

The effects of perceived offensive advertising on consumer buying behaviour in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the effects of offensive advertisements on consumer behaviour in South Africa by analysing the individual characteristics and attitude of consumers towards such advertising. This study aims to articulate the relationship between offensive advertising and consumer behaviour, and the nature of consumers and how they respond to the advertisements differently; and how the brand is affected.

Using gender, self-construal, hedonic and utilitarian attitudinal appeal, the paper hypothesizes that South African consumers will be less accepting of offensive advertising. It also compares how attitudes towards offensive advertising influence the intention to purchase the advertised brand. A survey of 194 respondents was conducted in November 2019. A questionnaire with three print advertising containing a neutral, sexual reference and religious offense advert were printed and distributed online.

Findings on consumers' attitudes towards offensive advertising were varied. Results show that the levels of offensiveness differ according to gender and self-construal. The results also found that consumers attitude towards offensive advertisements has a significant impact on consumers' intention to purchase the advertised product and the advertised brand. Consumer responses for this study were derived from South African consumers only. This study provides useful insights on current marketing strategies used by organisations and useful advice to marketers who wish to make use of offensive advertisements and the possible risks involved.

Keywords: Advertising, Offensive Advertising, Brands, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Attitude, Purchase Intention

DECLARATION

I, Sikhulekile Mdlongwa declare that this article is my own work except as indicated in references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Sikhulekile Mdlongwa

Signed at Johannesburg

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The study presents the findings from quantitative research conducted to explore the consequences of offensive advertisements on consumer buying behaviour. A cross-cultural study done by Chan, Li, Diehl, and Terlutter (2007) suggests that offensive advertising is constantly used in different countries and there is a need to gain deeper understanding of their impact on consumer behaviour. Virvilaite and Matulevičienė (2013)'s study also suggests that it is important to clearly understand the reasons behind consumer behaviour. Therefore, this study aims to articulate the relationship between offensive advertising and consumer buying behaviour, behavioural traits of consumers and how they respond to the advertisements differently, and its impact on associated brands.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the consequences of offensive advertisements on consumer buying behaviour. It looks to determine factors that contribute to certain consumer behavioural traits. This study further measures the levels of offensiveness towards different advertisement and compare the offensiveness with various demographics, such as gender.

Offensive advertising is defined by Huhmann and Limbu (2016) as the perception that advertising executions are frequently irritating, rude, provocative and cause displeasure or resentments. A study done by Madni, Hamid, and Rashid (2016) suggest that companies now use offensive adverts to get consumers' attention. O'guinn, Allen, Semenik, and Scheinbaum (2014) defines advertising as a paid communication that is delivered by an organization to an audience via mass media with an attempt of persuasion. In South Africa, the common mass media used consists of television and

video, internet, radio, out of home media, magazines, cinema, music and podcasts, esports and business to business.

Organizations spend a lot of money on advertising to introduce new products, remind consumers about products and services they offer, attract and influence consumer buying behaviour. Previous literature state that these promotion strategies sometime fail to convey the message and instead, come across as inappropriate to the consumer. There is a notable gap in the literature that articulate the relationship between offensive advertising and consumer buying behaviour and the nature of consumers in South Africa. Studies investigating the effects of offensive advertising on consumer behaviour have been done in Australia by (Waller, 1999; Waller, Fam, & Zafer Erdogan, 2005) and in some parts of Asia by (Chan et al., 2007; Fam & Waller, 2003; Phau & Prendergast, 2002; Tangtarntana, 2017; Virvilaite & Matulevičiene, 2013; Xiao, Yang, & Iqbal, 2018). All these studies investigated cultural differences and individual factors that influence consumer attitudes towards offensive advertising and results do not necessarily apply to South African consumers. In South Africa, a study was done by Urwin and Venter (2014), that only investigated shock advertising among generation Y. Therefore, the individual factors of all South African consumers that influence attitudes towards offensive advertising remain unexplored.

1.3 Context of the study

A cross-cultural study done by Chan et al. (2007) suggests that offensive advertising is constantly used in different countries and there is a need to gain deeper understanding of their impact on consumer behaviour. Virvilaite and Matulevičiene (2013)'s study suggests that it is pivotal to clearly understand the reasons behind consumer behaviour and to appropriately evaluate socio-demographic factors such as moral principles, age, gender and religion. An analysis should be

undertaken on measuring levels of offensiveness towards specific advertisements, comparing offensiveness with various factors such as age, religion, location, income to determine the views held across different regions and countries (Waller, 1999). A study done by Rashid & Khan (2017), indicates that the religiosity of an individual predicts his or her attitude and consumer behaviour towards various products and services; and the concepts in which advertisements are delivered. The study done by Virvilaite and Matulevičiene (2013) looks at gender, location and age of the consumer and explains how these factors contribute to the interpretation of advertisements.

1.4 Problem statement

South African consumers' individual differences in attitude towards offensive advertisement will be considered by focusing on demographic characteristics and general attitudes towards advertising. Similar study done by Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes (2006) suggest that attitude towards offensive advertisement should be systematically studied as the determinant of the attitude towards a brand and purchase intention. Several studies have been done that mainly looked at negative aspects of specific studies and attitudes towards these types of advertising and little is known why these may cause offense in South Africa. Therefore, this study also examines consumer attitudes towards advertisements and determine the reasons why the advertisements are perceived as offensive.

1.4.1 Main problem

Companies spend a lot of money on advertising mainly to introduce new products, raise awareness and ultimately influence consumer buying behaviour. Several studies, including a study done by Madni et al. (2016) suggest that companies now deliberately use offensive adverts to get consumers' attention. Virvilaite and Matulevičiene (2013) states that it is important for

organisations to explore the effects of offensive advertising on consumer buying behaviour to increase organisation's profitability. A detailed and generalised information about the impact of offensive advertising on consumer buying behaviour is lacking and this include better identification generalising basic factors which influence consumer behaviour (Virvilaite & Matulevičiene, 2013). Therefore, link between offensive advertising and consumer buying behaviour in South Africa remains unexplored.

i) Sub-problem 1

First sub-problem is to assess the impact that offensive advertisements have on the overall company brand. According to Cyril De Run, Mohsin Butt, Fam, and Yin Jong (2010), there is little knowledge on how brands of offensive advertisements and controversial products affect the image of the brand and those of the company sponsors.

ii) Sub-problem 2

Second sub-problem is to investigate the nature of consumers interpreting offensive adverts and how they respond to offensive adverts differently (Banyte, Paskeviciute, & Rutelione, 2014). Several companies in South Africa such as Unilever, Department of Health and H&M have used offensive advertising to get consumers attention and failed to communicate the messages as planned as consumers found these messages to be inappropriate (TheGuardian, 2013; WashingtonPost, 2018; YOUMagazine, 2017). Therefore, there is need to understand and evaluate the influence behind individual consumer's behaviour and how this leads to the interpretation of advertisements. Previous studies done suggests that there is a relationship between advertisements and consumer buying behaviour but there is still lack of research articulating relationship between offensive advertising, South African consumer and purchasing behaviour.

1.4.2 Research questions

Based on the research problems stated above, this study attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

Main problem: Research questions

i) Does offensive advertising affect consumers' purchasing behaviour?

Sub-problem 1: Research questions

ii) Does offensive advertising affect the advertised brands in any way?

Sub-problem 2: Research questions

iii) What are the individual factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards offensive advertisements?

1.4.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the effects of offensive advertising on consumer buying behaviour in South Africa and its impact on associated brands. To achieve this, the following objectives should be considered:

Main Objective

i) To investigate the impact of offensive advertisement on consumer's intention to purchase the advertised product or service.

Sub-objective 1

ii) To investigate the impact of offensive advertisement on the advertised brand.

Sub-objective 2

iii) To investigate the influence of individual factors in determining the attitudes of consumers towards offensive advertising and whether there are any attitudinal differences according to individual differences as follows:

- to investigate price sensitivity in determining attitudes of consumers towards offensive advertising and brands.
- to investigate how hedonic and utilitarian attitudes influence consumers' view of advertisements and brands.
- to investigate independent and interdependent self-construal in determining the attitudes of consumers towards offensive advertising and brands.
- to investigate the influence of gender in determining the attitudes of consumers towards offensive advertising and brands.

1.4.4 Research hypothesis

The following summarized hypotheses have been formulated to help achieve the objectives of the study:

Main objectives: Hypothesis

H1: Consumer's attitude towards offensive advertising has a negative influence over his/her intention to purchase the advertised product/service.

Sub-objective 1: Hypothesis

H2: A negative consumer's attitude towards the advert has a significant influence over his/her attitude towards the brand.

Sub-objective 2: Hypothesis

H3a: Price sensitivity is negatively related to consumers' attitude towards advertisements.

H3b: Price sensitivity is negatively related to consumers' attitudes towards brands.

H4a: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable hedonic attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

H4b: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable utilitarian attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

H4c: Consumers who view neutral adverts rate them to have a unique appeal than those who view offensive adverts.

H4d: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable purchase intentions for those adverts than those who view offensive adverts.

H5a: Independent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H5b: Independent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards brands.

H6a: Interdependent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H6b: Interdependent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards brands.

H7: Consumer's gender is likely to influence his/her attitude towards offensive advertisement.

1.5 Significance of the study

The importance of the study is anchored on its ability to provide an empirical understanding of offensive advertising influence on consumer buying behaviour.

Studies have been conducted that focus on the effects of offensive advertisement and consumer behaviour. Little is known about the main psychological factors that accelerate the consumer buying behaviour and the personality characteristic of consumers (Niazi, Siddiqui, Alishah, & Hunjra, 2012; Saleem & Abideen, 2011). A study conducted by Hayko (2010) states that culture is another important factor to be considered that significantly affect consumer behaviour. Because of culture differences, countries like Malaysia have put strict measures to control advertisements to be seen publicity (Hayko, 2010).

Research into consumers' emotional reaction to products, services or their advertisements constitutes the major part of advertising research (Banyte et al., 2014) and this has not been done in South Africa. Little is known about the main psychological factors that accelerate the consumer buying behaviour and the personality characteristic of consumers (Niazi et al., 2012; Saleem & Abideen, 2011). There is need to analyse the reasons behind varied customer reactions to offensive advertising given the growing society's concern with the popularity of shock advertising (Banyte et al., 2014).

Previous literature suggest evidence that there is a relationship between advertisements and consumer behaviour, but there is lack of empirical studies which are focused on offensive advertisements and consumer buying behaviour; therefore, there is need to conduct a study to determine the influence of offensive advertisements on consumer behaviour (Madni et al., 2016).

1.6 Delimitations of the study

- The research study was conducted using actual retail advertisements as examples and it only measures two types of offensive advertisement, that is, sexual reference and religious offense.
- The study only examines gender as demographic factor that influence attitude towards advertising.
- The study does not criticize the firms' marketing strategies, it only uses past advertisements that have been used as part of the experiment.

1.7 Definition of terms

Offensive advertising: Rashid & Khan (2017) defines offensive advertisements as advertisements leads to the sense of disgust or negative attitude towards the goods and services in the minds of the consumer.

Advertising: Advertising is defined as an effective way to communicate and convey a message to an audience; and is seen as a promotional strategy used to create awareness of products and services (Malik et al., 2013).

Consumer behaviour: It is the process that buyers go through in recognising their individual needs, finding ways to fulfil those needs, making purchase decisions, interpreting information; and making and implementing those plans (Furaiji, Łatuszyńska, & Wawrzyniak, 2012). According to Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2006) consumer behaviour is defined as the activities that lead up to and include the purchase or receipt of a product, how, where and under what circumstances consumers use products and how consumers get rid of products and packaging.

Brands are defined as name, design, symbol or any other feature that differentiate a product or service from another (Lautiainen, 2015).

1.8 Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

- A total sample of 194 respondents are deemed enough for the study.
- Respondents were truthful in their responses and all the responses reflect their own perspectives.

1.9 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to the research study. This chapter describes the purpose of the study, the context of the study, problem statements and sub-problems, objectives of the study, formulation of hypothesis, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study and definition of key terms referred to in this research.

Chapter 2 provides theoretical grounding, definition of the topic and background discussion by reviewing previous literature that focuses on advertising, offensive advertising, attitudes and consumer behaviour. Chapter 2 also provides a conceptual framework of the study, which provides a clear picture of theories that underpin the knowledge base of the phenomenon to be investigated.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology used in the study. Sections in this chapter include research paradigm, population and sample, research instrument, procedure for data collection, data analysis and interpretation and validity and reliability.

Chapter 4 describes the finding and results of the study in detail, in order of the research questions. Experimental procedure and sample characteristics are described first, followed by the description of findings, that is, description of respondents' profiles and measures used.

Chapter 5 discusses and explains the research findings described in chapter 4. Results are discussed in more detail, in relation to research questions and other literature.

Lastly, Chapter 6 concludes the research report, discusses recommendations, the research implications, and suggestions for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

This study sought to understand the relationship between offensive advertising and consumer buying behaviour, and the behavioural traits of consumers. As previous studies focus more on how advertising affect consumer behaviour, there is a notable gap as to how consumers respond to the advertisements differently and how offensive advertising affect the organisation, and the associated brands. The results of this study provide useful insights on current marketing strategies used by organisations and give useful advice to marketers who wish to make use of offensive advertising and the possible risks involved.

Five more chapters follow. Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review of general advertising theories, attitudes, and consumer behaviour. In Chapter 3, the research methodology is discussed in detail, that is, the research design and how the study was conducted. Research results are presented in Chapter 4, and the interpretation of results are presented in Chapter 5. The last chapter concludes the research report and provides recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews previous literature related to integrated marketing communication elements with emphasis on advertising. The goal of this literature review is to summarize the previous studies done on advertising, offensive advertising and consumer behaviour. It also includes studies done in other countries that investigate influence of offensive advertising on consumer's purchasing behaviour.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part describes theoretical background of the study and general theories of advertising, attitudes and consumer behaviour. The second part identifies and critically analyse relevant research with a goal to clearly define the research problem.

Keywords were used as a guideline to search databases for information. Keywords included, but not limited to, advertising, offensive advertising, consumer behaviour, consumer attitudes and brands. Sources of information included peer-reviewed journals, government resources and statistics, books, website articles and master's dissertations and PhD thesis.

2.2 Theoretical grounding, definition of the topic and background discussion

A cross-cultural study done by Chan et al. (2007) suggests that offensive advertising is constantly used in different countries and there is a need to gain deeper understanding of their impact on consumer behaviour. Virvilaite and Matulevičienė (2013)'s study suggests that it is pivotal to clearly understand the reasons behind consumer behaviour and to appropriately evaluate socio-demographic factors such as moral principles, age, gender. Religion is also a factor that predicts individual attitude and consumer behaviour towards various products and services; and the concepts in which advertisements are delivered (Rashid & Khan, 2017). Furthermore, Hayko

(2010) states that culture is another important factor to be considered that significantly affect consumer behaviour and countries like Malaysia have put strict measures to control advertisements to be seen publicly. Virvilaite and Matulevičienė (2013) developed a theoretical model that link the main elements of offensive behaviour and consumer behaviour as shown below:

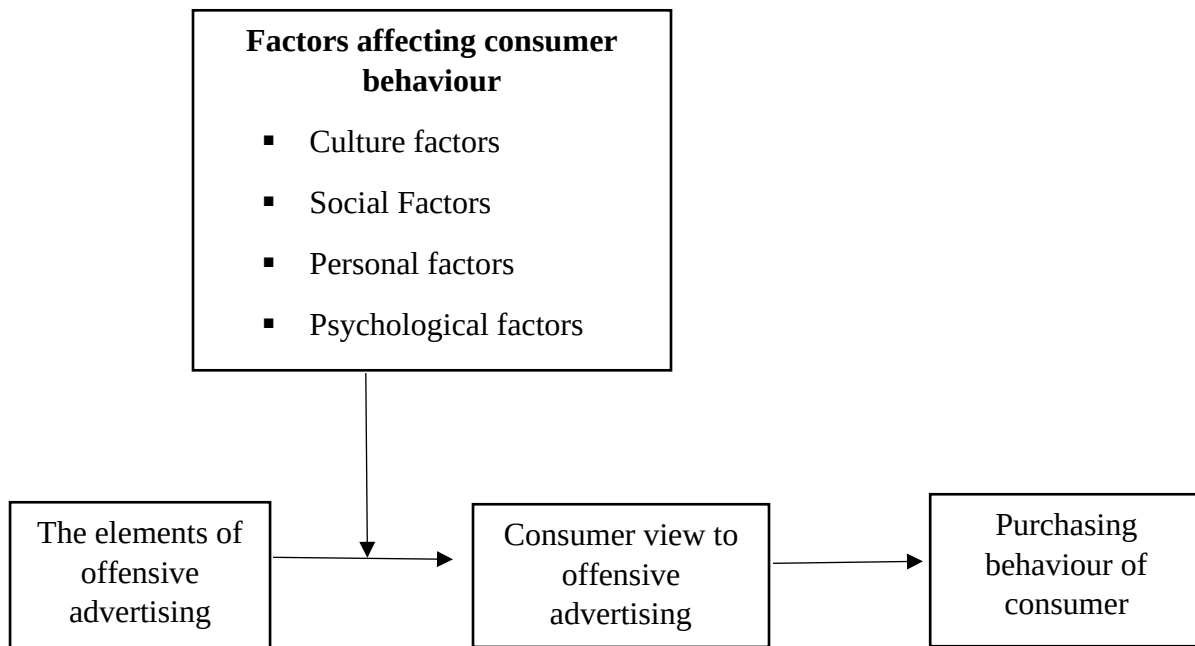


Figure 1: A theoretical model of the effects of offensive advertisement on consumer buying behaviour (Virvilaite & Matuleviciene, 2013).

2.3 Promotion

Promotion is an umbrella term that, according to, Nour & Almahirah (2014), includes “all the activities directed to the targeted consumers, that lead to facilitate the process of contacting with them for the purpose of formatting a sense of the importance of the commodity in achieving high degree of consumers satisfaction of their wishes and needs, comparing with the competitors commodities”. According to Belch and Belch (2004) promotion is defined as the coordination of

seller initiated efforts to come up with different channels of information and persuasion with an intent to sell goods and services or to promote an idea. Different kinds of promotion tools are used by companies to attract the consumers and to encourage the consumers to think and evaluate brand and purchase opportunities; and increase their sales (Mughal, Mehmood, & Ahmad, 2014). Belch & Belch (2004) suggests that a traditional promotional mix or tools include advertising, sales promotion, publicity or public relations, and personal selling. The effectiveness of an organisation's marketing strategy is highly dependent on the proper combination of integrated marketing tools (Naumovska & Blazeska, 2016). Promotions specifically serve to inform, persuade and remind the target market of the organisation's products or services that are being sold with hopes of influencing the recipients' feelings, belief or behaviour (Parumasur & Roberts-Lombard, 2014).

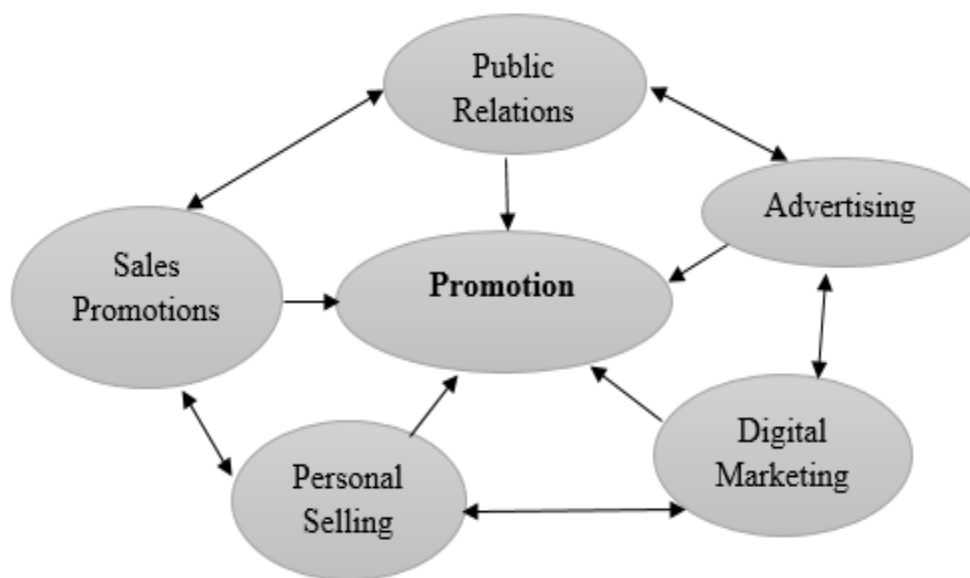


Figure 2: Promotional Tools

2.3.1 Sales promotions

Sales promotion is traditionally part of promotional mix. Sales promotions are usually short term and are used to move stock and therefore reduce the cost of inventory (Du Plessis, Van Heerden, & Cook, 2011). It consists of different sales incentives offered to consumers and distribution channel members to encourage products or services purchase (Naumovska & Blazeska, 2016). Du Plessis et al. (2011) states that sales promotion is often supplementary to advertising and personal selling and is a direct inducement that offers an extra value for the product or service to the sales force, distributors or consumer with the primary goal of creating an immediate sale.

Sales promotion is classified into three categories, namely, business oriented, consumer-oriented and sales-force-oriented sales promotion. Business oriented sales promotion is used to push products into distribution channels; consumer-oriented is a technique used to pull customers into the stores while the sales-force oriented sales promotion is used to motivate sales teams to sell more (Du Plessis et al., 2011).

2.3.2 Public relations

Belch and Belch (2018) defines public relations as the management function which determines and evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an organisation with public interest and execute a communication program designed to bring about public understanding and acceptance. It has a role to complement the use of advertising, taking into account that advertising alone is not as effective as it used to be (Anugrah, 2014).

Other than promoting products and services, it is important for organisations to assess public attitudes and create a favourable image (Belch & Belch, 2018). Public relations main objective is to influence positive change of the audience behaviour, mainly, public opinion, attitudes, public

perception and maintaining the favourable image of the organisation (Kretter & Kádeková, 2011). Naumovska and Blazeska (2016) is of the view that public relations underline the ability to communicate and interact to the public on a specific level that provides the audience credibility and trust. The feedback is needed by the organisations for evaluation of the communication effectiveness and its potential for being used in the next process (Kretter & Kádeková, 2011). None of the marketing mix elements or promotional tools can solely contribute to an organisation strategic marketing communication and therefore, public relations function should be integrated with other components for it to be successful (Naumovska & Blazeska, 2016), that is, brand messages should be strategically consistent and coordinated (Anugrah, 2014).

2.3.3 Personal selling

Du Plessis et al. (2011) describes personal selling as the oral, person-to-person of a product or service to a prospective consumer by a representative selling it. The main objectives of personal selling is to gather industry and consumer information; communicate product information; to introduce new products; develop new customers; provide technical service and convenience in order to facilitate sales; and to build relationships with new consumers and maintain loyalty of existing ones (Du Plessis et al., 2011). Personal selling is business-to-business marketing communication predominantly used by organisations when practicing push promotional strategy including marketing efforts directed towards the sales or distribution channel (Naumovska & Blazeska, 2016). Advantages of personal selling include sharing of information, getting instant feedback from clients and educating consumers (Du Plessis et al., 2011). It should also be noted that personal selling is relatively expensive, time consuming and the message communicated can be inconsistent given that many salespeople delivering a unified message is very difficult (Du Plessis et al., 2011).

2.3.4 Digital marketing

Digital marketing is the use of computer networks or internet in order to reach the target market (Mahalaxmi & Ranjith, 2016; Sivasankaran, 2013). The internet channels used include social media, websites, multimedia advertising, online search engine (SEO), e-marketing and interactive marketing (Mahalaxmi & Ranjith, 2016). Digital marketing is viewed as a projection of conventional marketing with tools and strategies on the internet; and bring together customisation and mass distribution to accomplish marketing goals (Ghazie & Dolah, 2018). Marketing activities conducted via the digital channels enable organisations to communicate directly with the target market faster regardless of their location (Mahalaxmi & Ranjith, 2016).

2.3.5 Advertising

Advertising is a subset of promotional mix, which is one of the 4Ps in the marketing mix consisting of price, place, product and promotion (Saleem & Abideen, 2011) and a medium designed to power an audience to buy the advertised products and services (A. Hassan, 2015). Advertising is one of the most important forms of communication that companies use, with limited resources to operate effectively and improve their brand image (Ansari & Riasi, 2016) and emotionally motivate consumers to buy their products and services (Saleem & Abideen, 2011). Kumar & Raju (2013) elaborates that advertising is used as a tool that creates product awareness and also sets the mind of a potential buyer to take final purchase decisions. The aim of advertising is to impact buying behaviour (Saleem & Abideen, 2011).

O'guinn et al. (2014) defines advertising as a paid communication that is delivered by an organization to an audience via mass media with an attempt of persuasion. Mass media mainly used in advertising consist of television, internet, radio, print and out of home media, directing the

message from the sender to the receiver (Naumovska & Blazeska, 2016). In South Africa, the common mass media used consists of television and video, internet, radio, out of home media, magazines, cinema, music and podcasts, esports and business to business as shown by the Figure 3 below.

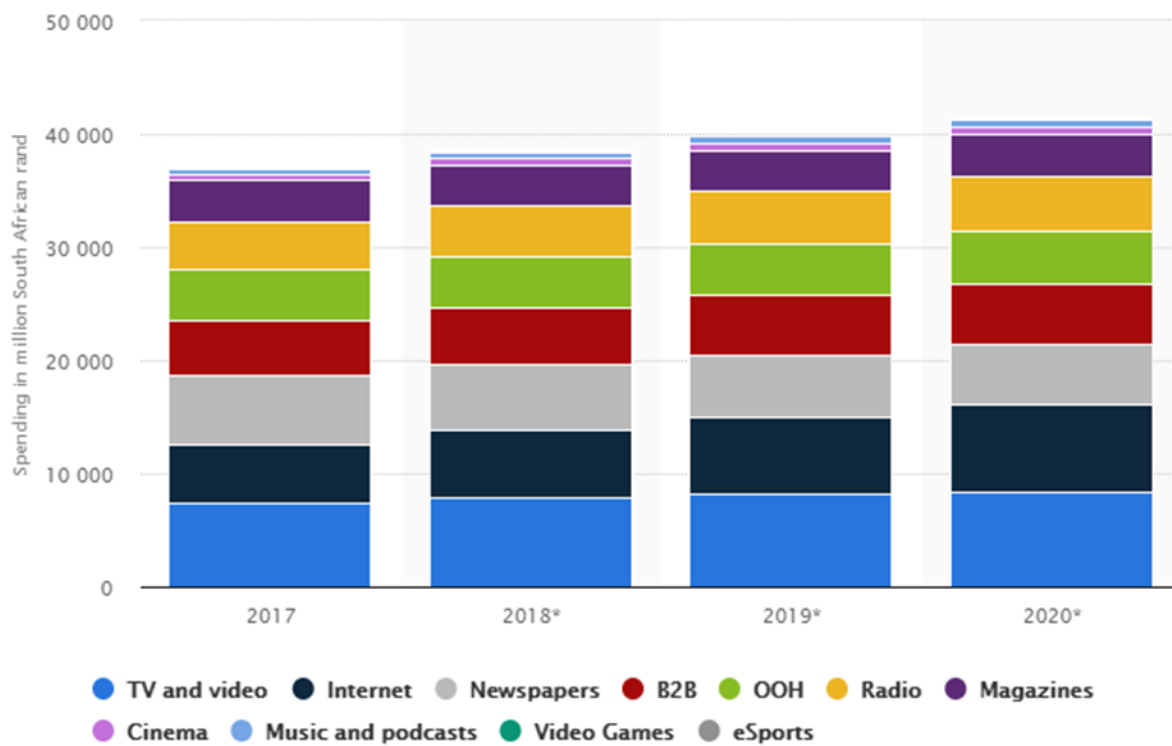


Figure 3: Advertising spending in South Africa 2017 – 2020 (Statista, 2019)

Companies invest a lot of money in advertising to position their products and services better than its competitors (A. Hassan, 2015; Jolodar & Ansari, 2011) and to keep consumers interested in their products (Ayanwale, Alimi, & Ayanbimipe, 2005); and it increases profits and helps organizations achieve their goals (Madni et al., 2016). Advertising is particularly vital for organization whose products and services are targeted at mass consumer markets (Belch & Belch,

2004). According to Saleem & Abideen (2011), the main goal of advertising is to create product awareness and condition the mind of a potential consumer to make final purchase decision. It is important for advertisers to ensure that consumers are attracted to the advertisements so that the consumer will be encouraged to purchase the product or service (Eze & Lee, 2012). Therefore, the relevance of advertising depends on its ability to influence the consumer not only to purchase the products or services but to continue repurchase and ultimately, develop brand loyalty (Ayanwale et al., 2005; Eze & Lee, 2012).

Advertisements that reach potential buyers at the same time a consumer requires information about a product will have a positive impact, since the consumer is spared time and effort to research about the product (Sorina-Raula, Liviu, & Georgeta-Mădălina, 2012). Other than giving a product or service existence and make it known to the target market, advertising helps grasp consumers' attention and reinforces customers' brand impression (Chih-Chung, Chang, & Lin, 2012) and it creates understanding, liking and selection of product or services (Saleem & Abideen, 2011). Furthermore, advertising can also be used to create brand images and symbolic appeals for an organisation or brand which is very important for companies who experience differentiation difficulties on functional attributes (Belch & Belch, 2004). When consumers receive and interpret the adverts, they develop purchase intention and behaviour; and this behaviour satisfies the consumer, they start buying the product or service (Chih-Chung et al., 2012).

The nature and purpose of advertising differ from one industry to another and across situations (Belch & Belch, 2004). Advertising plays an important role in developing a strong brand name of the organisation or product or service (Eze & Lee, 2012).

From the foregoing, previous studies have shown how effective advertisements are towards brand awareness and introducing products to the target market. Some studies have elaborated that advertising can also be offensive towards consumers and can severely affect the brand and sales of the products or services being advertised.

2.4 Consumer behaviour

Many authors quote Solomon (1999) who defines consumer behaviour as a process that involves many different factors and involves individuals on how they choose or use products and services to satisfy their needs and desires. Consumer behaviour is defined as how customers, that is, individuals, groups and companies choose, buy, utilise and dispose of goods, services, ideas and experiences to satisfy their needs and wants (Keller & Kotler, 2016). According to Tekin, Yiltay, & Ayaz (2016), consumer behaviour is a pattern in which customers buy and consume according to their individual needs, preferences and buying power. It involves going through a process to identify needs and finding alternative ways of fulfilling those needs through making purchasing decisions that includes evaluating which product to buy, brand and at what price (Tekin et al., 2016). As elaborated by Furaiji et al. (2012), consumer behaviour focuses on studying individual consumer characteristics and behavioural variables in an attempt to understand buyers' wants. It is important to understand consumers and their responses and their basic characteristics of their behaviour to help ascertain who the consumers are, their needs and how they react to the products or services (Furaiji et al., 2012). Therefore, consumer behaviour is the a broad range of things that affect, derive from or form the context of human consumption (O'guinn et al., 2014).

The behaviour of consumers do not remain the same all time, it changes with the passage of time (Nisar, 2014). The knowledge of consumer behaviour helps the marketer to understand how the

consumers think, feel and select from the alternative products and service (Brosekhan, Velayutham, & Phil, 2013) and determine the factors that influence this behaviour (Kumar & Raju, 2013). Consumer behaviour analysis helps to discover the direction that consumer behaviour is likely to take and to give preferred in-product development and alternative communication methods (Ayanwale et al., 2005). The success of promotions depends on the understanding the consumer behaviour, hence, it is vital to emphasise on the relationship between consumer behaviour and marketing strategies (Furaiji et al., 2012). Marketing is customer focused and is concerning with the needs and wants of the consumer; and products are manufactured based on the consumer preferences (Dheeraj, 2014).

Consumers are viewed as a variable that cannot be controlled in the marketing sequence and they interpret the products or service not only based on the physical characteristics but according to their social and psychological understanding (Ayanwale et al., 2005; Saleem & Abideen, 2011). Tekİn et al. (2016) echoes the same view that consumer behaviour involves the psychological methods that consumers go through in identifying needs and satisfying those needs. When making purchasing decisions, consumers also consider which brands to buy and where to buy them (Tekİn et al., 2016).

Organizations must understand that consumer behaviour is a complex process that involve numerous steps that influence marketing decisions (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, & Best, 2013). Several scholars agree that the main goal of advertising is to persuade the consumer to purchase the products or services. Therefore, to achieve this goal, consumers must be understood, that is, their way of thinking, the factors that motivate them and the environment they live in (Madni et al., 2016). Consumer reaction is usually a reflection of the social and cultural fabric of the environment (Phau & Prendergast, 2002). Study done by Phau and Prendergast (2002) suggests

that offensive advertising which fails to take into account consumers response may lead to lost sales opportunities to new consumers and fail to retain existing consumers.

2.4.1 Factors affecting consumer behaviour

Many factors influence individual consumers in their decision making process, shopping habits, purchasing behaviour and the brands they buy (Rani, 2014) and several scholars have pointed out that consumer behaviour of every individual is different from other depending on the buying choice which is affected by their social class, psychological factors, friends, family, groups and other personal factors (Nisar, 2014). Brands have an opportunity to develop better marketing strategies when they identify and understand the factors that influence their consumers (Rani, 2014). Factors that influence consumer behaviour include cultural, social, personal factors (Keller & Kotler, 2016); psychological factors (Brosekhan et al., 2013); and lifestyle and demographics values (Hawkins et al., 2013). These factors are sub-divided into segments, namely, external influences and internal factors.

a) External influences

According to Hawkins et al. (2013), external factors include culture, demographics, social status, reference group, family and marketing activities. Culture is important when understanding the needs and behaviours of consumers; and varies from country to country (Rani, 2014). Reference groups influence an individual and provides them with points of comparison about behaviour, lifestyle and consumer habits and the ability of forming a person's attitude or behaviour (Rani, 2014). Furthermore, Rani (2014) elaborates the role of family and social status has on consumer buying behaviour. He states that social status influences an individual in a manner that they must behave according to their profession, gender, position in the family and expectations of people

around them. Consumer preferences often change because of age, lifestyle stage, occupation and economic circumstances (Rani, 2014).

b) Internal influences

Internal influences begin with perception, followed by learning, memory, motives, personality, emotions and attitudes (Hawkins et al., 2013). Individuals develop self-concepts and how they live base on a variety of internal and external influences; and these influences produce needs and desires which require consumption decisions to satisfy (Hawkins et al., 2013). Consumer decision process is then activated as consumers encounter relevant situations (Hawkins et al., 2013).

2.5 Offensive advertising

According to O'guinn et al. (2014), advertisers should make sure that they understand their customers if they want to experience sustained success in creating effective advertising. Success of the modern day business depends largely on the effectiveness of advertising (Rashid & Khan, 2017). Although advertisements are designed to serve as channel to convey messages to the consumers, these messages can be interpreted by the consumer as offensive. Offensive advertising is defined by Tangtarntana (2017) as an advertisement that provoke reactions of embarrassments, distaste, disgust and outrage from a segment of population when presented. It was further defined by Waller (2006) as advertising that, by the type of product or implementation, can cause reactions of embarrassment, distaste, socially unacceptable and disgust to some significant segment of the population. Overall, definition of offensive advertising is summarized by Cheng and Chan (2009) as an act or process norm violation, which includes transgression of law and customs, breaches of a moral and social code or things that are outrage the moral or physical senses.

According to Waller (2006), advertisers have a social responsibility not to offend people by their images, but in a free market they should be able to communicate messages to their customers in a way they want to and therefore, advertisers choosing to use offensive material must then tread the fine line between successfully communicating to the marketplace and offending consumers.

Advertising messages that are seen as insulting can be perceived as offensive and advertising can offend consumers by the type of appeals and the manner of the presentation (Phau & Prendergast, 2002; Prendergast, Ho, & Phau, 2002). While extensive research has been done, little is known about consumer reactions to offensive advertisements in South Africa. Offensive adverts used are influenced by the changing environment, attitudes, cultural background and demographics of consumers (Phau & Prendergast, 2002).

Virvilaite & Matuleviyene (2013), argue that advertisers believe offensive adverts are the most efficient and they use them in an attempt to evoke consumers emotions and intention to buy, thereby increasing their sales. Offensive advertising has been successful before and Waller (2004) suggests that most advertisers are using it to increase sales numbers. Prendergast et al. (2002) echoes the same sentiments that advertisers increase the interest and persuasiveness of an advertisement using offensive advert. The strategy used by marketers would be to place offensive advertisement on general exhibition to be seen by the public at large with the intention to generate publicity through controversy and complaints (Waller, 2006). Consumers may find advertising to be offensive because they think it's not for public display or open discussion, all depending on the relationship of the parties involved and the occasion or situation where it is exposed (Chan et al., 2007). Studies show that offensive behaviour have two distinct components, namely, the products perceived to be offensive by potential customers and the advertising execution, which may or may not relate to the product being represented in the advertisements (Tangtarntana, 2017). One of the

reasons a product could be perceived as offensive because it violates the fundamental teaching of a religion in a religious society (Cyril De Run et al., 2010).

As stated before, Rashid & Khan (2017) elaborates that offensive advertisements leads to the sense of disgust or negative attitude towards the goods and services in the minds of the consumer. Although several authors states that use of offensive advertisement increases sales, Prendergast et al. (2002) says it can lead to negative company image, which leads to negative impact on purchase intentions. Fam and Waller (2003) support Prendergast et al. (2002)'s view that offensive advertising can result in negative publicity, complaints, falling sales and product or service boycott. Furthermore, if an advertisement is perceived to be too offensive, it can be ineffective in the sense that it will lead to a negative impression towards the product or brand, and not lead to sales increase (Urwin & Venter, 2014).

It is noted that there seems to be an increase in amount of offensive advertising being printed and broadcast (Fam & Waller, 2003) and this is because the society has become more complex and increased awareness of the harmful effects of some products (Waller, 2006). If offensive advertising resulted in negative effects, then most advertisers would stop using it, but there are still using them to increase numbers (Waller, 2006). Saren (2013) is of the view that offensive behaviour essentially works because it stands out from the rest, it is a cheap method to attract the attention of the news-hungry media, thereby, creating free publicity. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that offensive advertising can have positive or negative impact on consumer buying behaviour (Waller, 2006).

It is important to analyse products and images that cause offense to different cultures around the world (Waller et al., 2005). Several scholars have discussed the offensive products in detail. These

include personal hygiene, birth control, warfare, alcohol, sex related products, and drugs (Phau & Prendergast, 2002) and women underwear and political advertising (Waller, 2004; Waller et al., 2005). The most criticized advertisement involves messages that use sex appeal and nudity; sex appeals that demean women by depicting them as sex objects and sex appeal to promote cigarettes and alcohol (Phau & Prendergast, 2002). Chan et al. (2007) state that offensive advertising includes messages that contravene laws and customs, breach moral and social code or outrage the moral or physical senses. Dahl, Frankenberger, and Manchanda (2003) give a detailed list of offensive advertising that use, which shock the consumers:

- Disgusting images: these reference blood, body parts, odors, disease, parasites, death, bodily harm and orifices.
- Sexual references: the advertisements that give reference to masturbation, implied sexual acts, nudity and partial nudity.
- Profanity/obscenity refers to swear words and obscene gestures.
- Vulgarity: references to distasteful acts by humans and animals such as nose picking, farting, licking and drinking from the toilet.
- Impropriety: refers to violations of social conventions for dress and manners.
- Moral offensiveness: advertisements that show harming of innocent people or animals, alluding people or objects that provoke violence, violating standards for fair behaviour and putting children in provocative situation.
- Religious taboo: refers to inappropriate use of spiritual religious symbols and rituals.

2.5.1 Disgusting images

Disgusting images that can lead to feeling of shock include advertising images that reference blood, diseases, death, parasites, body parts and bodily harm. Disgusting images are used to attract attention and stimulate a feeling of distaste (Saren, 2013). Use of disgusting images is influenced using fear appeal to get the message across. Fear appeals often have a startling effect, as fear is an emotional response that expresses danger and can trigger emotions such as confusion, sadness and disgust (Allred & Amos, 2018). The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) uses controversial and fear-inducing images in their commercials.

2.5.2 Sexual references

Sexual advertising makes use of sex appeal in an advertisement to help sell the product or service being advertised and in most cases these sexual adverts may not even pertain to the product or service in question (Raghuram, Mahajan, & Poddar, 2015). The main objective of using sexual references in an advert is to draw customer attention to the advertising message and ignite cognitive (negative or positive) impressions (Skorupa, 2014). Sex appeals used in advertising as stated by Skorupa (2014) can be one of the following:

- Subliminal cues – images that affect subconscious of the viewers
- Nudity or partial nudity – products that have sexual connotation feature a degree of nudity
- Sexual suggestiveness – words, action, suggesting that sex is about to happen.
- Explicit sexuality
- Sensuality – images of romance and love rather than raw sexuality.

For example, the Department of Health in South Africa mounted billboards on the major highways in Johannesburg which read “Who says girls don’t want to be on top?” (YOU Magazine, 2017).

This was a campaign that was meant to uplift and empower young South Africa women (YOU Magazine, 2017). The words used were perceived to be referring to sexual acts.

2.5.3 Profanity/obscenity

This refers to swear words and obscene gestures (Dahl et al., 2003). It is further elaborated by Feldman, Lian, Kosinski, and Stillwell (2017) that profanity can be defined as obscene language including swear words and taboo, which are generally considered to be inappropriate and unacceptable. Profanity includes sexual references, anti-racial-gender-slurs and offensive slang and these can be interpreted as harmful, antisocial and abusive (Feldman et al., 2017). The use of swear words can lead to a feeling of being surprised, which can lead to shock; and shock feeling leads to higher levels of attention, recall and recognition than the other advertising approaches (Mortimer, 2007). However, Baker and Broadus (2015) are of the view that swear words in advertising have been used in a persistent manner and as result, consumers are used to them. They also elaborate that as the English language continues to evolve and the freedom use of swearing words increase, the acceptance of these words will also increase. In the advertising media, the industry standards governing swear words have relaxed (Baker & Broadus, 2015). Furthermore, Baker and Broadus (2015) is of the view that the presence of the swear words in an advertisement will have a positive effect on consumer's attitude towards the advertisement.

2.5.4 Vulgarity

References to distasteful acts by humans and animals such as nose picking, farting, licking and drinking from the toilet (Dahl et al., 2003). A "LifeStraw" advert titled "LifeStraw make toilet water drinkable" (VAT19, 2013), shows a young man drink water out of the toilet and children

drinking dirty water to demonstrate the efficiency of the product. This is perceived as disgusting and gross by consumers while others perceive it as a trustworthy product.

2.5.5 Moral offensiveness

Moral offensiveness is defined by Dahl et al. (2003) as advertisements that show harming of innocent people or animals, alluding people or objects that provoke violence, violating standards for fair behaviour and putting children in provocative situation. For example, Unilever ran a Flora margarine advert ran in South Africa which suggested that dads need a strong heart in order to deal with a son coming out as gay; and in turn it angered the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ) community (TheGuardian, 2013).

2.5.6 Religious taboo

This is when marketers make use of religious or spiritual symbols or people inappropriately to advertise their products or services (Urwin & Venter, 2014). Taboo is defined by Sabri and Obermiller (2012) as a behavioural and/ or act that a society does not approve of and generally considered to be publicly unmentionable. The concept of taboo has two meaning, firstly, something that is holy or scared and secondly, something that is disturbing, dangerous, forbidden or impure (Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006). It should be noted that what is forbidden depends on cultural norms within regions (Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006).

Taboo topics includes, but not limited to suicide, death, abortion, nudity, gay sex, rape, physical abuse of women, masturbation and, parody of religious symbols (Sabri & Obermiller, 2012). A religious taboo themed advert typically involves visually or verbally presenting the use of religious symbols or people. In 1994, a Benetton advert showed a priest and nun kissing, which in turn caused discomfort amongst the religious people. In 2011, Benetton clothing company faced legal

action from the Vatican after they distributed an image showing the Pope kissing a Muslim leader (Guardian, 2011). Banyte et al. (2014) states that a consumer response to taboo advertising depends on their personal, factors, understanding of moral norms and cultural symbols that condition consumer's acceptability of shocking stimuli. The secret nature of sexual relations and the non-representation of nudity in the Christian nature are the consequences of sexual taboos (Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006). A study done by Fam and Waller (2003) found that Malaysians found advertisements related to gender or sex products offensive due to the fact that these products are closely associated to nudity and sexist images which are perceived to be contradictory to their religious beliefs; and Manceau and Tissier-Desbordes (2006) stated that if sex is still considered a taboo in Western cultures, then their representation can vary according to the countries concerned. Education plays an important role in the perceptions of offensive advertisements but not in the same way for different cultures (Chan et al., 2007). However, Tangtarntana (2017) is of the view that offense in some products is mainly dictated by social norms and its most likely to occur in products that are considered a taboo. The following figure depicts the consumer reactions to offensive advertising:

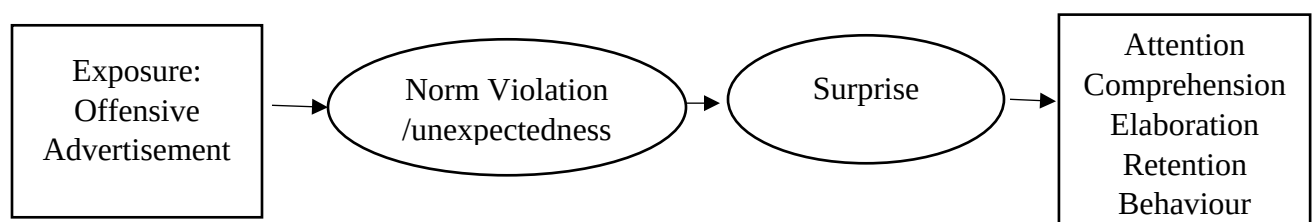


Figure 4: A model of consumer reactions to offensive advertising (Dahl et al., 2003).

Based on the previous discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H10: Consumer's attitude towards offensive advertising has no influence over his/her intention to purchase the advertised product/service.

H1: Consumer's attitude towards offensive advertising has a negative influence over his/her intention to purchase the advertised product/service.

2.6 Advertising and brands

Advertisements main purpose is to inform the consumer about the products and services on offer and to get the consumer to like the brand; and eventually buy the brand (O'guinn et al., 2014).

Brand is an organisations asset that contributes identity and character; and guides consumers for products and services choices (Kavak, Kazancı, Şahin, & Tunçel, 2015). Lautiainen (2015) defines a brand as a name, design, symbol or any other feature that differentiate a product or service from another. Tabaku and Zerellari (2015) further elaborates that brand is an organisation's most important intangible asset that is seen as a product or service whose dimensions differentiate it in some way from the other products or services designed to satisfy the same need.

Brands play an important role on social development and there is a need for organisations to create strong brands in order to survive and gain competitive advantage (Kavak et al., 2015) and organisations use brands to create strong relationships with consumers; in the process, they use the information they gather to understand, elaborate and develop the products and services that consumers want (Tabaku & Zerellari, 2015). Consumers look at the brands when making purchasing decisions. Therefore marketers need to position their brands in a way that it reaches their target market minds by means of advertising, promotions and packaging (Lautiainen, 2015) and thorough understanding of consumer behaviour for making better strategic decisions about target market definition (Keller, 1993). A product or service should be designed with anticipation

of possessing a strong brand image that corresponds with consumer perceptions (Lautiainen, 2015). Furthermore, brands facilitate recognition and where customers have built up favourable attitude towards the product, they speed the individual buyers through the decision making process (Ayanwale et al., 2005).

Brands allow organizations to communicate regularly and efficiently with the market (O'guinn et al., 2014). O'guinn et al. (2014) further elaborates the role played by brands. He states that brands are used for information and persuasion; introduction of new brands or brand extensions; building and maintaining brand loyalty among customers; and creating an image and meaning for the brand. The relevance of advertising depends on its ability to influence consumer, not only to purchase but continue to repurchase and eventually develop brand loyalty (Ayanwale et al., 2005). Ayanwale et al. (2005) are of the view that consumers filter out brand that are unfavourable or unfamiliar brands and continue to purchase the familiar brands, contributing to loyal behaviour and without brands, advertising would be impossible as consumers would not be able to differentiate the products or services. Therefore, based on the previous discussion, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H2₀: A consumer's attitude towards the advert has no significant influence over his/her attitude towards the brand.

H2: A consumer's attitude towards the advert has a positive influence over his/her attitude towards the brand.

2.6.1 Purchase intentions and Price Sensitivity

Purchase intentions are individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a product or service (Spears & Singh, 2004). Consumer purchase intentions is the likelihood to buy the product in future and consumers' likelihood to buy the product or service after evaluation (Waheed, Khan,

& Ahmad, 2018; Younus, Rasheed, & Zia, 2015). It is linked with consumer attitudes, perceptions and buying behaviour (Musharraf & Ali, 2013). Purchase intentions are used as an alternative for measuring consumer behaviour (Haque et al., 2015) and are regarded as important in business because it's used to determine if the product meets consumers' expectations and need in order to further explore their assessment on goods and services (Xiao et al., 2018). Several factors affect consumer purchase intentions and these include, brand image, promotional strategies used and price of the product (Waheed et al., 2018), and external factors such as demographic groups and geographic (Younus et al., 2015). Price has been considered as the main factor that drive purchase intentions. Musharraf and Ali (2013) compared price and product quality and concluded that consumers who prefer quality over price are less likely to purchase private brands because price is used as an indicator of quality. Price sensitive consumers are more likely to buy private brands (Musharraf & Ali, 2013). Based on the this, the following hypothesis is formulated to measure the influence of price on consumer attitudes towards advertisements and brands:

H3a0: There is no relationship between price sensitivity and consumers' to attitudes towards advertisements.

H3a: Price sensitivity is negatively related to consumers' attitude towards advertisements.

H3b0: There is no relationship between price sensitivity and consumers' attitudes towards brands.

H3b: Price sensitivity is negatively related to consumers' attitudes towards brands.

2.7 Attitudes of South African consumers towards offensive advertisement

Beliefs and attitudes entail the experience a consumer gets, learning and external influences that develops into beliefs that will influence consumer behaviour (Rani, 2014). Beliefs and attitudes are generally a conviction that a consumer has on something, that is, products and services.

Promotions can change beliefs and attitudes of customers through campaigns by adjusting marketing messages to position them in such a way that consumers change their brand perception (Rani, 2014).

Attitudes are defined as consumer negative or positive feelings towards a brand, product or service and they indicate an assessment of sustainable emotions and tendencies toward that brand (Vahdati, Mousavi, & Tajik, 2015). Le and Nguyen (2014) defined attitudes as “learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner towards advertising in general”. Therefore, attitude towards a brand is a consumer’s internal evaluation of the brand (Spears & Singh, 2004). Vogel and Wanke (2016) define attitude as “evaluation of an object thought and those attitude objects consist of anything a consumer may hold in mind including, things, people, group and ideas”. Spears and Singh (2004) further states that attitude is useful in predicting consumer behaviour. A study done by Vahdati et al. (2015) suggests that consumer buying behaviour is influenced by perceptions and attitudes of consumers. They further state that knowing consumer’s attitudes help marketers get familiar with the way consumers think and feel and how they get choose products or services. Attitude towards advertising represents effectiveness measure of the advertisement and understanding consumer’s perception and their acceptance or rejection of advertising messages (Madni et al., 2016).

2.7.1 Components of attitude

There are three components of attitude, namely, cognitive, affective and conative (Palani & Sohrabi, 2013; Pandit, 2011). These components are interdependent and should be viewed together as they represent forces that influence how the consumer reacts towards a product or service (Pandit, 2011). *Cognitive component* refers to all beliefs that a consumer hold with respect to the

attitude object. Cognition is developed through reading, listening to others or through actual experience, basically, what the consumer believes about the product or service (Le & Nguyen, 2014). For example, if a consumer holds negative attitude towards alcohol advertisement, he/she may not buy anything that shows alcohol advertisements. The *affective or feeling component* relates to the consumer's overall feelings towards an object, situation, or person (Le & Nguyen, 2014). The conative or action tendency component entails intended and actual behaviour with respect to the attitude brand (Le & Nguyen, 2014).

Consumer attitudes can also be classified according to the functions of the products or service being purchased. Consumers purchase products and brands based on two consumer dimensions of consumer attitudes (Denecli & Tosun, 2015). Several authors state that consumer attitudes can be multidimensional and be categorized as hedonic and utilitarian. It is suggested by Batra and Ahtola (1991) that consumer attitudes are inherently bidimensional because consumers purchase goods and services and perform consumption behaviours consummatory affective gratification and instrumental reasons. Consumers are motivated by to satisfy their needs and chose to buy products that provide both hedonic and utilitarian needs (Denecli & Tosun, 2015). In this sense, it is argued that the utilitarian and hedonic attitudes may be influential on the consumer's brand choice (Denecli & Tosun, 2015). This may not always be the case, as pointed out by (Lu, Liu, & Fang, 2016; Okada, 2005) hedonic and utilitarian consumption can be discretionary in nature. A product can be necessary to some and discretionary to others. In most cases, hedonic and utilitarian attitudes are measured to test the effectiveness of marketing campaigns that stress experiential or positioning strategies (Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003).

2.7.2 Hedonic dimension of consumer attitudes

Hedonic dimension of attitudes results from sensation derived from the experience of using the product (Voss et al., 2003) and it brings pleasure in which a consumer does not necessarily care about the benefit he/she will get (Cinjarevic, Tatic, & Petric, 2011; Soebandhi et al., 2019). It is consumer's willingness to initiate behaviours that enhance positive experience and behaviours that decrease negative experience (Kaczmarek, 2017). Consumers with a strong hedonic motivation seek the enjoyment of the process rather than the usefulness of the purchased product (Mikalef, Giannakos, & Pateli, 2012).

2.7.3 Utilitarian dimension of consumer attitudes

Utilitarian dimension is derived from the functions performed by the product (Voss et al., 2003). It is further defined by Denecli and Tosun (2015) as the perception of use evolving from the ability of the product to satisfy its functional, physical aspects and duties. Functional values play an important role in terms of product category and brand selection. Utilitarian consumer behaviour is more rational consumer attitude (Denecli & Tosun, 2015).

The behavioural measure of consumer attitudes towards offensive advertising will be measured by the uniqueness of the advert. Uniqueness of the advert represents the degree to which the particular advert is different to other adverts (Olney, Holbrook, & Batra, 1991). Olney et al. (1991) is of the view that advert uniqueness influences emotional dimensions of pleasure, arousal and dominance. It is further elaborated that hedonism depends on pleasure, which reaches its peak at an intermediate level of uniqueness.

H4a0: Consumers who view neutral adverts show unfavourable hedonic attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

H4a: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable hedonic attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

H4b₀: Consumers who view neutral adverts show unfavourable utilitarian attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

H4b: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable utilitarian attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

H4c₀: Consumers who view neutral adverts rate them to have no appeal than those who view offensive adverts.

H4c: Consumers who view neutral adverts rate them to have a unique appeal than those who view offensive adverts.

H4d₀: Consumers who view neutral adverts show no purchase intentions for those products than those who view offensive adverts.

H4d: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable purchase intentions for those adverts than those who view offensive adverts.

2.7.4 Socio-demographic and cultural-social factors that influence consumer attitude in South Africa

Studies done confirmed that positive and negative attitudes towards offensive advertising is influenced by socio-demographic and cultural-social factors such as religiosity, moral principles, age, gender, individualism-collectivism and high-low context (Virvilaite & Matuleviciene, 2013), as shown by the model below:

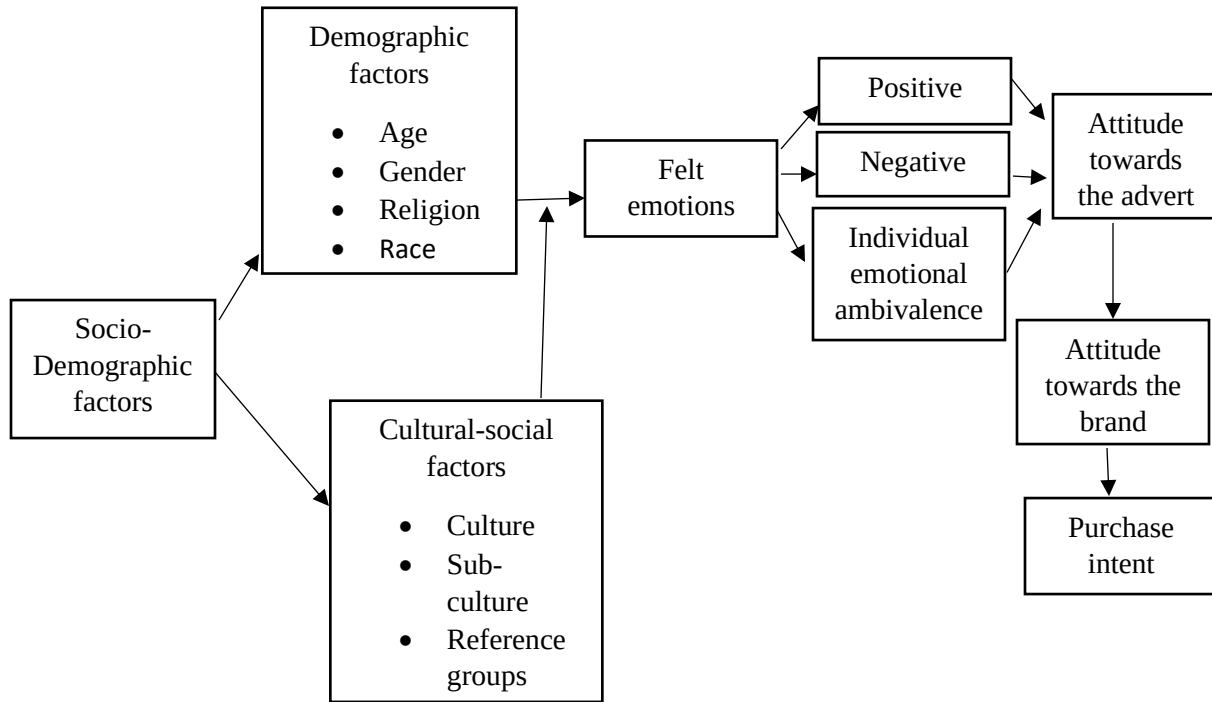


Figure 5: The influence of socio-demographic and cultural-social factors on consumer attitudes of offensive advertising (Virvilaite & Matuleviciene, 2013).

i) Reference Groups

Reference group is any individual or group that serves as a point of comparison or reference for an individual consumer in forming values, attitudes and behaviour patterns (Parumasur & Roberts-Lombard, 2014). Friends, neighbours, family and colleagues form part of primary reference groups that directly influence consumer behaviour (Nisar, 2014) due to their frequency of interaction with the individual and primacy of these significant others in an individual's life (Jisana, 2014). Consumers are also influenced by trade unions, religious, professional and aspirational groups (Nisar, 2014).

ii) Culture

Blackwell et al. (2006) defines culture as the set of values, ideas, artifacts and other symbols that help individuals communicate, interpret and educate as members of society. Culture has a direct effect on consumer behaviour as it affects how people buy and consume products as well as the specific products people buy including the pattern of consumption, individual decision making and communication in society (Blackwell et al., 2006). Culture determines what a consumer wants and behaviour (Dheeraj, 2014) and it varies from country to country (Nisar, 2014; Rani, 2014). Culture is an important concept to thoroughly understand the behaviour of South African consumers. Consumers are likely to accept products that relate with the values, preferences, customs and norms of their culture (Dheeraj, 2014).

iii) Sub-culture

It refers to a group of consumers who share the same values based on a common experience or similar lifestyle (Rani, 2014). Nisar (2014) states that the norms, values, behaviour, and customs are different in subcultures and this means that consumers who live very close to each other can be different on the behalf of their subculture.

Subcultures are important in the analysis of the general market and enables the marketing departments to focus on a sizable market segment (A. P. D. Y. Durmaz, 2014). Culture contains four different subcultures namely, religion, nationalities, geographic region and racial groups. Nationality group refers to a group of consumers found within large communities and exhibit distinct ethnic tastes and proclivities (A. P. D. Y. Durmaz, 2014), such as, South African, Zambian, Zimbabwean, British, American, Chinese and so on. Religious groups such as Roman Catholic, Jews and Moslems represent subcultures that with specific cultural preferences and taboos. Geographic regions such as Alexander in Johannesburg, Camps Bay in Cape Town, Thohoyandou

in Venda, are distinct subcultures with characteristic lifestyles. Racial groups such as blacks, Indians, coloureds and whites also have distinctive lifestyles and attitudes.

Consumers who belong to different cultures have different subcultures, values, attitudes and social structures and it is vital to understand the different characteristics of each subculture in creating promotional activities, marketing mix price and brand positioning (Y. Durmaz, Celik, & Oruc, 2011). Overall, culture has significant influence on human lives by providing a meaning system for individuals which motivates their behaviour within a particular cultural context (Han & Humphreys, 2016). Individuals learn specific cultural beliefs, values and norms from an early age and this eventually shape their behaviour (Han & Humphreys, 2016). Cultural differences in behaviour and emotion are explained by how an individual perceives, comprehends and interpret self (Han & Humphreys, 2016). Several authors refer this as self-construal, which is the most important cultural trait that influence behaviour. Self-construal can influence people's social activities (Shavitt & Cho, 2016; Wang, Yang, & Wang, 2014). Because of different perceptions and opinions of individuals on their relationships with others, self-construal can be divided into independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal (Gai, 2018). The influence of self-construal on the consumer behaviour focuses on the actual consumer behaviours of self-construal individuals, different types of advertisements and brand attitudes (Gai, 2018). Individuals with different self-construal choose different goods or services (Gai, 2018). For individuals with different self-construal, the motivational processes may vary (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000).

a) Interdependent Self-Construal

Interdependent self-construal emphasises the relationship between self and others and are motivated fulfil an obligation to be part of various interpersonal relationships (Wang et al., 2014),

fostering harmony and fitting in with others (Lee, 2017). They develop positive feeling from developing and maintaining close relationships with others (Cross et al., 2000).

b) Independent Self-Construal

Independent self-construal is shaped by the principle that the person is essentially separate from others (Cross et al., 2000). Independent self-construal individuals are influenced by characteristics of the uniqueness of self-expression (Gai, 2018) and they value characteristics that separate them from other individuals (Wang et al., 2014). They usually choose to express their status and capabilities and they show enjoyment in consumption (Gai, 2018).

In terms of consumer behaviour, independent population exhibit more impulsive consumer behaviour while members of a dependent society can suppress their impulses (Gai, 2018). Consumers with independent self-construal prefer advertisements that emphasise independence.

However, Zhang and Shrum (2009) argued and stated that self-construal can be manipulated so that those with independent or interdependent self-construal can be persuaded to take the opposite side.

According to Shavitt and Cho (2016) cultural factors influence consumer attitude formation.

Based on the previous discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H5a₀: There is no relationship between independent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H5a: Independent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H5b₀: There is no relationship between independent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards brands.

H5b: Independent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards brands.

H6a₀: There is no relationship between independent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H6a: Interdependent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H6b₀: There is no relationship between interdependent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards brands.

H6b: Interdependent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards brands.

iv) Social Factors

Consumer buying behaviour can be affected by the people around, such as family as well as social status and personal factors.

Family: Family members can strongly influence consumer behaviour (Furaiji et al., 2012). If a family member uses or is loyal to a certain product, it is natural that the product will be bought and used by other family members. In South Africa, people live within the family, rather than individually as seen in Europe. Typical South African family has one person who runs the family and control other factors, which they have the authority to do anything and influence other members' decisions. Advertisements mostly target family members such as husbands, wives and children who have influence on buying decisions (Jisana, 2014).

Social status and role: Different roles that different people possess in the society influence consumer behaviour and their purchasing decisions (Jisana, 2014).

vi) Personal factors that affect consumer attitudes

Age: Age is an important factor influencing consumers. As consumers go through different life-cycles, their preferences also change and the purchase of goods and services also change with time (Jisana, 2014). Products being purchased and behaviour change with increasing age of a consumer and responsibilities also increase when a certain age is reached (Nisar, 2014; Ramya & Mohamed Ali, 2016). For example, study done by Potgieter, Wiese, and Strasheim (2013) show that young consumers tend to be more price-conscious, while the older consumers tend to be more brand loyal.

Race / Ethnicity: South Africa is very complex when it comes to marketing because of its multicultural society (Potgieter et al., 2013). Ethnicity is defined by Moore, Weinberg, and Berger (2018) as a group classification of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage, that is, customs, language, and religion that has been passed on from generation to another. A study done by Potgieter et al. (2013) in Tshwane, South Africa, shows the ethnic differences amongst the consumers. The study shows that the African consumers are more quality-conscious, engage in recreational shopping and are more brand conscious compared to their Caucasian counterparts. StatsSA (2018) estimates the South Africa population at 57,73 million people in 2018, of which 51% is female, total population further broken down to show that 80,9% are blacks, 8,8% coloureds, 2,5% Indian/Asians and 7,8% whites.

Religion: religion belief play an important roles in shaping social behaviour, and as elaborated by Fam and Waller (2003) that differences in religious affiliations tend to influence the way people live, the choices they make, what they eat and with whom they associate. Several scholars have

found out that more religious groups react intensely to advertisements that contain nudity, sexist images violence and subject matters that are too personal (Nooh, Shukor, Aziz, Khairi, & Abdullah, 2014). The study done by Shyan Fam, Waller, and Zafer Erdogan (2004) on three religions show that Islam and Buddhism showed high levels of offensiveness towards addictive products being advertised and Christians and non-religious believers were not offended. The study of diverse South African religious landscape helps one understand the role of religion in different communities and in society as a whole (Schoeman, 2017). According to the Statistics South Africa household survey (2014), 84.2% of South African described their religious affiliation as Christians, 5% practised Ancestral or traditional African religions, 2 % described as Muslim, and the rest described their religious affiliation as Hindu, Buddhist and Bahai, Atheist and nothing in particular. Differences in religious affiliations tend to influence how people live, the choices they make and whom they associate with (Shyan Fam et al., 2004).

Gender: several studies were done comparing women's and men's reaction to advertisements. Studies done by Dahl, Sengupta, and Vohs (2009) reveal that men preferred an advert featuring sexual image, whereas, women reported an attitude towards the explicitly sexual advert compared to a non-sexual advert. It was further stated by Dahl et al. (2009) that women in particular dislike use of sex in advertising. Virvilaite and Matuleviciene (2013) states that women's negative reaction to sexual advertisements depends on sensitivity and compatibility of moral and social principles in shocking advertising. A study done by Potgieter et al. (2013) shows that physiological differences between males and females may lead to specialised service-product needs. The study further shows that females tend to engage more in recreational shopping than males do and tend to be more price conscious than men. In Australia, studies show that women are offended by

alcohol advertisement than men who are more offended by the male underwear advertisement (Waller, 1999).

Therefore, based on the previous discussion, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H7₀: Consumer's gender is not likely to influence his/her attitude towards offensive advertisement.

H7: Consumer's gender is likely to influence his/her attitude towards offensive advertisement.

2.8 Conclusion of literature review

Advertising is a form of communication used by companies to persuade consumers to purchase the products or services (Saleem & Abideen, 2011). It is important for advertisers to ensure consumers are attracted to their advertisement (Eze & Lee, 2012), hence the need to use offensive advertisements in an attempt to differentiate by using consumer emotions (Virvilaite & Matulevičiene, 2013). Consumers reactions to offensive advertisement is divided into positive and negative, depending on how they view the advertisement (Virvilaite & Matulevičiene, 2013). Consumer buying behaviour is influenced by socio-demographic factors which must be analysed to understand consumers. Researchers have largely focused on how advertising impact consumer behaviour but there is no known research that examine the effects of offensive advertising on consumer behaviour in South Africa. This study further examined the consumers' attitudes towards offensive advertising. Quantitative approach, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 was used to examine the theories.

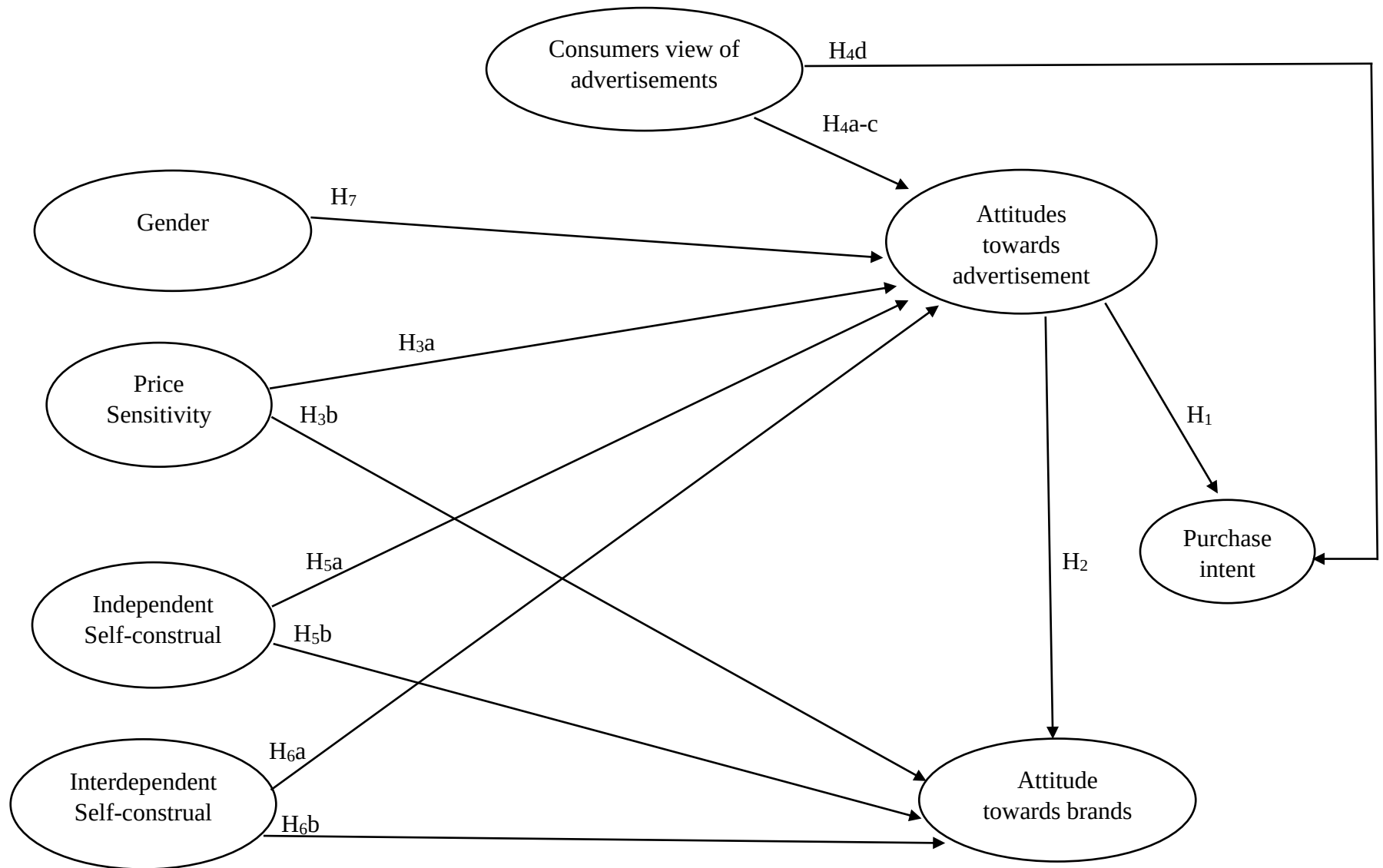


Figure 6: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section is focused on describing the research methodology for this study. Research paradigm, research design, population and sample, research instruments and data collection instruments will be discussed in detail. Research methodology is a systematic way to solve research problem (Kothari, 2004; Rajasekar, Philominathan, & Chinnathambi, 2006) and it basically states the steps the researcher will follow when describing, explaining, and gives direction on how the researcher conducted the research (Kothari, 2004).

3.2 Research paradigm

Research paradigm is a structure that guides the researcher and consists of different concepts, variables, and problems attached with choosing the right corresponding methodological approaches and tools (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013). Paradigm means research approach or research design (Atieno, 2009), and consists of four elements, namely, epistemology, ontology, axiology (ethics) and methodology when dealing with positivist (quantitative researcher) and social constructivist (qualitative researcher) (Eyisi, 2016; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Positivist research was applied in this research. It was used to search for cause and effect relationships in nature and relies on logic, formulation of hypotheses, testing those hypotheses and applying quantitative measures to derive to conclusions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), positivist research aims to provide explanations, and also make predictions based on the measurable outcomes. It generally applies the scientific method to study human actions (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012).

3.3 Research design

Research design focuses on the results of the study and the processes to be followed to achieve those results. Research design is a plan within which the research will be conducted, including the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose (Kothari, 2004).

Research design may be qualitative, quantitative and/or mixed method research (Morgan, 2013). Quantitative research is concerned with results, generalisation, prediction, and cause-effect relationship through empirical reasoning (Yilmaz, 2013). Yilmaz (2013) further states that quantitative research explains phenomena according to numerical data which are analysed using mathematically based methods and statistics. A quantitative approach will be appropriate to test predictive and cause-effect hypotheses and deductive logic is used (Muller, 2011). In contrary, qualitative research is concerned interpretative, ethnographic in nature and requires detailed observation, explanation and assumes that it is impossible to define exactly what elements are important and crucial and should be considered to the exclusion of others (Atieno, 2009). With that noted, quantitative research was conducted for this study, using close-ended questions to collect data for this study. Yilmaz (2013) states that quantitative research uses questionnaires, surveys and use mathematical models and statistics to analyse data and report findings. The use of scientific method of data collection make generalization possible and reduces the time and effort which the researcher would have invested in describing the result (Eyisi, 2016).

3.4 Population and sample

This section describes the population and the sample used for this study.

3.4.1 Population

The population is the study's target population that it intends to study or treat and where the sample will be taken (Majid, 2018). The study population of this research consisted of people residing in South Africa between the ages of 18 and older; and who were willing to participate.

The population of the study was defined as follows:

- **Age:** 18 years and older
- **Education:** Non-specific, respondents who were able to read and answer questions provided.
- **Gender:** Both female and male respondents who were available and willing to complete the questionnaire.
- **Language:** All respondents had to be fluent in English as questionnaires were only available in English.
- **Ethnicity:** No limitations.
- **Geographic area:** Respondents who were currently residing in South Africa at the time of the study.

3.4.2 Sample and sampling method

Sampling is defined as a process through which a small group of cases is selected from the population (Alvi, 2016; Walliman, 2017). It is important to achieve a sample as representative as possible of the national population so that projective conclusions could be drawn (Shavitt, Lowrey,

& Haefner, 1998). Different sampling strategies can be used to obtain a representative sample from the population. These are convenience, simple random, stratified random and cluster strategies (Majid, 2018). Simple random strategy is when everyone in the population of interest has an equal chance to being selected as a respondent (Majid, 2018). Stratified random sampling is when the population is partitioned into subgroups (Nguyen, Shih, Srivastava, Tirthapura, & Xu, 2019). Clusters are natural groupings of people and involves obtaining a random sample of clusters from the population with all members of each selected cluster invited to participate (Sedgwick, 2014). Convenient sampling method was used for this study. It is non-random sampling method where participants are chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The most convenient, easily accessible participants were chosen. A questionnaire was designed and distributed to respondents over the age of 18. The objective is to generalize the study findings from the sample of the population (Majid, 2018).

3.5 Research instrument

Research instrument is a tool used for obtaining information relevant to the research (Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003). There are various research instruments to choose from, such as questionnaires, interviews, observations and focus groups. For this research, self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data. A questionnaire is a form prepared and distributed to secure responses (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). Several advantages exist for using questionnaires, such as, inexpensive to administer, little training is needed for answering the questions and can be easily analysed once completed (Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003). Closed ended questions were used to collect data to address the research questions, as shown in Annexure B. The questionnaires were only available in English. An informed consent form, as shown in Annexure A, was required

for each respondent prior to completion of the questionnaire. The questionnaire took an average of 10-15 minutes to complete.

Experimental design was used for the study and variables included offensive advertisements as the independent variable, consumer buying behaviour, attitude of consumers and purchase intention as dependant variables, and consumers' gender as controlled variables. Three experimental questionnaires were designed, two of them focusing on offensive advertisement and one neutral to be used as a control questionnaire. To determine whether participants perceived different appeals as planned, three different questionnaires showing different adverts were distributed. Participants were randomly assigned to an experimental condition associated with one specific advert. Each respondent was given the questionnaire to complete and the researcher was not present. This guarantees confidentiality; respondents responds without fear and embarrassment (Furaiji et al., 2012). In this study, respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire on a voluntary basis.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section was used to gather information relating to the research questions and the second section was used to gather demographics of the respondents. The demographic data was used to find the influence of demographic characteristics and the offensive feeling and purchase involvement. Closed ended questions that have been previously used by other scholars were utilised, and these contained all the questions in which answers were provided. The questionnaires also included different types of advertising, that is, examples of offensive adverts to measure the offensiveness based on their reaction to adverts.

The first section showed an advert and respondents were asked to rate the advert shown. This section measured the hedonic and utilitarian attitudes. This set of questions was derived from Olney et al. (1991). This part of the questionnaire had a scale that consisted of seven possible answers, ranging from the attitude measure “strongly agree”, “agree”, “somewhat agree”, “neutral”, “somewhat disagree”, “disagree” to the exact opposite measure of “strongly disagree” towards adverts and brands. Participants were asked to rate whether the image were regarded as (1 = unpleasant, 7 = pleasant), (1 = not fun to look at, 7 = fun to look at), (1 = not entertaining, 7 = entertaining) and (1 = not enjoyable, 7 = enjoyable).

From the second section to the sixth section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate answers according to a predefined scale, that is, Likert scale. The scale consisted of five possible answers to the question, ranging from the attitude measure “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral”, “disagree” to the exact opposite measure of “strongly disagree”.

Attitudes towards advertising was measured by a scale adapted from a similar study done by Jain and Goel (2012) looking at consumer attitudes towards organisation’s marketing strategies. Similarly, the attitudes towards brands were measured by a scale adapted from (Pagla & Brennan, 2014; Potgieter et al., 2013; Yang, He, & Lee, 2007) that measured brand attitudes, social and demographic differences among consumers.

The fifth section measured the consumer price sensitivity in determining attitudes of consumers towards offensive advertising and brands. The scale was adapted from Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer (1993) that measured price perceptions and consumer shopping behaviour.

To measure how self-construal relates to consumer attitude towards brands and advertisement, Gudykunst and Lee (2003)'s scale was adapted. This scale assessed the validity of self-construal scales.

To improve the response rate, in the demographic section of the questionnaire was designed to include signposts or routing instructions. These guide the respondent to appropriate areas of the questionnaire (Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003) and reduces time spent completing the questionnaire.

To ensure reliability and validity of the research, protocols should be in place when designing and administering the questionnaire; and ensure data integrity and appropriate analysis strategy (Muller, 2011). A pilot study was done to test the measurement instrument as well check its validity and reliability.

3.5.1 Pilot study

Hassan, Schattner, and Mazza (2006) stated that a pilot study is done to determine the feasibility of the study protocol, recruitment of participants and testing the measurement instrument. The most important element is to ensure that the questionnaire items address the research questions and if the questions are well defined and clearly understood by the respondents.

i) Method

Hard copy questionnaires were distributed to 22 respondents and they voluntarily completed the questionnaire. As stated by In (2017) adequate information and time was given to the participants

to make their decisions and agree to participate. The data collected was directly entered into Microsoft Excel for coding and cleaning and then imported to Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 program with specific codes for each element in the questionnaire. The main purpose of the pilot study was to check questionnaire reliability and validity using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha is commonly used in the development of scales intended to measure attitudes (Taber, 2018).

Validity is concerned with the extent on which the questionnaire measures what it is intended to measure and reliability is concerned with measuring questionnaire's consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to test validity and Cronbach's Alpha was used to test reliability. Cronbach's Alpha measures internal consistency which describes the extent to which all items in the questionnaire measure the same construct (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). It is further elaborated that Cronbach's Alpha acceptable values should range from 0.7 to 0.95

ii) Measurement Scale of the Pilot Study

The respondents found the questionnaire easy and straight-forward to answer. Participants mentioned that it took them less than 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Few respondents mentioned that some words were not easy to comprehend such as "Appeal" and "Vulgarity" under the question "what attracts you towards advertising on TV/Radio/Billboards/Newspaper/etc? Participates also mentioned that one question was difficult to answer, that is, "The advert conveyed the intended message" as they had no knowledge of reasons behind the advertisement. For the main study, this question was re-phrased.

iii) Results from the Pilot Study

For attitudes towards advertising, SPSS extracted two components or factors above the Eigenvalue of 1 and had a cumulative percentage of 69% which explained 69% of the variance; attitudes towards brands explained 60% of the variance; influence of reference groups on consumer attitudes 77%; sexual reference 69%; moral offensiveness 73%; disgusting images 83% and religious offense explained 82% of the variance.

The Cronbach's Alpha indicated that there was good reliability for attitudes towards advertising ($\alpha = 0.753$); attitudes towards brands ($\alpha = 0.804$); influence of reference groups on consumer attitudes ($\alpha = 0.604$) which was lower than the recommended 0.7, because item "I consider my financial condition during shopping" measures a different construct and the item decreases the reliability of each factor. This item was deleted from the questionnaire to increase the value of Cronbach's Alpha to 0.73, which is a generally accepted value. Other constructs measured were sexual reference ($\alpha = 0.857$); Impropriety ($\alpha = 0.827$), moral offensiveness ($\alpha = 0.853$); disgusting images ($\alpha = 0.885$) and religious offense ($\alpha = 0.900$). The results of the final study are presented and discussed in chapter 4 and 5.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

A letter of permission to collect data was used and all respondents agreed to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed online and in hard copy papers and this depended on respondents' preferences. The questionnaires were distributed only to participants who were willing to participate in the research study. A pilot study was conducted to pre-test all questionnaires to ensure reliability and validity. Online questionnaires are inexpensive to produce

and can be automatically coded upon receipt by using appropriate database packages (Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003)

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

This process involves exploring, describing the data and confirming its characteristics (Ebrahim & Sullivan, 1995). Ebrahim and Sullivan (1995) further states that all references drawn and conclusions reached as a result of statistical manipulation of the data rest on the assumption that all measures will be valid and reliable, and that the data had been entered correctly (Ebrahim & Sullivan, 1995). All collected raw data was edited to ensure that it is accurate, consistent with other facts gathered and well arranged to facilitate coding (Kothari, 2004). Coding is the process of allocating numbers or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a several categories (Kothari, 2004). It will be easy to analyse coded data using statistical packages. Coded data was entered into Excel, which was transferred to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Mplus for data analysis.

3.8 Limitations of the study

The study was only conducted in South Africa. Because of different cultures around the world, the study is not applicable to some areas of the world. Again, the study did not focus on the reasons why companies use offensive advertising, and it does not critic organisations' marketing strategies.

3.9 Validity and reliability

Validity is the extent in which a concept is measured in the study (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Heale and Twycross (2015) further states that the questionnaire will have to cover all the content that should, with respect to the variables.

3.9.1 External Validity and Internal Validity

External validity deals with whether the finding of the study will be applicable to other settings or with other subjects (Zohrabi, 2013). Internal validity deals with the degree in which the researcher measures what is supposed to be measured when the study was commenced (Zohrabi, 2013). For this study, data was be collected, analysed and interpreted as impartially as possible; and adhered to ethical rules and principles and data evaluated accurately; and reported findings with honesty (Zohrabi, 2013).

3.9.2 Reliability

Reliability is defined as the accuracy of the questionnaire and the extent to which the questionnaire produces the same results if it is used in the same situation on repeated occasions (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Therefore, another researcher should be able produce similar results given that he/she investigates the same problem, then the research will be deemed reliable.

3.10 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was to discuss the research method used to answer the research questions. Research paradigm, research design, sample and population, research instrument, pilot study results, procedure for data collection, and validity and reliability were all discussed in this section. The following Chapter 4 presents results and findings and demonstrate the methodology described in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of results and findings from the data collected. Data were analyzed to identify, describe and investigate how South African consumers respond to offensive advertising. Firstly, the profiles of respondents are described followed by the discussion of the research findings. Background of respondents is provided by describing the demographics details, followed by findings and analysis of data and lastly, summary.

4.2 Experimental Procedure

Experimental research attempts to identify the cause and effect relationship by conducting an experiment (Christensen, Johnson, Turner, & Christensen, 2011). Experiments can offer the potential to analyse how consumers belonging to a specific culture respond to different advertising stimuli. Experimental research findings can serve as a basis for determining where the dissimilarity in advertising appeals comes from (Garcia & Yang, 2006).

Three actual, nonfiction previously used adverts were used to stimulate a real-world scenario. The adverts chosen belong to Mercedes Benz, Tom Ford and United Colors of Benetton. Mercedes Benz advert was used as control because it is a hedonic advert while Tom Ford advert was categorized as sexual reference and United Colors of Benetton as religious offense. The sexual reference advert is part of Tom Ford first fragrance for men campaign. It shows a naked woman holding her breasts and a bottle of the perfume placed in between her breasts. The religious offense advert shows a Roman Catholic priest kissing the Sheikh of the Al-Azhar Mosque and this is regarded inappropriate as two men kissing is seen as homosexuality which is religiously condemned; and shows two men with different religious views kissing each other as lovers.

To determine whether participants perceived different appeals as planned, three different questionnaires showing different adverts were distributed. The main focus was to determine whether the groups differ in terms of the hedonic and utilitarian attitudes and unique appeal considerations of the adverts, and their purchase intention differences when the neutral, sexual offense and religious offense groups are compared.

Participants were randomly assigned to an experimental condition associated with one specific advert. Each questionnaire contained a consent letter which explained what the experiment was about and asked the respondents for their consent to participate in the study. Each questionnaire had instructions which guided them throughout the experiment. Each participant was exposed to one advert only.

4.3 Sample characteristics

Three advertisements were chosen, that is, control, sexual reference and religious offense. Total respondents (N=194) all from South Africa participated to examine the levels of offensiveness and the impact on their overall attitude towards the adverts and brand. After cleaning the data of excessive incomplete data, a total of 194 respondents were assigned to three groups: fifty-nine (59) to the control or neutral experimental condition, sixty-six (66) to the sexual offense group, and sixty-nine (69) to the religious offense group. A total of one hundred and seventeen (117) females and a total of seventy-seven (77) males were assigned to various advert conditions.

4.4 Discussion of findings

In this section, the results of the study are presented and discussed with reference to the objectives of the study, which is to investigate the effects of offensive advertising on consumer buying behaviour in South Africa and its impact on associated brands.

4.4.1 Descriptive profile of respondents

This section forms part of the data intended to describe variables of the sample. The demographic data consisted of gender, age, employment status, place of residence, income, race, education, and religion as shown in Table 1. In this study, all these demographics were necessary to check for any influence on the research findings.

i) Gender differences of the participants in the sample

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender by ticking next to the relevant options provided, that is, male and female. From a total of 194 respondents, 117 were female and 77 were male. This was important to measure so we can compare how different gender respond to adverts.

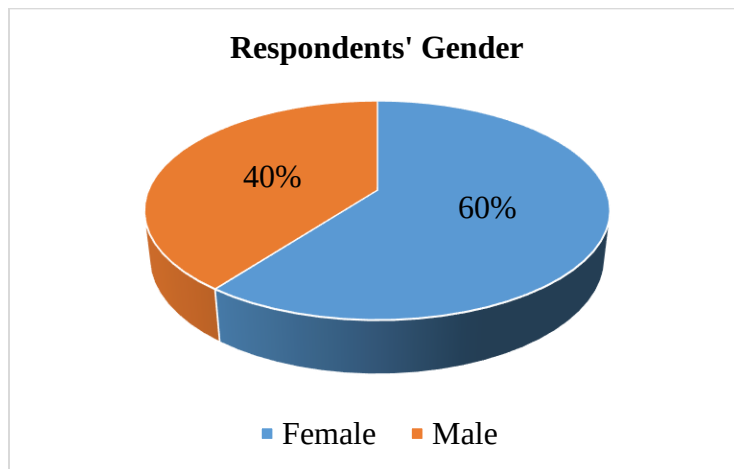


Figure 7: Respondents' Gender

ii) Age ranges of the respondents in the sample

All participants indicated their age range by ticking next to the relevant option. A total of 18.56% of the respondents were in the 18-25 years age category, 32.47% in the 26 – 30 years category,

43.30% in the 30 – 40 years category, 4.12% in the 40 – 50 years category and lastly, 1.55% were in the 51+ category.

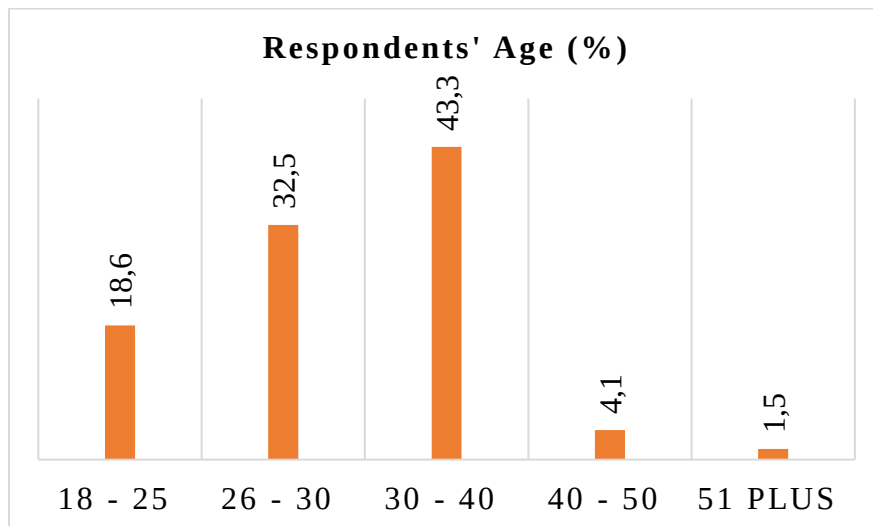


Figure 8: Respondents' Age

iii) Residence of the participants in the sample

Respondents were asked to indicate their area of residence. From the total sample, 91.72% reside in urban areas, 3.6% reside in peri-urban areas and 4.64% reside in rural areas.

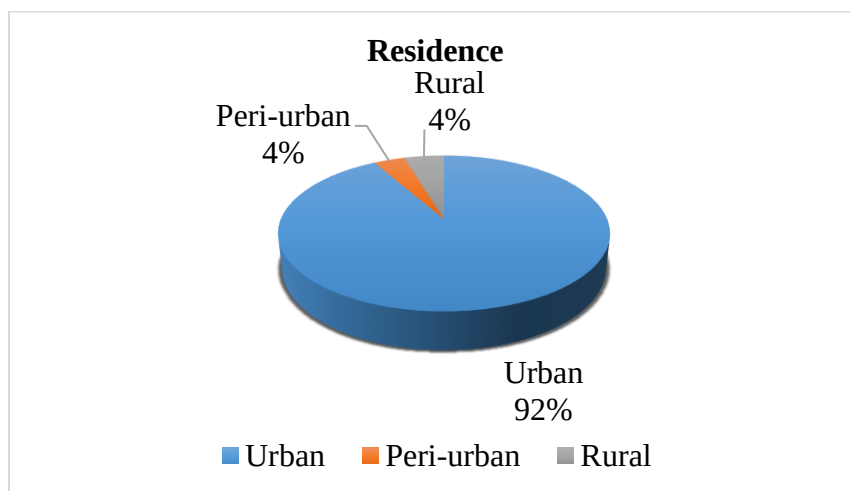


Figure 9: Respondents' Area of Residence

iv) Respondents' ethnicity

Most of the respondents in the sample were Black Africans, consisting of 86.56%, white consisted of 5.7%, total of 1.55% were Indians and Coloured added up to 6.19%.

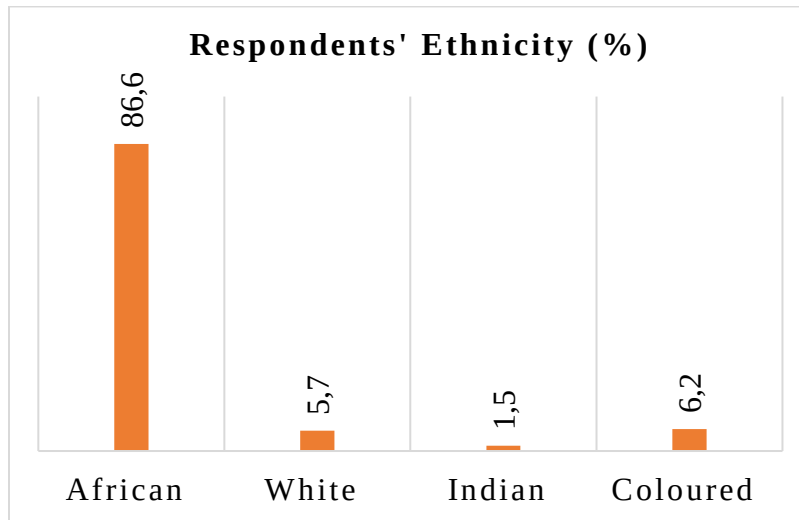


Figure 10: Respondents' Ethnicity

v) Income range of the participants in the sample

Participants were asked to indicate their income range applicable to them. Statistics show that the 41.75% of the respondents earn from R0 – R10 000 per month; 15.46% indicated a monthly income of R10 001 – R20 000; 13.92% indicated a R20 001 – R30 000 monthly income; 12.89% indicated a R30 001 – R40 000 monthly income; 5.67% indicated a R40 001 - R50 000 monthly income and lastly, 10.3% earn over R50 000 per month.

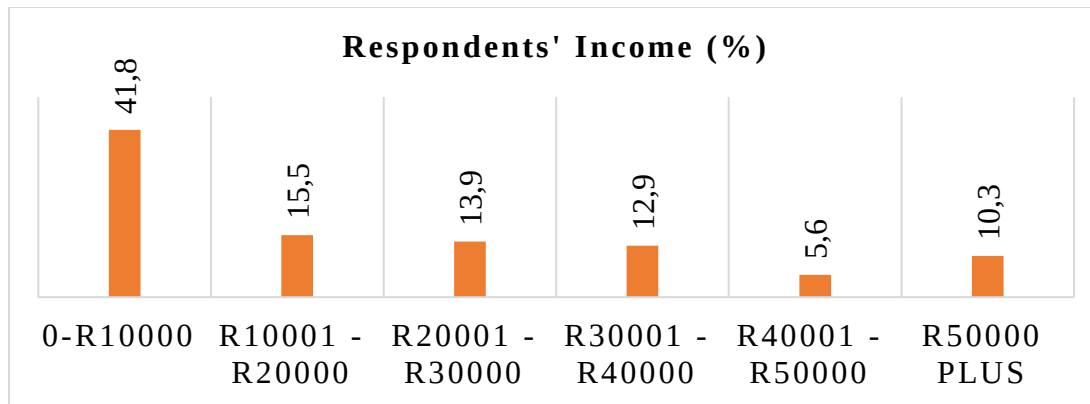


Figure 11: Respondents' Income

vi) Respondents' level of education

Again, participants were asked to indicate their level of education by ticking the relevant option. Most of the respondents totaling to 35.6% have Bachelor's Degrees, 21.1% have postgraduate degrees, 15.5% have Diplomas, 23.7% only have matric, 3.1% completed some primary school and participates with other qualification totaled to 1%.

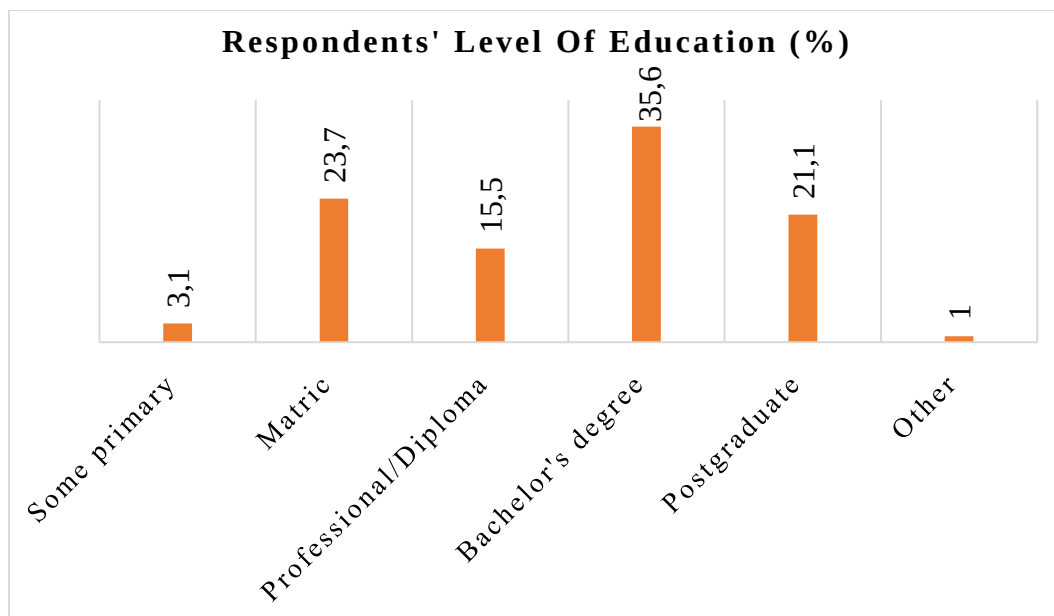


Figure 12: Respondents' Level of Education

vii) Religion of respondents in the sample

Christians made up a total of 86.08%, 3.09% of the total are Muslim, those that follow African religion total to 5.15%, Atheist and other religion add up to 5.16% of the total sample.

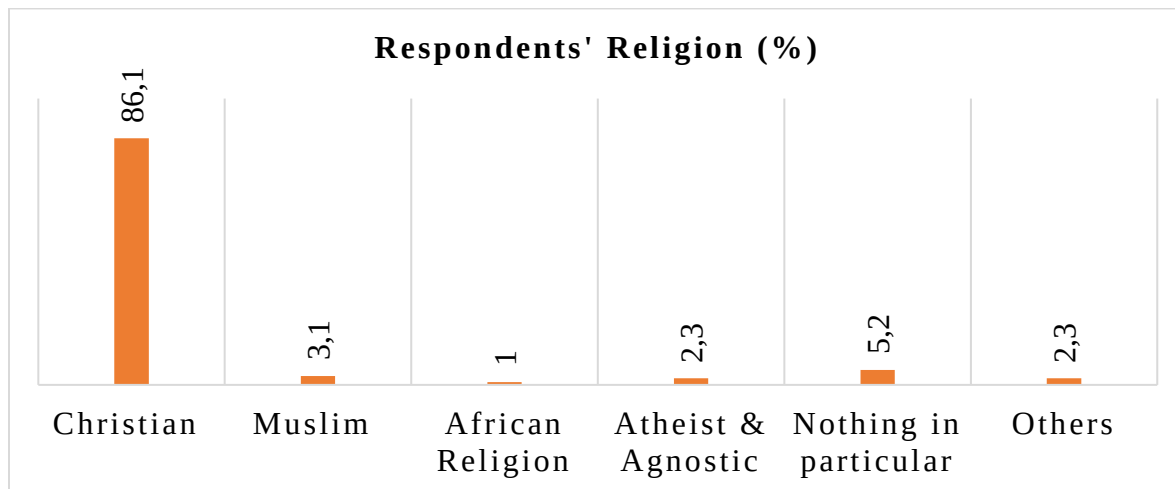


Figure 13: Respondents' Religion

viii) Employment status of respondents

Most of the respondents, over 80% of the total participants indicate that they are employed, 8.2% have never been employed, 8.2% are students, 9.3% are in vocational training and lastly, 1.03% of the total participated are unemployed.

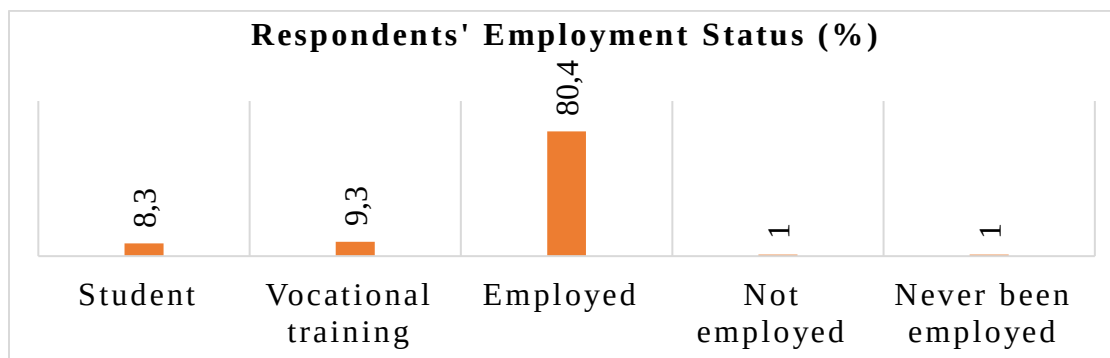


Figure 14: Respondents' Employment Status

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender			Residence		
Female	117	60.31	urban	178	91.75
Male	77	39.69	peri-urban	7	3.61
Total	194	100.00	rural	9	4.64
			Total	194	100.00
Age			Employment		
18 - 25	36	18.56	Student	16	8.25
26 - 30	63	32.47	Vocational training	18	9.28
30 - 40	84	43.30	Employed	156	80.41
40 - 50	8	4.12	Not employed	2	1.03
51 plus	3	1.55	Never been employed	2	1.03
Total	194	100.00	Total	194	100.00
Income			Race		
0-R10000	81	41.75	Black	168	86.60
R10001 - R20000	30	15.46	White	11	5.67
R20001 - R30000	27	13.92	Indian	3	1.55
R30001 - R40000	25	12.89	Coloured	12	6.19
R40001 - R50000	11	5.67	Total	194	100.00
R50000 plus	20	10.31			
Total	194	100.00			
Education			Religion		
Some primary	6	3.09	Christian	167	86.08
Matric	46	23.71	Muslim	6	3.09
Professional/Diploma	30	15.46	African Religion	2	1.03
Bachelor's degree	69	35.57	Atheist & Agnostics	5	2.58
Postgraduate	41	21.13	Nothing in particular	10	5.15
Other	2	1.03	Others	5	2.58
Total	194	100.00	Total	194	100.00
How much ads influence your purchases?			What attracts you towards ads?		
Large influence	52	26.80	Model	15	7.73
Medium influence	120	61.86	Colour	12	6.19

No Influence	15	7.73	Appeal	96	49.49
Not sure	7	3.61	Vulgar	5	2.58
			Humour	66	34.02
Total	194	100.00	Total	194	100.00

4.4.2 Measures

This section describes the relationship between advertising and intention to purchase the advertised product and further describes the consumer's attitude towards advertisements.

4.4.2.1 The relationship between advertising and intention to purchase

i) Influence of advertising on respondents' purchases

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of influence of advertising on the purchase behavior. 26.8% indicated that advertising had large influence on the purchase behavior, 61.9% indicated that it had medium influence, 7.8% indicated not sure and lastly, 3.6% of the respondents were not sure.

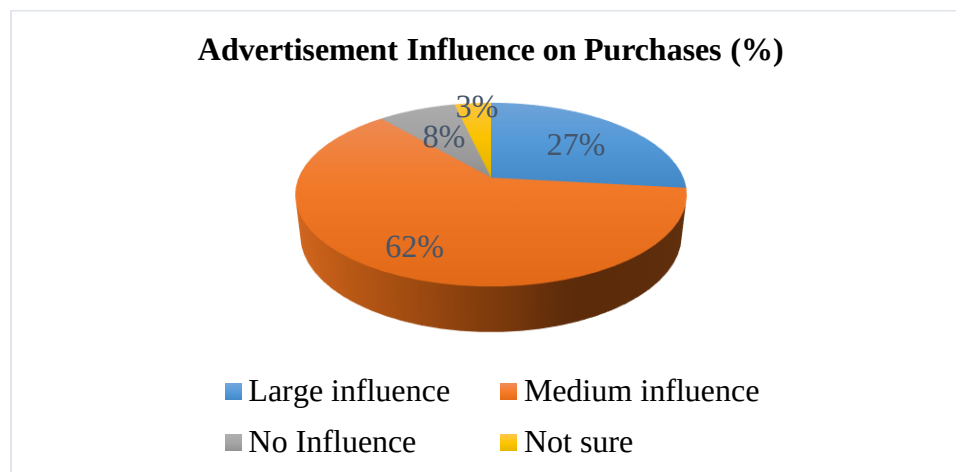


Figure 15: Advertisement influence on purchases

ii) What attract respondents towards advertising

Respondents were asked to indicate what draws them towards advertisements. Most of the respondents, 49.5% indicated appeal is important in adverts, 34% indicated humour, 7.7% indicated that the model featured in the advert attracts them, 6.2% indicated color and lastly, 2.6% indicated vulgar as an element that draws their attention towards advertisement.

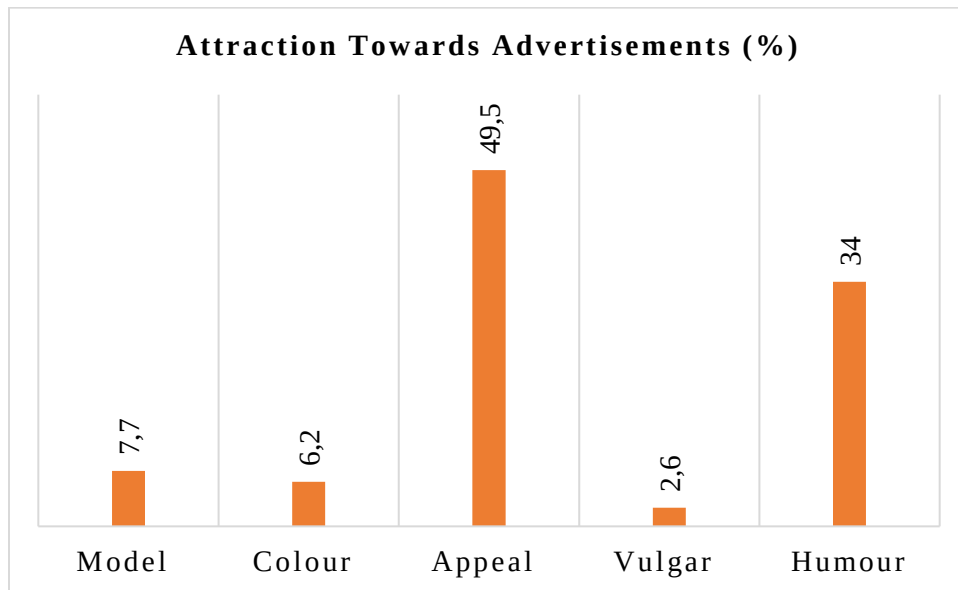


Figure 16: Attraction towards adverts

4.4.2.2 Consumers view to advertisements

i) Hedonic attitudes

Upon viewing each the respective ad condition, four-items derived from Olney et al. (1991) were used to measure participants hedonic attitudes towards the advert they just viewed. Measures were on seven-point semantic differential scale. Participants were asked to rate whether the image were regarded as (*1 = unpleasant, 7 = pleasant*), (*1 = not fun to look at, 7 = fun to look at*), (*1 = not entertaining, 7 = entertaining*) and (*1 = not enjoyable, 7 = enjoyable*). Cronbach's alpha score was $\alpha = 0.97$.

ii) Utilitarian attitudes

Participants were asked to respond to four items to measure utilitarian attitudes towards the advert content. The items used were derived from Olney et al. (1991). The measures were based on seven-point semantic differential scale. Participants were asked to rate whether the image were regarded as (*1 = not important, 7 = important*), (*1 = not informative, 7 = informative*), (*1 = not useful, 7 = useful*) and (*1 = not helpful, 7 = helpful*). Cronbach's alpha score was $\alpha = 0.95$.

iii) Advert uniqueness

Participants answered three questions about whether they considered the advert type to be unique. The items used were also derived from (Olney et al., 1991). The measures were based on seven-point semantic differential scale. Participants rated the advert types on the following adjectives (*1 = ordinary, 7 = peculiar*), (*1 = just like any other ad, 7 = different from any other ad*) and (*1 = nothing special, 7 = outstanding*). Cronbach's alpha score was $\alpha = 0.84$.

iv) Purchase intentions

Participants answered seven questions related to their intentions to purchase the advertised product on a five-point Likert scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree*), (e.g., I am likely to purchase the product after seeing this advert, and I am very likely to recommend this product to my friends and family who may ask for my opinion). Cronbach's alpha score was $\alpha = 0.82$.

4.5 Results and findings

4.5.1 Hedonic attitudes and offensive advertisements

A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate the gender differences in attitudes towards offensive advertisements. ANOVA were

subsequently run to determine participant's ratings of the hedonic or emotional attitudes on different advertisements copies and how the genders differed in the ratings of their offensiveness. A main effect of advertisement copy condition was found to be significant ($F(2, 188) = 63.06$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.39$).

Table 2: ANOVA - Hedonic attitudinal appeal

ANOVA - Hedonic attitudinal appeal

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Groups	300.954	2.000	150.477	63.062	< .001	0.389
Gender	1.855	1.000	1.855	0.777	0.379	0.002
Groups * Gender	21.484	2.000	10.742	4.502	0.012	0.028
Residual	448.603	188.000	2.386			

Note. Type III Sum of Squares

However, an interaction of gender and offensive advert condition emerged to be significant ($F(2, 188) = 4.502$, $p = 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.028$). An inspection of the mean scores indicate that females rated the neutral advert to evoke better hedonic attitude ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 1.16$) than those who rated sexual offense advert ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.53$) and religious offense advert ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.57$). The males also rated the neutral advert to produce better hedonic attitude ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.80$) compared to those who rated the sexual offense advert ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.93$) and religious offense advert ($M = 1.64$, $SD = 1.08$).

Table 3: Marginal Means - Groups and Gender**Marginal Means - Groups * Gender**

Groups	Gender	Mean (SD)	SE	95% CI		t	p
				Lower	Upper		
Control	Female	5.375 (1.163)	0.282	4.623	6.127	19.058	< .001
	Male	4.784 (4.784)	0.287	4.020	5.549	16.679	< .001
Sexual	Female	2.433 (2.433)	0.241	1.790	3.076	10.085	< .001
	Male	3.190 (1.927)	0.309	2.366	4.014	10.325	< .001
Religious	Female	2.413 (2.413)	0.228	1.806	3.020	10.595	< .001
	Male	1.641 (1.079)	0.322	0.782	2.500	5.096	< .001

Note. Bonferroni CI adjustment

Comparing how females rated the neutral advert the hedonic appeal, results show that the females rated the neutral advert better on these adverts than how males rated it. However, for sexual offense adverts, the males rated it favourably compared to how females rated it. The males rated religious offense adverts less favourably compared to the females' ratings. Regardless, both males and females rated the sexual and religious offense adverts less favourable on hedonic appeal compared to the neutral advert.

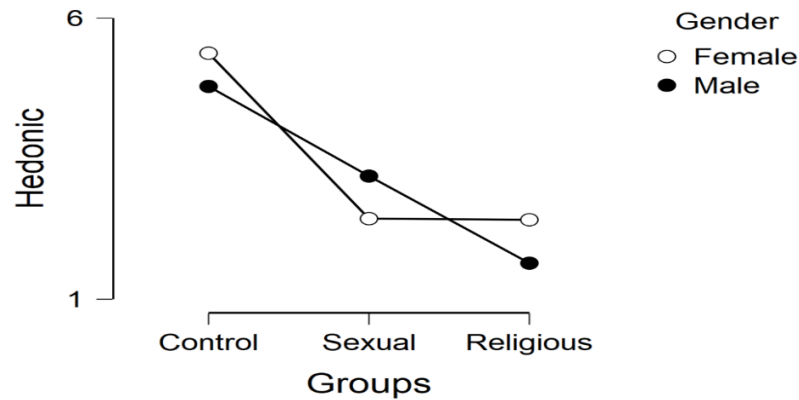


Figure 17: Interaction effect of offensive advert group and gender on hedonic attitudes

4.5.2 Utilitarian appeals and offensive adverts

Participant's ratings on the advert's utilitarian attitudes in the three advert conditions (neutral, sexual, and religious offense) were examined. A significant main effect of the advert condition was demonstrated ($F(2, 188) = 44.32, p < 0.001$).

Table 4: ANOVA - Utilitarian attitudinal appeal

ANOVA - Utilitarian attitudinal appeal

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Groups	211.179	2.000	105.590	44.315	< .001	0.313
Gender	0.840	1.000	0.840	0.353	0.553	0.001
Groups * Gender	15.225	2.000	7.612	3.195	0.043	0.023
Residual	447.954	188.000	2.383			

Note. Type III Sum of Squares

Posthoc analysis indicated that participants rated the neutral advert condition favourably in its utilitarian attitudinal appeal ($M = 4.63$) compared to sexual offense advert ($M = 2.68$) and religious

offense advert ($M = 2.10$). This suggests that offensive adverts perform poorly in their utilitarian attitudinal appeal, with religious offensive advert show poorer ratings. No significant main effect of gender on the utility of the adverts was observed ($F(2, 188) = 0.353$, $p = 0.55$, $\eta^2 = 0.001$).

A significant interaction effect of gender and offensive advert conditions also emerged ($F(2, 188) = 3.195$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.023$). Female ratings of the perceived utility of neutral adverts ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.46$) was higher compared to the males ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.83$). However, males rated the sexual offense adverts favourably ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.17$) than females did ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.49$). But males reviewed the religious offense adverts less favourably ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 1.38$) compared to females' reviews ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.43$) in terms of the offensive adverts perceived utility.

Table 5: Marginal Means - Groups and Gender

Marginal Means - Groups * Gender

Groups	Gender	Mean	SE	95% CI		t	p
				Lower	Upper		
Control	Female	4.733 (1.456)	0.282	3.982	5.485	16.795	< .001
	Male	4.534 (1.826)	0.287	3.770	5.299	15.819	< .001
Sexual	Female	2.384 (1.493)	0.241	1.741	3.027	9.890	< .001
	Male	2.980 (1.714)	0.309	2.157	3.803	9.653	< .001
Religious	Female	2.500 (1.428)	0.228	1.893	3.107	10.985	< .001
	Male	1.696 (1.377)	0.322	0.837	2.554	5.268	< .001

Note. Bonferroni CI adjustment

It is noted that in all three groups, neutral adverts were rated to have better utility than the sexual nor the religious offensive advert condition, again with religious offensive advert rated poorly in

its perceived utility. This implies that neither sexual nor religious offensive adverts generated the appropriate impact in influencing both males and females to consider them to have strong utilitarian appeal. This is further confirmed in Figure 18.

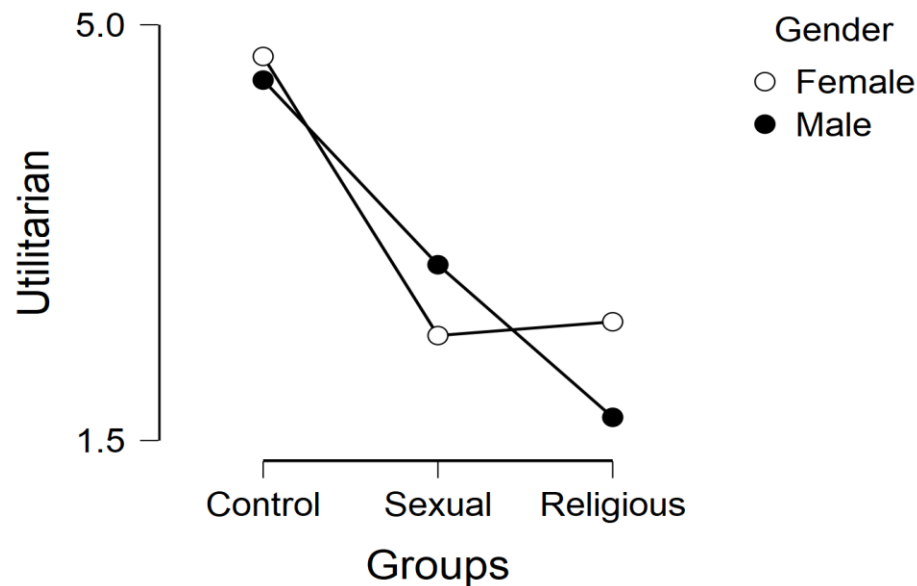


Figure 18: Interaction effect of offensive advert group and gender on utilitarian attitudes

4.5.3 Uniqueness appeals and offensive advertisement

ANOVA were performed to determine participant's ratings of the uniqueness of different advertisement copies and how the genders differed in the ratings of their offensiveness. First, participants ratings on the perceived uniqueness of the three advertisement conditions (neutral, sexual and religious offense) revealed a significant main effect ($F(2, 188) = 5.47, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.055$). Overall, participants rated the neutral advertisement to be more unique than the sexual offense and religious offense advertisement.

Table 6: ANOVA – Unique advertisement appeal**ANOVA – Unique advertisement appeal**

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Groups	36.185	2.000	18.093	5.470	0.005	0.055
Gender	0.526	1.000	0.526	0.159	0.690	0.001
Groups * Gender	3.194	2.000	1.597	0.483	0.618	0.005
Residual	621.790	188.000	3.307			

Note. Type III Sum of Squares

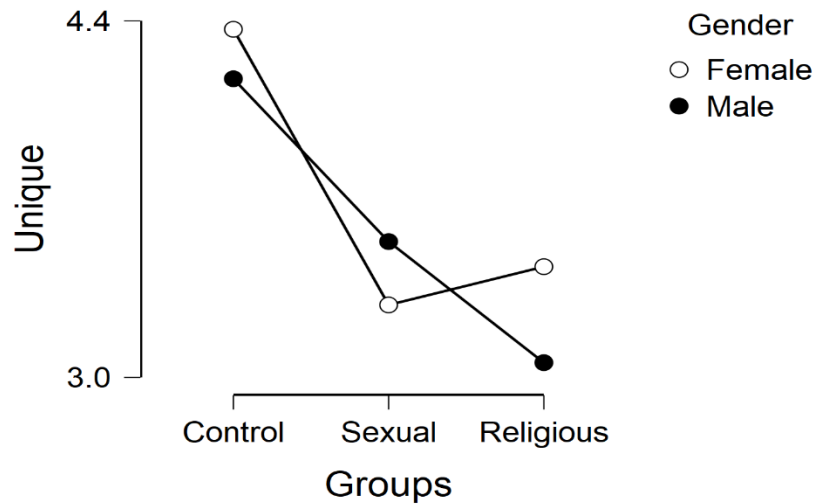
Specifically, posthoc analysis reveals that the neutral advertisement condition was perceived to be more unique ($M = 4.27$), compared to the sexual offense advertisement ($M = 3.41$) and religious offense advertisement ($M = 3.25$). This again suggests that offensive advertisements, while they are intended to attract the observer's attention due to the provocation, were not perceived to be unique, but instead the neutral advertisements with no provocative content was rated to be unique. Religious offensive advertisements are consistently rated more unfavorably, this time, on uniqueness too.

No significant main effect of gender was observed on perceived uniqueness of three advertisements conditions. Both males and females did not rate the advertisements copies on uniqueness differently ($F(2, 188) = 0.16$, $p = 0.70$, $\eta^2 = 0.001$). Again, no significant interaction effect was observed for gender and offensive advertisements conditions in how they perceived the advertisements unique attitudinal appeal ($F(2, 188) = 0.48$, $p = 0.62$, $\eta^2 = 0.005$). However, Table 7 shows that both males and females differed in how they evaluated the perceived uniqueness of the advertisements copies.

Table 7: Marginal Means – Groups and Gender**Marginal Means – Groups * Gender**

Groups	Gender	Mean (SD)	SE	95% CI		t	p
				Lower	Upper		
Control	Female	4.367 (1.845)	0.332	3.481	5.252	13.151	< .001
	Male	4.172 (1.967)	0.338	3.272	5.073	12.355	< .001
Sexual	Female	3.285 (1.631)	0.284	2.527	4.042	11.564	< .001
	Male	3.533 (2.066)	0.364	2.563	4.503	9.714	< .001
Religious	Female	3.435 (1.560)	0.268	2.720	4.150	12.810	< .001
	Male	3.058 (2.093)	0.379	2.047	4.069	8.064	< .001

Note. Bonferroni CI adjustment

**Figure 19:** Interaction effect of offensive advert group and gender on unique attitudes**4.5.4 Relationship between advertising and intention to purchase**

ANOVA was run to examine participant's ratings on their purchase intentions of the brands advertised with neutral versus offensive advertisement appeals. A significant main effect of the

advertisement condition was observed ($F(2, 188) = 33.80, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.26$). The findings show that participants who rated neutral advertisement expressed high purchase likelihood ($M = 3.49$), than those who rated the sexual offense advertisement ($M = 2.80$) and religious offense advertisement ($M = 2.35$).

Table 8: ANOVA – Purchase intentions

ANOVA – Purchase Intentions

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Groups	39.601	2.000	19.800	33.797	< .001	0.259
Gender	0.002	1.000	0.002	0.004	0.949	0.000
Groups * Gender	2.974	2.000	1.487	2.538	0.082	0.019
Residual	110.143	188.000	0.586			

Note. Type III Sum of Squares

No significant interaction effect of gender and advertisement conditions was observed on purchase intentions ($F(2, 188) = 2.54, p = 0.082, \eta^2 = 0.019$). Both males ($M = 3.49, SD = 0.14$) and females ($M = 3.50, SD = 0.63$) did not differ significantly in their rating of the neutral advertisement in regard to purchase likelihood. However, males rated the sexual offense advertisement more positively in regard to purchase likelihood ($M = 2.96, SD = 0.85$), compared to how females' ratings ($M = 2.64, SD = 0.70$).

Lastly, the males negatively rated religious offense advertisement ($M = 2.21, SD = 0.76$), compared to female respondents' ratings ($M = 2.50, SD = 0.75$). This suggests that while the males showed positive liking for the sexual offense advertisement, their liking of the religious offense

advertisement diminished in comparison to the females'. Yet, both males and females expressed higher intentions to purchase the product advertised in the neutral advertisement, than products advertised in the sexual and religious offense condition.

Table 9: Marginal Means – Groups and Gender

Marginal Means – Groups * Gender

Groups	Gender	Mean (SD)	SE	95% CI		t	p
				Lower	Upper		
Control	Female	3.495 (0.632)	0.140	3.123	3.868	25.011	< .001
	Male	3.493 (0.913)	0.142	3.114	3.872	24.573	< .001
Sexual	Female	2.638 (0.699)	0.120	2.319	2.956	22.065	< .001
	Male	2.960 (0.852)	0.153	2.552	3.368	19.336	< .001
Religious	Female	2.503 (0.752)	0.113	2.202	2.804	22.180	< .001
	Male	2.205 (0.764)	0.160	1.779	2.631	13.816	< .001

Note. Bonferroni CI adjustment

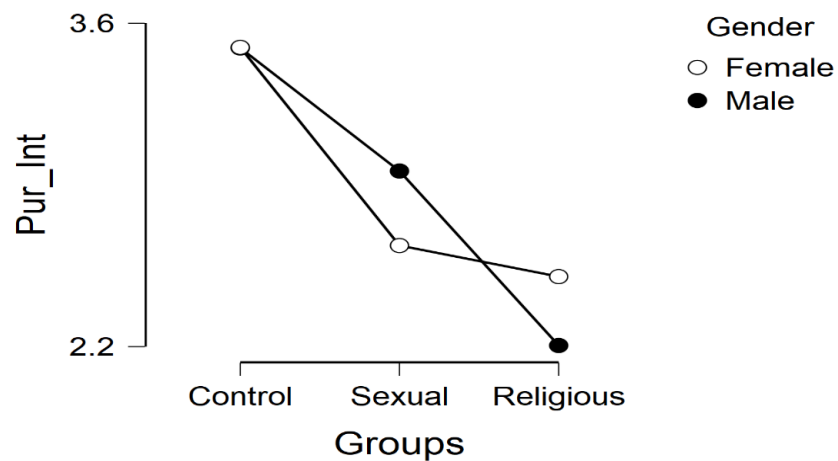


Figure 20: Interaction effect of offensive advertisement on purchase intentions

4.6 Exploratory Analysis

The study further investigated the role of self-construals (independent self-construal, interdependent self-construals) and consumers' price sensitivity and how they impact attitudes towards advertising and attitudes towards brands. Structural equation modeling was performed to assess the linkages among these constructs. The following diagram excludes the previously discussed hypotheses, and it was formulated specifically for Structural Equation Modelling apart from the experimental design:

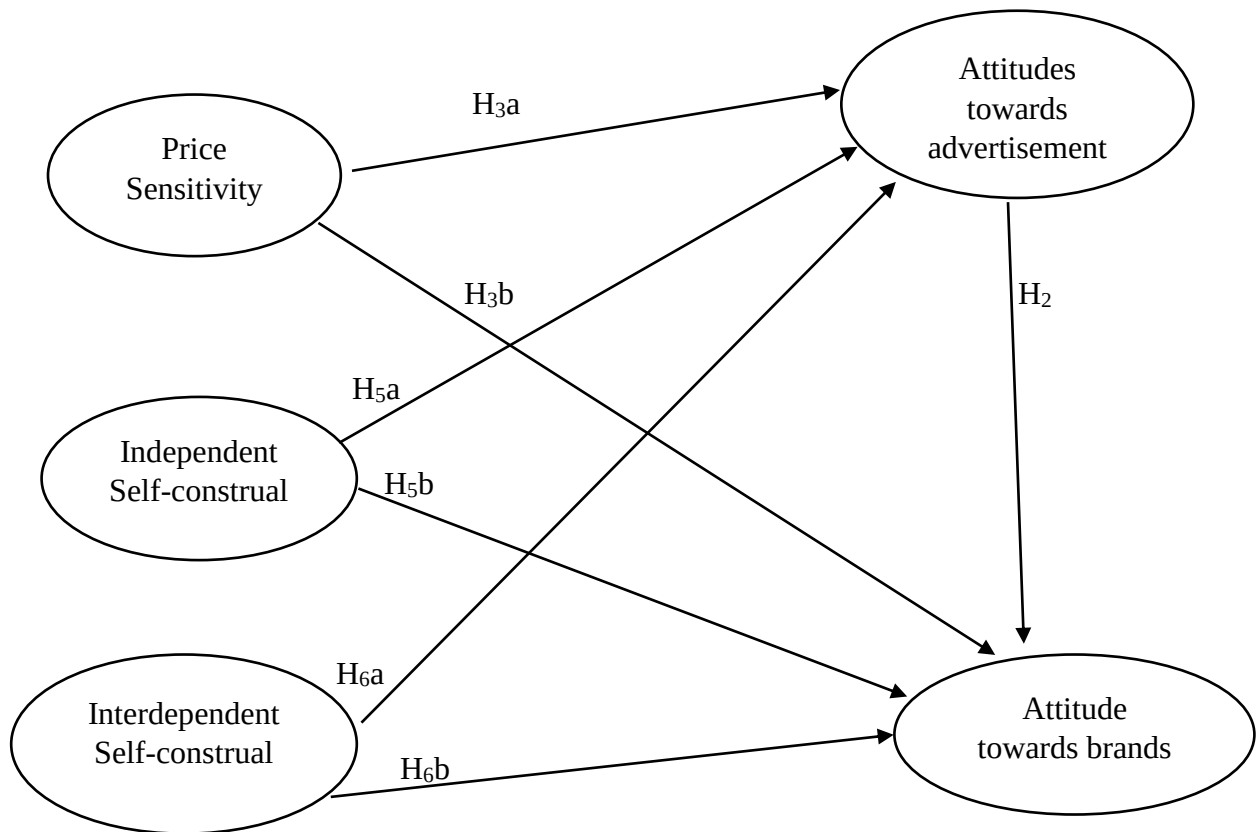


Figure 21: Conceptual framework for exploratory analysis

4.6.1 Measurement Assessment Approach

Following Anderson and Gerbing (1988), a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the measurement properties of the scale items. A covariance-based measurement model was fitted using full information maximum likelihood estimation approach. The ensuing fit indices produced acceptable fit of the measurement model to the data, which were examined using commonly applied fit criteria [$\chi^2 = 280.645$; d.f. = 197; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .047; Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.950; Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.941; Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.055].

On construct validity assessment, the standardized factor loadings are all above the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), except one item that recorded a loading of 0.49. Moreover, the average variance extracted values either approached or above the 0.5 threshold, providing evidence of convergent validity of the constructs. Confirmation for discriminant validity was achieved through the Fornell-Lacker approach, as stated by Fornell and Larcker (1981), whereby the square root of the AVEs are required to be greater than the correlations between the constructs. All composite reliabilities were also above 0.7, except for one construct (interdependent self-construal). Thus, discriminant validity was further supported by showing no confidence intervals (± 2 standard errors) for the derived correlations for all the measures to include 1.0 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Table 10: Measurement items

Items	Estimates	t-value	CR
Independent self-construal			
I enjoy being unique and different from others	0.505	5.143	0.73
I should decide my future on my own	0.586	7.755	
Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me	0.850	10.841	
It is important for me to act as an independent person	0.564	5.980	
Interdependent self-construal			
It is better to consult others and get their opinions before doing anything	0.613	8.476	0.67
I respect decisions made by the groups I belong to	0.491	7.125	
I consult others before making important decisions.	0.793	10.472	
Price sensitivity			
I am willing to go to extra effort to find lower prices	0.748	17.507	0.92
I will grocery shop at more than one store to take advantage of low prices	0.861	36.376	
The money saved by finding low prices is usually worth the time and effort	0.823	22.767	
I would shop at more than one store to find low prices	0.909	43.863	
The time it takes to find low prices is usually worth the effort	0.815	26.015	
Attitudes towards brands			
I like to buy brands	0.632	10.413	0.85
I am loyal to brands	0.627	10.900	
I prefer to buy the most advertised brands	0.773	17.930	
I prefer to buy well-known brands	0.734	16.139	
I like brands I see on advertisements	0.709	13.757	
I tend to choose brands that enhance my image in public	0.664	14.859	
Attitudes towards advertising			
Advertising plays an important part in my buying decision	0.667	13.720	0.81
I refer to advertising because it allows me to enjoy the best deal out of the competing products advertised	0.599	10.002	
Most of my purchases are influenced by an advert	0.813	21.889	
I am easily influenced by advertising	0.779	18.395	
CFA Fit Indices			
$\chi^2 = 280.645$ (197); $\chi^2/\text{d.f.} = 1.42$; RMSEA = .047; CFI = 0.950; TLI = 0.941; SRMR= 0.055			

Table 11: Descriptive statistics, correlations and reliabilities**Descriptive statistics, correlations and reliabilities**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Independent self-construal	-				
2. Interdependent self-construal	-0.07	-			
3. Price sensitivity	0.13	0.44**	-		
4. Attitudes towards brands	0.35*	0.07	-0.13	-	
5. Attitudes towards ads	0.37**	0.06	0.03	0.71**	-
Mean	4.28	3.21	3.78	3.25	3.41
Standard Deviation	0.14	0.44	0.64	0.47	0.48
AVE	0.41	0.42	0.69	0.48	0.52
CR	0.73	0.67	0.92	0.85	0.81

AVE average variance extracted, CR composite reliability

*p < 0.01, **p < 0.001

4.6.2 Hypotheses Testing

The rest of the hypothesis for the conceptual framework were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). Parameter estimates and statistics for the path modeling are presented in table 12 below. The results provide evidence of acceptable model fit for the path analysis $X^2 = 280.645$ (197); $X^2/\text{d.f.} = 1.42$; RMSEA = .047; CFI = 0.950; TLI = 0.941; SRMR= 0.055.

Table 12: Model test results**Model Test results**

Paths	Standardized estimates	t-Value	Hypothesis Supported
PxS → Aad	-0.08	-0.76	No
IND → Aad	0.39	3.81**	Yes
INT → Aad	0.12	1.10	No
PxS → Ab	-0.23	-2.42*	Yes
IND → Ab	0.15	1.83 [†]	Yes
INT → Ab	0.14	1.38	No
Aab → Ab	0.65	11.57**	Yes

SEM Fit Indices

$X^2 = 280.645$ (197); $X^2/\text{d.f.} = 1.42$; RMSEA = .047; CFI = 0.950; TLI = 0.941; SRMR= 0.055

[†]P<0.10; *P<0.05; **P<0.001

PxS: price sensitivity; Aad: attitude towards advertisements; IND: independent self-construal; INT: interdependent self-construal; Ab: attitude towards brands.

4.6.2.1 Relationship between attitude towards advert and brand

Hypothesis H2 predicted that consumers with favourable advertisement attitudes will also show positive attitudes towards brands. This hypothesis was confirmed as the path coefficient between ad attitudes and brand attitudes was strong and positive ($\beta = 0.65$, $t = 11.57$, $p < 0.01$), hence the results provides support for H2. The results confirm that consumers who regard advertisements positively will also have favourable attitude towards brands and their related communications.

4.6.2.2 Relationship between price sensitivity and consumer attitudes towards advertisement and brands

In hypothesis H3a and H3b, it was proposed that price sensitivity will be negatively related to attitudes towards advertisements and attitudes towards brands. The findings show that price sensitivity is indeed related negatively to attitudes towards ads ($\beta = -0.08$, $t = -0.76$, $p < 0.05$), however, this influence is non-significant, hence H3a is not supported. On the contrary, the link between price sensitivity and brand attitudes is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.23$, $t = -2.42$, $p < 0.05$), this evidence supports H3b.

4.6.2.3 Relationship between independent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards advertisements

Hypotheses H5a and H5b predicted a strong and positive relationships between independent self-construal and attitudes towards advertisements on one hand, and attitudes towards brands on the other hand. Both hypotheses were supported by the findings, since the path coefficients from independent self-construal to attitudes towards advertisements ($\beta = 0.39$, $t = 3.81$, $p < 0.01$), and from independent self-construal to attitudes towards brands ($\beta = 0.15$, $t = 1.83$, $p < 0.01$),

0.10) are positive and significant, although the effect on brand attitudes is marginal. Thus, both H5a and H5b are supported. These effects are depicted in the path diagram in Figure 22 below.

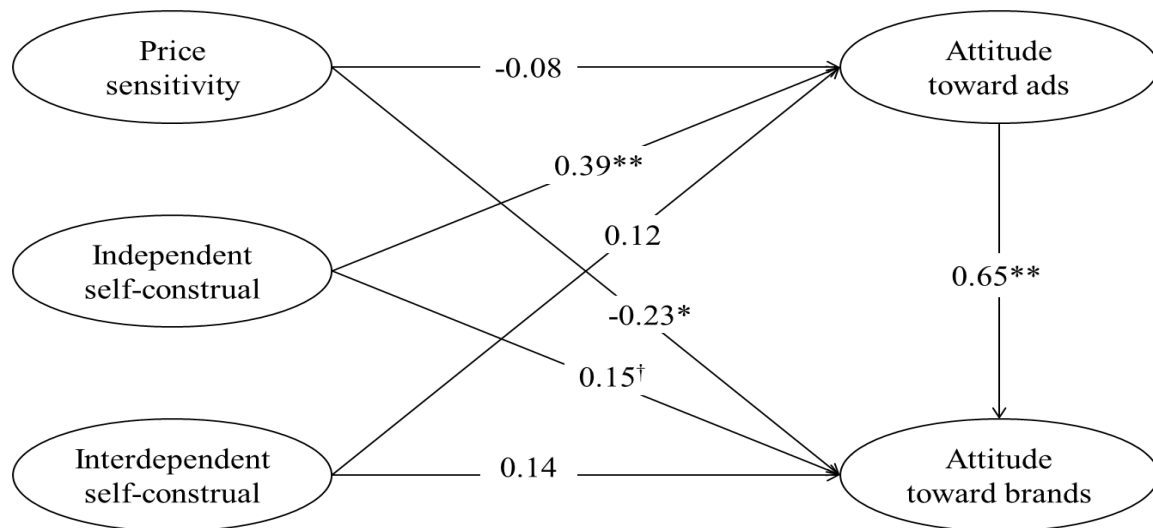


Figure 22: Path Diagram

4.6.2.4 Relationship between interdependent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards advertisements

Moreover, hypotheses H6a and H6b predicted a strong and positive relationships between interdependent self-construal and attitudes towards advertisements on one hand, and attitudes towards brands on the other hand. Neither of the hypotheses were supported since path coefficients of the link from interdependent self-construal to attitudes towards ads ($\beta = 0.12$, $t = 1.10$, $p > 0.05$) and the link from interdependent self-construal to attitudes towards brands ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 1.38$, $p > 0.05$) are both non-significant. This shows that consumers who are very conscious about their family and interrelations are less concerned about advertisements and brands.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter contains the results of the analysis, with an objective of answering research questions. A total of 194 participants, all residing in South Africa, completed the questionnaire. The questions were structured with an aim to understand the relationship between offensive advertising, associated brands, consumer attitudes and consumer buying behaviour. Structural Equation Modelling was performed to assess the linkage among self-construal and consumer price sensitivity, and how these factors impact attitudes towards advertising and brands. Chapter 5 discusses the results in more detail.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides discussion of the main findings and explains the results presented in Chapter 4. This chapter includes the discussion of major findings as related to the literature on advertising, the influence of individual factors in determining consumer attitudes and the effects of offensive advertising on purchase intention and on the associated brands.

5.2 Discussion of the main research problem

The main objective of the study was to investigate the effects of offensive advertising on consumer buying behaviour in South Africa and its impact on associated brands. This was achieved by investigating the impact of offensive advertisement on consumer's intention to purchase the advertised product or service; and investigating the influence of individual factors in determining the attitudes of consumers towards offensive advertising and whether there are any attitudinal differences according to individual differences. Not all hypotheses were supported. The discussion on the hypotheses is as follows:

5.2.1 Relationship between offensive advertising and intention to purchase

H1₀: Consumer's attitude towards offensive advertising has no influence over his/her intention to purchase the advertised product/service.

H1: Consumer's attitude towards offensive advertising has a negative influence over his/her intention to purchase the advertised product/service.

Individuals belief or attitudes towards the advert has an impact on purchase intent and brands involved (Huhmann & Limbu, 2016). The results show that advertising has a positive influence on consumers' intention to purchase. When advertisements are executed correctly, consumers are likely to purchase the products influenced by their hedonic and utilitarian attitudes. The

results of study confirmed that consumers purchases are, in most cases, influenced by advertisements. The results shown in Chapter 4, 26.8% of the respondents indicated that advertising has large influence over their purchasing behaviour and 61.9% of the respondents indicated that advertising has medium influence on their purchasing behaviour, meaning that advertising has influence and other factors also can contribute their behaviour. Their purchasing behaviour could be also influenced by the price and uses of the product, amongst other factors.

As presented in Chapter 4, results show that the hypotheses were confirmed that consumers' attitude towards offensive advertisements has a negative impact over his/her intention to purchase the advertised brand. The study revealed that there is a relationship between offensive advertising and purchase intentions. Consumers who find advertisements offensive show a low level of purchase intention. They are most likely not to recommend the product and this also negatively affects the advertised brand. This is evident in the way consumers showed high level of purchase intention when it came to the Mercedes Benz advertisement, which was a neutral advertisement and low level of purchase intention when it came to both sexual reference advertisement and religious offensive advertisement. This further shows the impact of advertising on consumer behaviour.

5.2.2 Relationship between attitude towards advertisement and brand

H2₀: A consumer's attitude towards the advert has no significant influence over his/her attitude towards the brand.

H2: A consumer's attitude towards the advert has a positive influence over his/her attitude towards the brand.

The hypothesis predicted that consumers with favourable advertisement attitudes will also show positive attitudes towards brands. This hypothesis was confirmed as the path coefficient

between advertisement attitudes and brand attitudes was strong and positive ($\beta = 0.65$, $t = 11.57$, $p < 0.01$). The results confirm that consumers who regard advertisements positively will also have favourable attitude towards brands and their related communications. Consumers look at brands when making purchase decisions and therefore brands should be positioned in a way that it reaches the consumer by means of advertising and promotion (Lautiainen, 2015).

5.2.3 Relationship between price sensitivity and consumer attitudes towards advertisement and brands

H3a₀: There is no relationship between price sensitivity and consumers' attitudes towards advertisements.

H3a: Price sensitivity is negatively related to consumers' attitude towards advertisements.

H3b₀: There is no relationship between price sensitivity and consumers' attitudes towards brand.

H3b: Price sensitivity is negatively related to consumers' attitudes towards brands.

It was proposed that price sensitivity will be negatively related to attitudes towards advertisements and attitudes towards brands. The findings show that price sensitivity is indeed related negatively to attitudes towards advertisement, however, the results show this influence is non-significant, and the hypotheses is not supported. This means price sensitivity has nothing to do with how the advertisement is viewed and perceived. On the contrary, the link between price sensitivity and brand attitudes is negative and significant; and the hypotheses is supported that price sensitivity will be negatively related to attitudes towards brands. The price has been the main differentiator in brands. The more expensive the brand is, the more likely to be perceived as a quality product.

5.2.4 Consumers' view to offensive advertisement

This section is split into two parts. The first part discusses the relationship between hedonic attitudinal appeal and offensive advertising; and the last part discusses utilitarian attitudinal appeal and offensive advertising.

i) Hedonic Attitudinal appeal and offensive advertisement

H4a₀: Consumers who view neutral adverts show unfavourable hedonic attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

H4a: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable hedonic attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

Results show that both female and male respondents rated the neutral advertisement to evoke better hedonic attitudes. Both male and female show negative hedonic attitudes towards sexual reference and religious offense advertisement compared to the neutral advertisement.

ii) Utilitarian Attitudinal Appeal and offensive advertisement

H4b₀: Consumers who view neutral adverts show unfavourable utilitarian attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

H4b: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable utilitarian attitudes than those who view offensive adverts.

Hc₀: Consumers who view neutral adverts rate them to have no appeal than those who view offensive adverts.

H4c: Consumers who view neutral adverts rate them to have a unique appeal than those who view offensive adverts.

H4d0: Consumers who view neutral adverts show no purchase intentions for those products than those who view offensive adverts.

H4d: Consumers who view neutral adverts show favourable purchase intentions for those adverts than those who view offensive adverts.

No gender difference was observed on utilitarian attitudinal appeal rating the neutral advertisement. Results show that both males and females rated the neutral advertisement favourably. However, offensive advertisements are poorly recognised by consumers in their utilitarian attitudinal appeal. Female respondents rated the sexual reference offensive advertisement poorly compared to how male respondents rated it; and male respondents rated religious offense advert poorly compared to how female respondents rated the advert.

5.2.5 Relationship between independent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards advertisements and brands

H5a0: There is no relationship between independent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H5a: Independent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H5b0: There is no relationship between independent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards brands.

H5b: Independent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards brands.

Results show the role of different types of self-construal on advertisements and consumer attitude towards brands. The results highlight the importance of understanding consumers' different types of self-construal and how the marketers can use the information to strategize in advertising and promotion.

Results show a strong and positive relationships between independent self-construal and attitudes towards advertisements on one hand, and attitudes towards brands on the other hand. This means that independent self-construal consumers are more concerned about the advertisements and brands advertised. This is confirmed by several studies that explain the characteristics of independent self-construal consumers. These individuals want to express themselves and stand out from the crowd, hence the love of brands. They also want to be seen as individuals who are successful, unique, and able to express themselves in a different way (Wang et al., 2014). Here, the hypotheses were supported, confirming independent self-construal will be positively related to consumer attitudes towards advertisements and brands.

5.2.6 Relationship between interdependent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards advertisements and brands

H6a0: There is no relationship between interdependent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H6a: Interdependent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards advertisements.

H6b0: There is no relationship between interdependent self-construal and consumer attitudes towards brands.

H6b: Interdependent self-construal is positively related to consumer attitudes towards brands.

Neither of the interdependent self-construal hypotheses were supported. Results show strong and positive relationships between interdependent self-construal and attitudes towards advertisements and attitudes towards brands. After testing the relationship between interdependent self-construal consumers and consumer attitudes and brands, results show that interdependent self-construal consumers are very conscious about their family and

interrelations and less concerned about advertisements and brands. This supports Zhang and Shrum (2009) that interdependent self-construal consumers tend to be more concerned with fitting in and living in harmony with other group members.

5.2.7 The relationship between gender and attitude towards advertisement

H7₀: Consumer's gender is not likely to influence his/her attitude towards offensive advertisement.

H7: Consumer's gender is likely to influence his/her attitude towards offensive advertisement.

Reactions towards advertising differ across men versus women and younger compared to older consumers (Huhmann & Limbu, 2016). In this study, no significant difference was observed for neutral advertisement. Both females and males had a higher intention to purchase the product on the neutral advertisement. However, results show that males rated the sexual reference advertisement favourably and they were likely to purchase the product compared to women. Women rated the sexual reference advertisement very poorly and the results show low likelihood to purchase that product. Studies have shown that women are mostly offended by sexual adverts more compared to men. A study done Huhmann and Limbu (2016) also confirmed that women who are offended by sexual reference adverts intend to purchase less of that product compared to men. According to Huhmann and Limbu (2016), most adverts describes women role in society and notably, one of the outcomes describes how women are depicted as sex objects. Failure to depict actual gender roles in advertisements can lead to gender-stereotype attitudes, which is shown by the results of the study.

Lastly, men rated religious offense advertisement less favorably compared to women. This suggests that, while the males showed positive liking for the sexual offense advertisement, their liking of the religious offense advertisement reduced in comparison to the females'. Yet, both males and females expressed higher intentions to purchase the product advertised in the neutral

advertisement than products advertised in the sexual and religious offense condition. This could be because of the type of adverts shown and it is assumed that, because of our cultural norms, certain individuals have not yet accepted changes in society and they find gay acts and nudity uncomfortable to watch. Sabri and Obermiller (2012) noted that suicide, death, abortion, nudity, gay sex, rape, physical abuse of women, masturbation and, parody of religious symbols is still considered as taboo topics and causes shock, and this depend on cultural norms within regions.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter analyses how consumers respond to offensive advertising. Individual consumer characteristics influence consumer attitude towards advertising and the advertised brand, which affects consumer's intention to purchase the advertised product. Furthermore, it is evident that individual beliefs have an influence on how consumers view adverts. Positive view on advertisements has a positive influence on the consumer's intention to purchase the advertised product or service. Other individual factors, such as gender, influence how consumers react to advertisements and associated brands. Chapter 6 provides conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study, recommendations and suggestions for future research based on the data analysed and discussed in the previous chapter.

6.2 Conclusion of the study

The study's main objective was to investigate the effects of offensive behaviour advertising on consumer buying behaviour. Although other factors were discussed in detail, this study only focused on self-construal, price sensitivity and gender as factors affecting consumer attitudes towards offensive behaviour. Having discussed the nature of consumers, the study also looked at how offensive adverts affect the advertised brand.

Experimental design was used for the study and variables included offensive advertisements as the independent variable, consumer buying behaviour, attitude of consumers and purchase intention as dependant variables, and consumers' gender as controlled variables. An experiment was conducted to identify the relationship between offensive advertising and consumer buying behaviour. Actual advertisements were used as a stimulate a real-world scenario. A neutral advert was used to control the experiment and two other offensive adverts used are sexual reference and religious offense.

The results are based on data collected from 194 respondents. Results indicate gender differences when it comes to offensive adverts. It is also clear that offensive advertisement lowers consumers' intention to buy the advertised product. Results also show that if consumer's attitude towards advert is negative, it also affects the brand negatively.

6.3 Recommendations

Regardless of all the negative effects of offensive advertising on consumer behaviour, the conclusions do suggest practical strategies that advertisers, marketers and organisations could employ to communicate messages to their consumers. These strategies are described as follows:

Advert content: Organisations must consider looking into advertising content and design their advertisements material in relation to what attract the consumers. In the study, I unpacked what really attracts consumers to advertising and results show that consumers are interested in the appeal of the advert. Humour also draws consumers towards advertisements. Previous studies done mention that humour attracts attention, but it should be used with caution as some products may affect the appropriateness of the humour treatment. Study done by Koneska, Teofilovska, and Dimitrieska (2017), state that humour attracts attention, enhance liking and influences consumer buying behaviour; but it should be used for products for low involvement products and feeling-oriented products.

Use of offensive advertising: In South Africa, companies must first investigate the benefits of offensive advertisement and use it on certain products, targeting certain specific markets. The idea of organisations gaining competitive advantage and creating awareness for their products and services has become the driving force behind organisations' marketing strategies. Companies use offensive advertising to quickly gain attention, increase the interest and influence of an advertisement and intention to generate publicity. Several studies show that it is possible for organisations to create unique advertising and achieve greater consumer interest by the use of offensive advertising. Organisations can use offensive advertisement when they are targeting a certain segment. For example, companies can use sexual reference advertisements when they are targeting men. This type of advertising can be effective as studies have shown

that men are less likely to be offended by sexual adverts and does not negatively affect their purchasing behaviour.

Customer Segmentation: Again, advertisers in South Africa should be able to segment their target market according to their individualism and employ advertisements accordingly. For example, advertising stimuli that employ independence, status, individual achievement and self-enhancement should be used to communicate to the independent self-construal consumers; and on the other hand, marketers should choose marketing communications that emphasize collectivism, high appreciation and warm-heartedness. Furthermore, South African marketers should focus more on customer segmentation if they wish to attract consumers' attention as studies have shown that consumer segmentation help generate more predictable effects of advertising.

6.4 Research implications: theoretical and managerial implications

Advertisers should investigate their target market's attitudes (Huhmann & Limbu, 2016), as this would help them strategize to enhance brand reputation relative to their competitors. Offensive advertisements have implications for advertisers. Advertisers should avoid offensive advertisement to reduce brand rejection and unfavourable global advertising evaluations (Huhmann & Limbu, 2016). It is important for marketers to tailor marketing strategies for their consumers, taking into considering different factors that influence behaviours. This will enable the organisations to correctly position their products or services in the South African market. The ultimate goal is to create a favourable brand image in the mind of the consumers to augment the impact of their intention to purchase the advertised product or service (Haque et al., 2015).

6.5 Suggestions for further research

The types of offensive advertising investigated are limited, this study only used sexual references and religious offense examples. Further research should cover other elements of offensive advertising discussed in Chapter 2, namely, vulgarity, disgusting images, profanity, impropriety, and moral offensiveness.

Further study should measure how other socio-demographics influence consumer behaviour and attitudes of consumers towards offensive advertising, factoring socioeconomical and comparing educational different backgrounds. Huhmann and Limbu (2016) suggested that determinates of offensive advertising maybe invariant across target markets than sexual reference attitudes and this should be investigated to determine the influence on consumer attitudes.

This study is limited to South African consumers, additional countries should be included in future research and the investigation expanded in terms of sample size; and investigate different cultural dimensions to gain a deeper understanding on the effects of offensive advertising. Cross-national research should focus on comparing different cultural values using different experiments.

Future research should also focus on the relationship between independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal on how they influence consumer attitudes towards hedonic and utilitarian products, and lastly, how self-construal interact with consumer purchase behaviour.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the conclusion of the study. Recommendations are described for organisations and/or marketers who wish to make use of offensive advertisements. Research implications, that is, theoretical and managerial implications, suggestions for further research were discussed.

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ANNEXURE A: RESEARCH COVER LETTER

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. The study investigates how offensive advertising affect consumers' purchasing behaviour. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous; and will only be reported as a collective combined total.

Kindly pay attention to the instructions and please answer every question. The success of the project depends on fully completed questionnaires. Although some of the questions appear similar, we request that you answer them all as they have been deliberately framed in that manner for statistical purposes. The questionnaire is expected to take 10-15 minutes or less to complete.

Should you have any questions about this research, please contact the undersigned.

Thank you for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

Sikhulekile Mdlongwa

MM SM Researcher, Wits Business School,

Email: sikhulekile.mdlongwa1@students.wits.ac.za

ANNEXURE B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate your consent for participation here: **I agree** ☐ **I disagree** ☐

Please Start Survey Here

QUESTIONNAIRE 1: EXPERIMENT (CONTROL)

SECTION A: Please view the following Mercedes Benz advert and answer Section A1 &A2:



Please rate the Mercedes Benz advert above on the following dimensions:

SECTION A1								
I find the Mercedes Benz advert to be:								
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither disagree nor Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Unpleasant	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Pleasant
Not fun to look at	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Fun to look at
Not entertaining	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Entertaining
Not enjoyable	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Enjoyable
Not important	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Important
Not informative	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Informative
Not useful	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Useful

Not helpful	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Helpful
Ordinary	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Peculiar
Just like any other ad	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Different from any other ad
Nothing special	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Outstanding

Measuring hedonic and utilitarian attitudes towards adverts and brands: Questionnaire

adapted from (Olney et al., 1991)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please **mark/tick the number** that closely matches your opinion.

SECTION A2					
This survey is to measure intention to purchase the product after seeing the advert	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am likely to purchase the product after seeing this advert	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to shift from one brand to another after seeing this advert	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to purchase a different product from the advertised brand	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to try new products made by Mercedes Benz	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to recommend this product to my friends and family who may ask for my opinion	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to say positive things about this advertised brand	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to speak well of the advertised brand to my friends, family and other people	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Measuring attitudes towards offensive advertising: questionnaire adapted from (Potgieter et al., 2013)

QUESTIONNAIRE 2: EXPERIMENT (SEXUAL REFERENCE)

SECTION A: Please view the following Tom Ford advert and answer Section A1 &A2:



Please rate the Tom Ford advert above on the following dimensions:

SECTION A1								
I find the Tom Ford advert to be:								
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither disagree nor Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Unpleasant	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Pleasant
Not fun to look at	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Fun to look at
Not entertaining	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Entertaining
Not enjoyable	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Enjoyable
Not important	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Important
Not informative	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Informative
Not useful	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Useful
Not helpful	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Helpful
Ordinary	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Peculiar
Just like any other ad	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Different from any other ad
Nothing special	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Outstanding

Measuring hedonic and utilitarian attitudes towards adverts and brands: Questionnaire

adapted from (Olney et al., 1991)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please **mark/tick the number** that closely matches your opinion.

SECTION A2 This survey is to measure intention to purchase the product after seeing the advert	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am likely to purchase the product after seeing this advert	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to shift from one brand to another after seeing this advert	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to purchase a different product from the advertised brand	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to try new products made by Tom Ford	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to recommend this product to my friends and family who may ask for my opinion	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to say positive things about this advertised brand	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
I am likely to speak well of the advertised brand to my friends, family and other people	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Measuring attitudes towards offensive advertising: questionnaire adapted from (Potgieter et al., 2013)

QUESTIONNAIRE 3: EXPERIMENT (RELIGIOUS OFFENSE)

SECTION A: Please view the following United Colors of Benetton advert and answer Section A1 & A2:



Please rate the United Colors of Benetton advert above on the following dimensions:

SECTION A1								
I find the United Colors of Benetton advert to be:								
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither disagree nor Agree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Unpleasant	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Pleasant
Not fun to look at	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Fun to look at
Not entertaining	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Entertaining
Not enjoyable	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Enjoyable
Not important	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Important
Not informative	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Informative
Not useful	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Useful
Not helpful	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Helpful
Ordinary	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Peculiar
Just like any other ad	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Different from any other ad
Nothing special	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	Outstanding

Measuring hedonic and utilitarian attitudes towards adverts and brands: Questionnaire

adapted from (Olney et al., 1991)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please **mark/tick the number** that closely matches your opinion.

SECTION A2 This survey is to measure intention to purchase the product after seeing the advert	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am likely to purchase the product after seeing this advert	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I am likely to shift from one brand to another after seeing this advert	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I am likely to purchase a different product from the advertised brand	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I am likely to try new products made by United Colors of Benetton	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I am likely to recommend this product to my friends and family who may ask for my opinion	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I am likely to say positive things about this advertised brand	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I am likely to speak well of the advertised brand to my friends, family and other people	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

Measuring attitudes towards offensive advertising: questionnaire adapted from (Potgieter et al., 2013)

THE BELOW SECTIONS WERE THE SAME FOR ALL EXPERIMENTS

SECTION A3 What is your general attitude towards advertising?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think advertising is useful because it promotes the latest products	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
Advertising plays an important part in my buying decision	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

Through advertising I get to know more innovative ideas	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I refer to advertising because it allows me to enjoy the best deal out of the competing products advertised	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
Most of my purchases are influenced by an advert	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I am easily influenced by advertising	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

Measuring attitude towards advertising: Questionnaire adapted from (Jain & Goel, 2012)

SECTION A4 Here we measure general attitudes towards brands. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I like to buy brands	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I am loyal to brands	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I prefer to buy the most advertised brands	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I prefer to buy well-known brands	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I like brands I see on advertisements	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
Advertisements make me think brands are important	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I tend to choose brands that enhance my image in public	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
People who purchase brands are respected by the public	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

Measuring attitudes towards brands: Questionnaire adapted from (Pagla & Brennan, 2014;

Potgieter et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2007)

SECTION A5 Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with any of the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am willing to go to extra effort to find lower prices	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I will grocery shop at more than one store to take advantage of low prices	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
The money saved by finding low prices is usually worth the time and effort	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I would shop at more than one store to find low prices	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

The time it takes to find low prices is usually worth the effort	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
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Measuring price sensitivity: Questionnaire adapted from (Lichtenstein et al., 1993)

SECTION A6 In this section, we present a set of questions that describes how people describe themselves. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with any of the questions.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy being unique and different from others	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I should decide my future on my own	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
It is important for me to act as an independent person	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
It is better to consult others and get their opinions before doing anything	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I respect decisions made by the groups I belong to	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I consult others before making important decisions.	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅
I maintain harmony in the groups of which I am a member	☐ ₁	☐ ₂	☐ ₃	☐ ₄	☐ ₅

Questionnaire adapted from (Gudykunst & Lee, 2003)

In this section, we present a set of questions about consumer attitudes and opinion. Kindly share your opinion with us. Remember the questions have no right nor wrong answer.

How much influence do you feel adverts have over your purchasing behaviour?				
☐ Large influence	☐ Medium influence	☐ No influence	☐ Not sure	
What attracts you towards advertising on TV/ Radio/Billboards/Newspaper/ etc?				
☐ Model	☐ Colour	☐ Appeal	☐ Vulgarly	☐ Humour

SECTION B: Please provide your personal information

What is your gender?							
☐ Female		☐ Male		☐ Prefer not to specify			
What category below includes your age?							
☐ 17 or younger	☐ 18 – 25	☐ 26 – 30	☐ 30 - 40	☐ 40 – 50	☐ 51 and older		
What is your race?							
☐ Black	☐ White	☐ Indian	☐ Coloured	☐ Other			
What is the highest level of education you completed?							
☐ Some primary school	☐ Matric or equivalent	☐ Professional /Technical Diploma	☐ Bachelor's degree / Honours	☐ Post-graduate degree (e.g. Master, PhD)	☐ Other		
What is your religion?							
☐ Christian	☐ Muslim	☐ Hindu	☐ Ancestral, Traditional African Religion	☐ Buddhist & Bahai	☐ Jewish	☐ Atheist & agnostic	☐ Nothing in particular
Residential area							
☐ Urban		☐ Peri-Urban		☐ Rural			
Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status?							
☐ Student	☐ Vocational training	☐ Employed	☐ Not employed	☐ Never been employed	☐ Retired		
Which of the following categories best describe your current income per month?							
☐ R0-R10000	☐ R10001-R20000	☐ R20001-R30000	☐ R30001-R40000	☐ R40001-R50000	☐ R50000 and more		

End of the survey. Thank you!

ANNEXURE C: PILOT STUDY SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Section n	Construct measured	n	m	V	SD	Items	α
AA	Attitudes towards Advertising	22	21.23	13.136	3.624	6	0.753
AB	Attitudes towards brands	22	25.73	26.208	5.119	8	0.804
RG	Influence of Reference Groups on consumer attitudes	22	27.09	17.991	4.242	8	0.604
SR	Sexual Reference	22	19.45	49.688	7.049	9	0.857
OI	Offensive advertising: Impropriety	22	19.45	43.688	6.610	9	0.827
MO	Offensive advertising: Moral offensiveness	22	15.36	30.814	5.551	9	0.853
DI	Offensive advertising: Disgusting Images	22	17.73	51.446	7.173	9	0.885
RO	Offensive advertising: Religious Offense	22	18.18	56.156	7.494	9	0.900

n: number of cases; *items*: number of items; *m*: mean; *v*: variance; *SD*: standard deviation; α :

Alpha