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The effectiveness of using Religious content in advertising products in the Maltese

Market

By

Christian Joseph Scifo

0109998M

Master of Science in Strategic Management and Marketing

University of Malta

Declaration of Authenticity

I, Christian Joseph Scifo studying MSc in Marketing and Management, announce that this study has not been distributed to any other University or institution of learning for a higher degree. This study is built upon originality and dedication by the author, Christian Joseph Scifo. Moreover, the publications mentioned in this dissertation have been personally accessed.

Signature: *C.Scifo*

Date: 29/08/2020

Name: Christian J. Scifo

Abstract

Advertising has become more difficult as it is harder for companies to stand out from the vast amounts of advertisements. Therefore, marketers might opt for shock advertising in order to grab the attention of the consumer. One such form of advertising is that of using religious content in the advertising of products. This has already been attempted in Malta by New York's Best, a food retailer, a few years back with its effects ranging across the different audiences. This study aimed at looking at the effectiveness of using this form of advertising to promote products in the Maltese market. A survey was rolled out and distributed over all the Maltese regions. A total of 536 valid responses were collected. The research concluded that this sort of advertising can have a negative impact on the brand which will subsequently reflect on the sales of the product, referred to as the purchase intention in this study. Despite this, this research also showed that this form of advertising can be effective on a selected audience, therefore, its effectiveness may be dependent on the consumer that is being targeted. Finally, this research also highlighted that the use of religious content in the advertising of products might be more effective in the future as the current majority of the Maltese consumers are not open to such advertising. All in all, this study should give us an insight into the perception of the Maltese consumers towards such advertisement as well as its effectiveness in selling products. Further qualitative studies in this field could reveal into more detail the reasons behind such patterns and attitude towards such advertisement.

Keywords: Religion, Brand attitude, Purchase intention, Shock advertising

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I would like to thank and show my appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Ann Laenen for her continuous assistance, support, and guidance throughout this whole challenging and learning experience.

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Without the support of the above-mentioned people this work would have been much harder to accomplish and endure.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my beloved grandmother Salvina and my mother Rita.

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List of Abbreviation

AB: Attitude towards the brand

AD: Attitude towards the Advertisement

PI: Purchase Intention

NYB: New York's Best

LAU: Local Administrative Unit

NSO: National Statistics Office

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Chapter 1: Introduction

Nowadays it is becoming more difficult to stand out in the vast amounts of advertisements that consumers are exposed to, especially with online advertising (Rejón-Guardia & Martínez-López, 2014). Therefore, some marketers are resorting to shock advertising in order to appeal to consumers (Singla & Sundrani, 2012).

One of these forms of advertising consists of the use of religious content in the advertising of consumer products (Halvadia, Patel & Patel, 2011). Such advertising can have different effects, from generating a negative reaction to generating more awareness through the shock on the consumers, literature so far is not in consensus (Virvilaitė & Matulevičienė, 2013).

A few years back this form of advertising was attempted by a Maltese food retailer New York's Best. Different reactions were generated and ultimately the company was forced to bring the advertisement down. This shows that such advertisements do generate a reaction and indeed, stand out, however, their effectiveness is still unexplored in the Maltese Market due to insufficient research. Therefore, this research will be attempting to delve into this form of advertising and understand its effectiveness in the Maltese Market.

1.1: Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to look at the use of religion in advertising in Malta and to try and understand its influence on the attitude towards the brand which ultimately lead to an influence on the purchase intention. In addition to this, the study will look into any variations between different age, sex and regionality. This will allow to see whether

certain patterns arise from the collected data. Ultimately this study is trying to determine whether the use of religion in advertising is worthwhile in Malta.

1.2: Significance of the Study

By looking at the New York's Best's case study, certain likely practical and theoretical implications of this research can be pointed out. It can be articulated that using religious content for advertising will generate a reaction from the public. Therefore, research on the effectiveness of this form of advertising will be helpful in understanding the influence of this reaction on the attitude towards the brand and ultimately the purchase intention.

Religion can be found in all known societies; this has been central to the shaping of individuals reactions and perceptions (Akinfenwa, Fagbamila & Abdulganiyu, 2014). This statement is also very relevant for the Maltese market. Therefore, it can be said that this research will be providing marketers with the answer to whether the use of religious content in advertising is effective in the Maltese Market and if so to which audiences.

1.3: Chapter Overview

This introductory chapter will be followed by the following chapters:

Chapter 2 – Literature Review, will deal with the main topics revolving around this research which are religion and cultural values as well the different marketing appeals. Moreover, this chapter delves into the Maltese context with regards to religion in advertising in order to give a wider picture. This chapter looks at existing literature and

research in order to determine the current status quo and what can be done to challenge it.

Chapter 3 – Methodology, will focus on explaining the approach taken by the researcher in terms of a philosophical standpoint. This also dives into the calculation of the sample and the method selected. Furthermore, this chapter goes into the medium used for distribution as well as any measures taken to face the limitation proposed by such medium. Finally, this chapter guides the reader through the different analysis that were generated through SPSS and any other software used.

Chapter 4 – Results and Analysis, will focus on the presentation and analysis of the data collected from the survey.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Findings, will focus on adding on the results and analysis chapter in a more holistic way. Moreover, this chapter includes the implications for marketers.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion, will include a summary of the study. This will also present the limitations of the study as well as the suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section provides a context and existing literature relevant to this study, it is an important tool as it analyses existent literature, identifies important relationships and provides with the required knowledge around the subject matter (Bolderston, 2008). It is split into five; the first section looks at the current situation of the Maltese market by taking a closer look at the New York's Best case study, the second part dives into religion and its role in advertising, the third looks at cultural values, the fourth analyses studies that revolve around different marketing appeals mainly shock advertising and the final section looks at the relationship between attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention.

2.1: The Maltese Context – a case study of New York's Best

The context for this study is set by an event that occurred in Malta 3 years ago. New York's Best a fast food restaurant decided to use religious content in their advertisement, they did so by using a billboard to depict the famous last supper by Leonardo Da Vinci with a twist. The characters from the Bible were depicted eating New York's Best food instead of the original wine and bread (Grech, 2017). Reactions to this billboard varied, there were people offended, example a group called ''patrijotti Maltin'' went to tear it down. It should be noted that this reaction should not be generalised since the mentioned group is an extremist group with certain exaggerated ideas. Despite this, Grech (2017) noted that many remarked that this idea was in bad taste. On the other hand, there were people who took it well and even posted on Facebook about it (Peregin, 2017a).

In the article by Grech (2017), it is argued that this advertisement only used religion as a context, and that the product being advertised was not controversial when

compared to the same use of the last supper in other advertisements around the world. This indicates that in Malta the people might be more sensitive when it comes to the use of religion.

The billboard was removed by the owner just a day after, due to offending to many people, this reaction was not anticipated by the owner (Diacono, 2017). Despite only standing for one day, although not all positive, this generated a lot of exposure for the company (Peregin, 2017a)(Peregin, 2017b). The exposure generated probably would have costed a lot of money for New York's Best, as this ended up in several newspapers, on the television news and on the radio, not to mention on social media.

By looking at the above case study, it can be articulated that using religious content for advertising generates a reaction from the public. Therefore, research on the effectiveness of this form of advertising will be helpful to understand these reactions and decipher if the positive effects outweigh the negative, as after all bad publicity is still publicity (Cernat, 2014b).

2.2: Religion

Religion can be found in all known societies; this has been central to the shaping of individuals reactions and perceptions (Akinfenwa, Fagbamila & Abdulganiyu, 2014).

Since this research revolves around the involvement of religion in the advertisement of products, looking at existing literature on the topic is crucial. Firstly, a definition of religion will be derived, secondly, religion and advertising will be brought together, and literature within this regard will be analysed.

Defining religion is not easy due to its diversity (Dawes & James, 2012; Dow, 2007), but the definition given by Taylor (1990) offers a way forwards. He argues that this at least consists of three essential elements, the mythic element, the ritual element and the tradition element, this definition is also supported by Durkheim.

It is the definition by Emile Durkheim that will be adopted for this study, *''A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them''* (Durkheim & Swain, 2008). This will be adopted as it looks at religion in a dynamic way and from various aspects. Moreover, it also speaks of a moral community and unifies people into one community through religion.

Through building the person's moral values, perspectives and approaches to life, religion is undoubtedly a dominant catalyst in moulding persons' social behaviours (Nath & Phil, 2015; Shyan Fam, Waller, & Zafer Erdogan, 2004). Since as we will see later all of these values affect consumer's perception of advertisement, religion can be said to be very important. Despite all of this, it should not be taken as a general rule that religion dominates human attitude towards life, there can be other factors that affect this (Cyril De Run *et al.*, 2010).

This study will focus on Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church because it is the dominant religion in Malta. Moreover, the constitution also states that Roman Catholic Church is to be taught in state schools (Aquilina, 2018b). The practise of Christianity is also supported by a statistic published by the National Statistics Office (NSO). From the surveys conducted in the 'Cultural Participation 2016', 67% responded that they attend to parish feasts yearly, and 52% that they attend to the Good Friday procession

and passion plays (National Statistis Office, 2017). However, it is also interesting to mention that from a Survey conducted by the Archbishop Scicluna through DISCERN (Institute for Research on the Signs of the Times), it resulted that only 36.1% of the Catholic population in Malta (this excluded Gozo) attended the Sunday Mass. This is, indeed, an alarming figure, however, this does not necessarily mean that the people are not Catholic, rather than their level of religiosity might be decreasing. Furthermore, this survey indicated that 84.4% of the Maltese population is Catholic (DISCERN, 2017).

2.2.1: Religion in Advertising

The importance of religion in advertising is also reflected in numerous studies relating to the use of religious symbols in advertising and on how religion affects people's perspectives on advertising (Taylor & Halstead, 2010; Cernat, 2014; Nardella, 2012; Hasan et al., 2016). Moreover, it is well established by scholars that religion is relevant to the study of markets (Mittelstaedt, 2002). Religion is also relevant to the advertising of products, seen through the use of Christian symbols in the secular market for advertising, as marketers seem to assume their positive affect on consumers (Taylor & Halstead, 2010).

After looking at several conducted studies, it can be concluded that only a select few target religious content in advertising and its effects (Cernat, 2014; Hasan et al., 2016; Nardella, 2012). Starting with Cernat (2014); in his article *''The role of religion in advertising: case-study on the ''Batman'' TV commercial'',* the perspective of consumers on this commercial was examined in order to understand how controversial religious advertisements affect the consumer. 61 students were interviewed, and their responses analysed. The fact that the interviewees were mostly young students

affected the results, since age is an important factor in such research as mentioned by Andersson *et al.* (2004). Cernat (2014) found out that such advertisement can create enough awareness and increase sales by a significant amount. Another noteworthy article by Ugolini (2015) discusses the use of religion in advertising in Italy, in various contexts. This observed that controversies occur when the use of religion is not to create a context but rather used as a protagonist (Ugolini, 2015). By being a protagonist direct reference to religion is being made, for example portraying a product as a miracle or using Jesus in an advertisement. A content analysis of a sample of 607 advertisements by Nardella (2012) highlights the limits that marketers such as Bata, A-Style and Citroen reach with regards to religious content in advertising. In their research Hasan *et al.* (2016) looked at the attitude towards the advertisements and the purchase intention with regards to advertisements that make use of Islamic symbols. The results show that this can significantly attribute to the attitude towards the advertisement and the purchase intention. This study only used women in their sample which bias the results as gender plays a role on perception of such advertisement (Urwin & Venter, 2014).

On the other hand, a set of articles look into the relation between the religious practice of consumers and how it effects their perspectives of advertisement of certain products (Shyan Fam, Waller & Zafer Erdogan, 2004; Ugolini, 2015; Kadić-Maglajlić *et al.*, 2017). In their cross-cultural research Shyan Fam, Waller & Zafer Erdogan (2004) looked at the influence that religion has on the attitude towards advertising of controversial products. This meant that the research was focused on looking at the product and how it is perceived by different religions rather than looking at the use of religious content in advertising. By surveying university students from several countries this research managed to conclude that the level of offence does vary with

different religions. According to this research religion is an ingredient of culture that can take over any other aspect of society and it should not be underestimated. Kadić-Maglajlić *et al.* (2017) found out that a high level of religious commitment will affect the perception of the advertisement, and although an advertisement is ethically acceptable, it might still be perceived as controversial for someone with a high level of religious commitment.

From the above it can be derived that the use of religious content as a protagonist in advertising is not sufficiently researched. Moreover, given the lack of studies in the Maltese context on this regard, this research will be targeting the direct use of religious content as a protagonist, and its effectiveness in the Maltese market.

2.3: Cultural Values

Since this study looks at perceptions on and attitude towards advertising, cultural values cannot be ignored, because different cultures will have different values (Roccas & Sagiv, 2010). Cross-cultural studies such as the one by Petrovici & Marinov (2007) examine how cultural attitudes affect the perception of advertising. Moreover, culture is also very much linked with religion, indeed, the two are in most cases intertwined making boundaries between these two hard to establish (Beyers, 2017; Hackett, 2005). It should also be mentioned that cultural factors can shape the relationship between religion and individual values (Tarakeshwar, Stanton & Pargament, 2003).

Values guide purchase intention, therefore, marketers use different marketing appeals in countries which have varying levels of cultural values (Mortimer & Grierson, 2010; Liu *et al.,* 2009). Furthermore, different cultural values will require adaptations of the content that is employed in advertising (Baack, Wilson & Till, 2016). Although the focus

of this research will be on the use of religious content in advertising, cultural values should also be kept in mind, due to their relationship with religion (Beyers, 2017).

Hatzithomas, Zotos & Boutsouki (2011) identified that advertisements adopt to the different cultural dimensions of the audience. The cultural dimensions were identified by Hofstede (1980) in order to be able to quantify different cultures and therefore, assist in their study (Agodzo, 2014). The former was also captured in a study that compared advertising appeals in the US with those in the Arab countries. This study found out differences in the marketing appeals according the different cultural dimensions, furthermore, religion also played a part in the Arab countries (Kalliny *et al.*, 2011).

As the above research suggests such advertising should be taken into consideration by advertisers, however, this consideration is not always well perceived. Indeed, in a research by Malik & Yusaf (2016) on the viewer's perceptions of advertisement's violation of social and cultural norms conducted in Pakistan it was found that the majority of the people disposed to television advertisement felt that these advertisements are violating social and cultural values and were promoting an anti-Islamic Culture. This reveals that advertisers do consider these values and go against them to shock the audience. This gap was also found in a study by Shahin (2019) which analyses the Arab world and the United States. This study analysed magazine advertisements and their content, it found out that the values of the Arab world, example women and dressing codes were not being upheld by magazine advertising. This is linked and can build up to shock advertising.

Cultural values are also important for this research, for the fact that they can act as a moderator between the perception of the advertisement's level of offence (taboo) and

the felt emotion, which will reflect in the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention (Sabri, 2012). This will be looked at through the different ethnic backgrounds of the respondents. Another study is also in agreement with Sabri (2012), the results supported the hypothesis that the perception varied with cultural values (Sawang, 2010). This implies that the levels of offence will vary with the different levels of cultural dimensions (values).

From the above it can be concluded that most of the research show that cultural values are important in understanding the audience (Petrovici & Marinov, 2007; Mortimer & Grierson, 2010; Baack, Wilson & Till, 2016). Moreover, marketers should adhere to these values and adapt their marketing appeal accordingly. On the other hand, certain studies results do not go in line with this (Shahin, 2019; Malik & Yusaf, 2016). Most important for this research are those studies that show advertisers going against the values of the consumer. This is because the use of religious content in advertising might be going against the Maltese cultural norms, which leads to shock advertising (Hagenbuch, 2015).

2.4: Marketing Appeals – Shock Advertising

Advertising appeals, otherwise known as the message strategies, are different ways in which marketers try to influence the consumers and expose them to their products (Nwankwo *et al.*, 2013). It is of utmost important to understand that not all appeals demonstrate all the attributes of the product, rather they create an atmosphere in which the customer is intrigued and attracted to the product (Akbari, 2015). Advertising appeals are usually separated into two different dimensions, either rational or emotional (Nwankwo *et al.*, 2013; Pollay, 1983; Vézina & Paul, 1997).

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More important to this research are the shock advertisement appeals, these can be separated into various forms, one of which includes the use of religious content, also referred to as religious taboos (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003; Urwin & Venter, 2014). A shock advertisement is described as an advertisement aimed at startling and offending its audience, sometimes uncomfortable and painful, as well as going against the norms (Hagenbuch, 2015; Gustafson & Yssel, 1994; Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003). A research by Beard (2008) also found out that the audience is shocked by the theme of the advertisement rather than by the product itself, in the case of this study, the theme is that of religion.

Such form of advertisement is about shocking the audience in order to be able to struck out through the clutter of advertisements (Singla & Sundrani, 2012). Therefore, shock advertisement and its impact are very much related to this study. Singla & Sundrani (2012), also discuss the matter that this form of advertisement should not only be about aweing the audience but also at generating more sales for the company. This aspect should partially be captured in this research through the measuring of the purchase intention. This is because the intention to buy does not always lead to the actual buying of the product (Saxena, 2011).

The effectiveness of such advertising can vary, from research among a group of university students it emerged that such advertisements increase the attention, benefits the memory and positvely influence behaviour (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003). This view is supported in research done by Cernat (2014) which mentions that the audience attention was well captured and although the reaction might not have been all positive, the advertisement did reach the customer. It should

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be noted though that there is no consensus between the different studies, and therefore, certain implications cannot be concluded (Virvilaitė & Matulevičienė, 2013).

For instance Prendergast, Ho & Phau observed that people are most likely not to buy from the company that uses offensive marketing, if they have an alternative (Prendergast, Ho & Phau, 2002).

When creating such advertisements the marketer has to pay attention to the level of shock, too little might not get the attention anticipated, and too much might make the consumer dislike the company and create discomfort (Andersson *et al.*, 2004). The dose of shock should also be mentioned because this will vary according to the audience, and how much exposed they were to such advertisements before, like an addiction (Halvadia, Patel & Patel, 2011; Ford, LaTour & Tanner, 2006). Therefore, when conducting this study this has to be taken into account, as different levels of shock might generate different results.

This form of adevertising can be risky, indeed, in a particular study that looked at consumer perception of taboo (sex and death) in advertisments, it was found that the use of taboos in advertising do have a strong negative effect on consumer's attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention (Sabri & Obermiller, 2011). The study also adds, that although the results in the study reflected a negative effect, at the end of the day it is the sales that really matter and can put this matter at rest. An interesting observation in this study was that previous research (Vézina & Paul, 1997) might have biased the results due to using real brands, which result in preconcieved attitude towards the brand.

It should also be taken into account that studies in this field pointed out that a relationship between offence taken and gender can exist (Urwin & Venter, 2014; Andersson *et al.*, 2004; Sabri & Obermiller, 2011; Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006). Moreover, different generations wil have different reactions to such advertisements due to diferent levels of resistance (Andersson *et al.*, 2004; Javed & Zeb, 2011; Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006). Furthermore, research observed that consumer perception towads shock advertising is also influenced by socio-demograpohc and cultural factors such as religiousity, moral principles and individualism and collectivism (Virvilaitė & Matulevičienė, 2013). These variables should be taken into account when conducting this study, as they might play a role in the impact of the use of religious content in advertising.

2.5: Purchase Intention and Attitude towards the Brand

The purchase intention is usually defined as the intention of the consumer to buy from the company in the future (Saxena, 2011; Hsu & Tsou, 2011). Purchase intention is subject to various influences, other than advertising and might vary with the product/service being advertised (Mirabi, Akbariyeh & Tahmasebifard, 2015; Xiao, Yang & Iqbal, 2018). Other influences as mentioned by Xiao, Yang & Iqbal (2018) could be the quality of the service and the price. Furthermore, this can serve as a tool to forecast the process of purchasing (Yaqubi & Karaduman, 2019).

By looking at different definition Altmann (2008) identified similar characteristics; attitude is a mental state, a value, a belief or a feeling and a tendency towards a behaviour or action. There are two forms of attitude that can be of relevance to this study, attitude towards advertisement and attitude towards the brand.

Attitude towards the brand is defined by Mirbgheri (2012) as the '' audiences affective reaction to the advertised brand '' (p. 117). Moreover, this is the perception and attitude of the consumer towards the brand being advertised, therefore, this is also established through experiences (Ghorban, 2012). Attitude towards advertisement is defined as the positive or negative attitude (reaction) to advertisement itself (MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986). Attitude towards advertisement influences both directly and indirectly the attitude towards the brand of the customer, moreover, this relation becomes stronger as the recognition of the brand decreases (Mirbgheri, 2012; Sallam & Algannaah, 2016).

Looking at the relationship between attitude towards the brand, attitude towards advertisement and the purchase intention is important for this study, because it will assist the researcher in understanding better the effects that using religious content has on advertising. Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship between attitude towards the brand, attitude towards the advertisement and the purchase intention. The attitude towards the advertisement affect directly both the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention, while the attitude towards the brand can act as a mediator between these two (Kaushal & Rakesh, 2016; Goldsmith, Lafferty & Newell, 2000; Sallam & Algannaah, 2016; Sabri & Obermiller, 2011; Hasan *et al.*, 2016; Kadić-Maglajlić *et al.*, 2017).
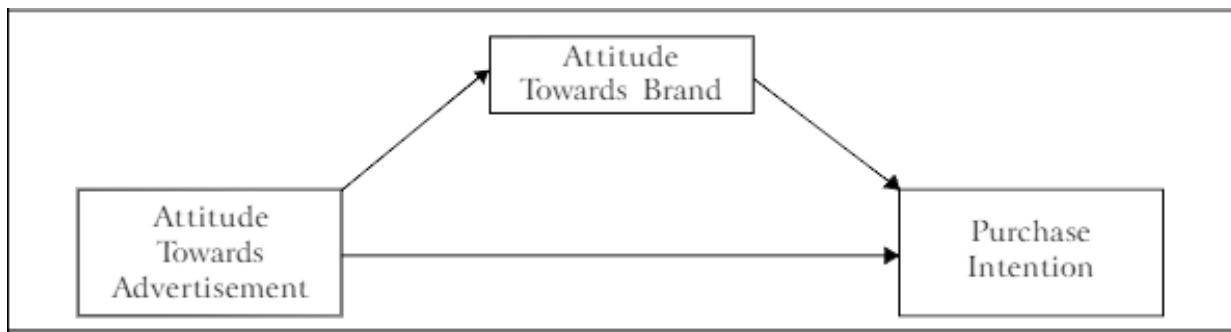
Figure 2.1: The relationship between attitude towards the brand, attitude towards the advertisement and the Purchase intention

Source (Kaushal & Rakesh, 2016)

In the study by Sallam & Algannaah (2016) by focusing on Saudi consumers the above relationship was directly investigated. The findings of this study also go in line with research by Goldsmith, Lafferty & Newell (2000). In this study it was found that attitude towards the brand only serves as a partial mediator between attitude towards the advertisement and the purchase intention. The study by Sallam & Algannaah (2016) had a limited sample selected from a particular city and consisted of students, therefore, the results cannot be generalised.

In their research Kaushal and Rakesh (2016) looked at the relationship between the three variables as mentioned in figure 2.1 by conducting a study amongst the University of Lucknow. The data gathered in this research was enough to prove the hypothesis that support figure 2.1. In other words, these findings confirmed that although advertisements have a huge impact on the purchase intention of the consumer, the brand name (attitude towards the brand) is also very important. Sabri & Obermiller (2011) in their research also included gender before the attitude towards advertisement, this is because it might be an influential factor. Apart from gender there also exist other factors that should be taken into consideration such as age and religious affiliation (Prendergast & Chia Hwa, 2003).

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2.6: Situating the Current Research

This literature review indicated that shock advertising can have different reactions. These are bound to vary with the level of taboo (the level of offence). Therefore, this factor must be taken into consideration when conducting this study. It should be noted that most of the studies focused on taboos such as death and sex rather than religious taboos (Sabri & Obermiller, 2011; Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006). Despite this, they can still offer insights for this study, as they provide with different measures and perspectives on taboos and shock advertising.

Another important takeaway from previous studies in this area is that gender, age, religiosity levels and different cultural values all play a part on the level of offence that is taken by the consumer. Although these cannot all be studied and measured in this research, they should still be taken into consideration and used as measures, this way, they will allow for comparison between the subjects. The variance of the cultural values will be limited since this research is not cross-cultural but focused only on Malta.

The relationship described in figure 2.1 is of importance for this study, since the research will be using the purchase intention and the attitude towards the brand as a measure of the effectiveness of using religious content in advertising. Therefore, understanding what existing literature dictates with this regard is crucial. From such relationship it was concluded that by analysing the purchase intention and the attitude towards the brand the effects of the attitude towards the advertisement can be derived.

Figure 2.2 below was adopted from (Liu *et al.*, 2009; Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003; Sawang, 2010; Sabri, 2012; Virvilaitė & Matulevičienė, 2013; Kaushal & Rakesh, 2016). This diagram was adopted and re-arranged according to

the information gathered and analysed in the above literature review. Figure 2.2 helps to visualise the findings from the literature review and capture the relationship between the various studies. This figure also incorporates figure 2.1.
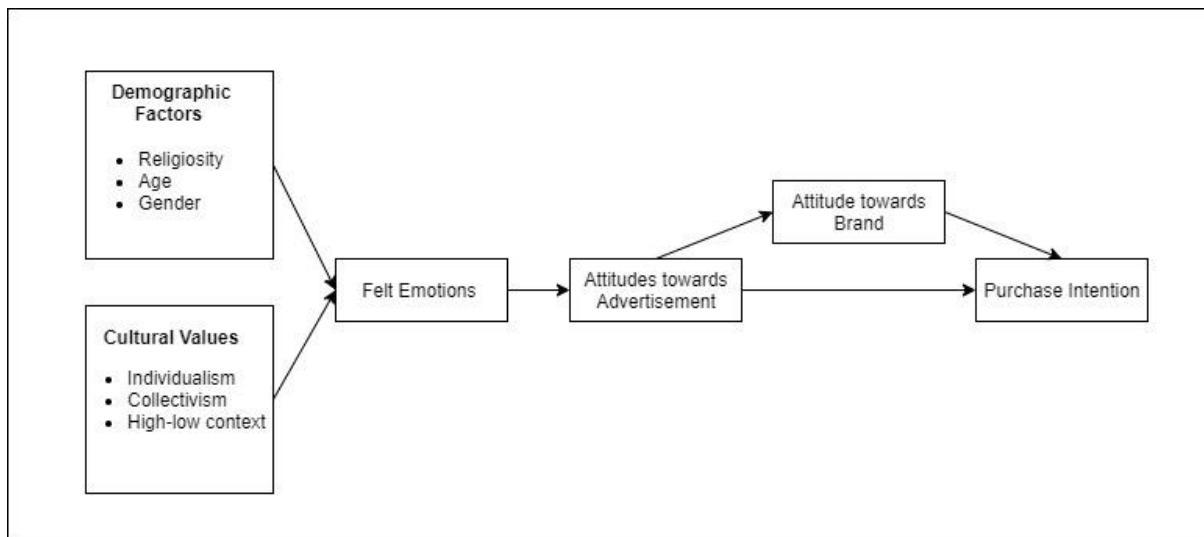
Figure 2.2: Possible influences on consumer perception of religious content in advertising (effect on Attitude towards the brand and Purchase intention)

Source (Liu *et al.*, 2009; Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003; Sawang, 2010; Sabri, 2012; Virvilaitė & Matulevičienė, 2013; Kaushal & Rakesh, 2016)

In conclusion, from the above literature review several studies were found to analyse the effectiveness of shock advertising as well as consumer perceptions. Therefore, the use of religion in advertising is still a developing area in research and not sufficiently researched, especially in the case of the Maltese market. By looking at the case study of New York's Best a light was shed on the Maltese context and how this study can help to understand it better. Moving forward this study will be looking at the effect that the use of religious content in advertising has on the purchase intention and attitude towards the brand, this is supported by most of the above studies.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter the method used throughout this study is discussed. The first section of this chapter covers the research questions and how they were developed. The second section covers the research design. The next two sections cover the survey and the sample (participants) whilst the final section of this chapter discusses the ethical considerations of this study.

3.1: Development of the Research Questions

As seen in the previous chapter of this study, the effectiveness of the use of religion in advertising is an area that can be looked into a more profound way, especially in the case of the Maltese market. To try to understand better the influences of such advertising the below research questions and hypothesis were formulated. This study looked at one research question which also incorporates two sub-questions.

RQ: Does the use of religious content in advertising in the Maltese market influence the attitude towards the brand?

- SQ1: Does the extent of this influence vary by age / sex?
- SQ2: Does the extent of this influence vary within the Maltese Regions?

From the above question one hypothesis was formulated:

- H1: Consumer' attitude towards the brand influence their purchase intention.

The first sub-question is based on the fact that previous literature suggests that the level of shock as well as the attitude towards such advertisement is affected by both the age and the sex of the audience. Distinct ages result in different generations, and it was found that these separate generations will have a distinct perspective on the use of taboos in advertising. Furthermore, it was identified that different sexes might

take different levels of offence from such advertising (Urwin & Venter, 2014; Andersson *et al.*, 2004; Sabri & Obermiller, 2011; Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006; Javed & Zeb, 2011).

The second sub-question examines whether there might be a variation of perception within the Maltese regions, this was developed in order to be able to identify any patterns that might emerge. Although variances might not be a lot due to the small size of Malta, these might still occur. This variance might be highlighted due to the fact that some Maltese residents might be from a different ethnic background.

The hypothesis is based on the literature review which suggests that there is a relationship between attitude towards the brand, attitude towards the advertisment and the purchase intention (figure 2.1). It will be looking at the attitude towards the brand and its influence on the purchase intention. The attitude towards the brand is found to have an influence on the purchase intention, this will be looked at in order to see the effectiveness of such advertisement, given that the purchase intention is a good indicator of such. This is related with the advertisement as this is the first thing that the participants are exposed to with regards to the brand, since a fictional brand is used. Therefore, the attitude towards the brand is generated through the advertisement creating a relationship between the use of religion in advertising (attitude towards the advertisement) and the attitude towards the brand. This relationship was identified from previous literature and can be a good indicator of the effects of using such advertisement, this relationship is seen in figure 2.1 (Kaushal & Rakesh, 2016; Goldsmith, Lafferty & Newell, 2000; Sallam & Algannaah, 2016; Sabri & Obermiller, 2011; Hasan *et al.*, 2016; Kadić-Maglajlić *et al.*, 2017).

3.2: Research Approach and Design

In order to tackle the research questions that this study proposed, it first looked at primary data through the literature review and then moved on to the data collection. Data collection for the purpose of this study was done through a questionnaire (survey).

This research took a cross-sectional approach, as the surveys were distributed at a given point in time (Setia, 2016). Moreover, the data was compared between the subjects in order to identify patterns and be able to come up with the different observations. This approach catered for the limited time available for this study (Sedgwick, 2014). Given the nature of this study, having participants of different age captured how attitudes change over time with regards to such advertisement.

For the purpose of this study, a deductive approach was undertaken by formulating the theory from the literature review and then investigating it throughout the study. This form of approach is also referred to as a top-down approach as it goes from theory to data. This methodological philosophy uses quantitative research in which methods of the natural sciences are applied to allow for the study of social sciences (Hammersley, 2013).

For data collection a quantitative and a mono method approach was selected, making use of surveys. This approach aims at collecting data from the different consumers around Malta in order to try to establish the effectiveness of using religious content in the advertising of products. This approach is closely linked with the positivist approach, which believes that reality is there to be discovered and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint (Levin, 1988).

3.3: Research Philosophy

The choice of the research strategy and design will have different implication and lead to a commitment to the research philosophy that is taken by the researcher (Johnson & Clark, 2006).

A positivist approach was taken by the researcher for this study, a positivist believes that reality is there to be discovered and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint (Žukauskas, Vveinhardt & Andriukaitienė, 2018). In line with this philosophy this study adopted a hypothesis in order to test it out against the data that was collected.

Moreover, through the use of questionnaires the researcher was detached from the data collection, as this was distributed in the same manner to all participants without any bias or judgement intrusion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015). Therefore, from this it can be argued that the researcher is not influencing the responses by his values.

Through the analysis of the data, the researcher maintained an objective stance, indeed, the analysis was done through specialised programs such as SPSS. Moreover, throughout the interpretation and presentation of the results the researcher also persevered to maintaining an objective stance. Such objectivism also reflects a positivist approach.

3.4 Survey

The use of surveys was adopted in order to be able to collect data from various participants of various age and be able to compare that data, moreover, this allowed for data to be gathered from across the Maltese regions.

3.4.1: Survey structure

The survey (see Appendices A1) was divided into different sections that tackled the different variables that were needed for this study. It opens by stating the research objective and explains to the participants their role in this study. In this part of the questionnaire the participants should also be assured that the data gathered will be confidential (Lee, 2006; Colosi, n.d.)

The use of a visual advertisement was made, this is crucial for this study as it revolves around the use of religious content in the advertising of products. A visual poster was used, this allowed for a single image to be left in the consumer mind. Moreover, this was also made use of due to the limited resources available. To create a television advertisement (video) required resources that were not available.
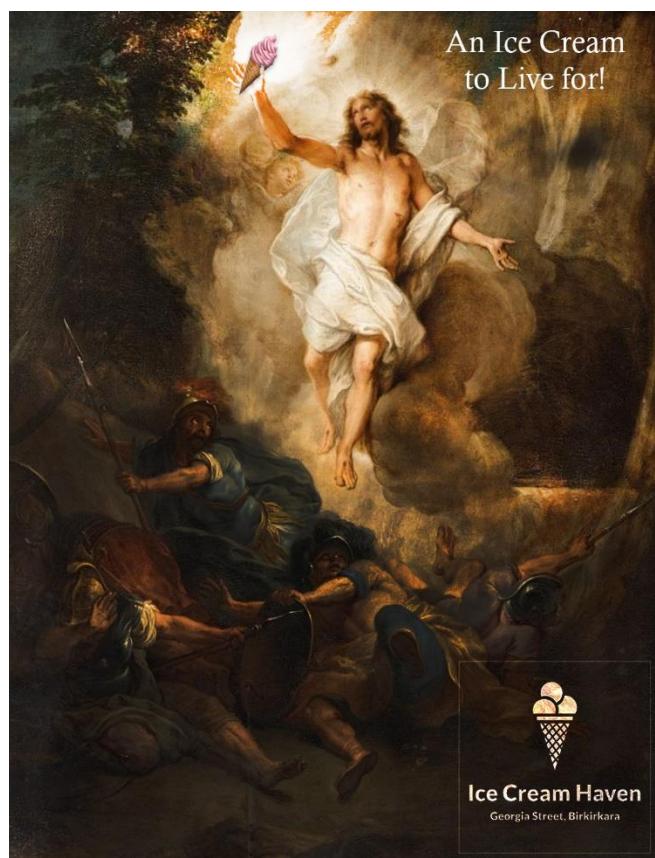
Figure 3.1: The advert that was shown to the participant of the Survey. The advert is depicting the resurrection of Jesus with a twist.

The first section of the survey looked at the demographics with regards to age and sex, as well as participants' residence. Moreover, this section attempted to look briefly at the level of religiosity of the participants. Although there is literature that suggests that such demographic data should be at the end of the survey (Goodrich, 1979; Jackson, 2009), due to the importance of this data for the study this was still put at the beginning. This guaranteed that this data was collected to allow for cross tabulations, furthermore, this would gather demographics with regards to incomplete surveys which would still allow some form of interpretation. This decision was also encouraged as there is research that suggests that if such demographic questions are not many and not personal these can be put at the beginning of the questionnaire with other research suggesting lower drop-out rates or no difference at all (Fuchs, 2008; Green, Murphy & Snyder, 2000).

The second section of the surve was directed to collect data on variables regarding the attitude towards the brand. This section, therefore, aims to gather data with regards to the hypothesis. On the other hand, section three of the survey, looked at data with regards to the second variable which is that of the purchase intention. Moreover, the survey ended by asking the participant two open ended question, these were included in the survey to try and understand further the perception of participants on such advertising. The last open-ended question investigated whether the participants were ever exposed to such advertisements and if they can recall it.

3.4.2: Data Collection method and limitations

Initially it was intended to distribute the survey both online and physically to allow for further randomisation. However, due to the Covid-19 situation physical distribution of the survey was not possible, therefore, the survey was distributed online through Facebook using specific groups (see appendices A2). The data was collected from the 7th of May 2020 till the 23 of May 2020.

An advantage of online surveys is that participants participate from their own free will, as no interference from the researcher is made, moreover, these can participate at their own convenience (Lefever, Dal & Matthíasdóttir, 2007). Despite this several limitations regarding this form of distribution do exist.

One of the first limitations of distributing the survey online is that the sample of the respondents was not representative of the whole population, this is due to the fact that not all the population has access to internet leading to a non-probabilistic sample (Ilieva, Baron & Healey, 2002; Siva Durga Prasad Nayak & Narayan, 2019; Lefever, Dal & Matthíasdóttir, 2007; Kayam & Hirsch, 2012). Another limitation that was mentioned by Ilieva, Baron & Healey, (2002) is that of not responding to certain questions, this was dealt with by applying the fill in to procced option for the important questions. As mentioned by Kayam & Hirsch, (2012) sampling through Social Media networks can be non-randomised as respondents form part of certain groups. In order to reach as much as possible all audiences, the survey for this study was distributed through closed groups as well as selected pages. The distribution of this survey was designed in a way to reach as much as possible people from various localities in Malta, table A2 shows the details regarding the distribution of the surveys in terms of groups and pages posted in respect to each LAO's (Region) and locations as well as the date

and time of the posts. Moreover, the sampling method required a quota to be collected from each region, this would allow for the sample to be more representative of the population.

Spamming can be another issue of online surveys as the same person can give the same opinion over and over (Lefever, Dal & Matthíasdóttir, 2007). Although, this can be tackled through the log-in option to complete the survey, this was not opted for in this study. The reason for is the fact that this can further limit the sample of the population reached, as not all the respondents have access to an email. This would also remove the anonymity of the respondents.

3.5: Sample Selection

It is of vital importance that the participants are well defined before the study commences (Murphy, 2016). Sampling of the population is required due to the time and budget required to have a census survey, moreover time and logistics are also a barrier to collecting a census (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015; Martínez-Mesa *et al.*, 2016).

For the purpose of this study it was decided to target different regions across Malta and allocate the sample size accordingly using a stratified sampling method. A stratified sampling method was used in order to be able to sample people proportionally from across the Maltese regions. This approach allowed for comparison and hence better representativeness across the different strata (Saunders, Lewis & Thorhill, 2016). Through this approach the study allowed for the comparison between regions and therefore, any differences that might emerge with regards to different cultural values and the perception on using taboos in the advertising of products can

be further analysed. Malta consists of two regions, Malta and Gozo and Comino, which are subdivided into six LAU's, Southern Harbour, Northern Harbour, South Eastern, Western, Northern and Gozo and Comino (NSO, 2019a).

The participants of this study were people that are subject to advertising and can form their opinion on such adverts together with having the power to pursue the buying of the product. The age of the subjects was to vary, furthermore, the sex of the participants is to be mixed. This allowed for the comparison of the different levels of offence between different generations and age groups.

With the following requirements the sample size needed for this study was that of 384 people.

- Level of Confidence of 95%
- Confidence interval of 5%
- Population size taken 493395

Table 3.1 below indicates the sample proportion to be taken from each district/LAU.

LAU	Population	Proportion	Sample Proportion	Sample
Southern Harbour	82910	0.167983969	64.50584429	64
Northern Harbour	160173	0.324526551	124.6181956	125
South Eastern	72375	0.146639004	56.3093774	56
Western	61689	0.124988097	47.99542912	48
Northern	83024	0.168214945	64.59453885	65
Gozo and Comino	33388	0.067647434	25.97661475	26

Total:	*493559*		*384*

Table 3.1: Sample size proportion by districts/LAU's

3.6 Measurements and Calculations

The measurements that were used for the data collection were taken from the Marketing Scales Handbook (Bruner, 2015). The aim of this handbook is to provide with multi-scales to measure various variables. The scales that were taken are in relation to the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention.

In order to collect data with regards to the attitude towards the brand a scale that was composed of four statements and uses a seven-point Likert-type response format, was used. This scale was adapted by Kim, Haley & Koo (2009). For the purpose of this study a five-point Likert-type scale was adopted. The reason for this adaptation is because literature suggests that this scale increases the response rate and seems to be less confusing for the audience (Bouranta, Chitiris & Paravantis, 2009). Furthermore, this scale was decreased to two statements from five. The reason behind this decision was due to the fact that most of the statements resembled each other or were not relevant to the study. The items were intended to measure a person's attitude towards the brand featured in the ad by the person that has been exposed to it. The highest Alpha Cronbach that was reported from the use of this scale is that of .93 and the lowest being .89. According to Taber (2018), this level of Alpha Cronbach falls between reliable and excellent.

With regards to the purchase intention the scale used for this study was composed of two items and uses a five-point Likert-type response format. This scale was originally used by Bone & Ellen, (1992) and reported an Alpha Cronbach of .92 and that of .90.

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According to Taber (2018), this level of Alpha Cronbach falls between reliable and excellent. Moreover, this scale was found out to be strongly associated with the brand attitude. This scale was adopted for this study and two statements were taken from it, reason for this is due to the fact that one of the statements was very similar to the other. Moreover, these were adjusted in the form of a statement in order to create a flow with the previous statements relating to attitude towards the brand.

Once all the data was collected this was cleaned and coded, after which it was inputted into SPSS for analysis and statistical testing. Firstly, the descriptive statistics were generated, these statistics included measures such as the mean, mode and median as well as the standard deviation. After this, frequencies of the demographic variables were extracted, this allowed for a better scope at the sample collected. Several charts that were generated by SPSS were inputted into excel in order to be enhanced and provide with a better visual aid for the reader. After the descriptive statistics were generated and analysed the inferential statistics were generated. The reliability and validity of the measures used was tested and a factor analysis was conducted in order to identify the different components. Moving forwards the hypothesis was tested using a multiple regression analysis and the output was interpreted. After the testing of the hypothesis several cross tabulations were generated to compare the different categorical variables with each other and to determine if there was any significant relationship between them. Apart from SPSS, excel was used in order to analyse the open-ended questions. Different themes were created, and points were allocated to them each time these came up in a response. Finally, Histograms were generated to aid the visual representation of the data.

3.7: Ethical Considerations

Given the involvements of human participants, the ethics form had to be submitted to the Faculty of Accounting, Management and Economics within the University of Malta for their review. Once ethical clearance was issued by the Faculty, the study commenced. Apart from the formal ethics, the study had to also take into consideration the fact that the study revolved around a sensitive subject. Since this study was related to religion, certain precautions were considered. In order to tackle this issue, the respondents were warned of the content that was included in the survey.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

In this chapter the results obtained from the survey are presented and discussed. The questionnaire was distributed across all Maltese regions. First the descriptive and inferential statistics obtained through SPSS are presented, then results are related to the research questions.

4.1: Descriptive Statistics

The intended sample size was that of 384 distributed proportionally over the 6 LAU's of Malta (regions). Due to the need to collect a quota from each LAU, the sample size gathered was that of 536. The required minimum amount for each region was collected. This data was cleaned in SPSS, after which 536 responses were kept, this means that there were no invalid responses.

Table 4.1 below represents the means of the variables. The minimum and maximum represent the range of the possible answers, given a Likert scale of 5, the minimum is 1 and the maximum is 5. The mean and the standard deviation are also presented for each variable, the mean indicates the average score for each question while the standard deviation indicates the variance from the mean (Livingston, 2004).

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am most likely to buy the advertised brand the next time I buy Ice-Cream.	536	1	5	1.90	1.153
I am most likely going to visit the associated Ice-cream store.	536	1	5	2.04	1.233
I feel positively towards the brand.	536	1	5	2.09	1.225

After seeing the advert, I am more interested in the brand.	536	1	5	2.01	1.277
I found the above advertisement offensive.	536	1	5	2.89	1.521
Valid N (listwise)	536				

Table 4.1: Table depicting the means of the responses to the questions relating to the dependent variables.

4.2: Demographics

From the sample gathered 183 (34.1%) were male, 352 (65.7%) were female and 1 (0.2%) Preferred not to say. Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 below demonstrate this more clearly.

What is your gender?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	183	34.1	34.1
	Female	352	65.7	99.8
	Prefer not to say	1	.2	100.0
	Total	536	100.0	

Table 4.2: Table listing the frequency of male to female with regards to sample collected.
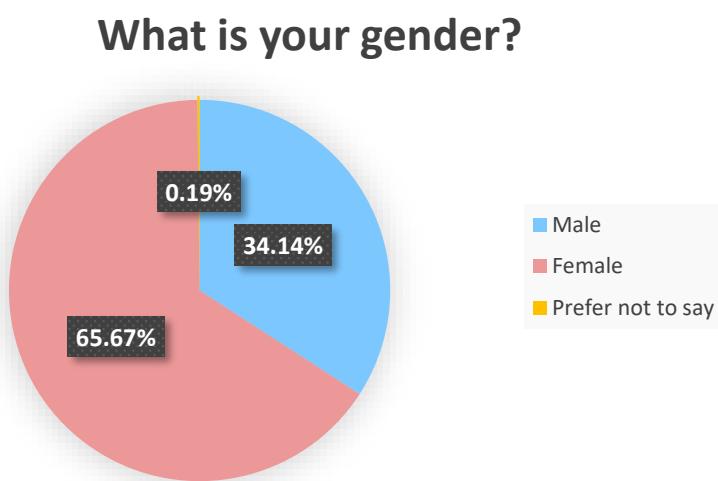
Figure 4.1: A Pie chart depicting the frequency of male to female with regards to the sample collected.

When looking at the age groups of the participants, it can be said that if one excludes the 16-19 years of age, all others are proportionally distributed. The largest two age groups are the 20-29 years old and the 60 years and over, this can be explained as the latter group covers more ages (NsSO, 2019b) while the former consists of a group of participants that are more frequently active on Facebook (Clement, 2020). Age distribution is relevant for this research as the response's variance will be analysed across the different ages, this will allow for any differences to be spotted.

Age Groups Frequency

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16-19 years	15	2.8	2.8
	20-29 years	124	23.1	25.9
	30-39 years	93	17.4	43.3
	40-49 years	108	20.1	63.4
	50-59 years	81	15.1	78.5
	60 years and over	115	21.5	100.0
	Total	536	100.0	

Table 4.3: Table illustrating the frequency of the different age groups with regards to the sample collected.
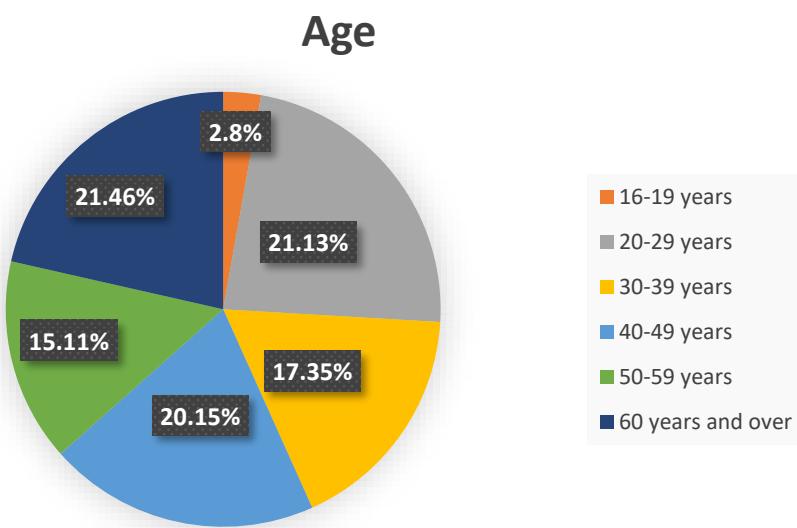
Figure 4.2: A Pie chart depicting the frequency of the different age groups with regards to the sample collected.

The third question looked at the country of origin of the respondents, this was included so as to assess if the perception on religious advertisement changes when people residing in Malta originate from a foreign country. In this respect most of the respondents were Maltese 493(91.98%) while 43(8.02%) were foreign people residing in Malta.

Country of Origin?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Malta	493	92.0	92.0
	Other	43	8.0	100.0
	Total	536	100.0	

Table 4.4: Table illustrating the frequency of Maltese and Foreign ethnicity with regards to the sample collected.

Country of Origin
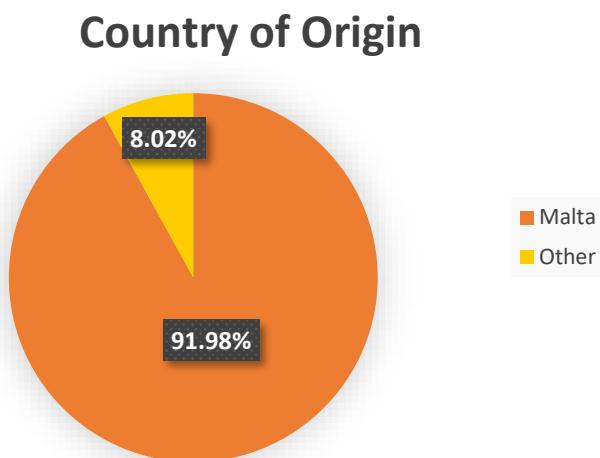
Figure 4.3: A Pie chart depicting the frequency of Maltese and Foreign ethnicity with regards to the sample collected

The fourth question looked at the place of residence of the respondents, this question was asked in terms of localities and then converted into LAU's as these were relevant for the research, the results are presented in table 4.6 and figure 4.3 below. These were collected to ensure that the sample is representative of the whole population and to measure variance in responses across the different LAU's. The below figure illustrates the distribution across the LAU's of the respondents. The quota for each

region was reached and exceeded for most of them, this is illustrated in the table 4.5 below. Since the quota was reached the sample has enough responses to represent each region accordingly, any additional responses were kept.

Region	Region Target	Region Reach
Southern Harbour	64	69
Northern Harbour	125	128
South Eastern Harbour	56	113
Western	48	87
Northern	65	82
Gozo	26	57
Total:	384	536

Table 4.5: Table showing the targets and actual quota reached (Reach) for each Maltese Region (LAU).

Place of Residence

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Southern Harbour	69	12.9	12.9
	Northern Harbour	128	23.9	36.8
	South Eastern	113	21.1	57.8
	Western	87	16.2	74.1
	Northern	82	15.3	89.4
	Gozo & Comino	57	10.6	100.0
	Total	536	100.0	

Table 4.6: Table showing the distribution of the sample across the different regions of Malta.
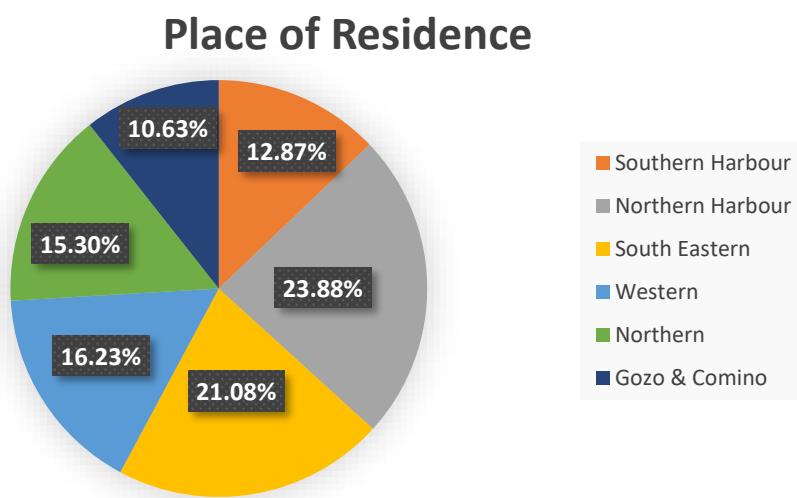
Figure 4.4: A Pie chart depicting the distribution of the sample across the different regions of Malta.

Questions 5 and 6 looked at the religion practised as well as the different participation levels. Since the advertisement is directed towards Christianity as it is depicting a picture from this religion, this was the main interest for this research. However, the other religions can still play a role as how they perceive such advertisement can still be looked at, although the advertisement is not directed towards their religion.

As predicted due to the religion practised in Malta (Aquilina, 2018a; National Statistis Office, 2017; DISCERN, 2017), most of the respondents were Christian 466 (86.9%), with the next majority being Atheists 53 (9.9%) which is still a minority when compared with Christians. On the other hand, when looking at how much the respondents practised their religion (table 4.8), 290 (54.1%) practise at least once a week, while a staggering 108 (20.1%), never practise their religion, which could indicate that they are not that much into their religion.

Religion practised

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Christianity	466	86.9	86.9
	Islam	3	.6	87.5
	Hinduism	1	.2	87.7
	Atheist	53	9.9	97.6
	Other	13	2.4	100.0
	Total	536	100.0	

Table 4.7: Table listing the distribution of the sample with regards to the different religious beliefs.

Religion practiced
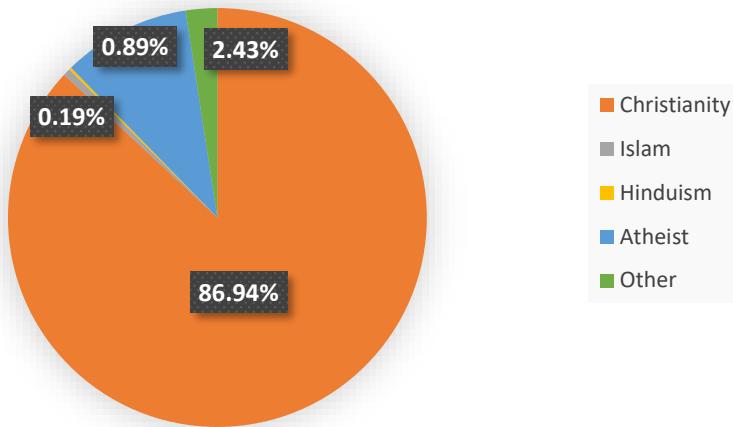
Figure 4.5: A Pie chart depicting the distribution of the sample with regards to the different religious beliefs.

Participation in religious activities

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	More than twice a week	90	16.8	16.8
	Twice a week	21	3.9	20.7
	Once a week	179	33.4	54.1
	Once a month	62	11.6	65.7
	Once a year	76	14.2	79.9
	Never	108	20.1	100.0
	Total	536	100.0	

Table 4.8: Table listing the frequency of the different categories with regards to the participation in religious activities.
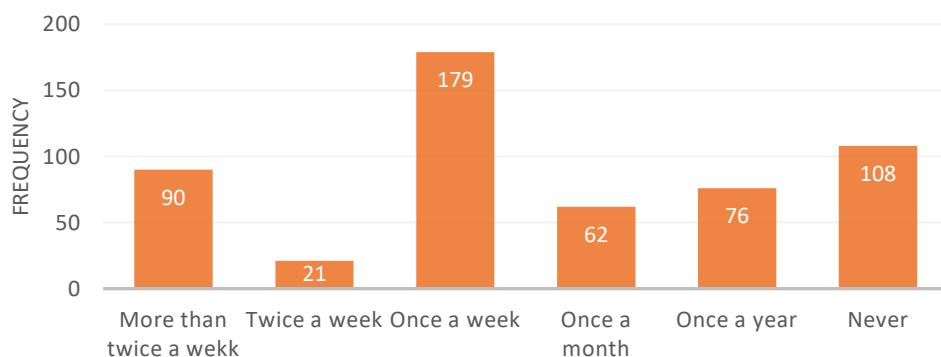
Figure 4.6: A Histogram depicting the frequency of the different categories with regards to the participation in religious activities.

4.3: Reliability and Validity of the Measures

To measure the attitude towards the brand 2 statements were presented to the participants, these were adapted from the study by Kim, Haley & Koo (2009). The original scale consisted of 5 statements. Originally this scale reported a highest level of Alpha of .93, evidence of the validity of the scale was also provided by previous studies (Kim, 2011; Lee & Mason, 1999). When it comes to the purchase intention this was also measured by an adaptation of an appropriate scale by Bone & Ellen (1992), which reported a Cronbach Alpha of .92 whilst its validity was not addressed. Due to the adaptation of both these scales their reliability and validity was tested again.

The statements provided to the respondents are presented in table 4.9 below:

AB - Attitude Towards the Brand									
Measured on a 5-point Likert Scale									
1	I feel positively towards the brand.								
2	After seeing the advert, I am more interested in the brand.								
PI - Purchase Intention									
Measured on a 5-point Likert Scale									
1	I am most likely to buy the advertised brand the next time I buy Ice-Cream								
2	I am most likely going to visit the associated Ice-cream store.								

Table 4.9: Table listing the statements provided to the respondents with respect to attitude towards the brand and purchase intention

Table 4.10 illustrates the Cronbach Alpha for the Scale measuring the attitude towards the brand. This scale presents an α score of .873 which is greater than .8, which, according to Ursachi, Horodnic & Zait (2015) is very reliable.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.873	2

Table 4.10: Table showing the Cronbach Alpha for the Scale measuring the attitude towards the brand.

Convergent to the above, table 4.11 illustrates the Cronbach Alpha for the Scale measuring the purchase intention. This scale presents an α score of .904 which is greater than .8, which is a very reliable score according to Ursachi, Horodnic & Zait (2015).

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.904	2

Table 4.11: Table showing the Cronbach Alpha for the Scale measuring the purchase intention.

In addition to the above reliability statistics which measured the internal consistency of the data above, the data was also tested for convergent validity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sample adequacy and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were applied to the data collected. Table 4.12 below indicates a KMO score of .860 which according to Hutcheson & Sofroniou (1999) falls in the region of a 'great value' when looking at the sample adequacy. Furthermore, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicates the relationship between the variables, this test concluded that the relationship is significant and that factor analysis can be conducted as the value is below .5 (Ul Hadia, Abdullah & Sentosa, 2016).

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.860
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1828.778
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Table 4.12: Table showing the results for the KMO and Bartlett's Test

Factor analysis was conducted with the following results (see table 4.13):

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
I am most likely to buy the advertised brand the next time I buy Ice-Cream.	.763	.553
I am most likely going to visit the associated Ice-cream store.	.880	.408
I feel positively towards the brand.	.556	.735
After seeing the advert I am more interested in the brand.	.406	.876

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Equamax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 4.13: Table showing results for the Rotated Component Matrix.

Component 1 can be defined as the purchase intention whilst component 2 can be defined as the attitude towards the brand. This was determined as the highest values .880 and .876 relate to the purchase Intention and attitude towards the brand respectively.

4.4: Level of Offence

4.4.1 Level of offence in relation to socio-demographic background

A question with regards to the level of offence taken by the advertisement was introduced in the survey, this allowed the respondents to express their feelings. Furthermore, this allowed for further interpretation of the results as it gives an insight to whether the influence on the attitude towards the brand and purchase intention is related to offence taken. Moreover, this can be interpreted as the attitude towards the advertisement.

Figure 4.7 analysis the responses regarding the offence taken by the respondents of the survey. The responses for the question are split differently across the different respondents. Table 4.14 shows the statistics for this question, when looking at the mean this is 2.89 and the mode is 1, therefore, most of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement below. Indeed, 151 (28.17%) responded that they strongly disagree with the statement that the advertisement shown was offensive. Moreover, 74 (13.81%) of the respondents responded that they disagree with this statement, this brings a total of 225 (41.98%) which disagree with this statement. When compared with the total of those who agree with this statement which is 194 (36.19%). This shows that most of the people were not offended with the shown advertisement, of course, this still generated a significant level of offence since 36.19% is still a very significant fraction. Finally, the neutral responses were at 117 (21.83%).

Statistics

I found the above advertisement offensive.

N	Valid	536
	Missing	0
Mean		2.89
Median		3.00
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		1.521
Variance		2.314
Range		4

Table 4.14: A table representing the descriptive statistics for the question relating to the level of offence

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I found the above advertisement offensive.
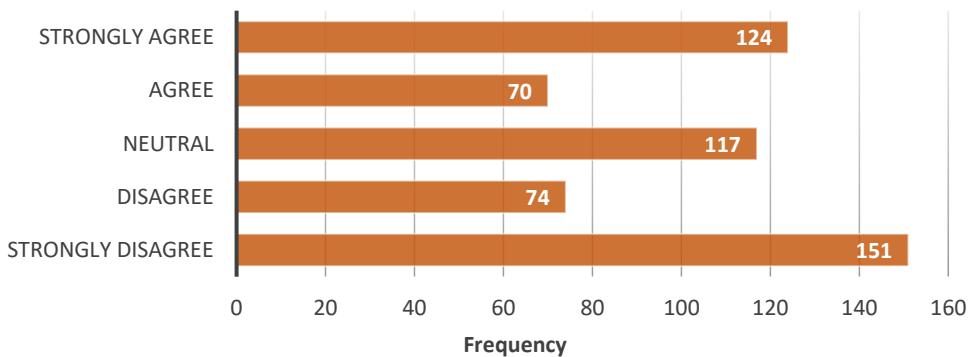
Figure 4.7: A Histogram depicting the frequency of the different responses with regards to the question relating to the level of offence.

The level of offence was also cross tabulated with other categorical variables in order to test if there are any significant relationships and indeed, there was as can be seen in table 4.15. For a better cross tabulation, the responses for the question above were categorised into 3 categories; offended (1 & 2), neutral (3) and not offended (4 & 5). Below is a table consisting of the categorical variables that the categories for offence were tabulated against and whether their relationship was statistically significant or not.

Categorical Variable	P Value	Significance
Gender	0.04	Yes
Age	0.009	Yes
Residence	0.836	No
Country of Origin	0.41	Yes
Religion	0	Yes
Religious Activities Frequency	0	Yes

Table 4.15: A table showing the P Values and the Significance for the cross tabulations with the level of offence.

As can be seen in the table 4.15 above, almost all the cross-tabulations generated resulted in a significant P-Value with only the cross-tabulation with residence being irrelevant.

When looking at the results provided by table 4.16 representing the relationship between offence and gender, it can be seen that females (40.1%) as a gender are more offended than males (29%). This is in line with other previous research that found a relationship between the offence taken and gender (Urwin & Venter, 2014; Andersson *et al.*, 2004; Sabri & Obermiller, 2011; Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006).

Gender against Offence taken

			Offence			
			Not Offended	Neutral	Offended	Total
What is your gender?	Male	Count	86	44	53	183
		% within What is your gender?	47.0%	24.0%	29.0%	100.0%
	Female	Count	139	72	141	352
		% within What is your gender?	39.5%	20.5%	40.1%	100.0%
	Prefer not to say	Count	0	1	0	1
		% within What is your gender?	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	225	117	194	536
		% within What is your gender?	42.0%	21.8%	36.2%	100.0%

Table 4.16: A table with results from the cross tabulation between gender and the level of offence

When looking at the results of the level of offence taken against the age of the respondents (table 4.17) one can see that the younger generations are less offended than the older ones. Indeed, as can be observed in the cross tabulation below the percentage of offended people is increasing as the age gap is increasing, inducing a positive relationship of the level of offence with age. This is also in line with the findings of previous research on shock advertising as well as the use of religious content in advertising (Andersson *et al.*, 2004; Javed & Zeb, 2011; Manceau & Tissier-Desbordes, 2006).

Age against offence taken

			Offence			
			Not Offended	Neutral	Offended	Total
What is your age?	16-19 years	Count	7	4	4	15
		% within What is your age?	46.7%	26.7%	26.7%	100.0%
	20-29 years	Count	66	26	32	124
		% within What is your age?	53.2%	21.0%	25.8%	100.0%
	30-39 years	Count	47	19	27	93
		% within What is your age?	50.5%	20.4%	29.0%	100.0%
	40-49 years	Count	32	31	45	108
		% within What is your age?	29.6%	28.7%	41.7%	100.0%
	50-59 years	Count	31	16	34	81
		% within What is your age?	38.3%	19.8%	42.0%	100.0%
	60 years and over	Count	42	21	52	115
		% within What is your age?	36.5%	18.3%	45.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	225	117	194	536
		% within What is your age?	42.0%	21.8%	36.2%	100.0%

Table 4.17: A table with results from the cross tabulation between age and the level of offence

In order to see how different religions and non-believers react to such advertisements a cross tabulation was generated with the level of offence against the religion practised (see table 4.18). When looking at this data it should be kept in mind that the advertisement used the Christian religion as a theme and therefore, it is inclined to generate a greater level of offence to Christians. When looking at this relationship it proved to be highly significant. Upon further analysis the main difference can be seen between those that are Atheist and those that are Christian. This does make sense as this advertisement might not be going against the moral and religious values of non-believers.

Religion Practised against offence taken

			Offence			Total
			Not Offended	Neutral	Offended	
What religion do you practice, if any?	Christianity	Count	179	105	182	466
		% within What religion do you practice, if any?	38.4%	22.5%	39.1%	100.0%
	Islam	Count	2	0	1	3
		% within What religion do you practice, if any?	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%
	Hinduism	Count	0	0	1	1
		% within What religion do you practice, if any?	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Atheist	Count	40	8	5	53
		% within What religion do you practice, if any?	75.5%	15.1%	9.4%	100.0%
	Other	Count	4	4	5	13
		% within What religion do you practice, if any?	30.8%	30.8%	38.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	225	117	194	536
		% within What religion do you practice, if any?	42.0%	21.8%	36.2%	100.0%

Table 4.18: A table with results from the cross tabulation between religion practiced and the level of offence.

Since the frequency of taking part in religious activities can be an indicator of the level of religiosity of the person, this was cross tabulated with the level of offence. This cross tabulation (table 4.19) resulted in the fact that the more the respondent takes part in religious activities, the more he is offended by this advertisement and vici versa.

Practise in Religious activities against offence taken

			Offence			Total
			Not Offended	Neutral	Offended	
How often do you take part in religious activities?	More than twice a week	Count	27	11	52	90
		% within How often do you take part in religious activities?	30.0%	12.2%	57.8%	100.0%
	Twice a week	Count	7	3	11	21
		% within How often do you take part in religious activities?	33.3%	14.3%	52.4%	100.0%
	Once a week	Count	60	46	73	179

		% within How often do you take part in religious activities?	33.5%	25.7%	40.8%	100.0%
	Once a month	Count	23	17	22	62
		% within How often do you take part in religious activities?	37.1%	27.4%	35.5%	100.0%
	Once a year	Count	37	21	18	76
		% within How often do you take part in religious activities?	48.7%	27.6%	23.7%	100.0%
	Never	Count	71	19	18	108
		% within How often do you take part in religious activities?	65.7%	17.6%	16.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	225	117	194	536
		% within How often do you take part in religious activities?	42.0%	21.8%	36.2%	100.0%

Table 4.19: A table with results from the cross tabulation between the frequency of taking part in religious activities and the level of offence

The final cross tabulation that presented a low level of significance is that of the level of offence taken against the country of origin. This resulted in the fact that people that currently reside in Malta, however, have a foreign origin are less offended than Maltese residents. This can be for various reasons, which can also be linked with religious and cultural values. It should be noted that this difference is very small and slightly significant as the value of p is that of .413 which is close to .5. One of the possible reasons for this difference could be the level of exposure, indeed, when the country of origin was cross tabulated with exposure, it was found that foreigners are more exposed and this difference is statistically significant as a p value of .003 was generated (table 4.20).

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.350[a]	5	.003
Likelihood Ratio	14.282	5	.014

N of Valid Cases	536		

a. 5 cells (41.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum
expected count is .08.

Table 4.20: Chi-Square Test for the Country of origin with Exposure to religious advertisement Cross Tabulation

4.4.2: Reasons for the level of offence

In addition to whether the advertisement generated any offence, the respondents were also asked to give a reason for their answer. Through this open-ended question, the researcher was able to get some insight on what the respondents were thinking. The open-ended question was analysed and resulted in several categories and themes.

The responses were divided into three different categories, those offended, those that were neutral and those that were not offended. Below are the graphs with the different categories and their relevant frequencies.
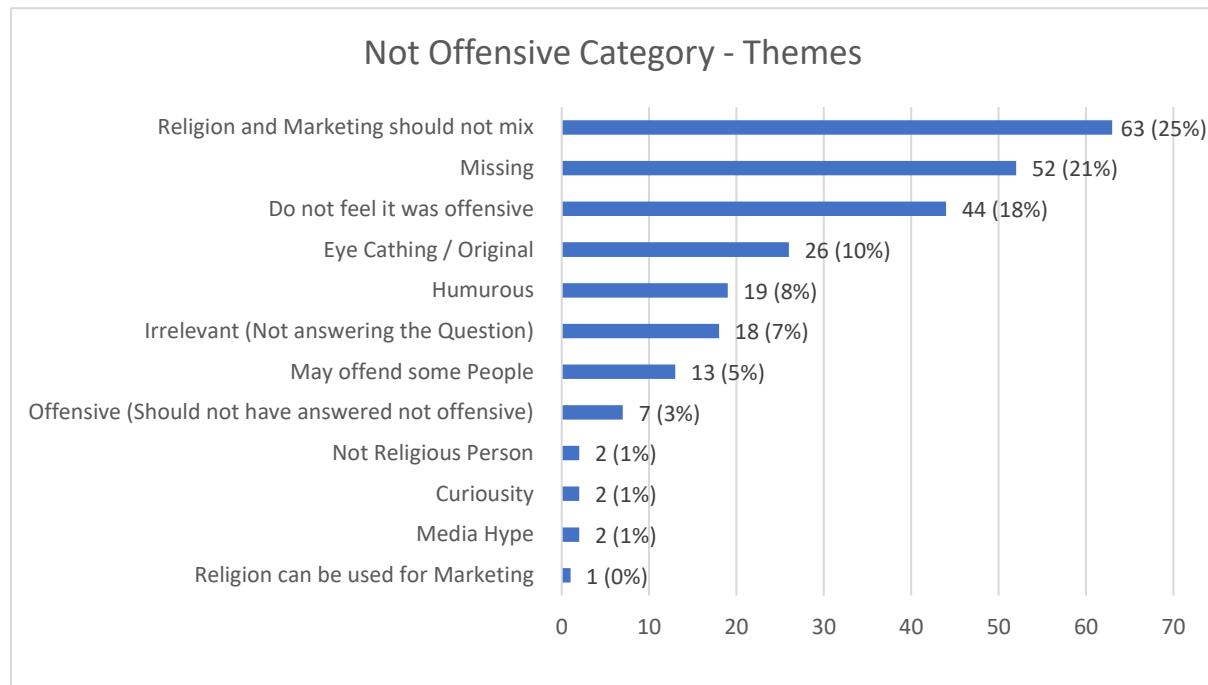
Figure 4.8: A Histogram with the frequency of the Themes with regards to the Not Offensive responses category.

From figure 4.8 above it can be seen that although these people responded that they are not offended by the advertisement, still 25% of the responses associated with the theme that Religion and marketing should not mix together. Indeed, this is reflected in

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one of the participants statements that goes as follows '' *I believe religion and marketing initiatives do not go hand in hand* '' another participant also added that such adverts would not make him buy the product more despite not being offended '' *It's an ok ad but I want to read reviews and check if the ice cream is really good rather than buy it because I saw an ad.''*

From these participants there were people that are indeed religious and despite this still enjoyed the advertisement and it did catch their eyes, one participant's response was as follow '' *I find it original and this would definitely catch my eye. Due to my beliefs, I feel a bit of an unconscious offence, but I quickly pushed the thought away and laughed due to its originality''.*

Despite the above responses, still 21% did not give a reason to why they were not offended, this could be for various reasons, one of which could be that they simply were not. Moreover, 7% of the responses were irrelevant to the question.
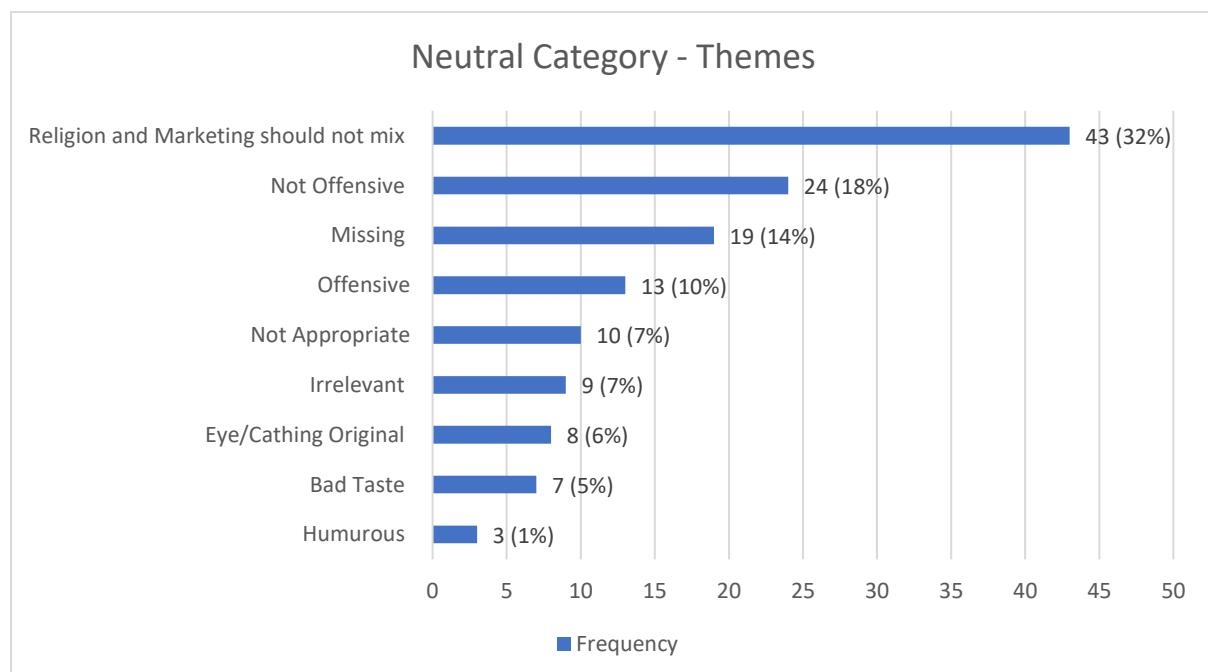
Figure 4.9: A Histogram with the frequency of the Themes with regards to the Neutral responses category.

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When looking at the Neutral responses' reasons (figure 4.9) again the most recurrent theme is that Religion and marketing should not be mixed (32%). It should also be noted that 18% of these coincided with the theme that they were indeed not offended. On the other hand, several responses related to the themes of ''not appropriate'', ''bad taste'' and ''offensive''.
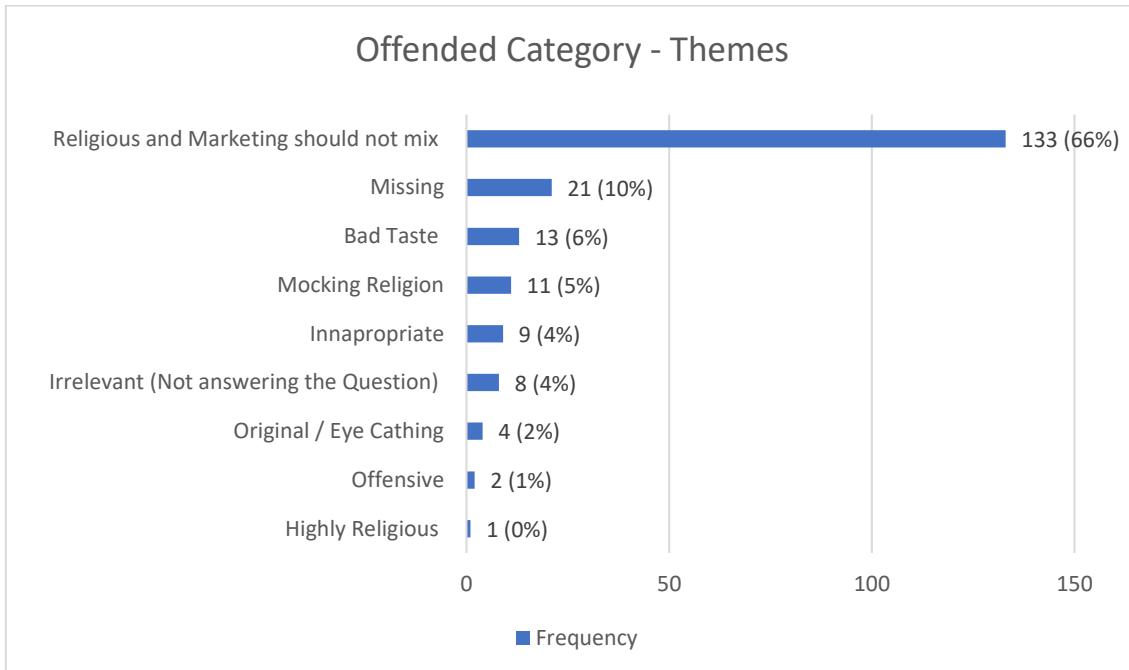
Figure 4.10: A Histogram with the frequency of the Themes with regards to the Offensive responses category.

Finally, figure 4.10 represents the reasons for the offensive responses', again it can be observed that 66% believe that Religion and marketing should not mix. Other responses relate to the themes ''Bad taste'', ''Mocking Religion'' and ''Inappropriate''

From the analysis above it can be seen that the most recurrent theme is that Religion and marketing should not be mixed together, even when the respondents were not offended by the advertisement. This can lead to a conclusion that these adverts are not seen fit in Malta and even though they might not offend the viewer they still might not see it as appropriate and be attracted to the advertisement.

4.4.3: Level of Offence relationship with attitude towards the brand and purchase intention

When looking at the relationship between the level of offence taken, the attitude towards the brand as well as the purchase intention a relationship occurs between both of these variables (table 4.23) with both cross tabulations generating a P value for the Pearson Chi-Square of .000.

Moreover, when looking at these values it shows that the respondents that were offended by the advertisement have a lesser score on the attitude towards the brand and consequently on the purchase intention. Indeed, from those that were offended 71% responded with a score of 1 on the purchase intention and 66.5% with a score of 1 on the attitude towards the brand. This relationship was further analysed through conducting a Pearson product-moment correlation. As can be seen in table 4.21 below although this relationship is not very strong, the level of offence is negatively correlated with attitude towards the brand (-.431) and with purchase intention (-.393), both of these relationships are significant at the level .01. This could indicate that a negative relationship exists which means that as the level of offence increases both attitude towards the brand and purchase intention decrease. The attitude towards the brand and purchase intention are not only affected by the level of offence, moreover if one is not offended it does not mean that this would result in wanting the product more. This was also seen in the qualitative responses where one of the participants responded '' *It doesn't offend me but neither does it entice me and make me want to find out more.*''.

Correlations

		Offence	AB	PI
Offence	Pearson Correlation	1	-.431**	-.393**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	536	536	536
AB	Pearson Correlation	-.431**	1	.860**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	536	536	536
PI	Pearson Correlation	-.393**	.860**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	536	536	536

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.21: A table showing the results of the Pearson Correlation between Offence, AB and PI.

This finding corresponds with the research by Sabri & Obermiller (2011) which found that the use of taboos in advertising can have a negative effect on the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention. It can also be the fact that this advertisement generated too much offence and as mentioned by Andersson *et al.* (2004), too much of as shock might make the consumer dislike the company and create discomfort. This can also confine with the results by Prendergast, Ho & Phau (2002) which stated that people are most likely not to buy from companies that use such advertising if presented with an alternative.

Moreover the level of offence can be interpreted as the attitude towards the advertisement due to the fact that the participants have never been exposed to brand, therefore, offence taken could have only been generated by the presented advertisement. With this reasoning the above would confirm with previous findings by Kaushal & Rakesh (2016) and indeed, go in line with figure 2.1.

4.5: Exposure

Another open-ended question asked whether the participants were ever exposed to such adverts and if they can recall it. The responses were divided into three categories: ''Yes'', ''No'' and ''Yes, NYB''. Through this question the effect of previous exposure to such advertisement on the reaction can be analysed. Moreover, the effect of such advertisement on the memory of the consumer can also be delved into.

Indeed, by looking at the frequency of the responses 14.7% (out of 82.6% valid responses) one can see that a substantial amount of the people remembered the NYB advertisement, this goes in line with other research that suggest that such advertisement benefit the memory of the consumer (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003).

Have you ever been exposed to such advertisement, if yes can you recall it?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	41	7.6	9.3	9.3
	No	323	60.3	72.9	82.2
	Yes, NYB	79	14.7	17.8	100.0
	Total	443	82.6	100.0	
Missing	Missing	93	17.4		
Total		536	100.0		

Table 4.22: A table showing the frequency of the responses with regards to the exposure to religious advertisements.

Moreover, when these categories were cross tabulated against the level of offence a relationship was found to exist as the generated value of P was that of .185 (table 4.24). When looking at the data as presented in table 4.23, it can be seen that those that were exposed to such advertisement were less offended, whilst those that have never been the audience of such an advertisement are more offended. This confirms

findings from previous studies that reason that such advertising is like a dose, the more you get of it the more you get used to it (Halvadia, Patel & Patel, 2011; Ford, LaTour & Tanner, 2006).

Have you ever been exposed to such advertisement, if yes can you recall it? *
Offence Crosstabulation

			Offence			Total
			Not Offended	Neutral	Offended	
Have you ever been exposed to such advertisement, if yes can you recall it?	Yes		24	3	14	41
			58.5%	7.3%	34.1%	100.0%
			13.0%	3.1%	8.6%	9.3%
	No		123	73	125	321
			38.3%	22.7%	38.9%	100.0%
			66.8%	76.0%	76.7%	72.5%
	Yes, NYB		36	20	23	79
			45.6%	25.3%	29.1%	100.0%
			19.6%	20.8%	14.1%	17.8%
Total			184	96	163	443
			41.5%	21.7%	36.8%	100.0%
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4.23: A table with results from the cross tabulation between exposure to religious adverts and level of offence.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.752[a]	10	.185
Likelihood Ratio	15.535	10	.114
N of Valid Cases	536		

a. 6 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .22.

Table 4.24: Chi Square test for the level of offence with Exposure to religious advertisement Cross-Tabulation

4.6: Hypothesis Testing

The study had the intention to test one hypothesis which looks at relationship between the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention. This offers the possibility to

verify this relationship and identify whether, the attitudes formulated through the advertisement will affect the purchase intention of the consumer.

4.6.1: Hypothesis

Hypothesis: Consumers' attitude towards the brand influences their purchase intention

H_0 = Consumer's attitude towards the brand does not influence their purchase intention

H_1 = Consumer's attitude towards the brand influences their purchase intention

The Null Hypothesis H_0 states that there is no statistically significant relationship between the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention. On the other hand, the Alternative Hypothesis H_1 states that this relationship is statistically significant.

For this hypothesis, the independent variable is the attitude towards the brand whilst the dependent variable is the purchase intention.

A multiple regression analysis was done in order to test the above-mentioned hypothesis, this tested if the influence of the attitude towards the brand on the purchase intention is statistically significant.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.861[a]	.741	.740	.58147

a. Predictors: (Constant), After seeing the advert I am more interested in the brand., I feel positively towards the brand.

Table 4.25: Table showing the Summary results for the Multiple Regression Model Performed on Hypothesis 1.

When looking at the model summary above (table 4.25) it can be denoted from coefficient of multiple determination (R Square) that 74% of the variance in the purchase intention can be explained through the attitude towards the brand (Miles, 2014). Moreover, since the R Square is closer to 1, it can be said that this model fits the data (goodness of fit) (Moksony, 1990).

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	514.867	2	257.433	761.385	.000[b]
	Residual	180.214	533	.338		
	Total	695.080	535			

a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. Predictors: (Constant), After seeing the advert I am more interested in the brand., I feel positively towards the brand.

Table 4.26: Table showing the results for the ANOVA test for the Multiple Regression Model Performed on Hypothesis 1.

The ANOVA presented in table 4.26 generated a p value of .000 which means that there is a statistically significant relationship between the predictors (AB) and the dependent variable (PI). This result further validates the model used as well as the relationship between attitude towards the brand and purchase intention.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.260	.051		5.117	.000
	I feel positively towards the brand.	.454	.032	.488	13.972	.000
	After seeing the advert I am more interested in the brand.	.380	.031	.426	12.198	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Table 4.27: Table showing the results for the Coefficients for the Multiple Regression Model Performed on Hypothesis 2.

Table 4.27 indicates that all predictors are significant for this model as the p value is that of .000. These predictors are both related to attitude towards the brand, this was

also tested in section 4.3 above. Furthermore, the above table indicated a positive relationship between attitude towards the brand and purchase intention.

From the results above we can reject the null Hypothesis and accept the Alternative Hypothesis, therefore, the attitude towards the brand does influence the purchase intention. Moreover, this is a positive relationship, as attitude towards the brand increases purchase intention increases. This verifies the findings from previous research by Kaushal & Rakesh, (2016).

Chapter 5: Discussion and Findings

The main research question of this study explored whether the use of religious content in advertising in the Maltese market influences the attitude towards the brand. In addition to this, the study also looked to whether the extent of this influence varied with age, sex and the residence of the respondents. When looking at the hypothesis this was to verify if the attitude towards the brand influences the purchase intention, this would help to determine the effectiveness of such advertising. By looking at the results and analysis of the data, the above research question together with the sub questions can be answered.

With regards to the influence of the use of religious content on the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention, this study showed a relationship. This relationship is supported through the link between the offence taken as a result of the advertisement and the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention. This relationship was verified in table 4.21. Being a negative relationship, the higher the level of offence, the lower the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention.

When looking at the hypothesis it was found that there is a positive relationship between the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention. Moreover, when looking at the relationship between the level of offence, which can be taken as the attitude towards the advertisement, the relationship between these three variables as indicated in figure 2.1 can be verified. This finding goes in line with previous research by Kaushal & Rakesh (2016).

When looking at the research question, which looks at the effecetiveness of such advertising, through this study it was found that there can be two sides to the coin.

Such advertisements can either be perceived positively or negatively and this perception will vary by the audience. It should also be noted that some of the respondents had a neutral standpoint, being neither offended nor not offended. This variance is explained through several cross tabulations above. Indeed, if the level of offence (AD) is changing and related to sex, age, religious activity and country of origin then it can be said that so will the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention, as their relationship has been verified in section 4.5.2 above. The findings of such variance are in line with previous research as illustrated in chapter 4 above.

When looking at the second sub-question which examined whether the influence and effectiveness of such advertising varies with the region of the respondent, this research found no statistical differences in the Maltese regions (Table 4.15). This means that the effectiveness of such advertisement is not affected by the residency of the audience. This could be due to the small size of the Maltese market which allows for less variance.

5.1: Findings and Implications to Marketers

From the results of the study several implications can be derived, these implications can be useful for marketers in the future. The most relevant implication is that currently in the Maltese market such advertising can leave more of a negative impact on the organisation than a positive one. On the other hand, at present such advertising can still be effective on selected audiences.

Although this study has concluded that such marketing is not so effective and can even lead to negative effects it has also shown that such marketing can depend very much on the target audience. This is due to the fact that different generations as well

as different people depending on their religious beliefs will perceive it differently. The older the generation the riskier this sort of marketing becomes (see table 4.17), and subsequently the larger the risk is of generating a negative effect on both the attitude towards the brand and the purchase intention.

Moreover, the effect on the memory of the consumer cannot be disputed, by looking at the different responses a substantial amount of the respondents remembered the NYB advertisement and could describe it (table 4.23). Although, this does not imply that this intrigued them to buy their products, it still generated a certain hype as well as a long lasting image of the brand in the mind of the consumer, after all as Cernat (2014) said bad publicity is still publicity. This can also lead the marketer to think what the objectives of the advertisement are, as it might be that such advertising is more effective in raising awareness on the brand rather than generating sales.

An observation that was made from this study is that this form of advertising can be relevant for the future majority of the Maltese consumers despite not being very appropriate at the time due to the offence generated. By looking at the results one can see that the more the consumers are exposed to such adverts the less they are offended (table 4.23), and this changes their perception. Therefore, it might be that in the future the Maltese consumers will be less reluctant and more open to such advertising. Again, although not offended, it would not mean that such adverts would be effective on creating a positive attitude towards the brand and subsequently generate more sales. Indeed, the fact that the results show that most of the respondents believe that Religion and marketing should not coexist should not be ignored by marketers. It could be that such believe is embedded in the cultural values of the Maltese population irrespective to whether one is religious or not and accepting

of such things or not, after all religion plays a very important role in the moulding of moral and cultural values (Beyers, 2017; Hackett, 2005).

Despite the above and most of the study suggesting a negative impact when using such advertising, it still leaves its marks. Moreover, some of the participants were inclined towards the brand and the product being advertised as an effect of seeing the advertisement, therefore, although in a minority this should not be ignored. Furthermore, remarks by participants that such advertising is original as well as eye catching (figures 4.7, 4.8 & 4.9) should also not be ignored, as, as explained above this minority might be the majority of the future.

Overall, this sort of advertising can be more damaging to the company than beneficial if not used correctly and addressed to the right audience, therefore, this should be used with certain care if it is to be used. Moreover, it could be that a lesser dose of religious content could leave a better impact, as it would shock the audience but not in such a drastic manner.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, all that was known with regards to the use of religious content in advertising, here in Malta, was information from newspapers and social media content that was generated after the attempt from NYB. Whilst multiple studies were identified in relation to such advertising, these were all focused outside of Malta and a consensus between these studies could not be reached.

This study looked at the effects and effectiveness of the use of religious content in the advertising of products in the Maltese Market was looked at. It showed that such advertisement can be risky and leave a negative impact when used in the Maltese market. Moreover, one can conclude that the effectiveness of this sort of advertising varies a lot with the audience, therefore, marketers should adopt their advertisement accordingly. Most of the findings coincide with those that were done abroad, however, these findings are now conclusive to the Maltese market.

6.1: Limitations

One has to keep in mind that this study has its limitation. The first limitation was time related. Research time was restricted and thus resulted in the choice of a cross-sectional study. It would make sense to have been able to conduct a longitudinal study as this could have allowed more focus on the development of consumer's perception on such advertising and how it affects their previous perception and attitude towards the brand. This was partially tackled by this study by using a fictional company which did not allow for pre-conceived ideas and perception of the advertised brand.

Another limitation of this study was that of the distribution as mentioned in the methodology sector. Due to the Covid-19 situation online surveys only were used, this

could have resulted in omitting part of the Maltese population that do not have access to Facebook.

Furthermore, the budget was also limited, given more budget, the study could have provided with different advertisement through different media which could result in a different perception from the audience.

6.2: Suggestions for future studies

A recommendation for future studies would be that of conducting a longitudinal study that could provide with a better analysis of the attitudes of the consumers towards such adverts. This would also allow for a comparison between different times and test better whether more exposure to such adverts results into more acceptance and a better attitude towards such advertisements.

A future study focusing more on qualitative data would also delve deeper into the reasons that such advertisement generates this level of offence, and also study whether such advertisement can be more effective if used differently.

Moreover, future studies can compare such advertisements with different shock advertisements as well as other traditional advertisements, this would allow for better comparison and determine better which form of advertisement would be more effective. In addition to this, such advertisements can be tested in different sectors to test whether these can be more effective with certain products.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey

Effect of Using Religious Content in Advertising

I am currently reading for a Master's Degree in strategic Management and Digital Marketing at the University of Malta. For my dissertation I am looking at the effects that the use of religious content in advertising has on the consumer.

Kindly note that the participation is voluntary, and all submitted answers will be anonymous. This questionnaire will take no longer than 5 minutes, however, feel free to withdraw from this questionnaire at any point.

Note: This survey includes content that might generate offence to some respondents.
* Required

Personal Information

1. What is your gender? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Female

   ◯ Male

   ◯ Prefer not to say

   ◯ Other: _____

2. What is your age? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ 16-19 years

   ◯ 20-29 years

   ◯ 30-39 years

   ◯ 40-49 years

   ◯ 50-59 years

   ◯ 60 years and over

3.   Country of Origin? *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Malta

◯ Other: _____

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4.   Place of Residence. *

Mark only one oval.

◯ Cospicua (SH)

◯ Fgura (SH)

◯ Floriana (SH)

◯ Ħal Luqa (SH)

◯ Ħaż-Żabbar (SH)

◯ Kalkara (SH)

◯ Marsa (SH)

◯ Paola (SH)

◯ Santa Luċija (SH)

◯ Senglea (SH)

◯ Ħal Tarxien (SH)

◯ Valletta (SH)

◯ Vittoriosa (SH)

◯ Xgħajra (SH)

◯ Birkirkara (NH)

◯ Gżira (NH)

◯ Ħal Qormi (NH)

◯ Ħamrun (NH)

◯ Msida (NH)

◯ Pembroke (NH)

◯ San Ġwann (NH)

◯ Santa Venera (NH)

◯ St Julian's (NH)

◯ Swieqi (NH)

◯ Ta' Xbiex (NH)

◯ Tal-Pieta' (NH)

◯ Tas-Sliema (NH)

◯ Birżebbuġa (SE)

◯ Gudja (SE)

◯ Ħal Għaxaq (SE)

◯ Ħal Kirkop (SE)

◯ Ħal Safi (SE)

- ◯ Marsaskala (SE)
- ◯ Marsaxlokk (SE)
- ◯ Mqabba (SE)
- ◯ Qrendi (SE)
- ◯ Żejtun (SE)
- ◯ Żurrieq (SE)
- ◯ Ħad-Dingli (W)
- ◯ Ħal Balzan (W)
- ◯ Ħal Lija (W)
- ◯ Ħ'Attard (W)
- ◯ Ħaż-Żebbuġ (W)
- ◯ Iklin (W)
- ◯ Mdina (W)
- ◯ Mtarfa (W)
- ◯ Rabat (W)
- ◯ Siġġiewi (W)
- ◯ Ħal-Għargħur (N)
- ◯ Mellieħa (N)
- ◯ Mġarr (N)
- ◯ Mosta (N)
- ◯ Naxxar (N)
- ◯ St. Paul's Bay (N)
- ◯ Gozo

5. What religion do you practice, if any? *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Christianity
- ☐ Islam
- ☐ Buddhism
- ☐ Hinduism

Other: ☐ _____

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6.   How often do you take part in religious activities?

Mark only one oval.

◯ More than twice a week

◯ Twice a week

◯ Once a week

◯ Once a month

◯ Once a year

◯ Never

Perception
on
Advertising

In this section you will be presented with an advert relating to a new ice-cream brand with a shop situated in Birkirkara. You are presented with statements relating to the advert and are to indicate your level of agreement.

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7. I am most likely to buy the advertised brand the next time I buy Ice-Cream. *

    Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

8. I am most likely going to visit the associated Ice-cream store.

    Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

9. I feel positively towards the brand. *

    Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

10. After seeing the advert I am more interested in the brand. *

    Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

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11.   I found the above advertisement offensive. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Strongly Agree

12.   Explain the reasons for your answers given above.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13.   Have you ever been exposed to such advertisement, if yes can you recall it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix 2: A table presenting the Pages and Groups posted with the date and time

Page	Reach	Date & Time	Date &Time	Status
Local Council Pages				
	Southern Harbour			
Borma Local Council	Cospicua (Bormla)	21/05/2020 10:17		Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Fgura	Fgura	19/05/2020 14:00		Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Floriana	Floriana	12/05/2020 00:00	21/05/2020 10:12	Message - Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Luqa	Ħal Luqa	19/05/2020 14:00		Posted on Community
Kalkara Local Council	Kalkara	19/05/2020 14:10		Posted on Community
Marsa Local Council	Marsa	15/05/2020 13:00	19/05/2020 14:05	Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali haz zabbar	Ħaż-Żabbar	19/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
Paola Local Council	Paola	12/05/2020 16:15	19/05/2020 14:15	Posted on Community
Santa Luċija Local Council	Santa Luċija	12/05/2020 00:00	19/05/2020 14:10	Message - Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Isla	Senglea (Isla)	19/05/2020 14:00	21/05/2020 00:00	Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Hal Tarxien	Ħal Tarxien	12/05/2020 00:00	19/05/2020 00:00	Message - Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Tal-Belt	Valletta	14/05/2020 14:00	19/05/2020 14:10	Message - Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Birgu	Vittoriosa (Birgu)	15/05/2020 00:00	19/05/2020 14:05	Message - Posted on Community
Xghajra Local Council	Xgħajra	15/05/2020 18:00	19/05/2020 14:10	Posted on Community
	Northern Harbour			
Kunsill Lokali ta Birkirkara	Birkirkara	16/05/2020 10:47		Posted on Community
Gzira Local Council	Gżira	12/05/2020 18:23	19/05/2020 14:00	Posted on Community
Qormi Local Council	Ħal Qormi			NA
Il Hamrun Kunsill Lokali Hamrun	Ħamrun	12/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message

Kunsill Lokali Limsida	Msida	12/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
Pembroke Local Council	Pembroke	14/05/2020 20:00		Posted on Community
San Gwann Local Council	San Ġwann			NA
Kunsill Lokali Santa Venera	Santa Venera			NA
Kunsil Lokali San Giljan	San Giljan	14/05/2020 20:00		Posted on Community
Is Swieqi Local Council	Swieqi	14/05/2020 16:39		Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Ta Xbiex	Ta' Xbiex			NA
Kunsill Lokali Tal- Pieta	Pieta	14/05/2020 20:24		Posted on Community
Tas Sliema Local Council	Tas-Sliema	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
	South Eastern			
	Birżebbuġa			
Il Gudja Local Council	Gudja	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
Kunsill Lokali Hal Ghaxaq	Ħal Għaxaq	16/05/2020 12:00		Posted on Community
Hal Kirkop Local Council	Ħal Kirkop	12/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
Hal Safi Local Council	Ħal Safi	16/05/2020 10:40		Posted on Community
Kunsill Likali Marsaskala - Marsascala Local Council	Marsaskala	14/05/2020 00:00	16/05/2020 10:45	Message - Posted on Community
Marsaxlokk Local Council	Marsaxlokk	14/05/2020 00:00	16/05/2020 10:45	Message - Posted on Community
L-imqabbaLocal Council	Mqabba	12/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
Il Qrendi Local Council	Qrendi	14/05/2020 00:00	16/05/2020 10:45	Message - Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Zejtun	Żejtun	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
Iz Zurrieq Local Council	Żurrieq	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
	Western			
Had-Dingli Local Council	Ħad-Dingli	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message

Hal Balzan Local Council	Ħal Balzan	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
Hal Lija local council	Ħal Lija			
	Ħ'Attard			
	Ħaż-Zebbuġ			
	Iklin			
	Mdina			
Mtarfa Local Council	Mtarfa			
	Rabat			
Kunsill Lokali Is Siggiewi	Siġġiewi	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
	Northern			
Hal Gharghur Local Council	Ħal Għargħur	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
	Mellieħa			
Kunsill Lokali Tal-imgarr	Mġarr			
	Mosta			
Naxxar Local Council	Naxxar	14/05/2020 00:00		Sent Message
Kunsil Lokali San Pawl il-Bahar	San Pawl			
	Gozo			
Il-Fontana local council	Fontana			
Ghajnsielem Local Council	Għajnsielem	16/05/2020 11:15		Posted on Community
Kunsill Lokali Gharb	Għarb			
Kunsill Lokali Ghasri	Għasri	16/05/2020 10:45		Posted on Community
Il-Munxar Local Council	Munxar			
Nadur Local Council	Nadur	16/05/2020 11:20		Posted on Community
	Ta' Kerċem			
	Ta' Sannat			
	Victoria			
	Xaghra			
Ix Xewkija Local Council	Xewkija	16/05/2020 11:20		Posted on Community
	Żebbuġ			
Il-Kunsill Lokali San Lawrenz	San Lawrenz	16/05/2020 11:20		Posted on Community
	Qala			

Groups				
YouSafeGroups (Local Council)				
	Southern Harbour			
YouSafeCospicua	Cospicua (Bormla)	16/05/2020 11:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeFgura	Fgura	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeFloriana	Floriana			Not Accepted
YouSafeLuqa	Ħal Luqa			Not Accepted
YouSafeKalkara	Kalkara	20/05/2020 07:00		Posted
YouSafMarsa	Marsa	23/05/2020 14:00		Posted
YouSafeZabbar	Ħaż-Żabbar			Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafePaola	Paola			Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeSantaLucija	Santa Luċija			Not Accepted
YouSafeIsla	Senglea (Isla)	20/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeTarxien	Ħal Tarxien	21/05/2020 18:00		Posted
YouSafeValletta	Valletta	17/05/2020 10:00		Posted
YouSafeBirgu	Vittoriosa (Birgu)	19/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeXghajra	Xgħajra	19/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
	Northern Harbour			
YouSafeBirkirkara	Birkirkara	16/05/2020 10:15		Posted
YouSafeGzira	Gżira	16/05/2020 10:15		Posted
YouSafeQormi	Ħal Qormi			Not Accepted
YouSafeHamrun	Ħamrun	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeMsida	Msida	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafePembroke	Pembroke	16/05/2020 10:30	20/05/2020 20:30	Posted
YouSafeSanGwann	San Ġwann			Not Accepted
YouSafeSantaVenera	Santa Venera			NotAccepted
YouSafeStJulians	San Ġiljan	19/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted

YouSafeSwieqi	Swieqi	14/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeTaXbiex	Ta' Xbiex			Not Accepted
YouSafePieta	Pieta	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeSliema	Tas-Sliema			Not Accepted
	South Eastern			
YouSafeBirzebbuga	Birżebbuġa	19/05/2020 18:00		Posted
YouSafeGudja	Gudja			
YouSafeGhaaxaq	Ħal Għaxaq			Not Accepted
YouSafeKirkop	Ħal Kirkop			Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeSafi	Ħal Safi	19/05/2020 19:00		Posted
YouSafeMarsascala	Marsaskala	21/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeMarsaxlokk	Marsaxlokk	16/05/2020 11:15		Posted
YouSafeMqabba	Mqabba	19/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeQrendi	Qrendi			Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeZejtun	Żejtun			Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeZurrieq	Żurrieq	16/05/2020 23:00		Posted
	Western			
YouSafeDingli	Ħad-Dingli	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeBalzan	Ħal Balzan	16/05/2020 11:25		Posted
YouSafeLija	Ħal Lija			Not Accepted
YouSafeAttard	Ħ'Attard			Not Accepted
YouSafeZebbug	Ħaż-Zebbuġ	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeIklin	Iklin			Not Accepted
YouSafeMdina	Mdina			Not Accepted
YouSafeMtarfa	Mtarfa			Not Accepted
YouSafeRabat	Rabat	21/05/2020 10:00		Posted
YouSafeSiġġiewi	Siġġiewi	25/05/2020 14:21		Posted
	Northern			
YouSafeGharghur	Ħal Għargħur	16/05/2020 18:00		Posted
YouSafeMellieha	Mellieħa			
YouSafeMgarr	Mġarr			

YouSafeMosta	Mosta			Not Accepted
YouSafeNaxxar	Naxxar			Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeStPaulsBay	San Pawl	19/05/2020 18:00		Posted - Not Accepted
	Gozo			
YouSafeFontana	Fontana			Not Accepted
YouSafeGhajnsielem	Għajnsielem	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeGharb	Għarb			Not Accepted
YouSafeGhasri	Għasri	22/05/2020 11:00		Posted
YouSafeMunxar	Munxar			Not Accepted
Your Safe Nadur	Nadur	21/05/2020 10:00		Posted
YouSafeKercem	Ta' Kerċem	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeSannat	Ta' Sannat	19/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeVictoria	Victoria	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeXaghra	Xaghra	21/05/2020 16:00		Posted
YouSafeXewkija	Xewkija	16/05/2020 17:15		Posted
YouSafeZebug	Żebbuġ	16/05/2020 00:00		Posted - Not Accepted
YouSafeSanLawrence	San Lawrenz			Not Accepted
YouSafeQala	Qala	21/05/2020 21:13		Posted
Groups	**Southern Harbour**			
Residenti Bormlizi	Cospicua (Bormla)			Not Accepted
People Who Like Or Live In Fgura	Fgura	12/05/2020 16:30		Posted
Not Applicable	Floriana			NA
Hal-Luqa Luqin	Ħal Luqa	14/05/2020 11:00	16/05/2020 11:30	Posted
Made in Kalkara	Kalkara			Not Accepted
Il-Marsa	Marsa			Not Accepted
Zabbar Residents	Ħaż-Żabbar	14/05/2020 11:00	16/05/2020 11:30	Posted
Paola Residents - Pawlisti	Paola	12/05/2020 15:20		Posted
Patrijotti Santa Lucija	Santa Luċija			Not Accepted
Not Applicable	Senglea (Isla)			NA

Tfal ta Hal-Tarxien	Ħal Tarxien			Not Accepted
Valletta Photos	Valletta	19/05/2020 14:20		Posted
Citta Vittoriosa - Birgu	Vittoriosa (Birgu)	12/05/2020 16:17		Posted
Xghajra Community Group	Xgħajra			Not Accepted
	Northern Harbour			
Residenti f'Birkirkara	Birkirkara	12/05/2020 00:00	16/05/2020 00:00	Post Not Accepted
Gzira Residents	Gżira			
Hal Qormi Residents	Ħal Qormi	12/05/2020 18:15	16/05/2020 10:15	Posted
Hamrun ghal Hamrunizi Maltin	Ħamrun	12/05/2020 00:00		Post Not Accepted
Not Applicable	Msida			
Pembroke Residents	Pembroke	14/05/2020 11:00		Posted
San Gwann Residents	San Ġwann	14/05/2020 11:05		Posted
Santa Venera Residents Past Present and future	Santa Venera	12/05/2020 23:00		Posted
St.Julians/Paceville Residents	San Giljan			Not Accepted
Not Applicable	Swieqi			
Not Applicable	Ta' Xbiex			
PIETA' RESIDENTS	Pieta	12/05/2020 18:15		Posted
Tas Sliema u Slimizi	Tas-Sliema	16/05/2020 15:00		Posted
	South Eastern			
Ngħaqqdu Birżebbuġa	Birżebbuġa	14/05/2020 16:00		Posted
Gudjani	Gudja	12/05/2020 18:00		Posted
Hal Ghaaxaq, Lghaxqin u r-residenti	Ħal Għaxaq	12/05/2020 00:00		Post Not Accepted
Not Applicable	Ħal Kirkop			
Hal Safi, Malta	Ħal Safi	12/05/2020 18:10		Posted
MARSASKALA OUR BEAUTIFUL VILLAGE	Marsaskala	19/05/2020 19:20		Posted
Marsaxlokk	Marsaxlokk			
Not Applicable	Mqabba			

Il-Qrendi - Storja, Kultura, Arti u Pajsagg	Qrendi			
In-Nies taz-Zejtun	Żejtun	12/05/2020 19:15	16/05/2020 11:45	Posted
Zurrieqr Residents	Żurrieq	14/05/2020 11:20		Posted
	Western			
Dingli, Storja u niesa. People from Dingli and History	Ħad-Dingli			Not Accepted
Balzan People	Ħal Balzan			Not Accepted
Ulied Hal Lija -- Lijani	Ħal Lija			Not Accepted
Not Applicable	Ħ'Attard			NA
Haz-Zebbug, Nies, Laqmijiex u Grajjiet	Ħaż-Zebbuġ	12/05/2020 16:07		Posted
Haz-Zebbug Residents	Ħaż-Zebbuġ	12/05/2020 18:00		Posted
Iklin Residents	Iklin			Not Accepted
People who like or livein Rabat Mdina	Mdina	14/05/2020 14:00		Posted
Mtards & its Community	Mtarfa	14/05/2020 11:30		Posted
People who like or livein Rabat Mdina	Rabat	14/05/2020 11:30		Posted
Siggiewi - Citta Ferdinand	Siġġiewi	14/05/2020 11:40		Posted
	Northern			
Gharghur Malta	Ħal Għargħur			
Mellieha People	Mellieħa	12/05/2020 18:04		Posted
Mellieha Residents	Mellieħa	12/05/2020 18:04		Posted
Not Applicable	Mġarr			NA
Mosta Residents	Mosta	12/05/2020 18:00		Posted
I'm from Naxxar and Proud	Naxxar			Not Accepted
Proud to live in St Paul Bay	San Pawl	12/05/2020 17:05		Posted
	Gozo			
Not Applicable	Fontana			
Not Applicable	Għajnsielem			
Not Applicable	Għarb			

Not Applicable	Għasri			
Not Applicable	Munxar	95		
Not Applicable	Nadur			
Not Applicable	Ta' Kerċem			
Not Applicable	Ta' Sannat			
Not Applicable	Victoria			
Not Applicable	Xaghra			
Not Applicable	Xewkija			
Not Applicable	Żebbuġ			
Not Applicable	San Lawrenz			
Not Applicable	Qala			