we want to promote tourism we should provide them with news, we should give them "stories" (Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises, 2004).

As already mentioned, no research has been conducted in Greece regarding the advertising message. Analytical recording and presentation of the advertising campaigns are almost non-existent and there is a great deficiency of relative studies. In Greek bibliography, the study which examined the advertising message and formulated some basic guidelines based, in some extent, on individual researches but mainly on the international practice and on basic rules of marketing, is the Marketing Study on the Greek Tourism (European Commission, Ministry of Development, Greek National Tourism Organisation).

Regarding the advertising expenditure, the only previous research was published in 2002 by the Institute for Tourism Research and Forecasts (ITEP). A basic conclusion of this study is that the reason for the inefficiency of Greek advertising campaigns for the period 1991-1999 was the inappropriate apportionment of expenses, and especially the excessive expenses on advertising, compared to the expenses on promotional actions and on informing the public (Andreas K. Kouzelis 2002). This conclusion derives from the ascertainment that the competitors of Greece, which spent more money on promotional actions and on informing the public, were more successful in attracting tourists. The study of ITEP proposes that the executives of the GNTO should participate in tourism exhibitions and conferences and make contacts with travelling agents. According to this study, the expenses made for the promotion of Greek Tourism during the decade 1990-1999 were mostly on advertising by 69,2% and public relations by 30,3%, while the expenses on promotional actions were only 0,5% (Andreas K. Kouzelis, 2002). Furthermore, another conclusion shows that the public is more responsive to promotional actions, where exhibitions are included, than to general advertising.

However, according to the Marketing Study of the Greek Tourism and specifically the included International Marketing Plan, exhibitions are less effective for the promotion of tourism. This study suggests the reduction of participations in exhibitions, while it proposes that advertising should be the main means to promote tourism (European Commission, Ministry of Development, Greek National Tourism Organisation).

There is a need for a more integrated approach on this subject, which will include the analysis of advertising expenses as well as of the advertising message. This approach will provide an overview of the strategies implemented for the promotion of Greek Tourism, during a 15-year period. The comparison of the findings of these analyses with the number of arrivals as well as the evaluation of advertising campaigns will enrich the conclusions of our study, harmonising it with the most recent orientations of the research on tourism advertising.

Methodology of research and problematic issues arising from the present condition

Through this study, an attempt is made for a research of the Greek tourism advertising, combining the analysis of the advertising message with this of the advertising expenses, within a long period of time. More specifically, we are investigating the advertising strategy, implemented by the Greek National Tourism Organisation, and also analyze the image of Greece, as it was formed through the advertising campaigns for the years 1991-2005.

The research followed two directions: the analysis of advertising expenses and the analysis of advertising messages.

Regarding the advertising expenditure, the analysis aims at giving information on the strategy that was followed diachronically, the targeted markets, the importance of each market and the amount of advertising expenses. These data are presented analytically for each country and are contrasted with the data of arrivals from each country, for the time period 1991-2005. The analysis of advertising expenses was based on data provided by the Greek National Tourism Organisation. Analytical tables of the advertising expenditure per country, program (regular, Co-op, extraordinary) and means (regarding only the extraordinary program) were created, for the time period 1991 until 1999.

The lack of analytical data for the years 2000-2005 led in seeking information from various sources. For the analysis of the advertising messages, two methods were applied. Initially, a semiotic analysis was implemented in order to reveal the creative strategy, the importance, the meaning and the implications of images, the operation of individual elements and the way they were composed, the methods and the tactics with which advertising is attempting to convince the targeted audience. It was supplemented by a content analysis, that is, the isolation and count of selected elements. The findings from these two analyses were composed in order to form more complete conclusions.

Analysis of the research data

Concerning the advertising expenses, the analysis is based on two data categories, presented in the corresponding diagrams showing the diachronical analysis of the advertising expenditure for selected countries and groups of countries, presenting separately the periods with different currency (drachmas, Euro). Moreover, the arrivals from each country are presented for the period 1991-2005.

Diagrams

A. Countries of Central and Western Europe

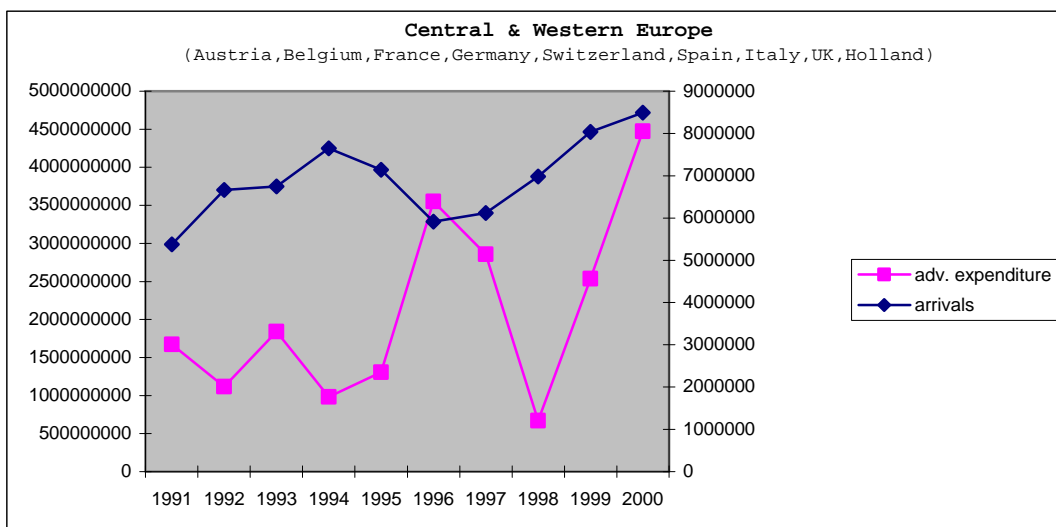


Diagram 1

Central & Western Europe (Table 1)		
(Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, UK, Holland)		
	Adv. Expenditure (Drachmas)	Arrivals
1991	1.674.200.000	5.373.310
1992	1.116.323.000	6.664.030
1993	1.841.054.000	6.748.389
1994	981.017.600	7.650.405
1995	1.306.478.000	7.145.548
1996	3.551.411.000	5.911.167
1997	2.853.887.000	6.115.210
1998	670.228.200	6.985.147
1999	2.536.488.000	8.033.814
2000	4.473.000.000	8.493.269

B. Visegrad Countries, Russia.

Visegrad*, Russia (Table 2)			
year	Adv. Expenditure (Drachmas)	Arrivals	
1995	2.582.559	588.391	1996
1996	209.399.582	652.230	1997
1997	127.284.469	669.596	1998
1998	2.000.000	564.067	1999
1999	40.000.000	660.984	2000

R=0,68

*Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia

R=0,18

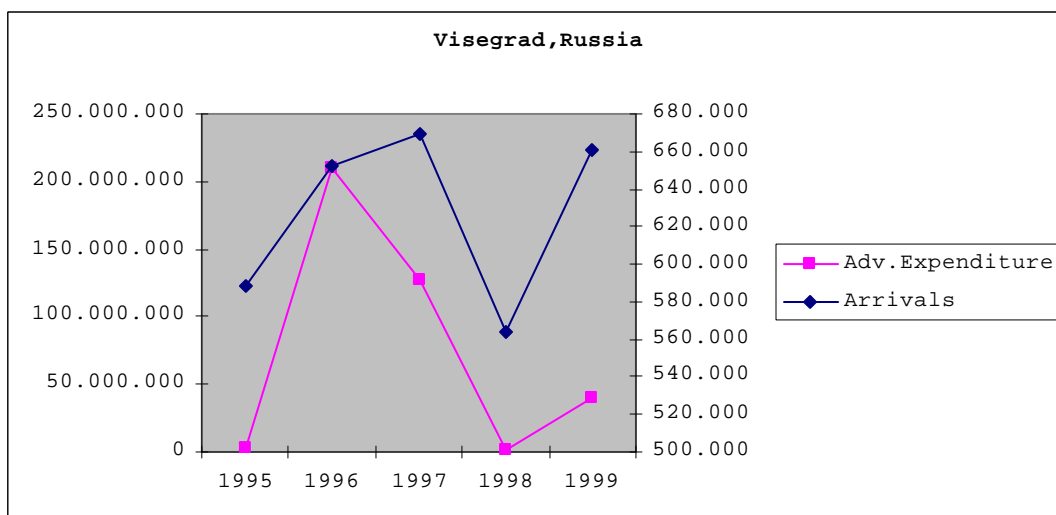


Diagram 2

Advertising expenditure diagrams and arrival diagrams

Based on the methodological approach followed and the problems caused by the absence of analytical information, the data were developed

through the comparison of the amount of the advertising expense and the number of arrivals, which is undoubtedly an indirect way of studying the possible effect of advertising on the attractiveness of Greece as a tourism destination. Nevertheless, the results of this comparison may constitute a useful instrument for further studies. The advance of analysis required the formation and verification of assumptions, given that, extraneous factors positively or negatively affected the tourist product, during the period examined.

In order to define the level of correlation between tourist arrivals and advertising expenditure, the countries examined were categorised in two groups: A) those which are "regular customers", i.e. the Central and Western European countries, and B) those which are "new customers", i.e. the Visegrad countries, Russia, etc. The correlation level was defined based on the advertising expenditure and the arrivals in the same year, for the first group of countries, and on the advertising expenditure in a given year and the arrivals in the following one, for the second group. The reason was that, studying the available information, it appears that, in the second group the message effect was not direct but medium-term, in comparison to the first group of countries where there was a direct effect.

Significant conclusions arise from the observation of the time periods when intense fluctuations are presented in advertising expenditures. It was observed that at the early '90s the reduction of advertising expenditures in most of the European countries was accompanied with an increase in arrivals. This is very clear in the cases of Great Britain, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, France, Germany, Austria, and Belgium as well as in the rest of the Western European countries. There are four possible explanations of this phenomenon. The first one is that the advertising expenses or generally the publicity of the previous years (1989, 1990) had been very effective. The second explanation is that in some countries and in particular the regular "customers" of Greek tourism, the fluctuations, up or down, in advertising expenditures influence, positively or negatively, the arrivals only if they exceed a maximum or minimum crucial point. The third interpretation is that the advertising message was possibly effective enough due to its three-year duration, thus allowing the decrease of expenses after 1991, so that in the following two years there was just a reminding of the same message. The fourth explanation is that this phenomenon was caused by other reasons (i.e. agreements with tour operators of those countries, last minute discounts, etc.)

The vertical rise of advertising expenses in 1996 (possibly in order to deal with the negative consequences of the extraneous factors of the years 1995 and 1996), was followed by a steady rise in arrivals during the following 4-5 years. The fact that almost in the majority of the Western European countries the advertising expense of 1996 had been by far the highest until 1999, shows that the amount of the advertising expense was also a very important factor for the increase of arrivals. In 1998, a vertical decline in advertising expense was observed in all of the countries. Nevertheless, this fact did not seem to affect next years' arrivals. So, the previous assumption and the reasons set out as more likely, seem to be verified.

The high advertising expenses in the year 1996 and to a smaller extent in 1997 as well as in 1999 and 2000 prevented the declining trends in the number of arrivals in most of the countries after 1998. In average, there was a rise in expenditure. However, if the 1998 low expenditure remained at the same levels the following year, then possibly the picture of arrivals would be different. Furthermore, in relation to the advertising message, it should be noted that after

three years of continuous changes in the message, "The authentic Choice" campaign had been remained the same from 1997 until 1999.

A first conclusion arising from the examination of all the cases is that major importance is given to the Western European countries. Advertising seems that positively effects the selection of the tourism destination. It also appears that the ITEP ascertainment that the advertising effect is not direct, but acts in the long run and its substantial results occur after a two-year period, is confirmed (Institute for Tourism Research and Forecasts (ITEP), Press Release, 2002).

Nevertheless, each case is particular. For example, the Scandinavian countries appear to have been less affected by the fluctuations in advertising expenses. This probably means that due to their culture, Scandinavians are less affected by advertising: northern Europeans plan their vacations in the long run and do not easily change their habits. On the contrary, in cases such as France, Great Britain and Italy the fluctuations in arrivals more intensely the fluctuations in advertising expenses. The relation of the amount of advertising expense with the number of arrivals in relatively new markets such as the countries of Visegrad, Russia, Egypt and Israel is even stronger.

The particularity of the tourist product is confirmed from all the above, since consumers approach it with greater reserve and with stronger desire of receiving substantial information. Consequently, it is a very sensitive product to extraneous factors, conditions and facts causing insecurity to the consumer.

Countries, which are regular customers of the Greek tourist product, present greater stability in the selection of Greece for their vacations, that is, they are more "devoted" customers and are less influenced by advertising. In that case, advertising "impels" rather than "convinces". Consequently, it is advisable for each country in separate, to seek for the ideal amount of advertising expense, though within the framework of a comprehensive strategy for each market.

Lastly, the stability of the amount of the advertising expenses as well as the advertising message and the avoidance of great fluctuations are preferable and more efficient in the long-term, in all of the country cases, bearing in mind that each country is a different case and should be examined separately. Furthermore, the advertising expense is an investment with medium- and long-term results and the relative decisions should be taken in relation to the strategy planning of the tourist product promotion through the competent authorities in national level.

Semiotic analysis of the advertising message

In order to analyse the advertising message the semiotic (Pierre Guiraud, 1989, Roland Barthes, 1988, John Fisk & John Hartley, 1992) and the content analysis methods were used. The semiotic analysis of GNTO's printed advertising and TV spots for Greek tourism offered the opportunity to investigate the separate structural elements of the advertising messages, as well as their formation methods and techniques for a persuasive communication.

The most crucial point in the procedure of application of content analysis is the definition of each element to be examined. The application of content analysis in images makes the definition of these elements even more difficult, especially in the case of moving pictures. Therefore, the semiotic analysis should precede, in order to identify the major structural elements of the advertising messages

and these findings should be used in a content analysis. In printed advertisement, each element was defined according to its presence in each picture and regardless of its size and position (in the foreground, in the background, etc.). In advertising spots, each separate shot was considered as a semantic unit and the elements appearing in it were counted. Thus, for example a shot of the sea is recorded as a unit of the subject "sea" when the shot has been completed, that is, it constitutes a complete thematic unit. Each different element in a shot is categorized in separate. So if an image of a beach is recorded in one shot and then the image of the same beach appears again in another shot, they are considered as two separate presentations of this thematic unit.

The examined elements and the classification of important findings of the semiotic analysis, as well as particular information arising from the advertising theory of the tourism services are included in table 1, combining the semiotic analysis with the content analysis during the period 1991-2005. Through time, the GNTTO advertisements for Greek tourism constitute the image of the Greek tourist product abroad. According to table 1, the Greek tourist product is mainly defined by the following components: sea-beach, antiquities and islands. Reference to the continental Greece, religious monuments, Greek cuisine and entertainment is made in smaller extent, while there is a small reference to other tourist products such as yachting, sports and adventure tourism, conference tourism and golfing tourism. Concerning human presence, Greeks are defined through folkloric images, usually wearing traditional outfits, exercising traditional crafts or in some other cases as dancers and musicians. Visitors appear to be engaged in tourist activities or to enjoy vacation moments in Greece. In some cases, their appearance or their physical characteristics are also a defining feature. Images of couples, children and animals are relatively frequent. These pictures constitute very common ways of influence in every type of advertisements, not only in the field of tourism.

The frequency of appearance of all the above elements through time leads to a very significant conclusion. The great increase of the element of "visitors" illustrates that publicity campaigns of the period until 2000, laid emphasis on various features of the Greek landscape and culture by displaying them in successive images, whereas from 2000 and on, there was a turning towards the visitor; this fact is also verified by the semiotic analysis, as well as by a simply careful observation of the advertisements in time order. In that period the GNTTO advertisements comprised more pictures and shots showing visitors interacting with the environment and enjoying their holidays. So we could say that a change in strategy took place.

This strategy is more appropriate, since it is more consistent with the basic findings of other researches and the theory on tourist services advertising. In particular, it is clearly more "informative" since the spectators can identify themselves with the characters appearing in the spots and therefore, imagine themselves in their place. Furthermore, apart from the beautiful sights, also "examples" of visitors and activities are presented. In this way, there is an actual "visualisation" of the tourist product, that is, of the individual services-activities constituting it as well as a documentation of the quality of these services.

It should be noted that, the Marketing Plan included in the Market Study for Greek Tourism, which was completed in spring 1999, contributed to this change, as well as to the formation of the general communication approach of the publicity campaign that started in 2000 with the slogan "That's life" (European Commission Ministry of Devel-

opment, Greek National Tourism Organisation). This arises from the fact that the whole approach of the concept concerning the advertising message of this particular campaign is consistent with the new outlook proposed in the plan regarding the image of Greek tourist product (Greece, unique harmony of sun, sea and culture). Besides, the word "harmony" is present in every advertisement of this campaign, and the message in respect of picture and text, refers to a sense of harmony felt by the visitor.

The "argument" category was included in the table where there is a brief and concise reference to some fundamental conclusions of the semiotic analysis concerning the type and structure of the fundamental argument expressed in each campaign. Thus, in the case of the campaign of the years 1991-1993 (Chosen by the Gods) the argument derives from a correlation of gods and mythological elements of ancient Greece. In the campaign of 1995 (Makes your heart beat) the argument is based on a number of contrasts and on the presentation of short scenes of Greek landscape, antiquities, etc. In the 1996 campaign (A never ending story), contrasts and short scenes are used once again. In the advertisements of the years 1997-1999 (The authentic choice), the argument is based on an attempt to prove the claim of "authenticity", with the use of various metaphors.

The publicity campaign of the period 2000-2001 (That's life) is based on an argument of emotional nature, creating a dreaming atmosphere. In the campaign with the slogan "Beyond Words", of the years 2002-2003, the argument derives from a correlation with the ancient Greek culture. The argument of the publicity campaign of 2004 (Your best time yet) is also based on an attempt to prove the value of the tourist product with the use of various metaphors. In 2005, the campaign with the slogan "Live your myth in Greece" also used the correlation with mythology and gods of ancient Greece, in order to stimulate the spectator's imagination, while in 2006 the publicity campaign keeps the same slogan, but its message turns towards the spectator's emotion using music as the main means of motivation.

Table 3 -Selected elements of the advertisements and main characteristics

Advertising Campaigns	Chosen by the Gods 1991-1993	Makes your heart beat 1995	A never ending story 1996	The authentic choice 1997-1999	That's life 2000-2001	Beyond Words 2002-2003	Your best time yet 2004	Live your myth in Greece 2005	Live your myth in Greece 2006
Sea-Beaches	15	10	14	15	17	21	6	6	9
Archaeological monuments-sites	9	7	8	7	8	14	1	2	10
Parthenon-Acropolis	4	2	3	3	1	1			8
Religion-Monuments	2	2	2			3			
Couples	3	1		1	1	3		2	1
Entertainment-Amusement	2	1	3	3	2				7
Kids	1	1			6	5		4	1
Continental Greece-Nature	1	5	2			5	1		
Islands-Architecture	3	8	5	6	9	2	1	1	3
Animals		4	4	3	3			1	
Greek tradition-Customs		4	2	1		1			1
Greek cuisine	1		1		2	6	1		
Yachting-Sailing	2	1	2	3		2		1	
Alternative activities				1		3			
Congressional Tourism				2		1	1		1
Golf									1
Greek people	3	9	3	3	2	5			
Visitors	6	3	4	8	16	22	11	8	7

Metaphors	1			1	1	2	1	3	1
Advertising Campaigns	Chosen by the Gods 1991-1993	Makes Your heart beat 1995	A never ending story 1996	The authentic choice 1997-1999	That's life 2000-2001	Beyond Words 2002-2003	Your best time yet 2004	Live your myth in Greece 2005	Live your myth in Greece 2006
Selected Elements	Correlation	Snap shots	Antithesis	Documentation Metaphor	Emotional Dreaminess	Correlation	Documentation Metaphor	Correlation Fantasy	Emotional Music
Argument	Product	Product	Product	Product	Visitor	Product Visitor	Visitor	Visitor	Visitor Product
Emphasis on									

Conclusions-Propositions for further research

Following the above analysis, we could draw the conclusion that countries, which are regular "customers" of Greek tourist product, are less affected by advertisements. This is obvious, since regular customers acquire full information coming from personal experience. As a consequence, in these cases the advertisement "impels" rather than "convinces". It is advisable that the ideal amount of advertising expense is defined individually for each country's case, within the framework of a comprehensive strategy for each market.

Concerning new markets, advertising should be more regular and consistent, regarding the amount of expense, so that the image of the tourist product to "be build" in a long-term basis. In that case, advertising alone is not sufficient. A comprehensive information strategy is required and of course the advertising "promise" should be credible.

The fact that the budget for advertising is apportioned to many markets, that through time there are many fluctuations in the available amount of money for advertising campaigns and the importance given to various countries, as well as that in some markets there is no regular advertising presence, indicate the absence of a cost-benefit analysis strategy. In all of the country cases, the constancy of the amount of advertising expenses and the advertising message as well as the absence of great fluctuations are more efficient in the long-term.

The advertising message changes very frequently. Typical example is the three-year period (1994-1996) when three different campaigns were launched. The advertising campaign constitutes an investment with medium- and long-term effects, and therefore, the relative decisions should be taken in relation to the strategy planning of the tourist product promotion through the competent authorities in national level.

The conclusions of the International Marketing Plan for Greek Tourism, delivered in spring 1999, were used to a very small extent in the following years. Its major propositions were not implemented and as a result the planning of the advertising promotion of Greece did not substantially change in the following years. In particular, the expenses for exhibitions, instead of decreasing, gradually increased from 2001 until 2005, the common advertising activities with tour operators and

airline companies stopped in 2001, while, in the same year, the expense rate was very low and the advertising expense was apportioned to more countries than these proposed by the plan.

Concerning the advertising message, it is mainly defined by the components: sea-beach, antiquities and islands. In a smaller extent, there is a reference to continental Greece, religious monuments, Greek cuisine and entertainment. Regarding other tourist products such as yachting, sports and adventure tourism, conference tourism and golfing tourism there is a small reference. Advertising campaigns of the period until 2000 present successive pictures of the Greek landscape, ancient monuments, etc. From 2000 and on, a turning towards the visitor is observed (more pictures and shots showing visitors interacting with the environment and enjoying their vacations). This strategy is more appropriate. It offers the spectators more information since they can identify themselves with the characters appearing in the spots and therefore, imagine themselves in their place, as well as because apart from sights, also "examples" of people and certain activities are presented. In this way, there is an actual visualisation of the tourist product, that is, of the individual services-activities constituting it and a documentation of the quality of these services.

In order to ensure the sustainability of advertising and promotion of the tourist product within strong competition in international level, the formation of a tourist policy for advertising is required, based on rational criteria. Consequently, every future research presupposes the creation and organization of a detailed database, which will include all available information for the Greek tourism advertising in a comprehensive way through a systematic observation of the markets in European and international level, aiming at different target groups.

Concerning the advertising message, it is necessary for regular quality researches to be established before and after every publicity campaign. Another research proposition concerns the publicity strategies of the main competitors of Greek tourism, in order for the good ideas or practices to be suitably used as well as for a framework for the evaluation of the publicity strategy of Greek tourism to be developed.

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