

# *The Macrotheme Review*

*A multidisciplinary journal of global macro trends*

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## Measuring the effectiveness of social advertising campaigns in shaping youths' behavioral intentions, with the moderating role of advertising skepticism

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### **Abstract**

*Purpose - The aim of this paper is to measure the effectiveness of social advertising campaign in shaping youths' behavioral intentions, with the moderating role of advertising skepticism.*

*Design/Methodology/Approach – face-to-face interviews were conducted in Alexandria and Cairo with 400 respondents using a structured questionnaire.*

*Findings - The findings showed that the Egyptian youth were less likely to be influenced through the central route of persuasion than the peripheral route of persuasion. Moreover, it was observed that the Egyptian youth are skeptic towards social advertising, which in turn, makes them less likely to adopt the social behavior advertised for.*

*Practical Implications – the study highlights the need for marketers and public policy makers in Egypt to tailor social marketing campaigns and programs that is specially directed at the youth segment of the Egyptian population, regarding the type of campaign message, the techniques used to attract the youths' attention, etc.; taking into account the unique psychological nature of the Egyptian youth and the distinctive characteristics concerning the design of social advertising.*

*Originality/Value - This study contributed academically by applying the Advertising Response Model (ARM) to measure social advertising in Egypt; with advertising skepticism as a moderating variable in order to measure the Egyptian youth's intention to adopt advertised favorable social behavior. Moreover, a number of central and peripheral cues were combined together in a constructed model that was not used in prior studies. This study also contributed practically by determining effective designs for social advertising that can be implemented in the Egyptian context in order to target the youth.*

**Keywords:** Social Marketing, Elaboration Likelihood Model, Advertising Response Model, Youth, Advertising Effectiveness, Skepticism

## 1 Introduction

Social marketing has become an accepted and used as a tool for dealing with major social issues around the world such as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), family planning and poverty; and minor social habits that lead to major problems in the future such as smoking, drug abuse, obesity and child abuse. The goal of these efforts is to influence consumers to help themselves by providing rational understanding of the associated risks of these unfavorable social behaviors (Rucker and Petty, 2006). This worldwide rapid interest in social marketing has led to studies monitoring the impact of social campaigns on various target audiences; including countries like the UK (Veer et al., 2008), the USA (Talbert, 2008) China (Chan, 2000), South Korea (Kim, 2006) Romania (Kotler and Lee, 2009, p.136) and many more. However, since the concept of social marketing is in its growth stage in Egypt and the Middle East, the effectiveness of such campaigns has not been thoroughly measured or has been dealt with like other product/service ads. Accordingly, it cannot help the marketers and policy makers in decision-making regarding the design, execution and implementation of these campaigns.

This research tackled the measurement of the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns aimed at youth in a quantitative manner that may provide marketers and policy makers with appropriate information that can help them in their decision making process. Given that in pervious literature (Moschis, 1987; Boush et al., 1994; Mangleburg and Bristol, 1998) it has been explicated that adolescents and youth seem to be more skeptic towards advertising in general more than other demographic segments. Hence, this study specifically focuses on social advertising and youth. Social advertising campaigns launched in 2010-2011 and monitored by Al-Ahram Advertising Agency were sought; and campaigns targeting the youth were selected in order to examine how they affect their behavioral intentions to adopt the behavior advertised for.

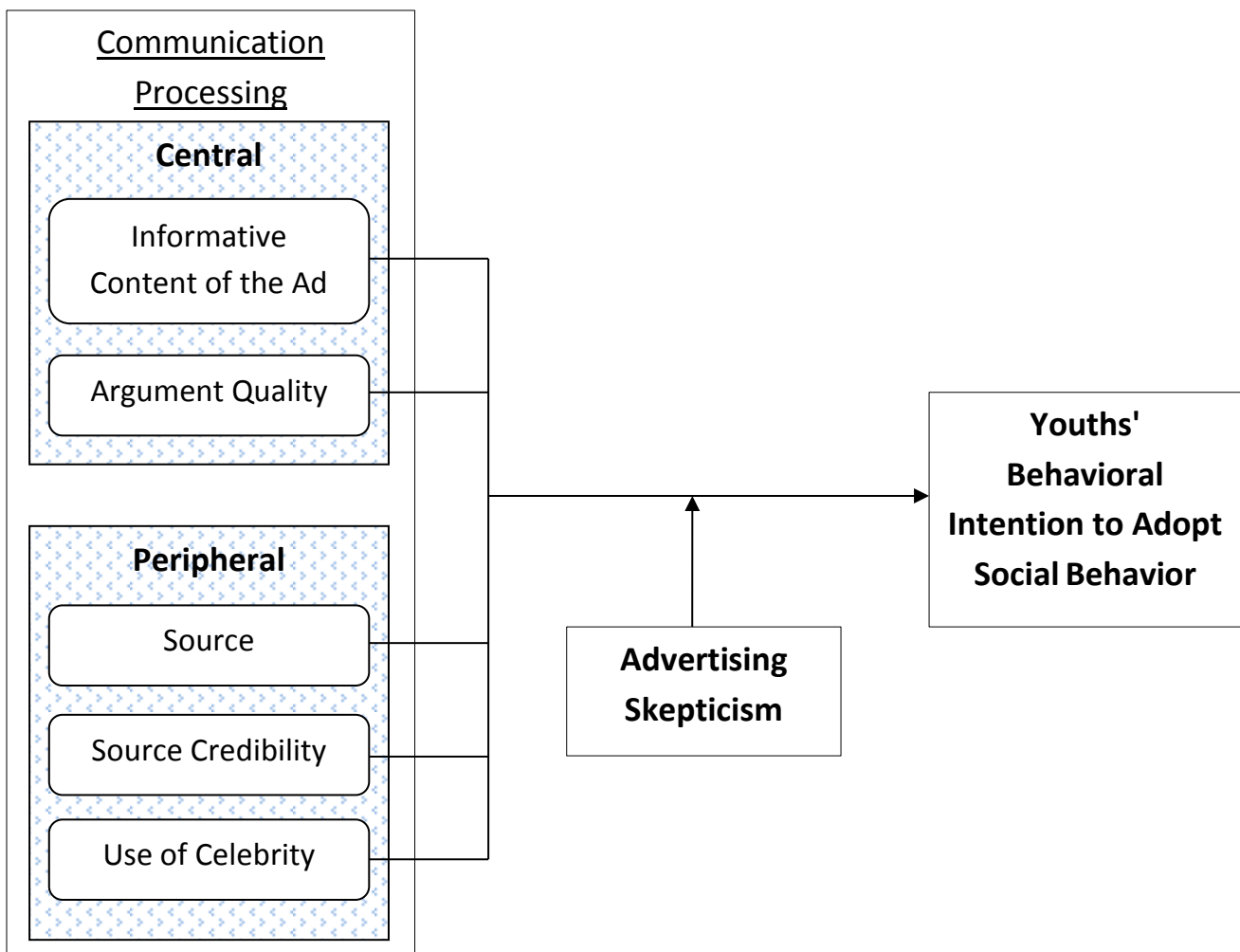
## 2 Theoretical Framework

Over the years, advertising professionals have used various advertising effectiveness models to outline what they believe is the impact of an advertisement on its audience. Researchers have tried to understand how advertising works and to measure mediating variables in the persuasive process in an attempt to evaluate the advertising performance (Mehta, 1994). Due to the disposition of social marketing and the distinctive nature of our study, we focused on measuring social advertising effectiveness through a proposed conceptual that is adopted from the *Advertising Response Model (ARM)* developed by Mehta (1994). This model incorporates Petty and Cacioppo (1981, 1986) theory of persuasion that explains that when exposed to a social advertisement and has successfully gained your attention, persuasion occurs through two routes: the *central route* and the *peripheral route*. In the central route, the main focus is on issue-related information; while in the peripheral route, the focus is on positive and negative cues associated with the execution of the advertisement itself.

One –or both- of these two routes directly affects youths' intention to adopt the advertised social behavior, whether it's to quit smoking, invest in a small project, perform Salaat (Muslim prayers) or behave in a socially acceptable manner. However, because it is said that adolescents tend to increasingly disbelief ad claims (Moschis, 1987), measuring skepticism towards advertising is a critical attitude towards social advertising that is essential to examine as it moderates in the relationship between the effects of these two routes of persuasion on youths' behavioral intentions. This proposed model is an appropriate way to measure the effectiveness of social

marketing campaigns because the application of similar models –such as the *elaboration likelihood model of persuasion* and the *advertising response model*- have been used to measure other social marketing campaigns in studies underwent in other countries (Metzler, Weiskotten and Morgen, 2000) and have been recommended to be used to develop more useful social campaigns (Rucker and Petty, 2006). Furthermore, the youth are a fast- developing segment, both mentally and socially that differs from adults and their behavioral conduct. Further studies should be directly especially to this specific life stage, as an understanding of them will help practitioners better penetrate a undetected growing market in Egypt. In addition, as most of Egypt’s population is constituted of young people, ages 18-30 (CAPMAS, 2010), any study around this life stage will contribute to our society, both in present and future. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed research model.

**Figure 1:** Proposed research model



*Adapted from:* Mehta, Abhilasha (1994), "How advertising response modeling (ARM) can increase ad effectiveness", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 34, No. 3, (May/June), pp. 62-74

### 3 Background and Hypotheses Development

Based on previous social psychological research on attitude change, the *central route* expresses a relatively thoughtful route. People focus on considering the issue relevant information presented in an ad as well as the quality of the argument presented. In an advertising context, the relevant arguments are usually identified with the informative content of the message (SanJose'-Cabezudo *et al.*, 2009). In addition, O'Keefe (1990) suggests that if the arguments are strong rather than questionable, then an individual's belief and attitudes toward the communicated topic will change favorably, which in turn leads to a change in behavior. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

**H1:** there is a relationship between the central route and youths' behavioral intentions.

**H1a:** there is a relationship between the informative content of the ad and youths' behavioral intentions.

**H1b:** there is a relationship between the argument quality of the message and youths' behavioral intentions.

The second route of persuasion, which is the *peripheral route*, occurs when people are unmotivated to or unable to process issue-relevant arguments. Processing that occur via the peripheral route do not occur because an individual has considered the pro and cons of the issue, but because the issue at hand is associated with positive or negative cues- that make a simple inference about the message's validity. The peripheral cues under study include: Source Attractiveness, Use of Celebrity and Source Credibility.

In a study by DeBono and Harnish (1988) regarding source attractiveness found that low self-monitoring individuals, when listening to an expert and an attractive male source deliver a counter attitudinal message. The respondents agreed with the attractive source regardless of the quality of the arguments presented but agreed with the expert source only when he delivered strong arguments. It is also suggested that high levels of source credibility tend to be associated with more positive attitudes toward the message and lead to behavioral changes (Craig and McCann, 1978). According to Hovland *et al.* (1953), if a source is perceived to be credible, a consumer will probably accept the influence or information as truthful and use it. Other studies by Silvera and Austad (2003) suggested that use of celebrities can result in more favorable advertisement ratings and product –or issue, in social marketing context- evaluation. Therefore, the following hypotheses are developed:

**H2:** there is a relationship between the peripheral route and youths' behavioral intentions.

**H2a:** there is a relationship between the source attractiveness and youths' behavioral intentions.

**H2b:** there is a relationship between the source credibility and youths' behavioral intentions.

**H2c:** there is a relationship between the use of celebrity and youths' behavioral intentions.

Behavioral changes induced via central route are suggested to be relatively enduring and predictive of behavior, but under the peripheral route are said to be relatively temporary and un-predictive of behavior compared to the central route (Mehta, 1994; Petty *et al.*, 1983). Therefore, the hypothesis can be defined as follows:

**H3:** the central route shall influence the youths' behavioral intentions more than the peripheral route.

Finally, it is argued that adolescents are more skeptic toward advertising, and develop greater resistance to persuasive stimuli and greater discomfort with marketing practices as they get older

(Moschis, 1987). Boush *et al.*, (1994) found empirical evidence that skepticism increase with age among the youth and adolescents. Accordingly, the following hypothesis would be:

**H4:** Advertising skepticism moderates the relationship between the central route & the peripheral route with the youths' behavioral intention.

The rationale behind measuring the youth's intention to adopt the advertised social behavior and not actual change in behavior is explained by Andreasen (2003) who suggested that the concept and application of social marketing is 'strictly' about *influencing* behavior- not necessarily changing it. That is, many social marketing programs are preventive in character in that they seek to have target audiences not do something (smoke, do drugs, act responsibly). However, the term 'behavioral change' has come to be used as synonym for the truer broader definition.

#### **4 Method**

A quantitative research technique was used in this study in the form of a cross-sectional, structured, close ended questionnaire. The population consisted of young Egyptians, ages 18-30, who were aware of the social campaigns that were being surveyed. The study was restricted to only two governorates, which are Cairo and Alexandria. These governorates are considered to be highly populated and in reach of social advertising activities. Because social marketing campaigns are created with a greater aim to influence societal behavior- not only certain individual behavior (Kaczynski, 2008), the population of this study was from different social classes, covering as much diverse citizens as possible.

Non-random quota sampling was employed in each governorate where strata and their proportions were identified as they are represented in the population. A quota balance was ensured the sample was representative of the populations of Cairo and Alexandria as possible, using a sample validation table that is presented below (Table 1) as a guideline for sample control. Validation was conducted according to gender, education, marital status and occupation.

Total Sample size (400 respondents)	Cairo		Alexandria	
Percentage	62%		38%	
Sample size for each city	248		152	
Social Demographics	Sample size (N)	%	Sample size (N)	%
<b>Gender:</b>				
• Male	136	55	69	45
• Female	112	45	83	55
<b>Literacy:</b>				
• Illiterate	37	15	24	16
• Less than sec.	80	32	51	34
• Sec. and less than Uni	88	35	54	36
• Uni and Post Uni	45	18	21	14
<b>Marital Status:</b>				
• Single	89	36	52	34
• Married	146	61	95	63
• Divorced	6	2	2	1
• Widowed	7	3	3	2
<b>Occupation:</b>				
• Public Sector	45	18	18	12
• Private Sector	103	42	68	45
• Other (unemployed, housewives, Students, etc.)	100	40	66	43

**Table 1:** Sample Validation

*Source: CAPMAS, 2010*

The survey method was in the form of a face-to-face interview, using the structured questionnaire for data gathering. The questionnaire was originally developed in English, then translated to Arabic and translated back to English. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was examined by an Arabic teacher and an industry expert from the field of advertising (Al-Ahram Advertising Agency) to ensure the accuracy of translation. The questionnaire was pre-tested by administering it to 60 respondents in a variety of places including The Arab Academy for Science, Technology

and Maritime Transport and Alexandria Sporting Club to pilot test it for clarity, comprehension and consistency. As a result of this test, several questions were re-worded and re-structured.

The questionnaire included five social advertising campaigns targeting the youth that were launched 6-10 months from the time of the field study (March 2011-May2011). These campaigns were chosen according to a number of criterions: 1) These campaigns where targeted at the youth, ages (18-30), 2) Most of the campaigns chosen had high viewing rate according to Al-Ahram Advertising Agency's media monitoring report in 2010 and Pan Arab Research Centre (PARC) TV rating study, 2010 and 3) The campaigns chosen varied in terms of the social issue tackled and the resulting behavioral outcome. A brief description of each campaign is enlisted below in Table 2.

Data collection took place in the form of consumer intercept at various sites in Alexandria and Cairo. Alexandria included shopping malls such as the City Center and San Stefano; local coffee shops to reach lower income respondent, Alexandria Sporting Club, The Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (Miami Campus and Abu Qeer Campus). Cairo sites included City Stars and Mall of Arabia, The Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (Sheraton) as well as local coffee shops. Respondents in collection sites were asked politely if they would like to participate in the survey. For those who agreed, a face-to-face interview took place with the respondent while filing their answers in a hard copy of the questionnaire. A piece of candy was given at the end of the participation as an incentive.

**Table 2:** Social advertising campaigns under study

<b>Social Advertising Campaign</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>(1) Preserving Ancestral Heritage Campaign</b> - Sponsored by the Supreme Court of Antiques	An Egyptian campaign aimed at taking good care of our ancestor's heritage and advising the youth to stop vandalizing it.
<b>(2) Youth Blessings</b> - Saudi Campaign	This campaign addresses the Arab youth to some of the wrong behaviors in the community that are widespread among the young people in particular, and shows, in a dramatic and stimulating manner, the right conduct of behavior.
<b>(3) Campaign against passive smoking and its impact on children's health</b> - Sponsored by the <i>Ministry of Health</i>	A campaign designed to urge smoking cessation and explaining that harm cause of smoking to both the smoker and his family and people surrounding him
<b>(4) Campaign against terrorism: Terrorism has no religion</b> - Saudi Campaign	A campaign explaining that terrorism is a tactic employed by deluded individuals or groups to advance an ideological or political cause that is not supported by Islam or any other religion. It also alerts individuals to abscond any violent thought or behavior that might be harmful to our society or other societies.
<b>(5) Fighting Drug Addiction Campaign: I will stop drug abuse and choose my life</b> - Sponsored by the <i>Ministry of Health</i>	An Egyptian campaign created to educate the youth about the dreadful implications of drug abuse and showing them that they have an option to lead a healthier & drug-free life

## 5 Findings

In this study, 420 questionnaires were distributed. Some surveys that were collected were unusable because respondents failed to answer most of the questions; hence the response rate was 95%. The final sample size was 400 respondents, with respect to population size in each governorate. This sample size was selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table. According to this table, the sample size for a population of 1,000,000 or more is 384 sample size is acceptable for analysis. Once the data has been collected, the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used to analyze the data gathered. Data analysis include reliability, validity, frequency, correlation, and regressions analysis were conducted.

### 5.1 Reliability of Scales

Reliability of scales used was measured using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability measure. Findings show that all the scales used in the study were reliable, above 0.6 and we can depend on them to measure the variables under study.



### 5.2 Frequency Analysis

When distributing the questionnaire, the respondents were from different backgrounds, covering as much diverse populace as possible. A description of the sample is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Frequency Analysis

Demographic characteristic	N	%	Demographic characteristic	N	%
<b>City of Residence:</b>			<b>Gender</b>		
Cairo	244	61	Male	218	54.5
Alexandria	152	38	Female	182	45.4
Other	4	1			
<b>Age:</b>			<b>Level of Education:</b>		
18-21	113	28.3	Illiterate	41	10.3
22-25	108	27.0	Elementary	65	16.3
26-29	98	24.5	Secondary	76	19.0
30-33	81	20.3	High school	95	23.8
			College graduate	98	24.5
			Post graduate	25	6.3
<b>Occupation:</b>			<b>Average Monthly Income:</b>		
Student	74	18.5	100-500	78	19.5
Housewife	54	13.5	501-1000	119	29.8
Businessperson	17	4.3	1001-5000	76	19.0
Professional	33	8.3	5001-10000	61	15.3
Private sector	112	28.0	10001-15000	27	6.8
Public sector	64	16.0	15001-20000	19	4.8
Unemployed	30	7.5	20001-25000	11	2.8
	16	4.0	25001-35000	9	2.3

### 5.3 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was used to test and prove certain hypotheses. When testing whether there is a relationship between the informative content of the ad and youths' behavioral intentions, the results show that the informative content of the ad didn't have any significant relationship with the youths' behavioral intentions. It is also worth noting that there was no significant relationship between advertising skepticism and the informative content of the ad. Thus, we cannot relate change in behavior to the value or content of information presented in social ads. Hence, H1a is rejected.

According to the second part of the hypothesis (there is a relationship between the argument quality of the message and youths' behavioral intentions), the argument quality of the message was found to have a significant negative relationship with youths' behavioral intentions ( $r=-0.18$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). However, at 18% the relationship is found to be weak. This means that the presence of argument quality, whether weak or strong, makes the youth less likely to adopt the social

behavior in the ad as this reflects the youths' psychological nature of rebelliousness and their tendency to behave upstream. Moreover, it is important to note that the argument quality has a positive and significant relationship with advertising skepticism as it is clear from the above table. As a result, H1b is supported.

In order to test hypothesis two, three components of the peripheral routes were analyzed: the source attractiveness (H2a), source credibility (H2b) and use of celebrity (H2c). Results showed that the attractiveness of the two of the three sources of social marketing ads; the public sector and the private sector were found to have a significant, yet negative relationship with the youths' behavioral intentions ( $r=-0.10$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and ( $r=-0.27$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) respectively. The public sector, generally representing the government, stimulates avoidance behavior rather than an approaching behavior through a negative relationship at a variance of 10%. The same applies for the private sector at even a higher negative relationship of 27%. It seemed that the private sector is more provocative for the youth as a source of social marketing campaigns. Finally, the results showed that there is no relationship between NGOs as a source and the youth's intention to adopt the desired behavior in the ad. This result explained a neutral perspective of the youth towards the NGOs as a source of social ads. Therefore, H2a is supported.

Source credibility was the next variable tested. It was found to have a significant positive, yet weak relationship with the youths' behavioral intentions ( $r=0.27$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This means that the more credible the source of the message is, the more likely it is for the youth to adopt the social behavior advertised for. This result showed a tendency for the youth to emphasis on the credibility of the source of a social ad oppose to other types of advertising such as commercial advertising; with regard to the nature of social marketing. The results also show a negative yet significant relationship between the source credibility and advertising skepticism. This indicated that the higher the source credibility and believability, the less skeptic are the youth towards the social ad. Hence, H2b is supported.

Finally, when testing the use of celebrity, results showed that it has a significant, positive correlation with the youths' behavioral intention. However, the relationship was found to be weak ( $r=0.18$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). It was also observed that advertising skepticism seemed to be positively correlated to the use of celebrity. However, this positive correlation with the youth's behavioral intention suggested that the use of celebrity in a social ad can encourage the youth to adopt a social behavior that a celebrity is endorsing. Therefore, H2C is supported.

H3 was tested next. The results showed that the Central Route (made up of the informative content of the ad and argument quality) didn't have any significant relationship with the youths' behavioral intentions. It is also observed that the Central Route was not significant with the advertising skepticism. Thus it is clear that the information or argument presented in social ads are not of interest to the Egyptian youth, and does not influence their intention to change a maladaptive social behavior.

However, the Peripheral Route (consists of the source attractiveness, source credibility and use of celebrity) was found to have a significant positive relationship with the youths' behavioral intentions ( $r=0.25$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The Central Route was not correlated to youths' behavioral intentions. The results showed that the peripheral cue present in an ad (e.g. the use of a celebrity) was more likely to influence the youth to adopt the social behavior advertised for more than the

central cues (e.g. strength of argument). This means that the Egyptian youth intention to behave is more likely to be influenced by the execution of the ad, whether in the choice of models presenting the ad or the story plot. Hence, H3 is rejected.

#### 5.4. Regression Analysis

In order to test H4 (*Advertising skepticism moderates the relationship between the central route and the peripheral route with the youths' behavioral intention*), chi square of variables was used to ensure the normality of the distribution of variables. And when tested, all variables were shown to be normally distributed; therefore linear regression can be utilized to test the hypotheses.

To identify the relative importance of the determinant variables on behavioral intentions included in this study, linear step wise regression analysis was conducted using behavioral intention as a dependent variable. For independent variables, only the Peripheral Route was included, but the Central Route was excluded. This exclusion occurred because there was no correlation between the Central Route components and Advertising Skepticism. In order to measure the impact of advertising skepticism as well as the model fit including it; linear stepwise regression was run once without the moderating variable and once with the presence of the moderating variable.

When identifying the contribution of each of the components of the peripheral route without first including the moderating variable -advertising skepticism- the results showed that the three components of the peripheral route (Source Credibility, Source Attractiveness and Use of Celebrity) were fit, indicating an approximate of 11% variance in the behavioral intention; which is considered weak for social sciences. However, they were significant, as their P-Values were 0.000, 0.003, 0.013 respectively; which is less than 0.05. The components of the peripheral route show a standardized regression coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) to the source credibility, ( $\beta = -0.15$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) to the source attractiveness and ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) to the use of celebrity. This means that the source credibility seems to be more important in influencing the youth's intention to adopt social behaviors in advertisements, then comes the source attractiveness and the least important was the use of celebrity.

However, when running the linear regression including the moderating variable -advertising skepticism- results indicated a higher variance in the behavioral intention at 14%. The results show that the two components of the peripheral route still remains significant, where the P-Value of the components are 0.004 for the source credibility, 0.002 for the source attractiveness. However, the last component was insignificant as it was more than 0.05, as the use of celebrity was insignificant at 0.056. However, the results show a lower standardized regression coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) for the source credibility and ( $\beta = 0.09$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) for the use of celebrity. The source attractiveness remains almost the same with a standardized regression coefficient of ( $\beta = -0.15$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Advertising Skepticism also appeared to be significant at a P-Value of 0.000, with a standardized regression coefficient of ( $\beta = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) as its individual contribution in the model.

The results of the linear step wise regression shows that advertising skepticism fits into the model as an additional independent variable that has an impact on the youth when being exposed to a social ad, making them more skeptic and less likely to adopt the social ad being advertised

for. However, its impact as a moderator is rather weak, and therefore is observed to have an effect of an independent variable rather than a moderating variable. Therefore, H4 was rejected.

**Table 4:** Findings of the correlation analysis

Hypotheses	Finding	Comments
Hypothesis One	H1a – Rejected H1b –Supported	Results confirmed that Hypothesis one is partially supported
Hypothesis Two	H2a – Supported H2b –Supported H2c – Supported	Results confirmed that Hypothesis two is fully supported
Hypothesis Three	H3 – Rejected	Results confirmed that Hypothesis three is rejected
Hypothesis Four	H4 – Rejected	Results confirmed that Hypothesis four is rejected

## 6 Discussion

The results of the data analysis indicated that when looking at the cues involved in the central route, it was discovered that the informative content of the ad was not significant with the youths' behavioral intention. This finding is consistent with other studies (Te'eni-Harari *et al.*, 2007) which reported that the type of message, part of which is the information enlisted in the ad, does not influence the youth. This result indicated that the Egyptian youth are not encouraged to process any information when it comes to social advertising, but are also in less need of any cognition effort. This can be due to the daily youth exposure to massive advertising clutter which makes them unable to process a great deal of information present in ads (such as social ads that contain extensive amount of information that is enormous for awareness and comprehension). This belief was expressed by Miller *et al.* (1976) who have noted on the limited amount of information processing time and capacity that was available for people in their long, hectic days; and show that such scrutiny would disengage the thought process from the demands of daily life (Miller *et al.*, 1976). Another reason attributed to this result was the fact that most of these social marketing efforts are implemented in the form of TV advertising, which is viewed as very traditional and overused; with very minor concern to other marketing tools of intervention. This might have contributed to the lack of interest from the youth to process information from TV ads as nowadays; the youth in Egypt and around the world rely on other sources of information such as the internet and available social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

The second cue in the central route was the argument quality that was found to be negatively correlated with the youths' intention to adopt an advertised social ad. This seems to be consistent with other findings. Sher and Lee, 2009 explained the impossibility of consumers to be persuaded via argument quality especially when they are highly skeptical towards the ad that is urging them to change their behavior rather than buy a product/acquire a service; they are biased against a certain type of information and generally indifferent towards the message quality. As past

literature explains, the adolescents and young recipients are more skeptical toward advertising, and develop greater resistance to persuasive stimuli and greater discomfort with marketing practices as they get older (Moschis, 1987). However, this resistance towards stronger arguments in social ads seems logical when discovering the rather complex and controversial psychological state of young people. According to psychology, rebellion -which is simply a behavior that deliberately clashes with the ruling norms or powers that be- are present in two common types: rebelling against socially fitting in (rebellion of non-conformity) and against adult authority (rebellion of non-compliance). In both types, rebellion attracts adult attention by offending it (Pickhardt, 2009). It can cause them to engage in self-destructive behavior, experiment with high-risk excitement, reject safe rules and restraints - letting impulse overrule judgment to dangerous effect; and it can cause them to injure valued relationships by pushing those who care about them away.

All these behaviors can be a main reason why the youth can find a strong, logic and sound argument in a social ad rather 'irritating' to their nature, and would seek ways to behave in the exactly opposite way of what the ad is referring to. This behavior calls out for attention that asks for the parents, and even society, to give and respond to.

This fiery attitude of the youth entwines and explains the results of the first peripheral cue-source attractiveness- that was also found to be negatively correlated with the youths' behavioral intentions to adopt social behavior after being exposed to social ads. Like a well-executed argument, it was found that the more attractive the source was (regardless of whether it is a private source, a public source, or an NGO). The less appealing the source was to the youth, and less likely that the Egyptian youth will behave according to the ad's socially ideal behavior. When conferring to the findings, it seemed that the most "provocative" source was the private sector. This can be explained that when huge multinational companies like McDonald's or huge business entities like Tarek Nour engaged in social advertising, the youth seem to be doubt their 'good' intentions and believe that there's a hidden agenda to engaged in an act of social wellbeing. Moreover, when looking at the advertising skepticism, it was found that the more skeptic the youth are towards social ads, the less attractive the source was, and therefore they are less likely to adopt the social behavior being presented in the ad.

One the other hand, the credibility of the source of the social ad was found to have a relationship with the intention to behave in a socially acceptable manner when exposed to a social ad. Findings from other studies happen to agree with this result (Banyte *et al.*, 2011; Byrne and Whitehead, 2003; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). It is important for the Egyptian youth to trust the source of the ad. In addition, they have to view the source as an expert in the field and trustworthy. This result is important because information from a credible source influences beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behavior through a process called internalization which occurs when the recipient adopts the opinions of the credible source, since their information is accurate (Byrne and Whitehead, 2003, Bailey, 2007).

Finally, the use of celebrity as a peripheral cue is positively linked with the Egyptian youths' behavioral intention to adopt social behaviors after ad exposure. Findings seems consistent with such results (Bower and Mateer, 2008; Byrne and Whitehead, 2003) and as witnessed through literature, individuals with low need for cognition do not enjoy cognitive efforts and prefer to rely on opinions of others (preferable experts) when dealing with complicated issues (Sher and Lee,

2009). This need is emphasized discerning the unique nature of social marketing and the need for an 'influencer' that is respected, loved and trusted when communicating to the youth. The common nature of the Egyptians is to look up to celebrities as idols and icons to follow. So any endorsement of product, service or as in our case, behavior, can be very well accepted, adopted and associated with the credible and treasured image of the celebrity.

However, when testing the overall effect of the dual routes of persuasion to measure which had a stronger influence on the Egyptian youth; results of the regression analysis revealed that the central route had no influence on the Egyptian youth which meant that the information present in a social ad does not encourage them to change their social attitude or behavior. But, on the contrary, the peripheral route had an influence on the Egyptian youth, encouraging them to consider social attitude and behavioral change. Other studies which also applied the ELM on the youth found that the peripheral route had a stronger effect (Sher and Lee, 2009). However, this implicates that how the ad is executed is what grabs the Egyptian youths' attention, and can make them consider such intervention.

Moreover, the findings of the regression analysis showed that the most important peripheral cue that influences the youths' behavioral intentions was the source credibility. This cue was followed by the source attractiveness and the least important was the use of celebrity. Again, this order of importance reveals that trust- or mistrust- is a common problem that the Egyptian youth has with the source of the social ads, which mostly are governmental sources. The attractiveness of the source followed next in importance which explains that the degree to which a source is appealing and familiar to youth has an effect in influencing their behavior. This also calls for the need for entities such as the NGOs to take a greater initiative in designing social marketing interventions that can be more appealing and more trusted than other source. The use of celebrities in social ads is needed to create a sense of trust through idealistic social figures to modify their behavior. The use of any social figure without contemplating their effect on the youth can have a counter-effect rather than the effect required by the ad.

Advertising Skepticism was also found to have an impact on the effectiveness of social advertising campaigns to influence intentions for behavioral change, but as an independent variable and not a moderating variable. Studies support that advertising skepticism plays a key role in determining whether the recipient would be influenced with the ad or not (Sher and Lee, 2009; Bailey, 2007; Schaefer *et al.*, 2005; Obermiller *et al.*, 2005). Results also show that the focus on the advertising skepticism as an attitude that influences the youth when being exposed to social ads is important and rather relevant, as it strengthens the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This finding explains how the Egyptian youth are generally skeptic towards advertising; as a result from years of oppression and vagueness that was communicated from the Egyptian government and the national media. The Egyptian society as a whole has adapted itself to the ambiguousness of the media and no longer depended on it for accurate information. Therefore, any ad that they are exposed to -especially when it's a social ad that communicates information and recommendations- sent an untrusting sense to the Egyptian youth, forcing them to disbelief any claim made by social advertising campaigns, whether its political, health-related or social-related.

This study has a number of limitations. However, these limitations do not render the findings any less significant, but open the way for further research in this area. This study is cross sectional in

nature and fails to capture the dynamic nature of consumer behavior (especially when social marketing involves monitoring change in behavior). Moreover, this study was done in aim to measure the impact of social advertising on the youth segment, which happens to be a specified part of the Egyptian population, and not the population as a whole. Furthermore, the sample was selected from two regions in Egypt (Cairo and Alexandria) and the information gained doesn't allow for the finding to be generalized. Due to the nature of the topic under study, some respondents faced some difficulty in expressing their underlying motives and beliefs about the selected advertisements. In addition, the data collection period was postponed till after the Egyptian Revolution of the 25th of January which could have affected consumer's responses towards social advertising.

## **7 Conclusion**

This study has indicated that, overall, the peripheral route had a significant relationship with the youths' behavioral intentions to adopt the social behavior in the ad, while the central route did not have a significant relationship with the youths' behavioral intention. This indicates that the Egyptian youth are persuaded to behave in the same manner that the ad suggests they should through the executional cues of the ad, such as the presence of a well known and loved celebrity, or the amount of trust and credibility that the source of the ad communicates to the youth, or how familiar and attractive the source of the ad is. This also implies that persuasion through the central route does not exist, which mean that the youth are not encouraged or motivated to change their current behavior and adopt a socially acceptable one when exposed to a social ad that is full of informational content or when the argument present in the ad is a strong one or a weak one. Moreover, advertising skepticism also happened to be significant which implies that the Egyptian youth tend to disbelief social ads, making them less likely to accept the message in the ad and behave accordingly.

These findings can contribute a great deal for both public policy makers and marketing officials to be able to create the appropriate programs and interventions to trigger the Egyptian youth into acquiring more socially responsible behavior -or abandoning unfavorable ones- for the sake of a better living and a more flourishing life.

## **8 Research Limitations**

This study has a number of limitations. However, these limitations do not render the findings any less significant, but open the way for further research in this area. This study is cross sectional in nature and fails to capture the dynamic nature of consumer behavior (especially when social marketing involves monitoring change in behavior). Moreover, this study was done in aim to measure the impact of social advertising on the youth segment, which happens to a specified part of the Egyptian population, and not the population as a whole.

Furthermore, the sample was selected from two regions in Egypt (Cairo and Alexandria) as they constitute the two largest cities in Egypt. However, the selected cities are considered to be highly populated and therefore a suitable area for this study to take place. Hence, the information gained in order to be analyzed was not proportionately gathered and doesn't allow for the finding to be generalized.

Due to the nature of the topic under study, some respondents faced some difficulty in expressing their underlying motives and beliefs about the selected advertisements. In addition, the data collection period was postponed till after the Egyptian Revolution of the 25th of January, 2011 which could have affected consumer's responses towards social advertising.

## 9 Direction for future research

To effectively measure the influence that social marketing campaigns have had on the Egyptian youth, a longitudinal study is recommended to be employed in order to better understand and observe behavioral change throughout time. It is also recommended that this study should be replicated on the Egyptian population as a whole, not just the youth segment, to compare results. Moreover, in order to thoroughly research the two routes of persuasion, other elements and cues should be studied. For example, in the peripheral route, variables such as the source expertise, advertising appeals and music can be studied to measure their influence in persuading the youth to adopt social behaviors in ads, and if they have an effect on them or not.

This research has also discovered the need for creating well-built academic programs that support the growth and rise of social marketing in the Middle East; as social marketing has been misinterpreted and dealt with as a minor concept emerging from the roots of socially responsible commercial marketing. This further legitimization of social marketing as a scholarly field will help shape the concept, giving it well defined dimensions, a stronger argument and a clearer distinction from other similar concepts. When such establishment of the concept is achieved, a more effective application of social marketing can be obtained, using it as one of the fundamental tools for fighting ongoing social problems in areas of health, self-preservation and community development.

This study also shed some light on the need for further investigation, secondary data analysis and more insightful qualitative research should be made into the measurement of the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns as a result of their unique nature of consumer response. It is also highly recommended that this study should be replicated in different regions in Egypt to compare different results and to apply it in different countries for cross-cultural analysis.

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