



An investigation into the impact of fear as a behaviour  
change agent in road safety commercials among  
young Irish road users aged 17-25.

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## **Abstract**

### ***Emma Fox - An investigation into the impact of fear as a behaviour change agent in road safety commercials among young Irish Road users aged 17-25.***

The research presents an awareness of young people's attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the Road Safety Authorities (RSA) use of fear appeals to promote safe driving in Ireland. Road safety leaders use negative means, such as, consequences, fear, shocking footage, startling imagery, and reactions to transmit a social health message of unacceptable driving habits.

The use of fear in marketing campaigns is nothing new, the tactic of influencing people with threats of bodily harm, shame, and emotional trauma, if you participate in anti-social behaviours, is commonly deployed by advertisers.

The aim of this study is to examine one particular group of road users, the 17-25-year-old group. To do this the investigation took into account multiple factors to gain an understanding of the subject, areas of research included;

- Primary research methods of focus groups and interviews
- Secondary literature from academics, theorist's models and road safety authorities
- Reviewing a sample of other road safety campaigns
- Causes that contribute and influence road tragedies
- The use of fear as a marketing tool to publicise road safety
- The gender difference and reaction to fear appeals
- The burn out factor of does fear work as a trigger to change driving habits?
- Advanced driving Instructors (ADI) opinions on RSA adverts and imagery

The research encompassed a qualitative exploration to investigate the objectives and explore the question on the impact of fear as a behaviour change agent in road safety commercials among young Irish Road users. Primary methods employed were the gathering of information in the form of a two-pronged approach, consisting of two focus groups, with males and females aged 17-25, and six semi-structure interviews with registered driving instructors known as ADIs.

Three objectives were used to assist in answering the research question, these examined the benefits of fear in advertising, asked the question of is there other ways to promote safe driving, and gained the opinions of those tasked with providing training to young drivers on their viewpoint to safe driving advertisements.

Road deaths are an unacceptable societal issue, one lost life on Irish roads is one too many, this study is about opinions of a target audience of young people, that statistically are the most at risk on our roads. Delving into their way of thinking and viewpoints is paramount to reducing road fatalities. Change is needed to reduce road deaths, it is of the utmost importance that a cultural shift towards safe driving occurs in the near future.

## **Declaration**

### **Submission of Thesis and Dissertation**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1.0 Chapter 1: Introduction to Study</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1 Overview and Statement of Problem .....	9
1.2 Significance and Purpose of Study .....	10
1.3 Research Aims and Objectives .....	10
1.4 Methodology .....	11
1.5 Expectations and limitations .....	11
<b>Chapter 2: Review of Literature</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.1 Introduction to literature .....	12
2.2 Road Accidents Statistics.....	12
2.3 The Australian Model .....	13
2.3.1 Figure 1, Road Deaths.....	13
2.4 American Model .....	14
2.4.1Figure 2 Tailgating.....	15
2.5 Marketing and Advertisement Theories and Models.....	15
2.6 The use of Fear Appeals in Advertisements .....	16
2.7 RSA Road Safety Campaigns .....	17
2.8 Gender and Perception of Fear .....	18
<b>Chapter 3: Research Methods and Methodology</b> .....	<b>20</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	20
3.2 Research Philosophy, Design, and Methodology .....	20
3.3 Selection of Participants and Sampling Strategy .....	21
3.4 Entry into Field .....	22
3.5 Analysis and Writing of research collected .....	23
<b>4.0 Chapter 4: Research Findings</b> .....	<b>24</b>
4.1 Introduction to Research Findings .....	24
4.2 Pre-Focus Group Findings .....	25
Figure: 4.2.1 Gender Breakdown.....	25
Figure: 4.2.2 Age Profile .....	26
Figure: 4.2.3 Vehicle Positioning .....	27
Figure: 4.2.4 Car Ownership.....	28
Figure: 4.2.5 Licence Status.....	29
Figure: 4.2.6 Passengers Reactions.....	31
Figure: 4.2.7 Awareness of Campaigns .....	32

Figure: 4.2.8 RSA Information .....	33
Figure: 4.2.9 Graphic Imagery .....	34
4.3 Focus Group Findings.....	35
4.4 Interview Findings .....	38
4.5 Focus Group & Interview Conclusions.....	39
<b>5.0 Chapter 5: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>40</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	40
5.2 Objective One .....	40
5.3 Objective Two.....	41
5.4 Objective Three.....	42
<b>6.0 Chapter 6: Recommendations .....</b>	<b>43</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	43
6.2 Recommendations.....	43
6.2 Conclusion .....	44
<b>7.0 Chapter 7: Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>8.0 Chapter 8: Bibliography.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>9.0 Chapter 9: Appendices .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Appendices 1: Explanation sheet for Focus Groups .....	53
Appendices 2: Assessment Sheet.....	55
Appendices 3: Focus Group Advertisement Videos .....	57
Advertisement One .....	57
Advertisement Two.....	57
Advertisement Three.....	58
Advertisement Four .....	58
Appendices 4: Links to focus group advertisement videos .....	59
Advertisement 1:.....	59
Advertisement 2:.....	59
Advertisement 3:.....	59
Advertisement 4:.....	59
Appendices 5: Screenshots shown during interviews and focus groups.....	60
Appendices 6: Interview Transcripts .....	61
Interview with Vinny Dorley, Approved Driving Instructor.....	61
Interview with Sandra Mc Dermot, Approved Driving Instructor .....	63
Interview with Derek O’ Rourke, Approved Driving Instructor .....	65
Interview with Eamon Graham, Trainer and ADI Driving instructor .....	67
Interview with Marie Beegan, Training School Manager .....	69
Interview with James Byrne, ADI .....	71

## List of Illustrations

Figure 2.3.1	Road Deaths.....	11
Figure 2.4.1	Tailgating.....	13
Figure 4.2.1	Gender Breakdown.....	23
Figure 4.2.2	Age Profile.....	24
Figure 4.2.3	Vehicle Positioning.....	25
Figure 4.2.4	Car Ownership.....	26
Figure 4.2.5	Licence Status.....	27
Figure 4.2.6	Passengers Reaction.....	29
Figure 4.2.7	Awareness of Campaigns.....	30
Figure 4.2.8	RSA Information.....	31
Figure 4.2.9	Graphic Imagery.....	32
Figure 4.3.1	Most Effective Advertisement.....	35



## **1.0 Chapter 1: Introduction to Study**

### **1.1 Overview and Statement of Problem**

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) in Ireland are the state agency tasked with promoting and marketing safe driving to the public in Ireland. According to the RSA (2018) their aim and objective is to promote safe driving, save people's lives, avoid injuries, and provide a safe environment by decreasing the number of collisions on Irish Roads. The organisation was first formed in September 2006 and since then has strived to promote safe driving through implementing Government legislation. To do this the RSA routinely engages with various media channels including television advert campaigns, to get safe driving messages across to the general public.

The advertisements are known for their shock impact or graphic imagery, this marketing strategy is known as Fear Appeals. "A fear appeal is a means of persuasion that threatens the audience with a negative physical, psychological or social consequence that is likely to occur if they engage in a particular behaviour" (Algie, 2010 pp.264/5). Fear or threat appeals are an everyday occurrence in various campaigns in Ireland, a few examples are, drink driving, drug prevention, and anti-smoking campaigns.

Although these adverts are aired to the public and offered widely through television, radio, and poster adverts, the level of adherence is still too low. Something is missing concerning road safety as road deaths and driver fatalities on Irish roads continues. According to the RSA, and Garda statistics road fatalities are reducing, however, the levels are still too high. These reducing figures are showing that the use of fear as an agent for change has had some impact, yet can other methods coupled with fear achieve even better results. This research aims to investigate what 17 to 25-year olds thoughts are on the use of fear and what, if anything can make them change their driving habits.

## **1.2 Significance and Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this research, is to investigate if fear is effective at changing the behaviours of young Irish road users between the age of 17-25. According to the RSA (2017 & 2018) this group are statistically the most vulnerable road users on Irish roads today.

As per the RSA (2017) the number of deaths on Irish roads dropped in 2017 by 15% compared to 2016. Up until December 2017 there was a total of 158 people killed on Irish roads, this is a result of 143 fatal collisions, compared to 186 lives lost in 2016. 2017s road death figures are also lower than the previous low of 162 deaths in 2015 and has been named the safest year on Irish roads since the road death records were produced in the year 1959. (RSA.ie). However, it is important to note the highest number of people killed were those among the age of 17 to 25 years, with 75% of those killed being male. According to the minister of transport, Shane Ross, “while the drop in the number of deaths was encouraged, ultimately our aim should be zero deaths on our roads and more needs to be done to protect the vulnerable Irish road users.” (The Irish Times 2017). As of the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2018, there has been a total of 55 fatalities on Irish roads, as a result of 51 fatal collisions. (Garda.ie)

## **1.3 Research Aims and Objectives**

An investigation into the impact of fear as a behaviour change agent in road safety commercials among young Irish Road users aged 17-25.

The objectives of this research are to find answers examining fear in advertising and their effectiveness when marketing safe driving to young Irish road users.

1. Examine the benefits and suitability of using Fear Appeals in Advertising.
2. Is there another way for marketers in the opinion of the sample to promote safe driving in a positive way that does not appeal to fear or is fear the way to go?
3. Investigate if the Road Safety Authority uses fear appeals successfully and effectively from the opinions of the target sample, 17 to 25-year olds, and the viewpoint of ADI instructors who provide lessons.

## **1.4 Methodology**

The primary research technique used was of a qualitative exploration nature, this added value to the research paper whilst answering the three objectives of the study. The methods used were two focus groups with the target audience of 17-25-year olds and in-depth interviews with six qualified Advanced Driving Instructors (ADI). These methods of research were used to evaluate information through the systematic gathering of data to assist in answering the research question.

The inspection of this data led to the collection of information in regard to the attitudes and beliefs of 17-25 year olds (both male and female) and the thoughts of qualified ADIs in Ireland.

## **1.5 Expectations and limitations**

The expected outcome of this research is to find out how effective fear is as a behaviour change agent in advertising a social cause, such as, safe driving to the young population in Ireland. The outcome of this research will help the RSA, Garda, and Advanced Driving Instructors (ADI) advertise safe driving in the most effective way to keep down young road fatalities and collisions. This research aims not only to find the best way to advertise safe driving but also the best possible way to change the perceptions of young drivers when it comes to road safety. The three objectives will all come with challenges and obstacles in both the primary and secondary research. There is a variety of secondary research available on road safety with multiple academics and experts in the field of driver safety all providing opinions. However, not much research is already established in Ireland about the effectiveness of fear for safe driving especially from the young populations point of view, this study's intention is to add balance to the topic.

Conducting research comes with obstacles from the time available to carry out the research, to the investigators experience in completing the task. To reduce and lessen any errors the researcher undertook sample interviews and focus groups to test their effectiveness, these are known as dry runs and were used by the researcher to offset errors and give the interviewer practice to refine interview techniques.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Introduction to literature**

To establish a base line and to add value to the research it is important to review literature that is relevant to gain an insight into the research question, an investigation into the impact of fear as a behaviour change agent in road safety commercials among young Irish Road users aged 17-25. To achieve this literature from road safety experts, the Road Safety Authority (RSA), Government agencies, theorist and marketing models coupled with advertising commercials, social marketing, poster campaigns, and statistics allowed the researcher to paint a picture of what work is currently being done to make roads safer for the target group and assist in answering the objectives of the study.

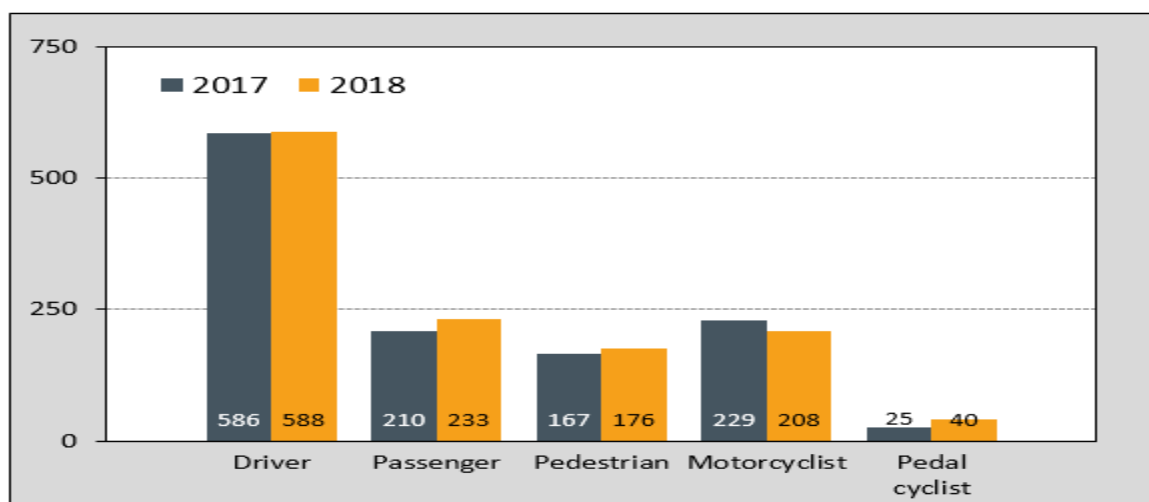
### **2.2 Road Accidents Statistics**

According to RSA statistics for 2017, 117 Males and 40 Females died on Irish roads, of these the most vulnerable group of people on our roads, 30 pedestrians, 20 motorcyclists and 15 cyclists, lost their lives. 20% of drivers and passengers were not wearing a seatbelt with Monday being the most dangerous day of the week, when 37 people lost their lives. Further investigations revealed that Dublin had the highest deaths (23) followed by Cork (14), Mayo (12) with all other fatalities spread around other counties. This clearly gives the impression that road deaths are not a local problem, more a national and worldwide issue. Figures from the World Health Organisation (WHO) confirm that road safety is a worldwide issue. On average 1.25 Million road deaths occur every year throughout the world with 3 out of 4 road deaths being male and 49% of fatalities coming from the vulnerable groups. This loss of life is hard to stomach and unacceptable. To reduce road accidents is paramount and it could be argued that there is just not enough being done by individual countries around the world. However, the RSA spent over 2.5 million on four safe driving campaigns in the last four years. These campaigns aimed to reduce road deaths by targeting driver behaviours and attitudes.

## 2.3 The Australian Model

Other jurisdictions play a big part in understanding road safety implementations and strategies. Road fatalities in Australia for 2017 as per The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) is an unattractive picture as illustrated in the graph below, the figures for Australia in 2017 are unthinkable in the Irish road safety context. Stats show 1,225 road deaths with 243 in the 17-25-year-old bracket. The question these statistics stir up is if the road safety campaigns in the country are going far enough to reducing road deaths.

**Road deaths by road user group: 12 months to April**



2.3.1 Figure 1, Road Deaths

The population of Australia as per Demographic Statistics, Sep 2017 is 24.7 million people, a much larger group than in Ireland, the 1,225 road deaths in the context of percentages may now seem reasonable and even acceptable on a per capita basis, with this size of a population this large and the volume of road user's, road deaths will occur. However, the case of any road death is one too many, and when the figures are examined they reveal interesting stats concerning the 17 to 25-year group with 243 deaths from this age bracket. The statistics pose more questions than answers, for example, is the advertising campaigns going far enough in their aim to reduce road deaths? The literature from Australia is important, the research proves very interesting to the objectives of this research being carried out in Ireland and delves further into the labyrinth of how to portray road safety and questions whether the RSA have considered other approaches other than fear to get their message across to young road users. The yearly economic cost of road accidents in Australia is huge with figures released by the Australian Government estimating the cost at \$27 billion per annum.

Road safety advert campaigns in Australia are renowned for being provoking and contentious addressing social issues from drink driving, speeding, and seatbelt compliance, these adverts take on the pretext of mostly portraying the fear of actions and what will happen to those involved, this use of fear is aimed at being a change behaviour agent.

Adverts such as the Ripple Effect, Everybody Hurts from 2010 demonstrates the impact on speeding from the point of view of family, friends, and first responders as they attempt to save victims lives. Road safety figures suggest road accidents are reducing in both countries, therefore, it can be assumed that adverts are working to some extent, however a cautionary note is attached to this line of thinking, is there another method to get even better results? It is hard to gauge the impact unless other methods are tried.

## **2.4 American Model**

In contrast, a group of psychologists in America investigated using a meta-analysis the effectiveness and theories of fear appeals. Their aim was to find if there was a correlation between fear and influencing positive attitudes, behaviours, and intentions among the public when it came from social marketing. They concluded that the use of fear had positive effects and optimistically influenced their samples attitudes, intentions, actions, and behaviours and there were very limited situations in which the use of fear appeals was not successful. However, there was no correlation between fear appeals and unwanted outcomes. (Tannenbaum, M. et al 2015).

American road deaths reached a high of 40,100 deaths in 2017, this was a 1% fall on 2016 with Deborah Hersman, CEO of the National Safety Council stating, "This is good news and bad news, the total number of fatalities is not getting worse, but the situation is not getting better." Eric, J (2013) in an article for City Lab in New York stated that American people pay highly for their roads through fuel tax and income with little return on safety. Michigan University Transport Research Institute released stats for the period 2006 to 2010 comparing the USA to Sweden, Holland, and the UK on a per capita basis concerning road deaths. During the years studied the US had 37,600 yearly deaths in comparison to Sweden 387, Holland 659, and UK 2,650 annual deaths for the same period.

Road Safety Advertising in the United States uses fear and consequences as a behaviour change agent with one such billboard advert campaign depicting the dangers of tailgating with the image of a car rear ending a large truck with the poster paper all crumpled as shown below;



2.4.1 Figure 2 Tailgating

This use of imagery on Colorado highways in America targets drivers whilst they are in the act of driving and are virtually impossible to miss. It could be argued that this method is distracting to motorists, however, with the caption saying “Tailgating Isn't Worth It. Give Trucks Room. It's the Law” it gets the message across in real time while drivers are behind the wheel. The state police were concerned about safety and aggressive driving around articulated vehicles with males in their twenties, the target audience, whom the police believed were the culprits of tailgating in the states. This creation of a graphic image scenario was a change from scare tactics and one which could be repeated in Ireland.

## 2.5 Marketing and Advertisement Theories and Models

Literature Research found Dann, S. and Fry, M. (2009) examined social marketing effect and argued that the use of social change should be to the fore by benchmarking change in behaviours of young drivers with new and innovative ideas. Social marketing as eluded to by Andreasen, A. (2011) is the “application of commercial marketing concepts and tools to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences to improve their lives or society of which they are a part of.” (Social Marketing: Influencing Behaviours for Goods. Pg.7) A concept that is analysed at the forefront of social marketing is the extended marketing mix also known as the 7Ps.

Marketing principles such as the marketing mix are imperative to any RSA campaign when promoting safe driving as it examines the seven service marketing tools that are needed to target customers and to get their promotional or social message across when selling a non-tangible service. Booms and Bitner in 1981 first devised the 7Ps of marketing and examined product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. (Make That Grade, 2011)

In addition to the marketing mix there are multiple theories and models that look at how effective and ineffective the use of fear appeals in advertising are. These models consist of the extended parallel response model which was devised by Witte in 1994 who based this model on The Parallel Response which was made by Leventhal in 1970. The Parallel Response Model looks at the association between the emotional response of fear focusing on the positive effects. This model appeared to simplistic and was unsuccessful in specifying how the use of fear would be portrayed. The extended Parallel Response Model on the other hand not only delves into the success of fear appeals but also focuses on when fear appeals fail and the effects that this can have. (Witte, 1994)

In Contrast, the Protection Motivation Theory which was devised by Rogers in 1975, this theory looks at the correlation between fear appeals and change in attitudes. (Rogers, R. 1995). According to Lewis. et al. (2007) the protection motivation theory delves into the supposed or perceived brutality of an endangered event, the supposed probability of the event to occur and how vulnerable the people involved are, the perceived effectiveness the individual must respond, and lastly the supposed self- assurance one has in their ability to act on the behaviours being recommended to them. (University of Twente.ie)

An evaluation and analysis of these theories are essential when seeing how effective the use of fear is for promoting a safe cause such as safe driving and if it changes the behaviours of young people on the road.

## **2.6 The use of Fear Appeals in Advertisements**

There is little doubt that fear, in marketing known as fear appeals, plays a big part in how safe driving is advertised in Ireland. Whether the advert plays on the fear of death or injury or the fear of legal consequences faced, the use of fear appeals is very common and is seen every day in social marketing adverts such as anti- smoking campaigns, HIV prevention, safe driving campaigns and so on. Every day we are exposed to around 3000 images and advertisements and due to this marketing gurus want to find the best technique to make an impact on an individual. (Forbes, 2016). According to Williams, M (2009) the use of fear and threat in advertisements are more likely to stay with the person and play on their conscience than those that do not contain a sense of fear or threat. In Australia, for example, fear is used very often when advertising or promoting public safety messages. The use fear is used widely when promoting anti-smoking, anti-drug, and driver safety TV advertisements but also are commonly seen on campaign posters, and signs around Australia. According to Mahdawi



(2013), an author for The Guardian, when it comes to public safety messages and public health messages, Australia is among the most gruesome fear mongering advertising in the world. According to this 2013 article scare campaigns in Australia seem to be working when it comes to advertising things like smoking. Australia is among the countries with the lowest smoking rates internationally, with around 16% down from 34% in 1980. However, the campaigns are not proven to be the main cause of this.

The road safety authority (RSA) is the overseer of all things that is associated with road compliance in Ireland, yet could it be the case that there is another way to reduce road deaths and attitudes of young drivers? According to research carried out by Plant, B. et al. (2017) in Australia the use of fear in anti-speeding messages carried mixed results both positive and negative depending on the view of the individual been asked. However, the research found that young drivers were more likely to reduce their speed considerably after they observed an anti-speeding campaign advert that portrayed a positive emotional appeal. Furthermore, the research examined found that when using adverts that appeal to fear or advert with graphic images of a crash and injury due to speeding, it had the opposite effect on young road users.

## **2.7 RSA Road Safety Campaigns**

Literature from the RSA promotes safe driving on Irish roads through different campaigns such as anti-speeding, drink driving, seat belt usage, and many more. The RSA use of graphic imagery in their advertisements is to provoke the feelings of fear, threat, and the human cost that unsafe driving can lead too. The current RSA campaign is called the “*Crashed Lives*” campaign, it shows real life examples of people telling their stories about life changing injuries or loss of a loved one due to the consequences of drunk driving. The message behind the new ‘Crashed Lives’ campaign is that “drink driving destroys lives, families and communities.” (Garda.ie). Stats show between the years of 2008 and 2012 drink driving accounted for 38% of all fatal crashes on Irish roads, taking around 286 lives. (RSA.ie). Other campaigns running in Ireland as of 2017 & 2018 are anti-speeding campaign, anti- drug use campaign, driver fatigue campaign, tyre safety, seatbelt usage, and driver distraction campaigns. Literature suggests these campaigns highlight the dangers that not following road safety laws can have on the individual, family, and the community. On further research it was found that this is not a new concept to road safety promotion with similar campaigns used in both Northern Ireland,

the UK, and Australia, with the Northern Irish road safety adverts being sold all around the world for their graphic imagery, is this the right way to go about promoting safe driving?

Stephens, A. et al. (2017) was behind the research in Australia that looked at the patterns of alcohol consumption and the attitudes towards drink driving behaviours. Research concluded that drivers who admitted to drink-driving and had high levels of alcohol use or consumption stated they were less likely to conform to the fact that drink driving leads to higher amount of fatal crashes and stated they were more likely to drink and drive at times they trusted they wouldn't be caught. From the findings of this research in Australia, does Ireland need to highlight the fear of the legal consequences of drink driving rather than the fear of fatality? This could be a better way to change the behaviours of young people and their overall perceptions of road safety.

## **2.8 Gender and Perception of Fear**

The use of fear in advertising effects everyone differently. The purpose of this study is to find out if using fear, particularly, graphic imagery to produce fear is effective in changing the behaviours of the young population of Ireland whether they are drivers or not.

Gender according to many studies influences how people of different genders view fear. Third party research explores this theory, and it shows the difference between how both male and female parties perceive emotions in the case of advertisements. A study carried out by Lennon et al (2010), looked at how fear appeals work in changing the beliefs and intentions of the 840 young adults which were studied. However, the study found some interesting findings when it came to how both male and females perceive emotions such as fear in road safety adverts. While the young females were supportive of the use of fear appeals and threat appeals and found them effective in changing both their behaviours and intentions, males did not find it as effective in changing their attitudes towards driving. In addition to this, females suggested that using interviews with people who were affected by distracted driving accidents as a tool for changing young adult's perceptions. In comparison males who took part in the study, stated that they would find safety driving campaigns more effective if laws and legal action was highlighted in the adverts to discourage unsafe driving.

Dunn, Lea British Columbia Sauder Business School found interesting results in a study when it came to how both male and females who felt scared or lonely had a high attachment to brands that they were close too when they experienced fearful times in their life concluding that the memory was a prompt to act on a product or service in a positive context. The linking of fear

as a prompt in road safety campaigns could be a viable method for road safety campaigns. The fear of injury or damage can lead to a person's worst nightmare thus making fear a significant trait in advertisements.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methods and Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The study of fear/fear appeals in advertisements is by no means a new concept; The topic of fear appeals effectiveness on safe driving and changing the behaviours of young people has been investigated by many theorists and road safety experts in Australia, America, and Northern Ireland, however, the study of the use of fear and its effectiveness on safe driving in Ireland is more or less a new concept.

### **3.2 Research Philosophy, Design, and Methodology**

Market research has been defined by Hague, et al. (2016) as “the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of information relevant to marketing decisions”.

A qualitative research method is the preferred choice for this study to answer the research objectives. Qualitative research investigates internal impressions and limits itself to this. According to Maxwell, (1992) qualitative research is used to discover “internal validity” and this is needed to produce effective qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research, the qualitative method of research focuses on seeking quality and depth from a small specially selected sample, through research tools, such as, focus groups, depth interviews and Ethnography. It is the researcher’s opinion that the method selected when undertaken correctly will establish more information that quantitative methodologies can provide. Due to this it is important that researcher takes care to find an unbiased sampling strategy to give strength and good rationality to the research.

To carry out the research needed for this investigation two focus groups were arranged with the target audience of 17-25 year olds, along with 6 interviews with ADI instructors. The use of qualitative research will assist the researcher in observing and analysing already established knowledge while gaining new insights into the perceptions of the sample being tested. This will test if theories developed supports or disagrees with secondary research and helps answer the research question of are fear appeals effective in promoting safe driving to young drivers in Ireland?

### **3.3 Selection of Participants and Sampling Strategy**

It is of utmost importance for this investigation that the target population is defined and chosen correctly. In order to select the best sample, the researcher assessed and studied different sampling methods to suit the research being carried out. The probability and non-probability methods of sampling were selected to obtain the best results.

Due to this, the researcher targeted both 17-25-year-old drivers, and vehicle passengers (both male and female) who fall into this age bracket to get an insight into the perceptions of the young population when it comes to perceiving fear in advertisements. The participants allowed the researcher to observe and understand how young people, view fear in public safety messages such as safe driving.

In addition, the researcher also gained insight into a sample of registered road safety authority ADI driving instructors through in-depth interviews to get an understanding of their knowledge, experience and views on fear as a change agent. The researcher allowed for snowball sampling when approaching ADIs as this method relies on referrals from initial participants to produce additional subjects to gain as much insight that is possible in the time available.

Due to geographical location and time constraints the sample interviewed and observed in focus groups were by no means be the whole population of young people in Ireland, however, they were a selection of opinions from the target population groups. A judgement or convenience method was used to work out the best way to counteract the geographical constraints to ensure the sample reflected the view of the wider population. However, the sample population was only those who took part in the research being carried out (e.g. interview, and focus groups.)

### **3.4 Entry into Field**

Before carrying out the qualitative techniques, the participants selected were given a short explanation or introduction to the scope and purpose of the research investigation. This was done to inform the participants of what they were getting involved in and to prevent any confusion later in the research.

Two focus groups were carried out, the first focus group contained three males and three females who were drivers between the ages of 17-25. In comparison, focus group two was made up of three females and three males who were non-drivers (passengers) also aged 17-25. The reason for this was to ensure the viewpoint of both the young drivers and young passengers and the perspective between both young males and young females were taken into account. The researcher wanted to know does the use of fear in advertisements have any effect on the behaviors and attitudes of drivers behind the wheel but also the behaviors of those who are passengers in a young driver's car, for example, would a young passenger ask their peers to slow down if they were speeding, after viewing a fear based driving commercial?

Each focus group lasted between 60-70 minutes. Each participant was asked to fill out an explanation sheet at the beginning (See Appendix 1). Once this was finished the contributors watched four advertisements going from least to most fear-provoking or startling. During the video, the mediator used another qualitative technique known as Ethnography. Ethnography is the observation or study of individuals in a specific environment. The use of this technique allowed the researcher to observe the reactions of the sample while they watched the campaigns. After each campaign, the sample were asked to fill out another assessment sheet to see what campaigns they found to be most effective (See Appendix 2). To further the research, the mediator also placed words, such as, fear, speeding, drinking, and distraction, along with screen shots from other safe driving campaigns in the middle of the group. (See Appendix 5). This was carried out to start a discussion on what these words meant to them and how they made them feel.

In addition to the two focus groups, six face to face exploratory interviews (Pakroo, 2009) with RSA driving instructors was conducted. The purposes for this was to get their view on the use of fear in advertisements as a behaviour change agent and if they view them as effective when it comes to teaching young drivers the rules of the road and safe driving. Interviews were

carried out in a semi structured manner that settled into an open discussion. Each interview lasted between 40-60 minutes. Questions were developed by the researcher before each interview and advanced into conversations about the RSA, the effects of fear in advertisements and the effects that these had on young people when learning to drive. A full transcript of the 6 interviews is provided under (Appendix 6). Throughout the interviews additional questions transpired, such as, questions on what the ADIs felt the RSA could do to change the behaviours of 17-25-year olds when on the road.

### **3.5 Analysis and Writing of research collected**

To evaluate the data from the primary methods, the researcher absorbed the information gathered and collected, analysed it, and broke it down into manageable parts to understand opinions. This took concentration and time to ensure all information was interpreted and categorised correctly. Interviews were analysed and transcribed in parts by first noting what the researcher asked followed by breaking down the responses of each participant. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008) this stage involves the investigator “breaking data apart and allocating thoughts to stand for blocks of raw data”.

When decoding the information gathered from the focus groups the researcher was able to compare and contrast the findings from both focus groups. The investigator was aware of potential bias that might arise. To reduce bias the researcher applied codes and categories to make it easier for them to analysis responses of the focus group participants. (Slideshare, 2018)

## **4.0 Chapter 4: Research Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction to Research Findings**

The primary research carried out involved two focus groups with the target audience of 17-25-year-olds and interviews with qualified ADIs. Each method of research used brought about different perspectives, some that were surprising to the researcher. For example, both the target audience and ADIs had slightly different opinions when it came to the effectiveness of fear. There was also a small contrast between the opinions of both males and females that took part in the study. However, after reviewing the information gathered further the researcher was able to identify many similarities between the findings in the primary research with literature that already existed in other areas, such as, Australia, America, and Northern Ireland which can be seen in chapter two of this research paper.



## 4.2 Pre-Focus Group Findings

### Question 1: *What Gender are you?*

- *Male*
- *Female*
- *Other*

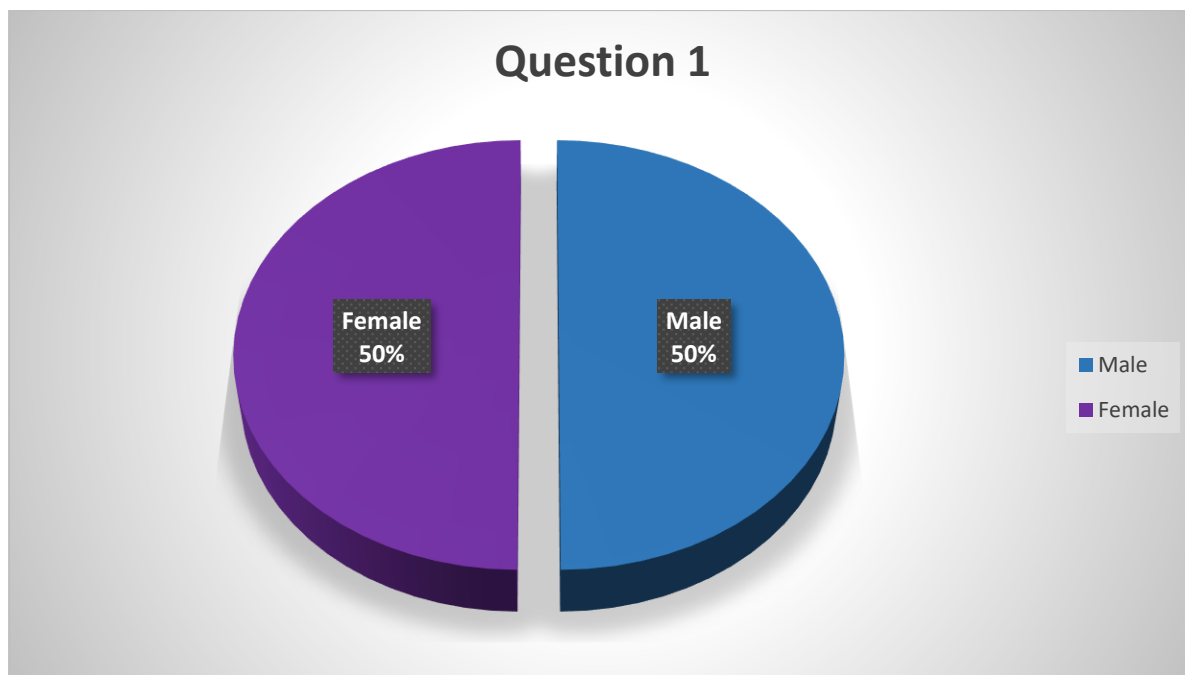


Figure: 4.2.1 Gender Breakdown

Each focus group was made up of three males and three females. This was carried out by the researcher to get a full understanding of how both genders perceive the use of fear in the road safety advertisements. Although, this was a small sample made up of only six females and six males, it gave the researcher what they needed in order to develop an overall idea and painted a picture to find out if fear in advertising really works in changing young males and females' behaviours when behind the wheel of a car. It was essential to get a balanced and equal representation from both genders. The 50/50 balance also allowed the study to see if the genders were at odds with each other in relation to the use of fear in advertising road safety.

**Question 2:** *Please state your age below:*

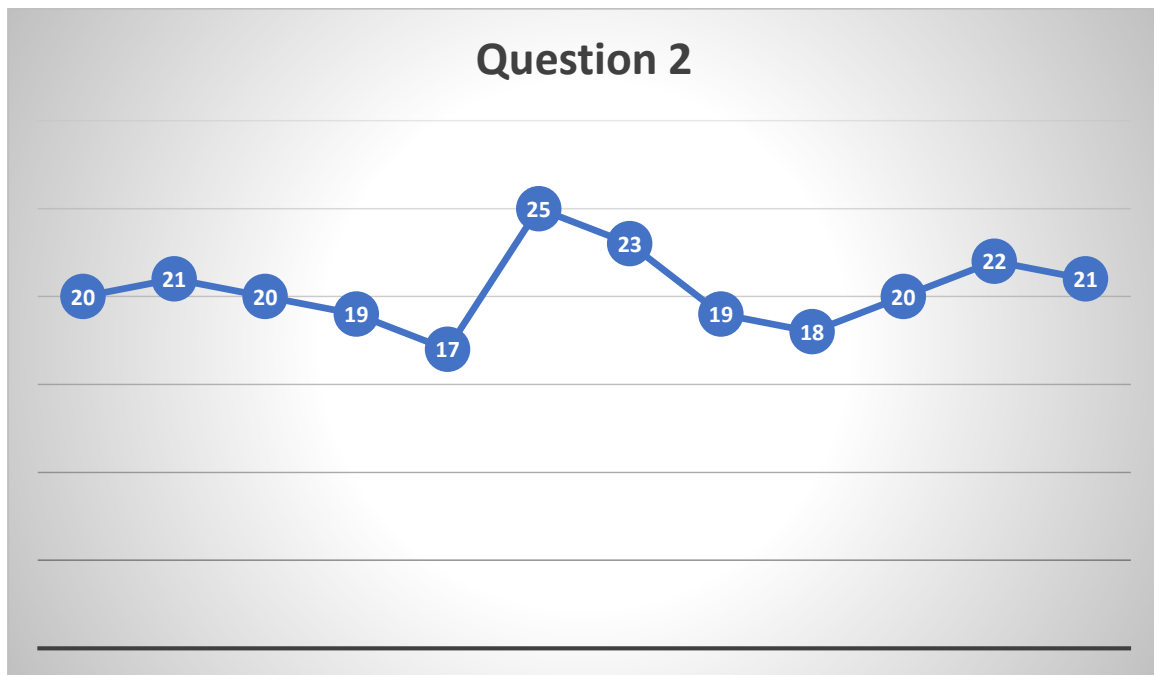


Figure: 4.2.2 Age Profile

The researcher wanted to investigate if the use of fear in advertisements changes the behaviours of young Irish road users between the ages of 17-25. Due to this it was important that the focus groups contained a variety of ages that fall into this age bracket. As you can see from the graph above, one of the participants was 17, one was 18, two of the participants were 19, three participants were 20 years old, two were 21, and the remaining participants were 22, 23, and 25. This gave the researcher an opinion from the entire demographic of 17 to 25 year olds to add value and to assist in answering the objectives of the study.

**Question 3: Are you**

- *A driver?*
- *A passenger?*
- *Or both?*

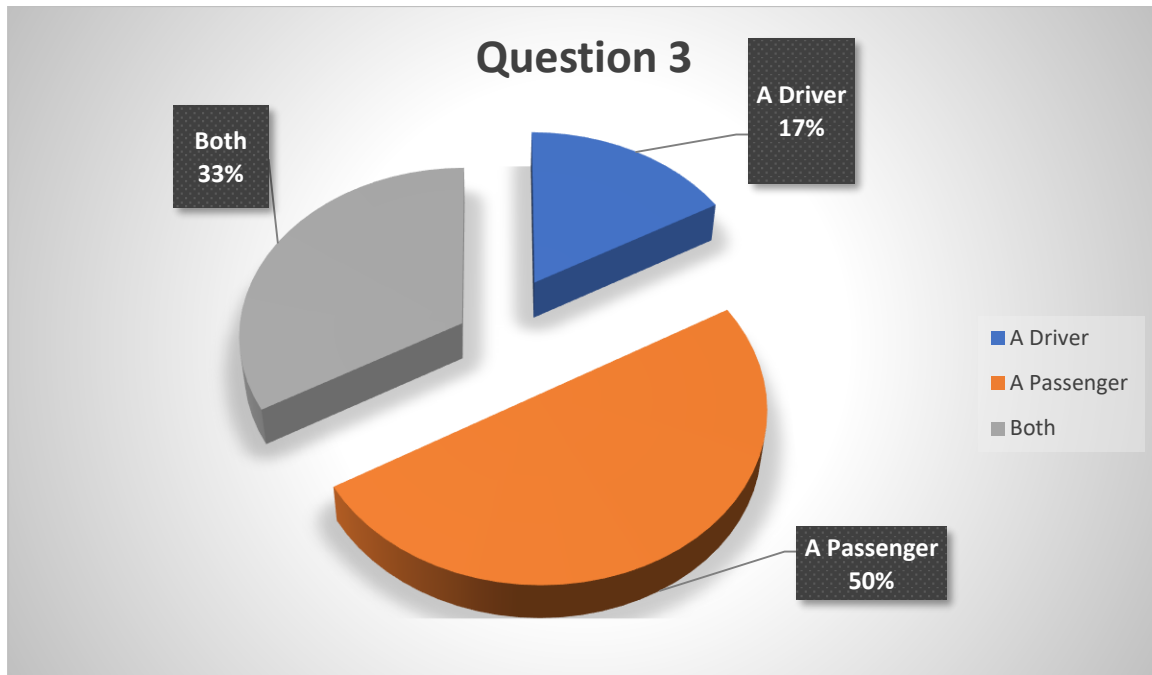


Figure: 4.2.3 Vehicle Positioning

Out of the 12 participants that took part in both focus groups 50% stated that they were only passengers, 17% stated they were only drivers and a total of 33% said that they were both drivers and passengers on different occasions. The mixture of both drivers and passengers allowed the researcher to get an in depth and fuller understanding of what the opinions of young Irish road users was when it came to fear or threat appeals in advertising. It was imperative to the objectives that passengers were involved in the research as they had opinions and views that drivers may not have, it could be argued drivers may be biased about their own skills and abilities. Therefore, the information all groups provided added balance to the study.

**Question 4:** *Do you drive your own car?*

- *Yes*
- *No*
- *Drive someone else's car often*
- *I don't drive*

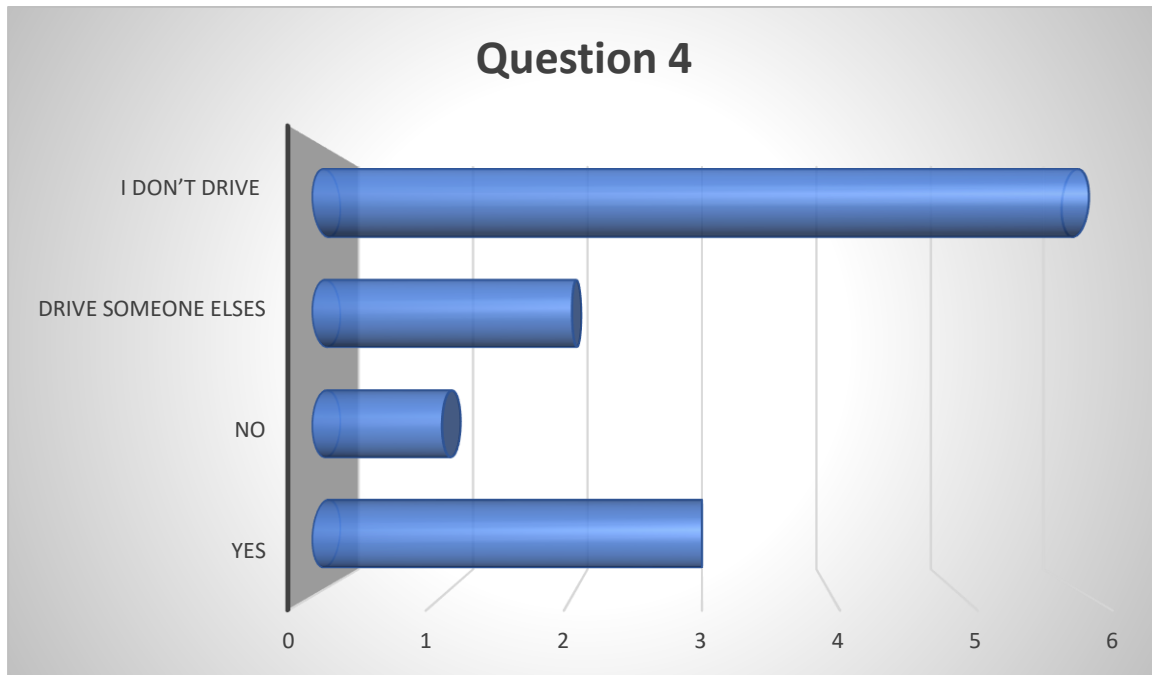


Figure: 4.2.4 Car Ownership

The participants were asked if they drive their own car. It was found that 6 of the 12 participants did not drive, 2 of the participants drove someone else's car often (mostly a parent's car), 1 participant stated that they didn't drive their own car, and lastly 3 participants said that they drove their own cars. Finding out if the driver was the car owner, it was felt could determine the level of safety and or responsibility an individual would take behind the wheel of a car. The knowledge gathered gave the researcher information on car ownership in the focus group participants, this information was used to evaluate opinions of individuals and to form opinions on whether this had any effect on their attitudes towards safe driving.

**Question 5:** *What type Driving licence do you currently hold?*

- *Provisional licence*
- *Full Driving licence*
- *I don't have a driving licence*

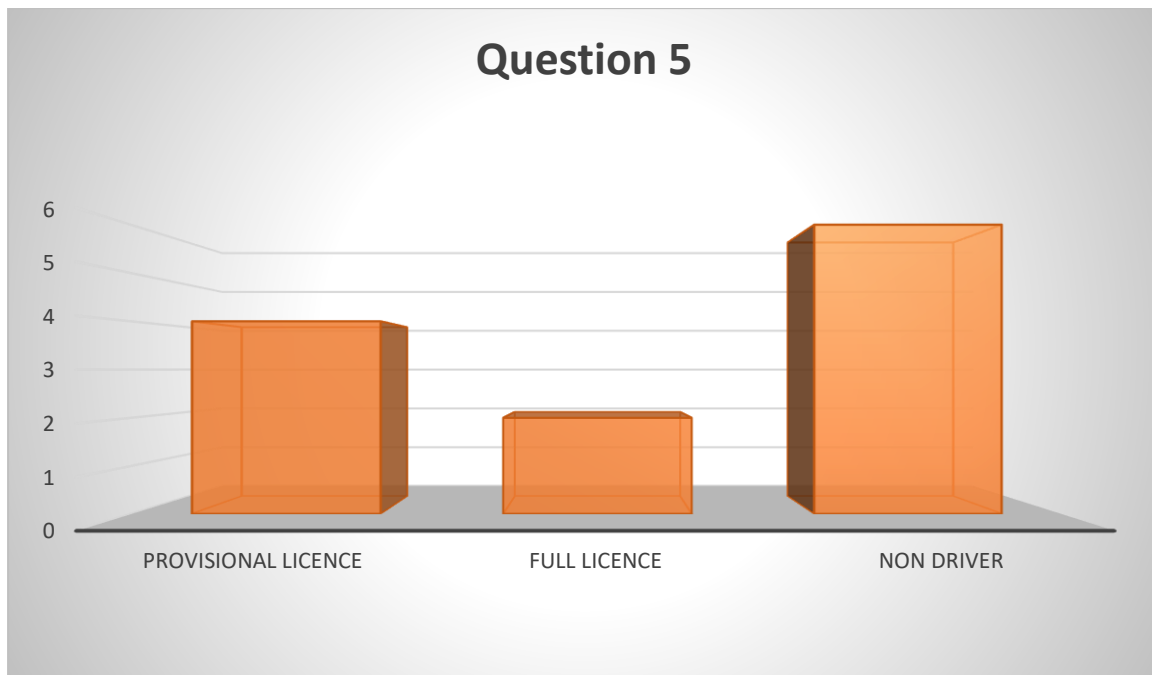


Figure: 4.2.5 Licence Status

The participants were asked if they had a driving licence and if so what type of licence did they hold? As stated in chapter 3 under entry into the field, focus group two contained three females and three males that didn't drive but were individuals that would be a passenger of a young driver often. This was to get an understanding if the use of fear in road safety commercials would encourage them to speak up if the driver wasn't following the rules of the road. Results found that 6 of the participants from focus group two did not hold a driver's licence, while 4 of the participants from focus group one currently held a provisional licence and the remaining 2 participants held a full licence. Finding out licensees and non-holders was important as the researcher was aware that new drivers have to under-go 12 lessons as part of the essential driver training to even be eligible to sit a driving test, these new and learner drivers have to go through a rigorous training program to drive. With this knowledge to hand the researcher wanted to establish if the RSA from the opinions of 17-25 year olds have used fear or mentioned fear advertisements in their training program.

**Question 6:** *Do you or have you ever engaged in any of the activities listed below **OR** have you been a passenger of someone who has engaged in any of the activities below? Tick all relevant answers*

- *Driving under the influence of Alcohol*
- *Using a mobile phone whilst driving*
- *Speeding or driving over speed limits*
- *Not wearing a seatbelt front or rear seats*
- *Driving after consuming or under influence of banned substances*
- *Driving without insurance or not on insurance policy*
- *Driving without tax or tax out of date*
- *Driving without passing an NCT test*
- *Driving whilst tired or fatigued*
- *Driving distracted by others*

The researcher wanted to get an overall understanding of what young road users had experienced when they were driving or someone else was. They were asked to tick the most relevant answers. The results showed that the most popular answers consisted of; driving under the influence of alcohol, using a mobile phone, speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, driving whilst tired, and driving distracted, with surprisingly over half (60%) of the participants choosing all or most of the answers mentioned above. Young drivers may have had bad influences as passengers in parents or family cars over the years and it was important for the study to highlight these. It was observed that most of the participants when answering this question were surprised with their own answers and honesty, with some not even realising until answering just how many times they were in a car while the offences happened.

**Question 7:** *If you were a passenger of a vehicle whose driver was driving in an unsafe manner for example, speeding, would you?*

- *Say nothing, they know what's best*
- *Ask them to slow down*
- *Ask them to pull over*
- *Other (Please Specify)*

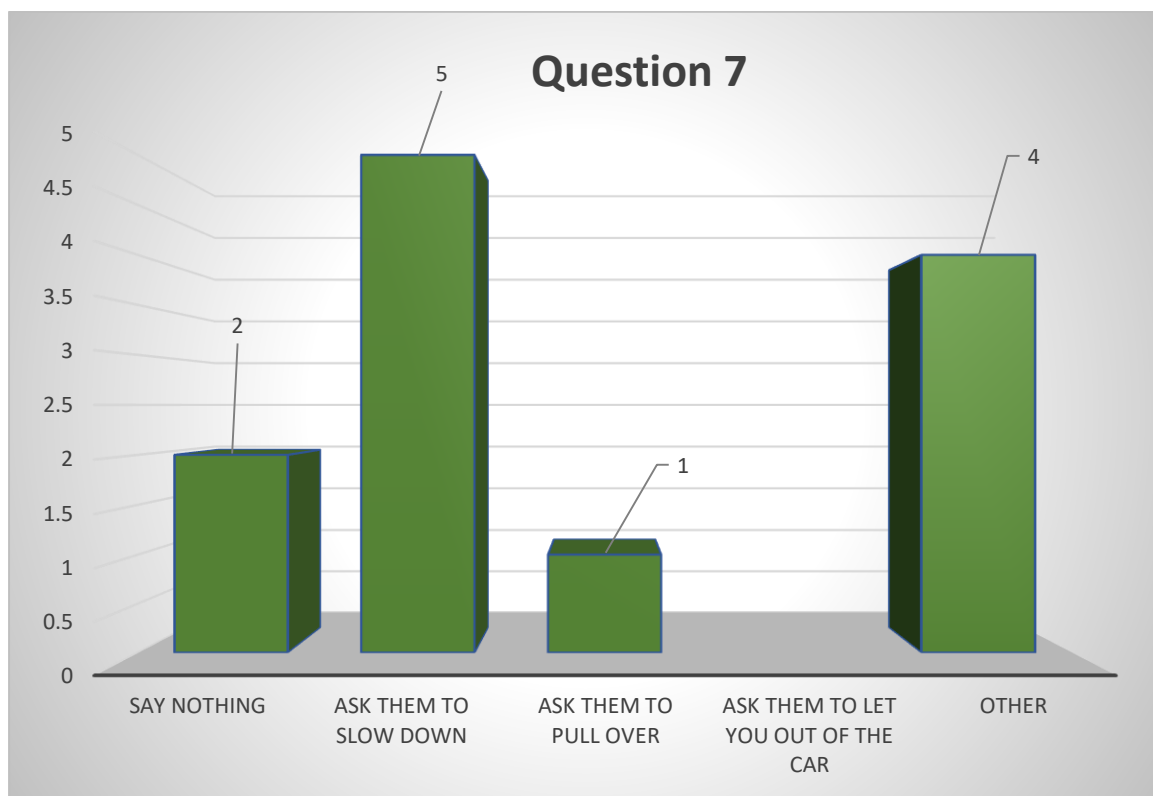


Figure: 4.2.6 Passengers Reactions

Both focus groups were asked about what they would do if the driver of the vehicle was driving in an unsafe manner. The results showed two of the participants would say nothing, as the driver knows best. One of the participants stated that they would ask the driver to pull over. The most popular answer was that the participants would ask the driver to slow down with 5 individuals choosing this answer. The remaining individuals picked other (4) stating that they would do things such as, *“I’d tell the driver I felt uncomfortable in the manner they were driving”* and interestingly one participant stated, *“It depends on who is driving, if the driver was my age I would ask them to slow down or get off their phone, but if it was my parents or an aunt/uncle driving I would probably say nothing out of respect for my elders.”*

**Question 8:** *Are you aware of the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and their public safety advertisements/campaigns?*

- *Yes*
- *No*

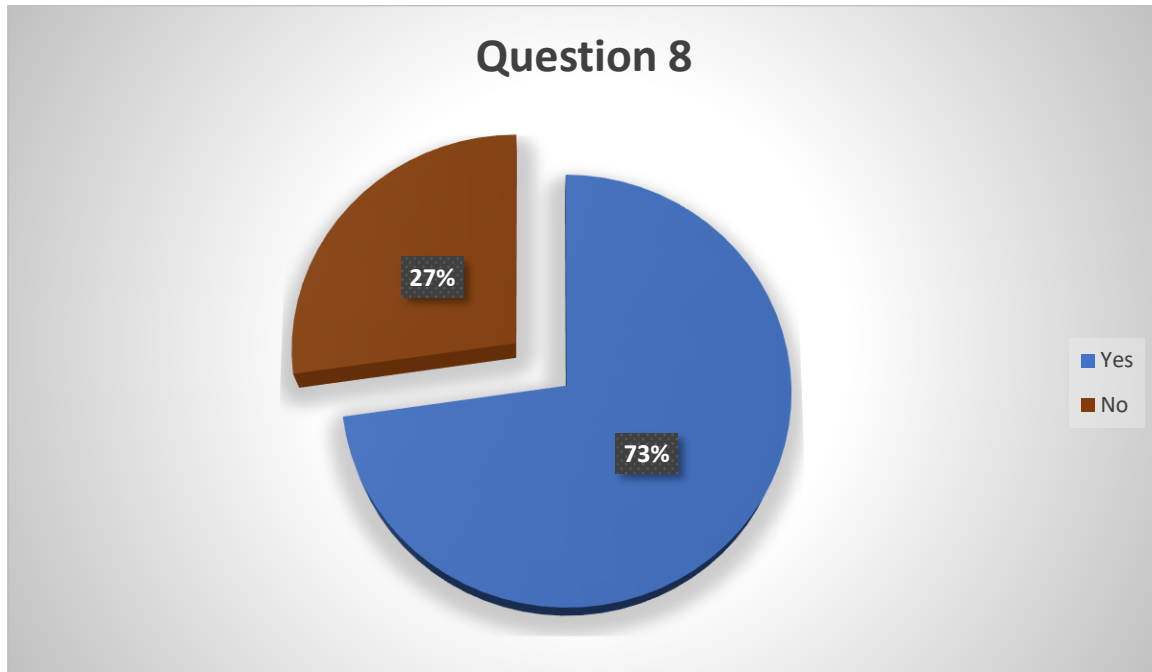


Figure: 4.2.7 Awareness of Campaigns

It was important for the researcher to get idea of how many participants were aware of the RSA and their campaigns before the videos were played. The results showed that only 73% of those who took part in the focus group knew of the RSA and 27% said they had never heard of the RSA and they were not aware of their current campaigns. With further probing it was discovered the groups found the media channels the RSA used were not compatible with them, with most of the group using social media as their information and news sources. This interesting fact could assist in safe driving. If the target audience viewed adverts constantly on all social media channels, the 27% who were unaware of the RSA would know the safe driving message.



**Question 9:** *If you answered yes to the question above, do you feel the RSA provide enough informative content and information in their road safety advertisements?*

- *Yes*
- *No*

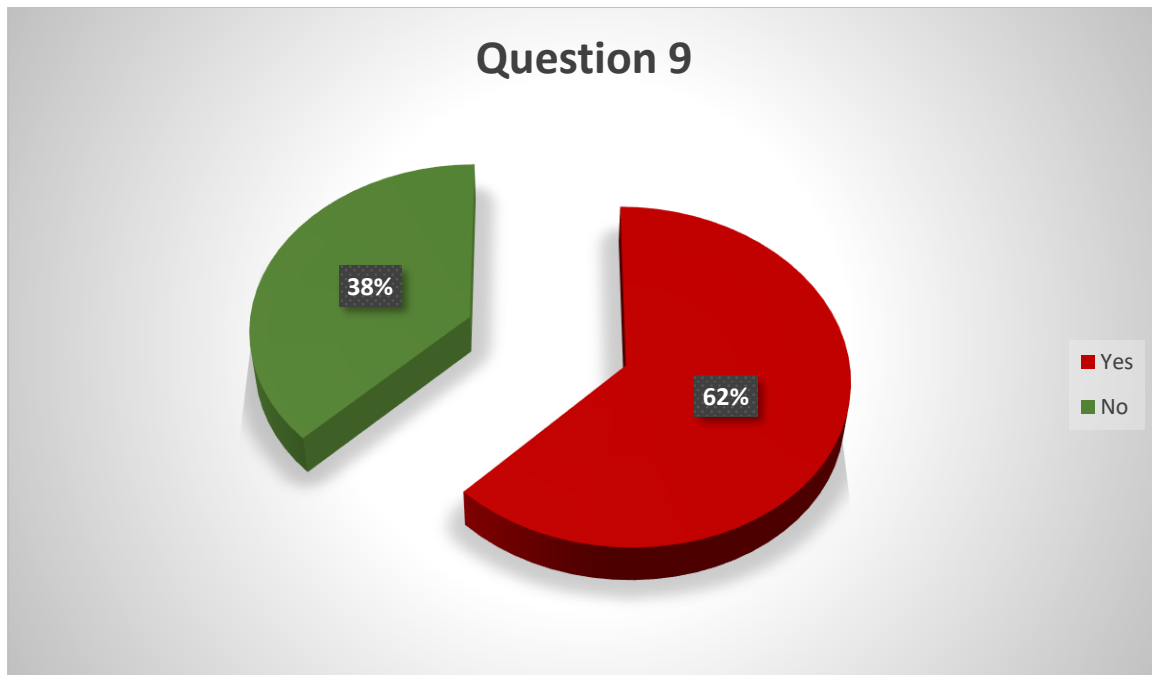


Figure: 4.2.8 RSA Information

Out of the 73% of participants who answered yes to question 8, 62% stated that they believed that the RSA provided enough informative information in their adverts and a total of 38% of those who took part stating that they thought the RSA could do more and that they did not provide enough informative content in their commercials. Figures of 62% is encouraging for the RSA, however, there is still room for improvement with 38% looking for more information. During observations of focus groups before viewing the advertising videos it was noted the shock and anguish as a method was on the mind of participants with one member saying, “*the use of children as victims is horrible, surely there is a better way to make people drive safe*” this opened a discussion on what other way is there to target safe driving that ended without any conclusive agreement.

**Question 10:** *On a scale of zero to ten, where zero is very appropriate and ten is very inappropriate, how appropriate do you consider the use of fear such as graphic imagery to be when advertising a public safety message, such as, safe driving.*

*Very appropriate. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10. Very inappropriate.*

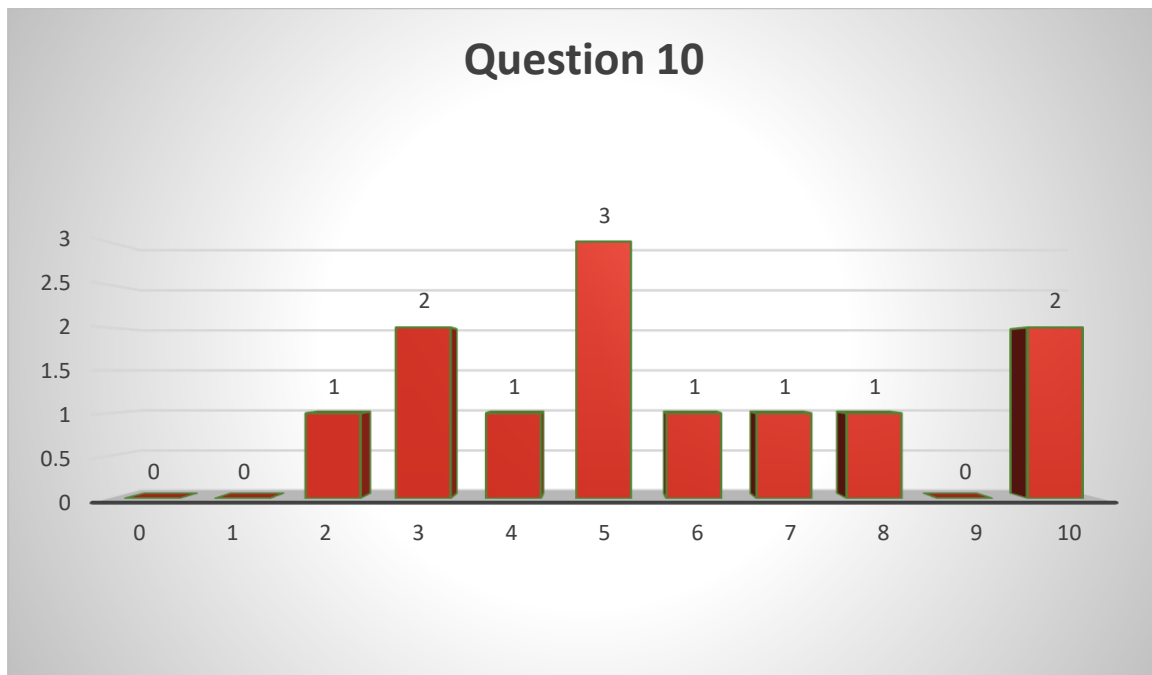


Figure: 4.2.9 Graphic Imagery

The last question the participants were asked before the focus group took place was on a scale of 1 to 10 (zero is very appropriate and ten is very inappropriate) how appropriate they felt the use of fear, such as, graphic imagery was in the case of promoting safe driving. The graph above shows the results with three partakers giving the use of fear and its appropriateness a score of 5 and a total of four participants stating it was appropriate giving it a score lower than 5. In addition, the remaining individuals in the focus group gave a score of 6 or higher, with two participants giving fear a score of 10 meaning it was deemed very inappropriate in their eyes.

### 4.3 Focus Group Findings

It was important for the study to gain an insight into the thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes of the target research group of 17-25 year olds. To do this the researcher set-up two focus groups of six contributors all within the age bracket of the exploration. These groups were labelled group one and two.

Each group was provided with an explanation sheet, this questionnaire format supplied the investigator with what the focus group contributors knew or did not know about the topic. The focus group were shown four road safety advertisements which are described in Appendix 3.

The findings from the four videos shown proved to be very interesting with contrasting views from both focus groups. For example, focus group one had split views on the most effective road safety advert, with four participants (3 male and 1 female) all agreeing that advertisement 4, 'Just Slow Down', was the most effective advertisement. This advert was the most graphic or fear depicting advert shown. One female stated

*"I found this advert most effective as the advert uses a young female driver which is not often seen, in many ways this made it more relatable for me. She didn't set out to hurt anyone but it showed because she was rushing, she made a mistake. It shows how easily these tragedies can happen and the devastation it can cause to not only the family of the deceased but the driver themselves."*

In agreement with this statement two of the male participants said they found this the most effective advertisements as

*"I didn't like the beginning of the advert where the little girl got hit by the car, that was too graphic for me. However, the ending where it shows the young driver in the police station crying into her mams arms really affected me. It showed how quick a mistake can happen and seeing the consequences the driver was going to face made it the most effective advert in my opinion."*

With the other stating

*“I liked how it showed the consequences for the driver, that really affected me. The thought of losing my licence and freedom to drive is more relatable to me and would make me think before speeding or even using a mobile phone behind the wheel.”*

One female from focus group one stated that advertisement one ‘Ballymun’ was the most effective advertisement stating,

*“The song is catchy, so I’m more likely to remember the message of the advert when I’m behind the wheel” and “I liked the first advertisement the most, it tells a story of the consequences of speeding without the use of graphic imagery and in my opinion, that is much more effective.”*

The remaining female stated that advertisement two ‘Driver Distraction’ was the most effective to her stating *“I think it’s the most effective because it is relatable and would encourage me to drive more vigilantly because as a 21-year-old I understand how easy it is to get distracted with your friends in the car and this video made me realise how easy it is for smallest distraction to cause such devastation.*

Similarly, three members of focus group two (one male and two females) stated that advertisement two ‘Driver Distraction’ was also most effective to them stating,

*“This is the most effective as it is in many ways is directed at me, I’ve been guilty of distracting my friends while they are driving and this advertisement shows me why I shouldn’t. The ending is shocking and that is why it would encourage me not to distract my friends”* and the male stating;

*“The advert at the beginning almost provides a comedic approach and I liked this because it kept me hooked, the shock ending was most effective to me and one I won’t forget because I didn’t expect it to come”.*

However not everyone agreed with one female contributor saying *“It’s a clearly thought out concept, but I feel like the video offers more comedic value bar the ending of course, it’s not as serious as others I have seen. It’s a very soft approach on a hard subject, it didn’t make me stop and think if I’m honest”.*

The remaining three participants also had mixed views, two participants (two males) stated that advertisement four ‘Just Slow Down’ was most effective to them. One male stated that he found the shocking imagery in advertisement four to be most effective stating *“The fourth advertisement was extremely effective and would 100% encourage me to tell the driver of the car to drive with more care. It’s a very strong advertisement with a strong message and shocking imagery, that is necessary these days to hammer home messages to reckless drivers”*.

The last female contributor found advertisement three ‘Mistakes’ most effective stating *“The advertisement was very intense and emotional, the use of a small child in the back seat for me gave the fear factor a good kick and the emotional exchange of the two men made it all the more real. It would definitely encourage me as a passenger to tell my friend to slow down as the risk is too high and for me that’s why it was the most effective.”*

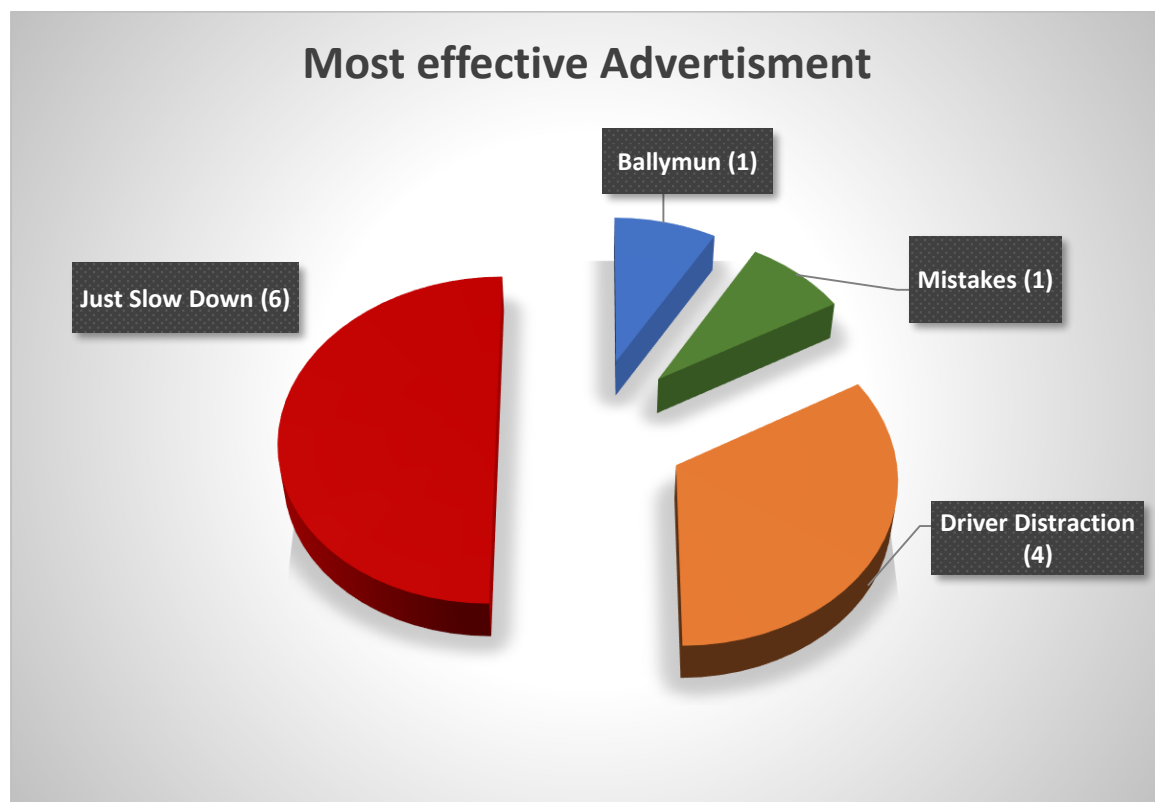


Figure: 4.3.1 Most Effective Advertisement

#### 4.4 Interview Findings

The researcher conducted six interviews with qualified RSA driving instructors to gain an insight into what the thoughts of people who are trusted to train the research target group 17-25-year-old males and females. The full interview transcripts are attached in Appendix 6.

All interviewees had opinions on what was right and wrong with road safety in Ireland. Some opinions were very similar and others far apart with all the interviewees agreeing that road safety is a significant problem in Ireland with one interviewee commenting negatively when asked about enforcing road safety,

*“Yes, I do believe that it’s a significant issue in Ireland, because the law enforcement in Ireland is and has never been carried out correctly and consistently when it comes to road safety. Laws are put in place but they are not enforced therefore, they are not taken seriously by Irish road users and this has led to a problem that is not only seen in Ireland but worldwide.”*

The general belief was that deterrents are in place through penalty points and road bans, however, enforcement remained a concern for the professional trainers.

When advertising was discussed, issues on the media channels used was brought up by one of the female interviewees stating,

*“No, in my opinion the TV adverts have very little effect on changing the attitudes and behaviours of young Irish road users. I feel that the use of social media is a more effective way on influencing generation Y.”*

Furthermore, the use of fear as a trigger to change habits had mixed opinions with one ADI believing,

*“In my honest opinion, I think that a combination of all the above and more should be portrayed in order for advertisements to change behaviours and attitudes of drivers. I don’t feel that one can stand alone, they are all needed together in order to be effective in promoting safe driving.”*

Other ADIs were more convinced that a harder approach was the way to go and that not enough fear was used to influence change. However, the manager of a training centre employing over 20 ADIs said she was more inclined to promote safe driving through emotions saying,

*“I think sadness, showing the effects on people who have to deal with serious road accidents so for example the family I think is much more hard hitting than fear and it sticks in the minds of young people more.”*

Finally, a male ADI with over 10 years' experience felt that graphic images were not needed saying,

*“I would say the use of graphic imagery to provoke fear is inappropriate. Fear does work but they don't need to use graphic imagery to do this. I think using fear to show the legal consequences would be more effective for young people.”*

#### **4.5 Focus Group & Interview Conclusions**

It is apparent from observing and analysis the findings that the focus groups and interview contributors all had mixed emotions on what was right and wrong with road safety promotions. Research findings of the focus sessions suggest that a mixed method approach is appealing as it caters for multiple preferences. The focus groups had 12 participants, a small number in the wider scheme of a total young population, yet only half of all contributors could agree on what was the way forward. However, it was clear that the use of fear as a tool for getting the message for safe driving got reactions, during observing contributors watching the four adverts the researcher was surprised with the expressions and aghast of participants. Many participants before said fear had no effect on them but from observing the participants and discussions after it is clear that maybe the adverts that contain fear remained at the back of their mind after viewings. The learnings from these watching sessions, the gathering of data, and thoughts from the focus groups have pointed to the use of fear as a change agent with a mixed reasoning approach, finding the balance of fear with compassion and reasoning is imperative to promoting road safety.

Interview findings also had mixed opinions, of the six interviews conducted there was agreement and disagreement with what is the correct way forward for road safety in Ireland. Many interviewees believed that fear in advertisement was effective in creating awareness of the effects of safe driving but wasn't that successful on changing the attitudes of young drivers. Many believed that enforcement of laws (along with fear) is the most effective way to change the behaviours of young people.

This mirrored the focus group and added to the complexity of the road safety advertising. The ADIs interviewed are the teachers of young drivers and with varied opinions it can be argued that this uncertainty needs clarifying from the RSA.

## **5.0 Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Road deaths and fatalities is an ongoing problem in not only Ireland but worldwide. The number of road fatalities in Ireland is decreasing, however, it continues to be a major issue in the long term. According to the RSA and Minister of Transport (2017) *“more still needs to be done, 158 deaths is not good enough, we need to continue our efforts if we are to achieve the objective of reducing fatalities to 124 by 2020.”* Road safety although decreasing is still an important issue for road safety experts and the effort to create campaigns, and communicate safety messages is still to the fore in order to continue changing behaviours of road users, especially the most vulnerable. This research paper objective was to delve into how the RSA currently communicate through fear and graphic imagery and to determine whether their efforts so far have been successful in changing the behaviours of young Irish road users aged 17-25.

### **5.2 Objective One**

*Examine the benefits and suitability of using Fear Appeals in Advertising.*

From reviewing secondary literature and gathering information from primary research many benefits of fear appeals in advertisements were discovered, along with how suitable the use of fear is moving forward. The benefits of using fear in advertisements is listed below;

- Helps create road safety awareness by showing viewers what can potentially happen if dangerous unsafe driving is undertaken.
- Fear in advertisements captures the attention of the audience
- Slowly changing attitudes of road users
- Road safety statistics of fatalities are reducing
- Other jurisdictions reviewed all used fear as a change agent

The suitability of fear in advertisements is a topic that had many varying opinions in both secondary literature and the primary research carried out. The question of suitability raised the most issues for research objective one. Primary and secondary collections all pointed to fear as



having positive results, however, findings suggest it is not the only way to approach road safety promotion.

The benefits of using fear extends beyond just adverts promoting safe driving, fear is a catalyst to changing habits. The research found through primary focus group observations that fear had participants agreeing to drive safer by cutting out bad habits, such as, mobile phone usage.

The knock-on effects are huge, road collisions put pressure on essential healthcare services and emergency personal dealing with the aftermath of accidents not to mention the monetary cost and loss of life unsafe driving creates. Using fear in promoting a societal cause is acceptable the benefits are endless, when life is preserved the result is positive. Primary and secondary findings agree it is a suitable approach to reducing road deaths.

### **5.3 Objective Two**

*Is there another way for marketers in the opinion of the sample to promote safe driving in a positive way that does not appeal to fear or is fear the way to go?*

This objective was achieved through reviewing both secondary literature review and focus group findings. It was found that fear in the opinion of, the sample tested, is the preferred way to go and the most effective way to promote safe driving to their age group. However, it is important to note from both the secondary research gathered and group discussions during both focus groups the way in which fear is used is important. Many of the male candidates found fear of losing their licence and freedom to drive would stay with them much longer than fear with the use of graphic imagery. The fear of the consequence they would face from unsafe driving was much more important and scarier to them than the use of fear through graphic imagery and or the loss of someone else's life. This was also found in many secondary research papers with countries such as Australia, United States, and Northern Ireland all using consequences coupled with fear.

The female sample found the use of fear through graphic imagery very effective, however, it is important to note that many female participants stated they found the use of emotion to be also very effective when promoting fear. Whether this is through a family of the victim talking in the advert or a man pleading with another driver not to hit him, like in the advert 'Mistakes'. This could suggest that males are slowly finding the use of graphic imagery in the RSA campaigns less effective, thus more young male drivers dying on Irish roads. This is something that the RSA should investigate to further understand male perceptions.

It became apparent when observing the groups and in the analysis phase of literature that males and females have similar yet different ideas and this is a challenge for road safety marketing.

Finally, there is no doubt that this topic needs to be studied more in depth but to answer the objective from the point of view of the researcher, fear is the way to go, however it doesn't work alone. In order for it to be most effective to the young audience it needs to be coupled with other sentiments, such as, emotion, humour or even guilt.

#### **5.4 Objective Three**

*Investigate if the Road Safety Authority uses fear appeals successfully and effectively from the opinions and the viewpoint of ADI instructors who provide lessons.*

There were many differing opinions from the ADIs when it came to the use of fear and if it was successful in changing the behaviours of those aged 17-25. Similar to the target sample of young drivers the driving instructors were of the opinion fear was an effective tool in road safety awareness. However, there were differing beliefs and opinions on how effective a stand-alone use of fear in advertising can be. The majority of those who were interviewed believed that the RSA do use fear effectively in their advertisements, however, the use of fear in the opinion of the interviewees was not effective at changing the attitudes of young drivers but in creating awareness of safe driving. Many believed that fear coupled with enforcement of law was the way to go if the RSA want to change the attitudes and behaviours of drivers. Other interviewees believed that the RSA didn't use fear effectively stating that their adverts could be more hard hitting and that they should adapt the techniques of countries in the Southern Hemisphere. Others stated that the RSA did not use fear successfully as fear wasn't the way to go about changing behaviours but that the use of peer pressure and enforcement in adverts would be much more successful at changing attitudes.

## **6.0 Chapter 6: Recommendations**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This research paper wanted to delve into the effectiveness of fear as a behaviour change agent when promoting safe driving to young Irish road users aged 17-25. From carrying out this research, through focus groups, interviews, and reviewing and examining already established literature many recommendations and views were established on how the RSA could better not only themselves but change opinions of the young populations.

### **6.2 Recommendations**

As a result of findings from primary and secondary sources collected throughout this research, it is recommended that the RSA:

- Show Adverts on popular social media platforms, such as, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, or even Netflix. The young generation don't watch TV anymore so the RSA need to ensure that they target these road users at the right places and right times.
- The RSA need to review Irish road safety statistics and databases and use these to their advantage, it can show when adverts should be shown based on the most common time and day accidents happen and how they happen, allowing them to not only know the best time to stream the advert but what the content of that advert should be.
- Adverts should contain a combination of fear, emotion, humour, and guilt etc. In addition, adverts should still continue to use graphic imagery, however, additional adverts that show fear of legal consequences, stories of families who lost loved ones, and road fatality statistics during the advert are also recommended to be shown. (Variety of adverts to target as much demographics as possible.)
- It is recommended that the RSA show advertisements before and or after concerts and matches. Young people attend these events and it might encourage them not to drive home for example, after consuming drink or drugs.
- Target the young population before they even start learning to drive by setting up workshops in primary and secondary schools. It's also recommended that these workshops continue after school, by providing workshops in colleges and communities around Ireland.

- Use databases to discover the most popular time for cars to be out on the road e.g. morning, lunch hour, and around 5 o'clock and use radio advertising to create awareness when they are already behind the wheel.
- Encourage more Gardaí enforcement
- Continue with the 12-lesson system and encourage ADIs to show road safety advertisements as part of driver education and training.
- Create more advertisements that are directed at the passenger of a vehicle.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The objective of this exploration was to find out if the use of fear as a behaviour change agent is effective when promoting safe driving to young Irish road users aged 17-25. From reviewing primary and secondary information it is clear that fear and fear appeals are vital when it comes to creating awareness to safe driving. However, in isolation and without the help of law enforcement, education, better promotion, and a wider use of sentiments (emotion, humour, guilt) fear alone cannot effectively change the opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of every individual that falls into the 17 to 25 age brackets. Furthermore, the investigation targeted a small group of opinions in the form of focus group sessions and a selected set of driving instructor's interviews, of those who contributed it is clear their views differed. This conflicting set of opinions from a small sample shows just how difficult it is for the RSA to advertise a social message of change to the entire population. Nevertheless, road fatalities are preventable if personal attitudes to dangerous driving habits change. Each individual has the power to change how they are as a driver (or as a passenger) allow unacceptable anti-social road practices to continue.

## **7.0 Chapter 7: Abbreviations**

- Road Safety Authority (RSA)
- Advanced Driving Instructor (ADI)
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
- The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE)

## 8.0 Chapter 8: Bibliography

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## 9.0 Chapter 9: Appendices

### Appendices 1: Explanation sheet for Focus Groups

*Before the focus group begins the participants will be asked to fill out the following explanation sheet about their driving abilities (or as a passenger) and their current knowledge of RSA and their advertisements.*

**Q1.** What gender are you?

- Male
  - Female
  - Other
- 

**Q2.** Please state your age below;

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**Q3.** Are you

- A Driver?
- A Passenger?
- Or Both?

**Q4.** Do you drive your own car?

- Yes
- No
- Drive someone else's car often
- I don't drive

**Q5.** What type of driving licence do you currently hold?

- Provisional driving licence
- Full driving licence
- I don't have a driving licence

**Q6.** Do you or have you ever engaged in any of the activities named below **or** have you been a passenger of someone who has engaged in any of the activities below? Tick all relevant answers.

- Driving under the influence of Alcohol
- Using a mobile phone whilst driving
- Speeding or driving over speed limits
- Not wearing a seatbelt front or rear seats
- Driving after consuming or under influence of banned substances
- Driving without insurance or not on insurance policy
- Driving without tax or tax out of date
- Driving without passing an NCT test
- Driving whilst tired or fatigued
- Driving distracted by others

**Q7.** If you were a passenger of a vehicle whose driver was driving in an unsafe manner for example, speeding, would you?

- Say nothing, they know what's best
- Ask them to slow down
- Ask them to pull over
- Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q8.** Are you aware of the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and their Public Safety Advertisements/Campaigns?

- Yes
- No

**Q9.** If you answered yes to the question above, do you feel the RSA provide enough informative content and information in their road safety advertisements?

- Yes
- No

**Q10.** On a scale of zero to ten, where zero is very appropriate and ten is very inappropriate, how appropriate do you consider the use of fear such as graphic imagery to be when advertising a public safety message, such as, safe driving.

*Very appropriate.* 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10. *Very inappropriate.*

## Appendices 2: Assessment Sheet

The following sheet is for the focus group participants to fill out after viewing adverts. There will be one sheet per video which will be giving out after each of the advert showings.

**Q1.** Have you seen this commercial before?

- Yes
- No

**Q2.** If you answered yes to the question above, where did you see this advertisement?

- TV
- YouTube
- Facebook
- RSA website
- Other (please specify)

**Q3.** On a measure of 1-10 would you drive more cautiously after viewing this commercial or would you ask a driver to drive more cautiously after viewing the commercial?

*Very Unlikely.* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10. *Very likely*

**Q4.** In your Opinion, why would this advertisement persuade / discourage you to drive more cautiously or tell a driver of the vehicle to drive with more care?

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**Q5.** After viewing this advertisement what way did you feel?

- Positive
- Negative
- Worried
- Upset
- Guilty
- Emotional (sad, upset)
- Relieved
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Q6.** In your opinion do you think the advertisement is applicable to you or more relevant to others?

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**Q7.** Did you find the advertisement appropriate for the cause in which it was advertising?

- Yes
- No

**Q8.** Why do you feel this advertisement was appropriate/not appropriate?

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**Q9.** In your opinion what do you feel was the message the RSA were trying to portray in this advertisement?

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**Q10.** On a scale of zero to ten, where zero is extremely effective and ten is extremely ineffective, how effective did you find the advertisement.

*Extremely effective.* 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10. *Extremely ineffective*



### **Appendices 3: Focus Group Advertisement Videos**

Four videos were shown, the researcher took on the role as an observer. The advertisements shown are as follows:

#### **Advertisement One**

Advertisement one was an advert that was produced by the RSA, it was titled 'Ballymun'. The advertisement is an attempt to reduce speeding and driver distraction on Irish roads. Out of the four advertisements shown this advert was the least fear mongering. The advert shows a car driving through Ballymun from the view of the driver and highlights the many distractions the driver sees from tower blocks, birds, people walking, fire trucks, and shopping malls. The distractions are highlighted through a song played in the background. The advert shows the speed limit of 50 in Ballymun and later flicks to the driver's speed which is over the limit and increasing. At the end of the advert it shows a freighted father and daughter standing on the road at a pedestrian crossing with the lyrics 'Never again will I see her, never no more' and it is left to the viewer to imagine what happened to both the child and parent. After the group filled out the questionnaire about the advert, the advert was discussed among the group. One female participant from focus group one stated that *"although the advertisement didn't show what happened to the child and father at the end, I still found it effective. At the beginning, I wouldn't have thought it was a road safety advert as the song was very catchy so it was a shock when the child and father stepped out on the road."*

#### **Advertisement Two**

Advertisement two was an advert that was produced by DOE in Northern Ireland and was called 'Driver Distraction'. The advert was targeted at young passengers. The advert shows a series of times that you wouldn't distract your friends from scoring a goal at a football match, diving into a pool, to putting a ball while playing golf. The advert ends with a group of friends in a car, all laughing and distracting the driver. The advert tactically says, "So why would you distract them doing this" and minutes later it shows the car crashing and injuring/potentially killing the passengers and the driver in the car. This advert takes a comedic approach at the beginning of the advert followed by a fear or shock approach with one participant stating, *"I feel like the video offers more of a comedic value at the beginning of the advert when it shows friends distracting their friends in normal situations, it kept me*

*hooked and then the ending of course takes a turn using fear and shows the seriousness of what can happen if you distract your friends behind the wheel”*

### **Advertisement Three**

Advertisement three is called ‘Mistakes’ and was produced by New Zealand’s road safety authority. This advert takes more of an emotional approach to road safety with elements of fear near the end. The advert shows two cars, one with a child in the back seat. The advert shows the car with the child pulling out and the other car speeding towards them. The advert suddenly stops the two cars and two male characters step out. The father of the child is apologising for pulling out and pleading with the other driver to stop before he hits the car with child seated in the back. The other man, upset, explains how he can’t because he was going too fast and the other driver just pulled out. The emotional conversation between the two men is meant to encourage drivers to slow down because other road users make mistakes. The advert ends with the cars hitting into each other and the screen goes black, leaving the rest to the viewers imagination. One participant stated *“It would encourage me to drive more vigilantly because every driver should be not only aware of their driving but other vehicles as well. If I was willing to speed or take a risk while driving, other drivers will be as well and this combination could lead to a tragedy.”*

### **Advertisement Four**

Advertisement four was produced by the Canadian road safety authority and was labelled ‘Just Slow Down’. This advertisement was the most fear mongering of the commercials shown to the participants. It begins with two men complaining about a speeding ticket that one just received, it then flicks to a young girl and her friends having lunch. The young girl looks at her phone and runs out in a rush. The advert then again changes scene of a father driving on the road to pick up his two children coming out of school. The children see their dad parked up on the side of the road and one child (the little girl) runs out on the road and is hit by the young girl rushing from college. The father and son are frozen in shock as the young driver screams behind the wheel. The commercial then shows the father receiving the news that his daughter had died and the young girl crying and screaming into her mother’s arms in the police station as she waits the consequences of her mistake. One participant stated she found this very effective saying *“It’s a very strong message, which engaged me as the audience through the use of graphic imagery, harrowing and emotional scenes with the use of distressing scenes that reflect reality.”*

## **Appendices 4: Links to focus group advertisement videos**

### **Advertisement 1:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BdXUNuHfCw> - 0:50 mins. RSA Ballymun, anti-speeding campaign.

### **Advertisement 2:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVQApuCjEN4> - 1:00 mins. DOE Road Safety, driver distraction. Directed at young passengers.

### **Advertisement 3:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2rFTbvwt eo> - 1:00 mins. New Zealand road Safety Advert: 'Mistakes'.

### **Advertisement 4:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5EyOnccJLg&feature=related> - 2:25 mins. Just slow down Campaign.

**Appendices 5: Screenshots shown during interviews and focus groups.**



## Appendices 6: Interview Transcripts

### Interview with Vinny Dorley, Approved Driving Instructor

*Researcher: From your experience working as an Approved Driving Instructor, is road Safety a major issue in the Republic of Ireland and why do you believe this?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “Yes, I do believe that it’s a significant issue in Ireland, because the law enforcement in Ireland is and has never been carried out correctly and consistently when it comes to road safety. Laws are put in place but they are not enforced therefore they are not taken seriously by Irish Road Users and this has led to a problem that is not only seen in Ireland but worldwide.”

*Researcher: How do you feel about the Road Safety Authorities TV advertisements? Do you think they change the behaviours of drivers?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “No, I don’t personally feel they are as effective as they could be, if you compare the RSA adverts to advertisements that are seen in countries in the Southern Hemisphere, the adverts there are much more hard hitting, more informative and updated regularly and due to that I feel they are more effective. I think it’s something that the RSA need to look into and something you can look into to further your research.”

*Researcher: In your professional opinion, do you believe the attitudes of people, practically young peoples, changing towards road safety?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “Yes, I believe drivers especially young drivers are more educated due to the introduction of the compulsory 12 lesson plan and are just more aware of dangerous out there on the road. So yes, I would say they are changing, however they are changing slowly.”

*Researcher: I’m going to present you with three images that were taken out of road safety adverts that are provided by the DOE, in terms of Advertising and promoting safe driving do you consider the use of Graphic imagery to provoke fear is an effective way in changing drivers behaviours?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “Yes, I think the use of this especially in the DOE adverts and as I said previously in adverts in the Southern Hemisphere as it makes it more real to the audience, it’s more hard hitting so leaves that impact behind.”

*Researcher: Do you believe that the use of other emotions over fear such as humour, sadness or anger would be more effective when trying to promote safe driving to the young population of Ireland?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “I don’t think the use of emotions over fear would be more effective but I think when advertising to the young population of our country a combination of emotions would be more effective. If you look at adverts in Northern Ireland they tend to start out with humour for example the driver having the craic with his friends and then from there a number of emotions are shown throughout. I’m not saying that’s the way to go but a combination of emotions is needed in my opinion.”

**Researcher:** *Do you feel the RSA provide enough informative information in their Advertisements?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “No, I think they could definitely increase their information, maybe adding stats to adverts could help with that.”

**Researcher:** *If I was to ask you on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is very appropriate and ten is very inappropriate, how appropriate do you consider the use of fear such as graphic imagery to be when advertising safe driving to young Irish Road Users?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “I would say it’s quite appropriate I’d probably give it a score of around 3.”

**Researcher:** *Do you feel the RSA provide enough informative information in their Advertisements or do they need the help of law enforcement to get results?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “No, not in isolation. Their adverts are somewhat effective; however, I believe that they need assistance of enforcement and that they need to repeat to reinforce.”

**Researcher:** *Final Question, do you have ideas on how the RSA might improve their adverts to alter the behaviours of young drivers?*

**Vinny Dorley:** “I would suggest that they update their adverts more often and repeat them more often as well – from experience a good form of training is repeating until the person understands.”

## **Interview with Sandra Mc Dermot, Approved Driving Instructor**

**Researcher:** *As an ADI and from your experience in the role in the last few years, do you view road safety as a significant problem in the Republic of Ireland?*

**Sandra Mc Dermot:** “Yes, I believe it is a growing issue, especially in the Republic of Ireland, in my opinion there is a lack of onward instruction when it comes to road safety in Ireland and it’s something that isn’t talked about enough.”

**Researcher:** *What about the attitudes of people, practically young people’s attitudes, do you believe that their attitudes towards road safety is changing?*

**Sandra Mc Dermot:** “No, young people attitudes are not changing towards road safety as I mentioned earlier there isn’t enough onward instruction for safe driving in Ireland that mixed with the lack of education and information provided or directed towards young people means their attitudes will remain the same.”

**Researcher:** *What’s your opinion on the RSA advertisements? Are they successful in altering the behaviours of drivers, young drivers or road users?*

**Sandra Mc Dermot:** “No, in my opinion the TV adverts have very little effect on changing the attitudes and behaviours of young Irish road users. I feel that the use of social media is a more effective way on influencing generation Y.

**Researcher:** *I’m going to present you with three images that were taken out of road safety adverts that are provided by the DOE, in terms of Advertising and promoting safe driving do you consider the use of Graphic imagery to provoke fear is an effective way in changing drivers behaviours?*

**Sandra Mc Dermot:** “Honestly no, I don’t find the use of graphic imagery to provoke fear effective. Don’t get me wrong at one point it worked, however, now it has become the norm to use graphic imagery in any public safety message whether it’s an anti-smoking campaign or road safety because it’s now the norm we expect to see it and it loses its effectiveness.”

**Researcher:** *Do you believe that the use of other emotions over fear such as humour, sadness or anger would be more effective when trying to promote safe driving to the young population of Ireland?*

**Sandra Mc Dermot:** “Yes, I would agree with this. I think that the use of peer pressure is deemed more effective when advertising to the younger population and I think this can be delivered through emotions such as anger or humour etc instead of fear.”

**Researcher:** *If I was to ask you on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is very inappropriate and ten is very appropriate, how appropriate do you consider the use of fear such as graphic imagery to be when advertising safe driving to young Irish Road Users?*

**Sandra Mc Dermot:** “I believe that advertising safe driving should be tackled by the RSA and other road safety institutes in a different way so I’d give the appropriateness of fear through graphic imagery a score of around 8.”

***Researcher:** Do you feel the RSA provide enough informative information in their Advertisements or do they need the help of law enforcement to get results?*

**Sandra Mc Dermot:** “To answer the first part of your question no, I don’t feel the RSA are providing enough informative information and or content to the public, however in saying that information is always important but enforcement is always more effective. So, to answer the second half to that question, yes they need the assistance of enforcement.”

***Researcher:** Lastly, have you any recommendations on how the RSA might improve adverts to encourage behaviours of young drivers to change?*

**Sandra Mc Dermot:** “I would suggest that the RSA offer training days or young drivers, in addition to this I believe they should increase their social media presence and awareness as this will prove more effective than TV for 17 to 25 year olds.”



## **Interview with Derek O' Rourke, Approved Driving Instructor**

*Researcher: How do you feel about the Road Safety Authorities TV advertisements?*

**Derek O' Rourke:** "I find the RSA adverts to be quite effective in changing the attitudes of drivers, because, of the scare elements attached to such advertisements. I think that the message gets to the younger drivers quicker when this method of advertisement is used."

*Researcher: From your experience working as an Approved Driving Instructor, is road Safety is an issue in the Republic of Ireland and why do you believe this?*

**Derek O' Rourke:** "Yes, I believe that too many people ignore the driving rules and we do not have enough traffic police to tackle the problem. Like most things there is a lack of enforcement from the law."

*Researcher: I'm going to present you with three images that were taken out of road safety adverts that are provided by the DOE, in terms of Advertising and promoting safe driving do you consider the use of Graphic imagery as a positive change agent to alter driver behaviours?*

**Derek O' Rourke:** "Yes, I find them very effective, in my opinion the more realistic something is, it causes people to truly realise what the consequences of their actions can be or lead to."

*Researcher: In your professional opinion, do you believe the attitudes of people, practically young peoples, changing towards road safety?*

**Derek O' Rourke:** "Yes, by bringing in and introducing the compulsory 12 ADI lesson plan to Ireland has helped change young people's attitudes when it comes to safety on Irish Roads."

*Researcher: Do you believe that the use of other emotions over fear such as humour, sadness or anger would be more effective when trying to promote safe driving to the young population of Ireland?*

**Derek O'Rourke:** "In my honest opinion, I think that a combination of all the above and more should be portrayed in order for advertisements to change behaviours and attitudes of drivers. I don't feel that one can stand alone, they are all needed together in order to be effective in promoting safe driving."

*Researcher: If I was to ask you on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is very appropriate and ten is very inappropriate, how appropriate do you consider the use of fear such as graphic imagery to be when advertising safe driving to young Irish Road Users?*

**Derek O'Rourke:** "I feel that the use of Graphic Imagery to provoke fear is needed in order to get the message across especially when advertising a cause like safe driving, therefore, I'd give it a score of 0, as it is very appropriate in this case."

**Researcher:** *Do you feel the RSA provide enough informative information in their Advertisements.*

**Derek O' Rourke:** "Yes, I do believe the RSA provide enough information in their advertisements and find them to be very effective"

**Researcher:** *Finally, do you have any ideas on how the RSA can better their adverts?*

**Derek O' Rourke:** "I would recommend that they show some real footage of what the consequences can be as a result of poor driving and ignorance of not knowing the rules of the road."

## **Interview with Eamon Graham, Trainer and ADI Driving instructor**

**Researcher:** *As a trainer and an ADI instructor do you think or feel that road safety is still a growing problem in Ireland?*

**Eamon Graham:** “Yes, I would there are issues in road safety in the republic of Ireland and believe it’s an on-going issue that needs to be solved.”

**Researcher:** *I know that you say that road safety is an ongoing issue in Ireland but in your opinion, are peoples, practically young people’s attitudes throughout Ireland changing towards road safety.*

**Eamon Graham:** “Bringing in the compulsory 12 ADI lesson plan I believe has changed young people’s attitudes towards road safety. They are more educated in the rules of the road and aware of the risks and responsibility of sitting behind the wheel.”

**Researcher:** *In terms of the RSA, do you think the RSA TV adverts are effective?*

**Eamon Graham:** Yes, in my opinion, education is the way forward and this is best carried out through TV, Radio, and Social Media.”

**Researcher:** *I’m going to present you with three images that were taken out of road safety adverts that are provided by the DOE, in terms of Advertising and promoting safe driving do you consider the use of Graphic imagery to provoke fear as an appropriate tool to get results in road safety.*

**Eamon Graham:** “Yes, advertisements especially Public safety messages need to show real life consequences of bad and irresponsible driving. In my opinion, there is no point shielding people from the reality that awaits irresponsible driving, such as, drunk driving or speeding.”

**Researcher:** *From your experience, do you believe that the use of other emotions over fear such as humour, sadness or anger would be more effective when trying to promote safe driving to the young population of Ireland?*

**Eamon Graham:** “No, from my experience fear is the way to go, its more hard hitting that way.”

**Researcher:** *If I was to ask you on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is very appropriate and ten is very inappropriate, how appropriate do you consider the use of fear such as graphic imagery to be when advertising safe driving to young Irish Road Users?*

**Eamon Graham:** I’d give it a score of around 1. The Graphic Imagery to provoke fear is required it gets the message out there so I’d say it’s very appropriate in this case.”

**Researcher:** *Do you believe that the RSA adverts need help from the Gardai?*

**Eamon Graham:** “The RSA, defiantly need the Garda to enforce law. Without enforcement of what the advertisements stand for, doesn’t achieve much.”

**Researcher:** *Finally, do you have any ideas for the RSA to improve their adverts.*

**Eamon Graham:** “I would suggest that the RSA show the adverts in schools and colleges nationwide. It might also be a good idea to show them at matches or concerts anywhere that young people socialise.”

## **Interview with Marie Beegan, Training School Manager**

**Researcher:** *From your experience of working as Manager of a Training School, do you think road safety is still an issue in the republic of Ireland?*

**Marie Beegan:** Yes, it's still a major issue and appears to be an on-going issue not only in Ireland. In my opinion, there is a lack of enforcement that to move forward needs to be dealt with."

**Researcher:** *In your opinion are peoples, practically young people's attitudes changing towards road safety?*

**Marie Beegan:** "Yes, the introduction of the compulsory ADI lessons has giving young people the education they need before being allowed to sit a driving test."

**Researcher:** *Are road safety authority advertisements going in right direction in changing drivers attitudes?*

**Marie Beegan:** "Yes, I believe them to be very effective, they are on me anyway. I think they are good at showing the effects of unsafe driving and bring more awareness to knowing the rules of the road."

**Researcher:** *I'm going to present you with three images that were taking out of road safety adverts that are provided by the DOE, in terms of Advertising and promoting safe driving do you consider the use of Graphic imagery to provoke fear is successful?*

**Marie Beegan:** Yes, they are very effective, they make it more real and in my opinion, that is much more effective."

**Researcher:** *From your experience in your role as manager, do you feel that the use of other emotions, such as, sadness, humour or anger to name a few would be more effective when trying to change the behaviours of young road users?*

**Marie Beegan:** "I think sadness, showing the effects on people who have to deal with serious road accidents so for example the family I think is much more hard hitting then fear and it stick in the minds of young people more."

**Researcher:** *On the topic of the RSA would you say the RSA provide enough informative content and information in their road safety advertisements?*

**Marie Beegan:** "Yes, I would say they do, they show the consequences of what unsafe driving can lead to and in my opinion, that gives the public the information they need."

**Researcher:** *If I was to ask you on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is very appropriate and ten is very inappropriate, how appropriate do you consider the use of fear such as graphic imagery to be when advertising safe driving to young Irish Road Users?*

**Marie Beegan:** "I would give it a score of around 4 as the use of graphic imagery isn't appropriate in every case but I would say it's inappropriate to use graphic imagery to provoke fear in its viewers. Fear can help save life's."

*Researcher: Lastly, in your opinion are the RSA adverts working well on their own or do they need help to gain results*

**Marie Beegan:** “I think they are doing a good job in their adverts but showing an advert to promote awareness alone isn’t going to change the attitudes of young people, they definitely need additional assistance on enforcement from the law.”

## **Interview with James Byrne, ADI**

**Researcher:** *I'm going to present you with three images that were taken out of road safety adverts that are provided by the DOE, in terms of Advertising and promoting safe driving do you consider the use of Graphic imagery to provoke fear is successful?*

**James Byrne:** "Yes, I think it's very effective it shows what can truly happen and what can go wrong if you don't follow the rules of the road and take part in unsafe, irresponsible driving"

**Researcher:** *On the topic of TV advertisements, do you think the RSA TV adverts are effective?*

**James Byrne:** "Yes, because the use of the adverts brings up more awareness for the need of safety and the effects of speeding, drinking or texting behind the wheel could have on the not only the people sitting in the car but those affected outside the car too,"

**Researcher:** *Is road safety still a major issue in the Republic of Ireland and do you think the attitudes of young people in particular are changing when it comes to road safety?*

**James Byrne:** "To answer the first part of the question yes, I do believe it's a significant problem and this is due to the lack of education and training for drivers prior to the 12 compulsory lessons and new rule regulation. I also would agree that young people's attitudes are changing as I feel adverts from the RSA and the new lesson plan is educating drivers that little bit more."

**Researcher:** *Do you believe that the use of other emotions over fear would be more effective when trying to promote safe driving to the young population of Ireland?*

**James Byrne:** "In some cases, yes, I think emotions such as shock can affect the public, particularly young people more in some cases but fear does work."

**Researcher:** *If I was to ask you on a scale of zero to ten, where zero is very appropriate and ten is very inappropriate, how appropriate do you consider the use of fear such as graphic imagery to be when advertising safe driving to young Irish Road Users?*

**James Byrne:** "I would say the use of graphic imagery to provoke fear is inappropriate so I'd give it a score of 8. Fear does work but they don't need to use graphic imagery to do this. I think using fear to show the legal consequences would be more effective for young people."

**Researcher:** *Do you feel the RSA provide enough informative information in their Advertisements?*

**James Byrne:** "No, I wouldn't say that they have enough informative content in their advertisements. They only show the immediate effects of straight after the accident they don't give enough statistics in their adverts. I think the Garda and HSE should work together more to enforce laws."

***Researcher:** Final Question, can you provide me with any thoughts on how the RSA can better themselves?*

**James Byrne:** “I would recommend that they make use of Social Media platforms much more, social media is the best way to engage with the young population of Ireland.”