

with respondents from smaller settlements, as well as such from different cultures (given the established cultural differences in the construct). The use of self-reporting tools for measuring of the studied variables is also one of the limitations of the study. The method of self-reporting may call into question the reliability of the data collected, as it risks that respondents are not sufficiently aware of their attitudes and motives, are not able to recall exactly different details of their behaviour, set in the individual statements, as well as to give socially desirable answers.

## CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine the direct and indirect links between the different levels of abstraction of consumer innovativeness. The results of the conducted analyses confirmed on an empirical level the presented hierarchical perspective to the construct. In particular, there are statistically significant relationships between the variables considered. The vicarious innovativeness is a stronger predictor of the adoptive innovativeness than the inherent innovativeness. Only two of the dimensions of vicarious innovativeness – advertising and word of mouth, have a statistically significant impact on adoptive innovativeness. This means that communication factors play a more important role in the process of embracing innovation than the level of innovativeness inherent to the consumer.

The conducted mediation analysis confirmed the stated causal mechanism regarding the mediating role of vicarious innovativeness in the link between the inherent and the adoptive innovativeness. The inherent innovativeness positively influences the consumer's decision to accept the innovativeness as a result of the formed readiness to act at it on the basis of his/her information activity (engagement in interpersonal communication and gathering information about the innovation).

The established trends and the revealed regularities in the innovativeness of the Bulgarian consumers give valuable guidelines to the marketing specialists for building an ef-

fective strategy for good positioning of the innovative product on the market. Each of the hierarchical levels of the studied construct might be used both alone and in combination with the others to support the innovative behaviour of the consumer. On the one hand, the inherent and the vicarious innovativeness are a potential basis for market segmentation and identification of the category of consumers that is more receptive to the innovation and has a crucial role in its successful introduction onto the target market. On the other hand, the establishing of an effective marketing communication requires that the media notice about the innovative product is presented in such a way as not only to attract attention and provoke the interest of consumers with different levels of innovation, but also to make them want to learn more about the product, which in turn will lead to its earlier adoption. Of course, the promotion of interpersonal communication, or of word-of-mouth information, must be a priority for marketing, given its strong influence on innovative behaviour of the consumer.

The study, although limited in its scope, enriches the notion of the construct “consumer innovativeness” and contributes to its deeper understanding, providing empirical support for its hierarchical structure in the context of the Bulgarian consumer. The knowledge of the existing links between the different levels of abstractness of the construct, as well as the way in which vicarious innovativeness and its dimensions affect the reactions to innovative products of consumers with different levels of inherent innovativeness, is a step towards building an effective market communication and achieving the goals of marketing when introducing an innovative product on the market.

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