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A critical evaluation of sexual appeal in advertising and how
it influences consumer buying behaviour

A comparative study between Muslim and Christian students

by

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful

Al – Fatihah [1:1], Nobel Quran

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Abstract

The use of 'Sexual Appeal' in advertising has become far and widespread in the span of the late - twentieth and early - twenty first Century, especially in the twenty first Century (Dahl and Sengupta, 2008). Sexual connotations are prevalent in consumer-centric advertisements in order to entice and appeal to the audience (Heckler et. al., 2001). However, due to the integration of religions and cultures in western countries becoming more diversified and the use of sexual appeal in advertisement being placard upon consumers consistently, not much statistical analysis has been done on how such displays of advertisements have an effect on the different socio-cultural and religious aspects of modern-day society.

It is not inconspicuous to say that aspects such as culture or religious morality has an inter-correlation affect into how consumers perceive and are influenced into the buying behaviour. In this research, outlined is the vast difference between how modern-day Christian students view sexual appeal and nudity in advertisements, based on Nelson and Peaks (2009) 'The Nudity Scale', in comparison to Muslim students living in a western country. The fundamental aspect of this research is that albeit both Christianity and Islam stem from a monotheistic religion, the difference in a subsequent person being raised in the 21st century, and how teachings and upbringings in relation to their religions significantly outweigh their perception of advertisements that incorporate sexual appeal, and how it conforms to their acceptability into buying the advertised products.

The investigation into the use of sexual appeal in advertising and its influence on consumer buying behaviours in relation to Muslim and Christian students, outlines that the resulting observations conducted via the qualitative research method, structured interviews, shows that Muslims do not outright deplore the use of sexual appeal in advertisements, whereas to the contrary Christians find sexual appeal can be quite useful in appealing to their senses and emotions. Thus, advertisers should take this analysis as an overlying factor and advance their cultural and religious comprehension to suit the criteria of addressing moral and social differences while conducting advertisements.

Keywords: Sexual Appeal, Advertising, Nudity, Buying Behaviour, Consumer Perception, Religion, Christian, Christianity, Muslim, Islam.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Sexual appeal in advertisements has been incorporated by advertisers since the early – nineteenth century as a technique to increase consumer interest, gain brand/ product recognition and in time increase sales (Dahl and Sengupta, 2008). Heckler et. al. (2001) discuss that sexual appeal in advertising has increased over the recent years, becoming a commonplace now than ever before. The explicitness of sexual appeal used in advertisements is continuously rising and the human body is being provocatively used by advertisers to make their products more attractive to the consumers (Heller 2000).

From the beginning of modern advertising, thus far, the effectiveness of sexual appeal has been a subject of extensive research. Many studies today indicate a favourable reaction towards sexual appeal (Dahl, et. al. 2003; Torlark, 2011). To the contrary, older research also indicated that such advertisements violate ethical and religious norms and questioned its effectiveness (Alexander and Judd, 1978; Gould, 1994) with little comparative research of this on modern day consumers. Thus, this research paper aims is to investigate and compare the influence sexual appeal in advertisements has on young Irish Muslim and Irish Christian students to examine if religious beliefs and norms, relating to sexual appeal, yet have an influence on their ethical judgements, perceptions and buying behaviours.

1.2. Gaps in the Literature

While many previous literatures have been done regarding the use of sexual appeal in advertising and its influence on buying behaviours, and in fact being a widely covered topic in the research field (Sawang, 2010; Fidelis et. al. 2017; Blair et. al. 2006), along with many references to research being carried out on a singular religion's effects on consumers ethical judgements and perceptions, (Purnama and Safira, 2017; John et. al, 2018; Sarpal et. al. 2018) there has yet to be research reflecting the observational behaviours of the world's largest religions; Islam and Christianity, and their relatively distinctive comparative analysis of how both of these Abrahamic religions outwardly express their views on nudity and sexual appeal today, as visually portrayed in the media, and how both Muslims and Christians subject their ethics towards the omnipresent world of advertising vastly consisting of sexual appeal, nudity, eroticism motifs etc.

Another aspect of previous literature is the predominance of Muslim behaviours and the influence Islam has in subjugating the use of sexual connotations in Islamic media and in prevalent Muslim countries. However, it appears there is yet to be a research paper published about the attitude of Muslim students raised in a predominantly Christian country such as Ireland, which ultimately may have an influence on their perspectives of the use of sexual appeal in advertising and thus, their buying behaviour.

1.3. Academic Justification

Despite the fact that many previous literatures, as discussed, have looked at the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on consumer buying behaviours (Sawang, 2010; Fidelis et. al. 2017; Blair et. al. 2006) these investigations were carried out in relation to consumers as a whole regardless of their background, culture, religion etc. or focusing specifically on a single religion. Thus, the author undertook this research to investigate and compare the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on consumers of two different religions, with the belief that there is a lack of understanding on how religious backgrounds can negatively suppress consumers buying behaviours (Ford et al. 2004). Through this, the author believes it necessary to investigate and compare how consumers with different religious backgrounds, in this case, Islam and Christianity can be influenced by the use of sexual appeal in advertising.

Come the late - twentieth and early - twenty first century, sexual appeal and nudity became increasingly ubiquitous in advertisements and are only deemed to become more prevalent (Dahl and Sengupta, 2008). Although many studies thus far indicate a favourable reaction towards sexual appeal in advertisements, namely to entice consumer interests, leading to buying intentions (Dahl, et. al. 2003; Torlark, 2011), past literatures have also indicated that such advertisements violate ethical norms and questioned their effectiveness (Alexander and Judd, 1978; Gould, 1994). This academic literature revolves around demonstrating that the use of sexual appeal and nudity does not necessarily increase the buying behaviours of consumers, especially when there is a-lot of scepticism deep rooted in religious and cultural societies (Liu et. al., 2009).

With advertiser's lack of representation and understanding of moral obligations that consumers of different religions have deeply rooted within them (Black et al., 2010) sexual appeal in advertising may result in many viewers feeling emotionally disconnected or

offended to the sexual content portrayed. Thus, the authors rationale for this study is to conduct more in-depth research on the ethical morality of the use of sexual appeal and level of nudity in advertisements. Thus forth, advertisers should take this analysis with pre-emptively and consideration to cultural and religious factors to suit the criteria of addressing moral and social differences while conducting advertisements.

1.4. Research Aims

Given the two main gaps in the literature identified in section 1.2. (chapter 1), regarding the use of sexual appeal in advertising, this study seeks to gain a deeper understanding to begin filling these gaps. The research paper therefore investigates the ‘influence’ sexual appeal in advertising has on Muslim and Christian students buying behaviours. Through this, the author aims to explore the following research question:

RQ: “what influence does sexual appeal in advertising have on young Irish Muslim and Irish Christian students buying behaviours?”

1.5. Research Objectives

The research objectives ought to be well – thought out statements that explain what the investigator inclines to accomplish as a result of carrying out the study (Saunders et al. 2016). Thus, in line with the identified gaps in the literature identified in section 1.2. (chapter 1) the following research objectives have been derived in an effort to examine the aforementioned research question, “what influence does sexual appeal in adverting have on young Irish Muslim and Irish Christian consumers buying behaviours?”

The *first sub objective* is:

To investigate the impact and response to all 5 levels of nudity, referring to ‘The nudity scale’ on young Muslim and Christian students in Ireland.

The *second sub objective* is:

To investigate the impact that sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students buying behaviours.

The *third sub objective* is:

To investigate the impact and response to one of the many factors of sexual appeal in advertising, interpersonal sexual behaviours (especially physical contact between the models) on young Muslim and Christian students buying behaviours.

1.6. Methods and Scope

As this research question and the three main research objectives seek to understand individual perceptions and personal opinions of Muslim and Christian students on such a sensitive topic of sexual appeal, current literature recommends a qualitative method for the efficient gathering of data, as such thorough insights cannot be gained via quantitative methods (Maxwell, 2013; Martin and Bridgman, 2012, Roshan and Deeptee 2009). Thus, In order to fully explore this complex and sparsely-researched subject, quantitative methods did not seem most appropriate to the researcher.

The studies sample will be young Muslim and Christian students from the age range 18 – 25 year olds. This study will only focus on young Irish Muslim students and young Irish Christian students, thus, all other religions and nationalities will be avoided. The rationale for the author's decision to situate this study in Ireland is because the current literature seems to suggest a shift to an increased sexual openness and culture of self-indulgence in Ireland, where satisfying sexual desires and pleasures is emphasised (English, 2005). The author would like to conduct a study to compare and contrast how this increased acceptance by the general populace, ultimately influences young Irish Muslim and Irish Christian students buying behaviours.

The data will be collected through the use of structured interviews with the discussed sample of young Irish Muslim and Irish Christian students. The types of sexual appeal that fall under the purview of this study are those described by Nelson and Peak (2007), 'The Nudity Scale'. The study will be focused on all five levels of nudity to determine what degree of nudity sways positively or negatively, both Muslim and Christian consumers' perceptions towards such advertisements, thus, influencing their buying behaviour.

1.7. Dissertation Structure

Chapter 1: Introduction

This research study begins with an introduction to the chosen research area ‘sexual appeal’, thus forth presenting gaps in the literature on the influence of sexual appeal on Muslim and Christian consumers buying behaviours. The academic justification, research question, research objectives and the study's research framework are then presented.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a thorough overview of academic literature pertinent to this study’s research topic. As the study seeks to explore the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students buying behaviours, relevant literature on shock advertising, sexual appeal in advertising, the nudity scale and the two chosen monotheistic religions will be discussed.

Chapter 3: Research Question

This chapter consists of the research question that will serve as a guide for gathering and analysing the data. The research question incorporates pertinent concepts for this study and is based on the literature review from the preceding chapter (chapter 2).

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter consists of presenting and discussing the chosen methodologies for data collection that are required to answer the overall research question and three main sub-objectives. Details of the sampling strategy, field research and analysis methods on how the primary research will be conducted, will be discussed.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

This chapter consists of the data obtained throughout the primary research, through thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes and key ideas that are pertinent to the research question and the research objectives of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter presents of a critical reflection on the study. This involves combining the findings from the primary research from chapter 4 and secondary research from chapter 2.

Thereby enabling the confirmation or refutation of theories previously put out in relation to sexual appeal. Thus, deriving from this a compelling discussion from the preceding chapters and gaining new insights into the research topic.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter evaluates if the study question and three main objectives have been met by reflecting on the conclusions from the combination of the primary and secondary research, especially the primary research. Recommendations for further research are thereafter provided.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter consists of literature related to the use of sexual appeal in advertisements, pertinent to this study. It will be divided into three sections. In the first section, advertising as well as shock appeal advertising is elucidated, thus, illustrating the link between advertisements and norm violations. In the second section, the origins of the sexual appeal in advertisements is elucidated, followed by an illustration of its various forms and current landscape. In the final section the two monotheistic religions, Islam and Christianity, chosen for this research paper will be described in relation Muslims and Christians perceptions of sexual appeal.

2.1. Overview of Advertising and Reality

Aaker and Biel (1993) discuss that from the four major marketing communication tools, known as *advertising, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing*, advertising has become a major communication tool to our society. It is the central mean utilized by businesses to gain consumer attention, thus, informing and influencing attitudes and behaviours. Advertising can be explained by Kolter and Alexander (1984, pp. 16), who defines it as “*any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and/or services by an identified sponsor through mass media such as radio, television, newspapers and internet.*” In essence, with the utilization of advertising, businesses seek to increase sales by influencing consumers to make a purchase from the products and/ or services being advertised. There is an ample of evidence from prior studies to support the notion that advertising significantly influences a business’s ability to grow, whether it be the recognition, image and/ or sales (Shakib, 2017).

As mentioned by Crisp (1987) it was once frequently suggested that the convincing nature of advertising nullifies the consumer's capacity for independent judgment by creating a strong desire for the brand, product and/ or service. Similarly, Levitt (1993) stated that it was in the consumers nature to be inspired by things that are unreasonable, wishful notions that are not grounded in reality, thus, surmise that consumers are interested in what an advertisement promises emotionally and/ or suggests symbolically. Although, Sassateli (2007) discusses that today’s consumers are becoming more sceptical of the persuasive abilities of advertising, hence, it may be argued that now more than ever, it is important to create advertising messages that are both pertinent and effective.

2.1.1. Shock Appeal in Advertising and its Affects

Whether consumers like it or not, advertising is omnipresent in everyday life. As cited by Mundel et. al. (2018) it has been estimated that consumers are exposed to approximately 3,000 to 10,000 advertising messages daily. Due to the immense media noise present in today's marketplace, Roper and Fill (2012) discuss that consumers are becoming desensitized to some advertising messages. Thus, advertisers seek different techniques to cut through the clutter to immediately catch audience attention, leading to a reaction of curiosity, disgust, shock and/ or interest. Hence, following on from Levitt's' belief that exaggeration and distortion are among the legitimate and societally favoured motives (Levitt, 1970), Wells et. al. (2006) discusses that an advertisement works if it prompts the audience to react in some way, making the brain 'itch'. Such reactions arise when the audience is left startled i.e. achieved with the utilization of shock appeal in advertisements.

In our daily lives, we come across numerous advertisements that suddenly catch our attention. The existence of such unexpected elements is the key component that transforms a regular advertisement into a shock advertisement. Shock appeal can be explained by Parry et. al. (2013, pp. 112) who define it as *"a purposeful attempt to shock the audience by straying from socially acceptable norms and one's own ideals in order to capture audience attention."* This technique purposefully attempts to trigger cognitive processing amongst the audience by challenging taboos and socially accepted norms. The seven major shock appeals are mentioned by Dahl et. al. (2003, pp.268) as *"moral offensive, disgusting imagery, profanity, vulgarity, religious taboos, indecency and sexual appeal/ references,"* and are all central means utilized by businesses to startle the viewers, thus, making the brand and its products more memorable.

Shock appeal in advertisements is not for everyone. There has been an increase of shock appeal in advertising, yet opinions on this technique vary. Despite the fact that shock advertising works well and may raise brand awareness, Karla (2012) states that alternatively, shock appeal in advertisements could turn people against the company and incite indignation and disgust towards the brand, its products and/ or services. Urwin and Venter (2014) discuss that consumer norms may influence how viewers react to the shock advertisements. Norms can be explained by Unicef (2021, pp. 1) who define it as *"rules that define appropriate and inappropriate actions within a given community, thus guiding human behaviour."* As people

interact and form social groups/ community, they begin to understand what is considered to be appropriate and inappropriate behaviour within that community. Dahl et. al. (2003) state that when the content of advertising deviates from these established norms, it is deemed offensive, leaving many viewers in discomfort, shame, and occasionally mental distress.

2.2. Overview of Sexual Appeal in Advertisement

Dahl and Sengupta (2003) discuss that “sexual appeal,” one of the seven shock appeals, has been implemented by advertisers since the early – nineteenth century as a technique to increase consumer interest, gain brand/ product recognition and in time increase sales (Alexander and Judd, 1978). From the beginning of modern advertising, thus far, the effectiveness of sexual appeal in advertisements has been the subject of extensive research. According to Severn and Belch (1990, pp. 14), approaching the late – nineteenth century, sexual appeal in advertisements had become more prevalent, stating that “*the percentage of male and female contact depicted in advertisements tripled,*” demonstrating that the supposition that “sex sells” was accurate and pertinent. Yet, although sexual appeal in advertisements had become the ordinary by the late – nineteenth century, LaTour and Henthorne (1994) argued that “selling via sex” still remained a contentious matter.

Heckler et. al. (2001) discuss that sexual appeal in advertising has increased over the recent years, becoming a commonplace now than ever. The explicitness of the sexual appeal used in advertisements is continuously rising and the human body is being provocatively used by advertisers to make their products more attractive to the consumers (Heller 2000). From the early – nineteenth century to the early - twenty-first century not only did the appearance of sexual appeal in advertisements rise, according to Carpender (2004) there has been an increase in many other crucial aspects of sexual appeal in advertisements. More than ever women are used as a marketing tool to satiate male sexual inclinations, demonstrating that the supposition of the omnipresent statement “women objectification” as accurate and pertinent (Carpender, 2004). Similarly, the explicitness of the sexual imagery and extensive body display used in advertisements is also rising. Hence, Berger (2007) discusses that as sexual appeal in advertisements is frequently used, consumers sensitivity to sexual imagery is waning, resulting in advertisers creating more explicit advertisements “to break through the clutter and gain consumer attention.”

Like discussed sexual appeal in advertisements, to date, remains a contentious matter, especially when discussing critical components. Such a component is religion/ culture and the level of nudity. Liu et. al., (2009) discusses that cultural norms and religious beliefs affect the degree of sexual allure that is considered acceptable. Liu et. al., (2009) further elaborate on this stating that consumers from Middle Eastern countries may view advertisements that incorporate sexual appeal as offensive and inappropriate, compared to consumers from Western countries, who consider this the 'norm'. Hence, as Ford et. al. (2004) mentioned, customers perceptions towards sexual appeal in advertisements varies depending on the country that the advertisement is shown in. As a result, it may be challenging for advertisers to create advertisements since they struggle to distinguish between what level of sexual appeal is deemed to be considered acceptable in certain countries and regions, as cited by Black et. al. (2010), some consumers may be more favourably impacted by the use of sexual appeal than others based on these aforementioned components.

2.2.1. Defining Sexual Appeal in Advertisements

The term 'sexual appeal' in advertisements can be explained by Vezina and Paul (1997) who describe it as an intentional appeal, lying inside the content of an advertisement, to stimuli what are expected to shock at least a portion of the audience. Ramirez and Reichert (2000) discuss that sexual appeals in advertisements may appear in many visual forms. Their analysis reveals that common forms of visual content include body display, nudity, seductive behaviour etc. further stating that these forms are viewed as most enticing. While Reichert (2000) emphasizes the visual elements, Lambiase (2003) argues that although this supposition is accurate, verbal elements are equally as effective when it comes enticing the audience. His analysis reveals that common forms of verbal content include sounds, seductive music, alluring words/ sentences etc. As Severn et. al. (1990) stated even the most basic sentence is sufficient to arouse sexual desire in the mind of the consumers.

A variety of classifications in relation to sexual appeal in advertisement have been assessed in previous literature. "Nudity, Sexual behaviour, Physical attractiveness, Sexual referents and Sexual embeds" are among the most prevalent concepts in these studies (Heckler and Jackson, 2001; Reichert and Ramirez, 2000; Lambiase and Reichert, 2003) and will be discussed below:

Nudity: The term ‘nudity’ within sexual advertisements can be explained by Polonsky (2001) who defines it as the adoption of a sexual attraction components, such as physical attractiveness, seductive gestures, body display etc. All as a persuasive strategy to grab consumer attention, thus luring them in to sustain their interest in the advertisement for longer. Notaro (2013) discusses that the term ‘nudity’ does not necessarily imply that the models are entirely unclothed, rather, Hultin and Lundh (2004) suggest that many times models are in the progressive stages of undressing and/ or dressed in seductively provocative clothing, exposing their physical features. Full nudity as cited by Ben Amor et. al. (2013) is quite rare, hence, frequently depicted in advertising through implied nudity or by side or back shots of the model, acting as a sexual stimuli to the audience. Although, nudity has a significant role in arousing sexual desire, restricting this domain to nudity overlooks potential, more significant factors that too entice the audience.

Sexual behaviour: The term ‘sexual behaviour’ within sexual advertisements can be explained by Reichert (2002, pp. 241) who define it as *“the process by which models engage in overt activities that demonstrate sexual performances and interests.”* Many studies have pinpointed several acts that can be classified as sexual, namely provocative sounds and/ or moving provocatively within the advertisements etc. Lambiase and Reichert (2003) further elaborate on this, stating that these acts can be diversified into two forms, individual or interpersonal. The ‘individual form’, as mentioned by Ben Amor et al. (2013) may vary from flirtatious activities, facial expressions, sexual utterance to sexual gaze etc. The advertisers aim to entice the audience with such subtle activities hence eliciting sexual arousal and interest. The ‘interpersonal form’ incorporates more intense activities that involve the utilization of two or more models. Chuan (2012) discusses that these models engage in activities which include seductively removing clothing, passionately kissing and/ or caressing etc.

Physical attractiveness: The term ‘physical attractiveness’ within sexual advertisements can be explained by Lambiase and Reichert (2003 pp. 241) who define it as *“a trait that is central for foreseeing interpersonal attraction and mate selection.”* It has long been accepted that ‘beauty sells’ and therefore advertisers utilize attractive models to lure. This form of sexual appeal in advertisement is crucial for enticing the audience and creating a sexual inclination. A models attractiveness can be determined by her facial features, facial symmetry, body figure and/ or skin complexion etc.

Sexual referents: The term ‘sexual referents’ within sexual advertisements can be explained by Anabila et. al. (2015 pp.34) who defines it as “*the use of seductive words, teasing allusions and references to elicit sexual thoughts in the minds of the consumers.*” Lambiase and Reichert (2003) discuss that ‘sexual referents’ may include message, visual or verbal elements that subtly hint sex and serve to lure the audience and initiate the sexual thoughts. This form as discussed by Chuan (2012) primarily relies on the imagination and creativity of the audience to embrace their sexuality within and less from the advertisement itself.

Sexual embeds: The term ‘sexual embeds’ within sexual advertisements can be explained by Reichert and Lambiase (2003, pp.120) who define it as “*references or forms of sexual representation designed to be perceived subconsciously by the consumer.*” This type of sexual appeal contain sexual content, albeit small and sometimes undetectable. ‘Sexual embeds’ in advertisements can be diversified into two forms, words or objects. The ‘words form’ as mentioned by Chuan (2012) are hidden sexual messages that are conveyed using words with a sexual connotation. The ‘object form’ as mentioned by Chuan (2012) employ objects that represent genitalia or sexual activity, nudity and/ or other physical features.

2.2.2. The Nudity Scale

Many authors present a ‘**Nudity Scale**’ which provides a framework that can facilitate the understanding of what is perceived as high and low levels of sexual appeal in advertisements. Reichert (2002) discusses the importance of this scale, as the degree of nudity can sway consumers' perceptions towards advertisements, since it directly relates to sexual appeal. Moreover, as presented in Table 1 below, Nelson and Peak (2007) identify 5 levels to categorize the level of sexual appeal in advertisements; ‘Level 0, Level 1, Level, 2, Level 3 and Level 4.’

Berger (2007) noted that the explicitness of the sexual appeal used in advertisements is continuously rising and the consumers sensitivity to sexual imagery is waning. Thus, advertisers are pressured to create more explicit advertisements “to break through the clutter and gain consumer attention.” Although Bayraktar (2011) discusses that advertisers create such advertisements without considering the negative impact on consumers of different religions. For the purpose of this research, the level of sexual appeal in advertising and

religious based attitudes of Muslim and Christian students is evaluated with utilization of the ‘Nudity Scale’ outlined above and presented below.

Table 2.1. *Nudity Scale.*

5 Levels	Descriptions
Level 0	No sexual appeal.
Level 1	Subtle sexual nuance.
Level 2	Suggestively clad.
Level 3	Partially clad.
Level 4	Full nudity.

Source: *Adopted from Nelson and Peak (2007).*

2.3. Overview of Religion

Frazer (1974, pp. 824), defines religion with a polythetic definition, as a “*propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life.*” Smith (2017) discusses that the belief in these superior powers assists practitioners in communicating with, or aligning themselves with an ever - living God or Spiritual Being, in hopes of an ultimate transformation and/ or orientation. This transformation and/ or orientation as stated by Streng (1985) is a fundamental change from getting mired in the issues of everyday life, avoiding things set apart and forbidden.

As cited by Sherwood (2018) Eighty-four percent of world’s population identify with a religion i.e. hold a belief in a superior power. Depending on how religious the consumers are, Mansori (2012) discuss that the teachings from their superior powers are likely to influence consumer attitudes towards questionable and unethical business practices such as false claims, hidden fees, the utilization of politics in advertising, the utilization of vulgar sexual appeal in advertising and/ or stereotyping etc. Thus, as stated by Essoo and Dibb (2004) ‘religion’ may influence consumer decisions, leading to implications on their consumption behaviours. Further analysed in this comparative study are the two chosen monotheistic religions, Islam and Christianity.

2.3.1. Islam

2.3.1.1. Muslim and Qur'anic Perspective of Sexual Appeal

“Shari’ah” guides everything – vertically and horizontally, between the ever - living God, Allah SWT “Subhanahu wa ta'ala (SWT), Arabic for “The most glorified” (Arham, 2010), and among the Muslims. Fadl (2001), discusses that in the Islamic lexicon, “Shari’ah is the divine path and guidance for humanity on earth.” It requires Muslims to obey the ever – living God, Allah SWT and act righteously in every facet of life. Allah SWT desires that Muslims abide by the dictates of Islam in their daily lives, therefore as discussed by Arham (2010), one can infer here that Islam may be reflected in anything.

Wilson (2003, pp.3), discusses that Muslims have a significant advantage in that they can reference Qur’anic verses and the Sunnah (i.e. the actions/ sayings of Prophet Muhammad) for guidance in all facets of life, stating that “*revealed teaching provides moral certainty, and a set of standards to which the entire community of believers can adhere.*” It exhorts Muslims to uphold the values of justice and equity when making attempts to improve living standards. Here, Bari and Abbas (2001), emphasize the distinctiveness of Islam as it does not separate secular and spiritual facets of life, rather a way of leading a life that Allah SWT prefers in all spheres of life. This fundamental idea directs all of a Muslims activities, including Islamic advertising.

Islamic scholars have extracted from Qur’anic verses and the Sunnah a framework for advertising, “The Islamic Advertising Framework”. Alserhan (2011), discusses this framework, outlining the rules for Islamic advertising: The advertisements should refrain from taking advantage of customers' primal instincts and from inciting unsatisfiable needs, It should be grounded on accuracy and there must be full disclosure of every aspect of the product, the product should not violate Islamic law, be haram (haram, Arabic for forbidden act and/ or action) neither be harmful. The prohibition of the aforementioned is due their harmfulness and impurity. As Beekun (2003) discusses “whatever is lawful is wholesome and pure, while the contrary, unlawful will remains unethical, immoral and impure.”

Beekun (2003), mentions that any act that violates Islamic law by encouraging haram is itself haram and therefore prohibited. For instance, the term “adultery” appears explicitly in the Qur'anic verses and the Sunnah of the last prophet, Muhammad SAW (Sallallahu 'alayhi

wa sallam (SWA), Arabic for “Peace be upon him) mentioning that one should stay away from any situations or actions that could take them to adultery. Pornography and/ or looking at nude images of the opposite sex “the adultery of the eye” fits in the criterion of unlawful and is known to be morally wrong in Islam. As discussed by Bennett (2007), looking at such images and/ or videos is regarded as a first step leading to another haram such as adultery. Thus is a haram that encourages haram. For instance the Qur’anic verse (17:32) states: وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّانِيَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلٌ “Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is shameful and an evil, opening the road to other evils.”

Henderson (2003) discusses that when it comes to the buying behaviours of Muslim consumers, their strong convictions in the Islamic religion and its ideals greatly influence their needs and wants. Muslims must adhere to the ‘halal’ i.e. permissible and ‘haram’ i.e. impermissible rules in all aspects of their daily lives. As cited by (Deuraseh, 2009) the concept of halal is utilized in marketing to comprehend the permissibility of the products and services offered, based on the principles of the Shari’ah and the Holy Quran. From an Islamic perspective, the halal image expresses Muslim consumers' impressions of brand attributes, which ultimately affects their buying decision (Suki and Salleh, 2016). They further elaborate that Muslim customers have been found to have a strong desire to ensure that their purchase decisions are in line with the halal image and to steer clear of the non-halal image.

2.3.1.3. Muslim Consumers of Today (*in Western Countries*)

Ahmadi (2003, p.318) states that individuals who have immigrated to a western country or living in a country where sexual appeal is highly visible and acceptable i.e. Ireland, it can cause young modern Muslims to challenge their existing views on sexual perceptions. In an environment where every surrounding entails some sort of sexuality, it may be a challenge for young Muslims to abide by the rules of Islam, The “Shari’ah” and the teaching from the Holy Quran. Hence, as discussed by Ahmadi (2003, p.284) contact with individuals of different cultures and religious backgrounds may lead to modern Muslims' changing perspectives on sexual appeals and thus becoming more individualistic.

2.3.2. Christianity

2.3.2.1. Christian and Biblical Perspective of Sexual Appeal

Drane (2011) states that the origins of conservatism for Christians trace back to the historical influence of the Bible, both the old testament written between 1200 to 165 B.C. and the new testament written in the first century A.D. Today, we live in a society that pushes people to display their sexuality. Though, according to Matthews (2022) this is contrary to the principles of the scripture. Throughout the scriptures clear evidence has been cited as to why sexual appeal is considered wrong:

The Lord Jesus Christ says in Ephesians 5:3 *“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immortality or any kind of impurity... because these are improper for God’s holy people.”* Sexual immortality is explained in the biblical verse (Matthew 19:4-5) as any type of sexual action and/ or expression outside the confines of a marriage. Thus, sexual immortality cannot bring about the triumph of holiness in one's life. To be amongst God’s holy people Matthews (2022) discusses that it entails abstaining from both the physical sin of “adultery, sexual intercourse, homosexuality etc.” and mental sins of “impure thoughts, lust, passionate desire, sexual gaze etc.”

The Lord Jesus Christ says in Matthew 5:23 *“But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* Elwell (1996) mentions that the word ‘lust’ is used twenty – nine times in the scripture and is throughout seen in a negative light, generally referring to an intense desire for sexual immorality. Lust can be exemplified by Rust (n.d.) who defines it as a *“sinful longing; the inward sin which leads to the falling away from God.”* According to James 1:14-15 such sinful longing begins when a person is lured away or enticed by sinful behaviours. Such behaviours include flirting, sexual looseness, sitting provocatively, omitting pieces of clothing etc. giving rise to sin, which in turn gives rise to more sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ says in Timothy 2:9-10 *“I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety...”* The current trends in clothing are generally immodest and indiscrete, having been influenced by the transition from one sexual regime to another. Although, Matthews (2022) discusses that this is contrary to the principles of the scripture

further stating that what you wear as a Christian does matter. Thus, such transitions should not be adopted by Christians.

The Lord Jesus Christ says in Luke 11:34-36 *“Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when it is unhealthy, your body is filled with darkness.”* Brooks (2017) discusses that it is quite evidently outlined throughout the Biblical verses that Christians should be cautious about what they take in as this will ultimately mirror what is in the heart of the follower. While many authors concur that this Biblical verse ‘Luke 11:34-36’ discusses envy, greed and/ or anything that entices the eye, Meuther (n.d.) amongst many others mention ‘lust,’ more specifically the ‘lust of the eyes,’ an inclination to become fascinated on the visible i.e. sexual appeal. He elaborates by stating that the eyes, compared to other senses, tempt the believer to engage in sin (Meuther, n.d.) hence, leading to an ‘unhealthy eye.’

2.3.2.2. Christian Consumers of Today

It has been noted that throughout the Christians of today, sexual conduct seems to have no boundaries that violate God's plans and desires for human sexuality. Thus, as discussed by Matthews (2022) Christians are moving away from the Biblical teaching of repressing sexual pleasure to more sexual hedonism. This progression can be observed with the open-mindedness of sexual appeals in western nations and hence has impacted consumer perceptions of sexual appeal in advertisements, influencing their buying behaviours positively.

Chapter 3. Research Question

This section presents the research question. Following on from the literature and thus attaining a research question. Three main research objective will be derived that will ultimately seek to address the overall research question.

RQ: “what influence does sexual appeal in advertising have on young Irish Muslim and Irish Christian students buying behaviours?”

The ‘influence’ the author is looking to research is how the utilization of sexual appeal in advertising affects the target samples, both Irish Muslims’ and Irish Christians’ perceptions, thus, influencing their buying behaviours. The forms of sexual appeal that will be included in the scope of this study will be those described by Nelson and Peak (2007), ‘The Nudity Scale’: *Level 0 no sexual appeal, Level 1 subtle sexual nuance, Level 2 Suggestively clad, Level 3 Partially clad, Level 4 Full nudity.*

For the purpose of this study the target sample will be, young Muslim and Christian, male and female students between the age 18 and 26, living in Ireland. The author decided to concentrate on Ireland not only because it was an accessible sample, but also as there is a large population of consumers with both religious backgrounds living in Ireland. As cited on the Central Statistics Office (2016) Christianity is the largest religion in Ireland, accounting for 84.6% of the population and Islam is the third largest religion in Ireland, accounting for 1.33% of the population, thus, “63,443” Muslims.

Additionally, the rationale for the author's decision to situate this study in Ireland is because the current literature seems to suggest a shift to an increased sexual openness in Ireland and a culture of self-indulgence where satisfying sexual desires and pleasures is emphasised (English, 2005). The author would like to conduct a study to compare and contrast how this increased acceptance by the general populace, affects young Muslim and Christians students perspectives towards sexual appeal in advertising, thus, influencing their buying behaviour. The overall research question will be broken down into three sub objectives.

The first sub objective is: To investigate the impact and response to all 5 levels of nudity, referring to ‘The nudity scale’ on young Muslim and Christian students in Ireland. As the

level of sexual appeal in advertisements varies, the author would like to know how the target samples from both religious backgrounds perceive each level. The goal is to determine if going to the extremes will turn the intended audience away from the advertisements content/ message, or alternatively, a higher level of nudity will entice them towards advertisements content/ message. As Richert (2002) discusses if it is preferable to produce explicit advertisements rather than just lightly suggestive ones?

The *second sub objective* is: To investigate the impact that sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students buying behaviours. As Sassateli (2007) discusses that the primary objective of advertising is to persuade the consumer to buy the products and/ or services being advertised in a way that is pertinent and effective. Thus, the determining factor of the influence of sexual appeals in advertising is whether it makes the viewer more likely to purchase the products and/ or services offered.

The *third sub objective* is: To investigate the impact and response to one of the many factors of sexual appeal in advertising, sexual behaviours (especially the utilization of physical touch/ contact between the models) on young Muslim and Christian students buying behaviour. The goal is to determine if two models engaging in activities that include physical touch i.e. seductively removing clothing, passionately kissing, or caressing etc. will turn the intended audience away from the advertisements content/ message, or alternatively, they would prefer sexual advertisements that include some form of physical contact.

Chapter 4. Methodology

This chapter presents and discusses the philosophical position of the research. Following this, the research approach, research method and the method selected will be presented and accounted for. thereafter, the reader is given a thorough explanation of the sampling strategy, field research and the analysis method that will be utilized to collect and analyse the data. To end this section the limitations to the research will be presented.

4.1. Research Philosophy

Research philosophy can be explained by Saunders et. al. (2016, pp. 137) who defines it as “*a systems of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge.*” In this section we determine the philosophical position of the study in terms of the two major paradigms of research philosophy, *interpretivism and positivism*. Understanding these paradigm assumptions is important as they offer a clearer comprehension of how science is applied and consists of elements that support valid problems, solutions, and evidence-gathering standards (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Thus forth, guiding a researcher's perspective when embarking on research beginning from the research problem, research methods, collecting the data to analysing the data. The following section will describe both the positivist paradigm, the interpretivist paradigm and a justification for the paradigm selected for this study:

Positivist paradigm - The positivist paradigm can be explained by Saunders and Lewis (2012, pp. 104) who define it as “*the research of physical phenomena/ natural sciences and systematic methods of the observable social reality.*” The primary focus is to analyse the observable social reality and measurable variables under particular controllable settings. As cited by Neville (2007) there is a belief that human behaviour is influenced by various stimuli, forces, and rules external to oneself i.e. the external environment, that can be found, identified, and characterized. Such an approach focuses on carefully examining and analysing information with the utilization of rationale and systematic methods.

Interpretivist paradigm - The interpretivist paradigm can be explained by Saunders and Lewis (2012, pp. 106) who define it as “*the study of social phenomena in their natural environment,*” It is the identification of private motives or causes that influence individual's inner feelings thus, guiding their decisions to take certain actions. Hence, this phenomena differs from the physical phenomena as humans create meaning and the complexity must be

taken into account. Such an approach focuses on carefully examining and analysing information from conversations, images, and written words to uncover the complexity (Saunders et. al., 2016) with a crucial focus on their perceptions and interpretations.

As this study aims to examine the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students', buying behaviours, it is crucial that the author approach the research from an Interpretivist paradigm. As cited by Ashley and Boyd (2006, pp.70) "*True meaning is rarely at the surface.*" Students with religious differences may have varying inner feelings/ perceptions of sexual appeal in advertising, thus this alterity supports the interpretivist research paradigm rather than a positivist research paradigm.

4.2. Research Approach

When addressing a scientific problem there are typically two approaches' to consider, the inductive approach and the deductive approach (Molander, 2007). In addition to these two approaches there is also a third approach, the abductive approach, though it will not be taken into account for this methodology chapter. The following section will describe both the deductive approach, inductive approach and a justification for the approach selected for this study.

A positivist researcher typically opts for the deductive approach when collecting data, though not necessarily. The deductive approach is the process of deriving a conclusion from the theory, developing hypotheses, and then gathering facts to support the idea, thus "works from the top down." The deductive approach gives the researcher the ability to comprehend currently accepted theories and propose new questions or hypotheses in order to carry out any necessary additional research. It is typically used in descriptive and explanatory studies with the utilization of statistical techniques and uses probability sampling as a sampling strategy. As cited by Collis and Hussey (2014) the method of data collection and analysis utilised for a deductive research approach is generally quantitative, including but not limited to polls, questionnaires and/ or surveys.

A interpretivist researcher typically opts for the inductive approach when collecting data, though not necessarily. The inductive approach is the process of deriving a conclusion from the observation, pattern, hypothesis and then comes theory, thus "works from the bottom up."

The inductive approach is utilized to examine meanings and achieve a thorough comprehension i.e. explore a phenomenon that has not yet been thoroughly explored. It is typically used in explanatory studies with the utilization of probing techniques and uses non-probability sampling as a sampling strategy. As cited by Collis and Hussey (2014) the method of data collection and analysis utilized for an inductive research approach is generally qualitative, including but not limiting to various interviews, focus group and/ or participant observation.

Guba (1994, pp. 163) discusses that when selecting a research approach “*choose an approach whose assumptions best fit the phenomenon being investigation.*” As this study aims to explore a phenomenon that has not yet been thoroughly explored, it is crucial that the author conducts the research using a probing technique. Hence, the inductive approaches is more appropriate than the deductive approaches, offering the knowledge required to comprehend the target samples’ inner feeling about sexual appeal in advertisements that thus guide their decisions to take certain buying actions. A deductive approach would be less suitable for this study since the existing literature on this phenomenon is scarce, thus, being more challenging to comprehend the target samples' personal views, sentiments, opinions and so forth.

4.3. Research Method

Saunders et. al. (2016) suggest that there are three possible choices for conducting research. They state them as “the mono method, the multiple method and the mixed method.” As suggested in the preceding section this study will take a single inductive approach, implying that the ‘mono method’ will be utilized for the data collection. As discussed, inductive research is generally qualitative and proves successful for this study, providing the insights necessary to comprehend participants’ inner feelings and personal perspectives. The motivation for conducting qualitative research as opposed to quantitative research, is based on the observation stated by Myers (1997, p.242) “*if there is one thing which distinguishes humans from the natural world, it is our ability to talk!*”

Qualitative research can be explained by Merriam (2009, p.13) who defines it as “*exploring inner meanings and insights that the participants have constructed, in a particular social phenomenon*” through intensive collection and study of narrative data. Instead of focusing on

the "how many," it emphasizes the "why" or "what" of the given social phenomena to gain in-depth understanding of human behaviour, their experiences, intentions, motivations etc. based on observation and interpretation, to ascertain how people feel and think. Common data collection methodologies in qualitative research include various forms of interviews, focus groups or observational studies. Interviews and focus groups are deemed the most relevant methods for this research thus, will be explored further to assist in determining the most appropriate methodology for this study:

Interviews are the first methods deemed most relevant for this research. Interviews can be explained by Thorpe and Jackson (2015) who define it as a discussion between two or more people that focuses on questions and responses about the phenomenon of interest. Lambert and Loisel (2007) discuss that interviews are generally utilized to gather information about the participants' experiences, feelings, intentions, motivations and thus forth, when there is an exploratory component to the study. An interview provides the opportunity to explore inner meanings and in-depth appreciation of the subject matter rather than just provided answers. Thus, when conducted correctly, interviews provide a wealth of insightful information relevant to conduct the research. Though, as cited by Bridges et. al. (2008) the scope of a participants' responses may depend on the interview's design, further elaborating that there are three such designs of interviews that should be taken into account when deciding the appropriate approach: the structured interview, the semi structured interview and the unstructured interview.

The first interview design, the 'structured interviews' make use of an interview schedule which contain a specific structure and pre-determined list of questions that prevent the participants from going off the subject matter. As discussed by Macan (2009) structured interviews allow the interviewer to pose the same questions to all participants with no deviation from the sequence of questions and the language used. This method of interviewing is predicated on the idea that the responses can be comparable across all respondents, as long as they are in response to identical cues. McKenna et. al. (2006) state that structured interviews are useful when specific information is required in line with the research objectives. Though, structured interviews' alternatively lack flexibility.

The second interview design, the 'semi structured interviews' provide a more adaptable method for conducting interviews. Similar to the structured interviews, semi - structured

interviews too make use of an interview schedule, though have no rigid adherence. As discussed by Sruckey (2013) semi – structured interviews are aided by follow-up questions and a flexibility to pose more enhanced questions than those originally drafted, depending on the participants responses, allowing the researcher to go deep for a discovery.

The final interview design, the ‘unstructured interviews’ are the most flexible design of interviews where neither the structure nor the questions are pre – determined, merely a general concept of the topics the interviewer hopes to discuss. As cited by Patton (2002) unstructured interviews are a method for comprehending complex human behaviours without imposing any predetermined classification, which may restrict the investigation's scope. Thus, The interviewer is free to approach each candidate differently and in whatever way they deem fit. Although Jamshed (2014) discusses that such interviews cannot begin without thorough research and planning by the researcher if they want to gain in-depth understanding of participants’ perspectives.

Focus groups are the second method deemed most relevant for this research. Focus groups are an extension of a semi – structured interviews tough, instead bring together five to ten participants at a given time to gather in – depth knowledge about their perceptions, beliefs, views and experience regarding a phenomenon of interest. As cited by Creswell, (2012) it is a moderated discussion utilized to extract information from groups as opposed to individuals. He further elaborated that the moderator guides the discussions within the boundaries of the research topic, ensuring that the participants’ are given the opportunity to express their views, allowing for the emergence of discussions and differences in opinions within the subject matter.

4.4. Method Selection

This study aims to examine the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students’, buying behaviours. Thus, it requires the researcher to hypothetically dive inside the minds of each participant and comprehend their personal perspectives on sexual appeal in advertisements. From the two aforementioned methods deemed most relevant, interviews and focus groups, interviews have been selected to gather the necessary data for this research. Tough there is commonality between these two approaches, including their capacity to make use of visual aids and speaking directly to the respondents, which is

useful for gauging respondents reactions to advertisements (Bougie and Sekaran, 2010), the motivation for considering interviews as opposed to focus groups, is based on other, more critical observations outlined in this section.

As aforementioned, participants of the focus groups are encouraged to discuss their perspectives, opinions and feelings (Creswell, 2012). Although, depending on the subject at hand, many participants may feel some discomfort to express themselves amongst the others. Sexual appeal is one such subject that may be considered a sensitive issue for many. Thus, as the participants of focus groups generally do not know one another prior to the focus group meeting, Collis and Hussey (2014) discuss that some may dominate the discussion while others may not feel at ease speaking about such subjects. This discussion in particular will include personal perspectives, controversial opinions and beliefs about the use of sexual appeal in advertisements, which is a requirement to investigate this subject matter. Thus suggesting that one to one interviews are more suitable for this study as opposed to focus groups.

The Interview method is identified as the most appropriate data gathering method for this study. Through the use of one to one interviews, Thrope et. al. (2015) discuss that the researcher can reach an elicit depth of information, hence, in this case creating a deeper understanding on the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students', buying behaviours, and a further justification for the mentioned phenomenon of interest. For such a phenomenon, in accordance with King (2004) it is crucial to comprehend each participants perspectives without them being influenced or discomforted by others, preventing them from sharing their inner feelings and personal perceptions. Thus this suggests that one to one interviews are more suitable for this study as opposed to focus groups, where naturally one may tend to be influenced or intimidated by another participants responses.

As discussed, there are three designs of interviews that should be taken into account when deciding the appropriate interview approach: the structured interview, the semi structured interview and the unstructured interview (Bridges et. al., 2008). In order to conduct a successful interview one of the three interview designs had to be chosen. The structured interview from all three deemed most appropriate for this research, not to restrict the participants, rather to look for consistency in their responses and prevent the participants

from going off the subject matter (Thrope et. al., 2015). The structured format aimed to use an interview schedule containing a specific structure and pre-determined list of questions for both Muslim and Christian participants so that the responses can be comparable across all the Muslim participants and all the Christian participants and thus forth, between both.

4.5. Sampling Strategy

Finding appropriate participants is necessary to fulfil the research purpose, thus potential participants must be sampled with the utilization of a sampling strategy. As cited by Saunders et. al. (2009) there are two different sampling strategies available when conducting research, the probability sampling and the non – probability sampling. From both strategies, non – probability sampling deemed most appropriate to the researcher, not only due to the time limitations but also its exploratory nature, as according to Berndt (2020, p. 224) “*unlike the probability sampling, non-probability sampling strategies draw the sample using non-randomized techniques*” thus, may frequently be put into practice faster than probability sampling strategies (Battaglia, 2008).

Non – probability sampling consists of four main types of sampling frameworks namely, convenience sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling and theoretical sampling (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). Interviewees for this research were sampled with the utilization of the purposive sampling strategy. The motivation for this selection was in line with Patton (2015, p 264) who states that “*the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study.*” Thus, providing more in – depth descriptions from smaller participant samples that could provide valuable insights to the study i.e. its exploratory nature. Moreover, Thrope et. al. (2015) disuses that when embarking on the purposive sampling strategy, the researcher must have a clear understanding of the specific criteria required by the participants. As a result, two criteria’s were set to gather the correct participants and the pertinent information required to achieve the study's three main objectives.

Firstly, the age group is of utmost importance as this study aims to gather male or female ‘young adults’ perspectives on sexual appeal in advertising. Young adults have been chosen with the supposition that they are more equipped to respond to questions about sexual appeal and share controversial opinions and personal beliefs more openly than individuals of later

adulthood and older adulthood age range (Reichert, 2002). Similarly as cited by Byron (2016) majority of brands that utilize sexual appeal in advertisements speak directly to young adults as they possess the substantial buying power. Therefore the age group of the participants must fall between 18 and 25 to meet the requirement of being young adults.

Secondly, the religious backgrounds too are of utmost importance, as this study aims to compare and contrast the Muslim and Christians perspectives of sexual appeal in advertising, influencing their buying behaviours. Thus, interviewees need to be from one of the aforementioned religious backgrounds. However, it is crucial that they were either born or raised in Ireland from a young age. The choice of including young Irish Muslim and Irish Christian adults was of specific interest as both religions, Islam and Christianity hold varying perspectives of sexual appeal. Additionally, a lot of changes have been noted throughout the years i.e. Matthews (2022) discusses that modern Irish Christians are moving away from the Biblical teaching of repressing sexual pleasure to more sexual hedonism. Though, it is not certain if the young Irish Christians changing views are impacting young Irish Muslims views, as they too are constantly surrounded by the same advertisements, people, atmosphere etc. These factors therefore imply the need to investigate the extent to which young adults deem sexual appeal to be acceptable and if there is a desire for such change among the Irish Muslims.

With the utilization of the non – profitability, purposive sampling strategy, Irish Christian and Irish Muslims who meet all the criteria's will be selected to participate in a face to face structured interview. The participant's employment status and/ or educational background will be ascertained to create a profile. Though, for ethical purposes participant names will remain anonymous and therefore will be addressed as Muslim A, Muslim B, Muslim C and so forth. Likewise the Christian participants will be addressed as Christian A, Christian B, Christian C and so forth, depending on the final number of participants. Furthermore, Rita and Rapley (2004) suggest the benefits of audio recordings during in – depth interviews, thus, to ensure that the researcher is focused and carefully analysing the participants responses during the process of the interview, an audio recording tool will be utilized, though, only after a verbal consent from all the selected participants. These audio recordings will later assist in the transcript generating, analysing and categorising process.

4.6. Field Research

To begin the process the author directly contacted eighteen individuals (*nine Irish Muslim and nine Irish Christians*) that matched the criteria required i.e. either from a Muslim or Christian background, born or raised in Ireland and between the age group 18 – 25. Each individual was selected by the author personally, who believed these eighteen individuals would provide an intriguing perspective and contribute new insights to the research. All eighteen potential participants were contacted via one of the following messaging apps: Instagram, Facebook or WhatsApp with a request to participate in a forty minute interview. Outlined in the request were key details of the research, the purpose and reasoning for conducting the research and what would be required of them as participants. To make it clear they were informed that the interview will be audio recorded to generate transcripts at completion, though, their names will remain anonymous, assuring that they may be open and honest about their perspectives, opinions and inner feelings during the interview process.

Amongst the nine Irish Muslims contacted, five responded expressing their interest to take part in the research. Amongst the nine Irish Christians contacted, four responded expressing their interest to take part in the research. In order to keep the numbers even, two additional Irish Christians were contacted, amongst which one was willing to participate. At this point, a general pattern had emerged throughout both sets the interviews, thus, the author felt no need to contact individuals any further, meaning the interview process had come to an end. This resulted in a total sample size of five participants per religious background i.e. five Irish Muslims and five Irish Christians.

In line with the aforementioned criteria, all ten participants are from across Ireland, come from either Muslim or Christian backgrounds and are aged between 18 – 25 years. The author personally knew all ten selected participants, thus, their responses were shared openly with no hesitation of judgment or discomfort, resulting in the interviewers ability to dive deep into the participants mind and receive open and honest responses. As the structured' interview method deemed most appropriate for this research an interview schedule was utilized. This contained a specific structure and pre-determined list of questions (see Appendix 9.1.) to be discussed during the course of all ten, forty minute interviews. This interview schedule was utilized to keep the interview responses within the identical cues to ensure the data collected was comparable and could be used to answer the research objectives. it consisted of questions

related to advertising, sexual appeal in advertising, the nudity scale, consumer perceptions and buying behaviours.

It was crucial that the interviewer utilized advertisements as ‘visual aids’ that incorporated sexual appeal, to deeper understand participant perspectives. While selecting these advertisements the interviewer referred back to ‘The Nudity Scale’ to ensure all 5 levels of advertisements had been chosen. This nudity scale was also presented to the participants to aid in answering related questions (See Appendix 9.2). Each ‘visual aid’ featured two advertisements from each level of sexual appeal/ nudity varying from no sexual appeal (level 0) all the way to full nudity (level 4), though, one with physical contact between the models incorporated in the advertisement and one with no physical contact between the models incorporated in the advertisement, to seek responses for research objectives three. All ten advertisements (see Appendix 9.3) selected by the interviewer promoted fragrances as these would less likely offend any of the ten participants, given that fragrances are viewed as products with sexual connections.

Prior to conducting the interviews, two pilot interviews were completed to test the significance and appropriateness of the pre – determined questions and visual aids. Both participants of the pilot interview matched the participant criteria, one being a young 21 year old Irish Muslim and the second being a young 24 year old Irish Christian. The pre – determined questions were asked and the visual aids were shown in order to confirm its applicability and relevance to the research questions. The pilot interviews proved to be a success in gathering relevant insights for the research questions, therefore, the interviewer was content to progress onto the interviews that would be used to analyse the data.

The ten interviews took place over the course of 1 and a half weeks, from July the 21st to August the 31st, taking an average of forty minutes per interview. All interviews were conducted in the participants houses/ accommodations across Dublin (during weekdays) and Cavan (during weekends). The interview locations and times were broken down and can be viewed in Appendix 9.4. Furthermore, directly after the completion of each interview, the audio recordings were played back by the interviewer to generate transcripts (see Appendix 9.5).

4.7. Analysis Method

It was crucial to gather the data in an effective and organised manner before analysing it. Thus, at completion of each interview the audio recordings were played back by the interviewer to generate transcripts, so to avoid the possibility of overlooking crucial information missed during the forty-minute interview period. The outcome of the initial process resulted in substantial amount of data, hence, leading to the first step of ‘coding’ i.e. to structure the information gathered from all the interviews into themes and patterns for analysis, enabling the researcher to develop a richer theoretical meaning. The methods that will be utilized for the analysis will begin with open coding, followed by axial coding and end with selective coding (Charmaz, 2008). As cited by Douglas (2003, p.48) *“the ability of the researcher to efficiently advance the study process is greatly aided by coding.”*

The first method that will be utilized to analyse the raw qualitative data is ‘open coding.’ This method involves the researcher to identify key concepts and themes for categorization (Flick, 2009). Thus, expressing the original data in the form of categories, each labelled with a heading, known as a ‘code.’ Cameron and Prince (2009) discuss that this stage liberates the researcher from being intimidated by the immense amount of the raw data and allows for critical thinking. (see Appendix 9.6).

The second method that will be utilized to analyse the qualitative data is ‘axial coding.’ This method involves further refining, aligning and categorizing the themes in order to establish more distinct categories. Thus, the researcher examines the connections between the categories that have resulted from open coding, for the development of core codes (Saunders et. al. 2012). Charmaz, (2008) discusses that the objective of this stage is to determine the analysis's central axis of essential concepts. (see Appendix 9.6).

The third method that will be utilized to analyse the qualitative data is ‘selective coding.’ This method involves organising the data categories from the axial coding stage into phrases that are coherent and meaningful. Thus, assisting the researcher to identify the main categories to select the core category, then systematically aligning the main theme with additional categories, as discussed by Flick (2009, p. 310) in order *“to combine the findings and create a grounded theory.”* (see Appendix 9.7) The resulting data was thereafter utilized

to provide explanations that addressed the research question and objectives which can be seen in section 5. ‘Finding and Analysis’ below.

4.8. Limitations to the Research

Ten interviews were used in total as a small sample size for the research. From which five were Irish Muslim consumers and five were Irish Christian consumers. In light of this, it is reasonable to believe that the findings may not be entirely definitive as subjectivity and bias are probable. As cited by Bryman and Bell (2007) It may be challenging to relate themes because of varying individual views thus, irregularities in the data collecting can depend on different personal experiences, and respondent’s exposure to sexual appeal/ nudity in advertisements. Given additional time, interviews would have carried on until a clear and concise theme was spotted and further investigations would have been conducted.

Chapter 5. Research Findings and Analysis

This chapter will present the data findings and analyse the data derived from conducting the ten semi – structured interviews. The three main research objectives mentioned in the ‘research question’ chapter (chapter 3) will be discussed along with the themes/ codes identified in the preceding chapter.

5.1. Objective 1 Findings

5.1.1. Muslim Participants

To investigate the response to all 5 levels of nudity, referring to ‘the nudity scale’ on young Muslim students in Ireland.

From the five Irish Muslim respondents in this study, many thought the overall effectiveness of advertisements would be higher with a more subdued usage of sexual appeal. Beginning from the bottom of the scale, there was a general consensus that level 0 i.e. no sexual appeal and level 1 i.e. subtle sexual nuance, deemed most appropriate. In fact, two respondents also mentioned that they believe the level 1 advertisements shown (see Appendix 9.3.3 and 9.3.4) for them were on level 0 of the sexual appeal/ nudity scale. The overall opinions on level 0 and level 1 advertisements were recurrently described as ‘connection’ ‘not overly intimate’ ‘slight tension’ and ‘romantic touch.’

Interviewee Muslim A “There is nothing suggestive but a close intimacy between two people. To me the woman seems happy to be embraced with the man, Its more about love than it is about sexual appeal and nudity.” (see Appendix 9.3.3.)

Interviewee Muslim B “it does start to show signs of the female being somewhat attracted to the male after he used the product, which showcases a romantic touch but not nudity or sexual appeal for me.” (see Appendix 9.3.4.)

Level 2 advertisements had varying perspectives, with two respondents stating their emerging discomfort, yet as Muslims living in Ireland they understand and believe that this is the new norm. Therefore, are somewhat in agreement with the other three respondents who believe this level of sexual appeal/ nudity in advertisements is acceptable to a certain extent, taking

into account the surroundings and environment. The overall opinions on level 2 advertisements were recurrently described as ‘quite intimate’ and ‘toned down tension.’

Interviewee Muslim A: “As a Muslim living in Ireland I would say I have come across all levels of nudity whether intentionally or unintentionally but in general regards, for me I understand its use but would begin to feel uncomfortable at level 2.”

Interviewee Muslim C: “As a Muslim I wouldn’t totally agree with it but it is the new norm.”

The top two levels, level 3, especially the level 4 advertisements is where a clear discomfort can be noted throughout all five respondents. At level 3 the overall opinions were recurrently described as ‘provocative’ ‘exposed’ and ‘touchy.’ According to three of the respondents, religion has a significant influence on their perspective on sexual appeal, especially in regards to Shari’ah and modesty. The others mentioned ‘upbringing’ and ‘culture’ as factors that influenced such perspectives.

Interviewee Muslim A: “I consider myself to be a Muslim who abides by the rules in my religion and the Shari’ah, one of which being to stay away and not reflect on any sexual images or activity and to not subdue into premarital activities.”

The respondents believed that overt nudity and suggestive positions detracted from the products advertised and that they preferred more attention be paid to the fragrances being advertised. Thus, many Irish Muslims believed that the overall effectiveness of advertisements would be higher with a more subdued usage of sexual appeal, though due to the environment they live in this view is subject to change.

5.1.2. Christian Participants

To investigate the response to all 5 levels of nudity, referring to ‘the nudity scale’ on young Christian students in Ireland.

From the five Irish Christian respondents in this study, many believe that with the rapid growth of the internet, social media has normalised sexual appeal, thus, people are becoming

more used to seeing 'nakedness.' Four out of the five respondents expressed their acceptance for sexual appeal in advertising, no matter the level of sexual appeal/ nudity and see no issue with the aforementioned, though may be a little sceptical when it comes to level 4, depending on the products and brands utilizing this level of sexual appeal/ nudity.

Interviewee Christian C: "I just think it's important that the company using the high level sexually-based ads match the theme."

This is a general consensus throughout all five respondents, though, two respondents mentioned 'objectification' of either man or woman as their only concern, especially the objectification of women. It is believed by these participants that this practice is 'outdated' and needs to change, as it directly impacts the younger generations and their outlook.

Interviewee Christian D: "There can be only one issue that bothers me in this regard. It mostly depicts a women who is less smart or a damsel in distress and then a strong male hero who is smart."

Interviewee Christian E: "It is outdated in my opinion and needs to change as it is not a great image to have on display in front of a younger generation of children"

When analysing the different levels of sexual appeal/ nudity in the advertisements, the overall opinions on level 0 advertisements were recurrently described as 'pretty normal.' Similarly, level 1 advertisements were referred to as 'classy' and 'innocent' with no references to sexual appeal or nudity. When viewing level 2 and level 3 advertisements, the responses again were about the 'norm' i.e. how sexual appeal has been so normalised nowadays. Thus, it does not influence them negatively in any way. In fact, two respondents also mentioned that they believe the first level 3 advertisement (see Appendix 9.3.7) for them was on level 2 of the sexual appeal/ nudity scale and the second level 3 advertisement (see Appendix 9.3.8) for interviewee C was on level 2 and interviewee D was on level 0 of the sexual appeal/ nudity scale.

Interviewee Christian C: "I would still give this image a level 2. I don't think that there is too much sexual appeal, even though they were swimwear" (see Appendix 9.3.7).

Interviewee Christian D: “if you ask me this advertisement does not include a theme of nudity. Since it is a product related to the summer, the people in the advertisement wear clothes related to the season. This is why nudity in this ad gets a 0 on the nudity scale”

(see Appendix 9.3.7).

5.2. Objective 2 Findings

5.2.1. Muslim Participants

To investigate the impact that sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim students buying behaviours.

Majority of the participants were of the opinion that they would not buy a product if it had sexual appeal in its advertising, when it hit levels of sexual appeal/ nudity above 1. The general consensus was that they, as the audience had different aspects of buying products than just being targeted by sexual advertisements. Thus, stating that the overall effectiveness of advertisements would be higher with a more subdued usage of sexual appeal. For many the ‘aesthetic’ ‘appealing to the eye’ and ‘colourful’ aspects had more influence on their buying behaviours than the sexual aspects in sexual advertisements or any advertisements in general.

Interviewee Muslim C: “I think the more interesting the advertisement, the more I would be influenced to buy the product, it is not all about sexual appeal at the end of the day.”

Interviewee Muslim D: “The sixth one looks a bit dull and isn’t aesthetic so I personally wouldn’t be influenced to buy this product” (see Appendix 9.3.6).

Although, level 1 sexual appeal/ nudity in advertisements appeared to have a finer influence on the Irish Muslim participants. As long as there was no negative aspects or anything going against the Islamic law, level 1 could potentially influence their buying behaviours. All participants were more attracted to the advertisements that incorporated a more ‘love story’ ‘connection’ or ‘romantic’ type atmosphere (see Appendix 9.3.1) than any hint of a ‘provocative’ or a ‘seductive’ atmosphere (see Appendix 9.3.4).

Interviewee Muslim A: “The advertisements where there is no nudity and the models are close to each other in a warm embrace evoked my senses of creating connections and therefore it would influence me to buy such products or something similar.”

Whereas, on the other side of the scale i.e. level 3 and 4, the Irish Muslims viewed these as being ‘inappropriate’ and ‘unnecessary.’ Many were unclear about what exactly was advertised as more attention was placed on the models and other sexual aspects such as physical contact, nudity etc. than the actual product itself. Again, being a big reason for the negative influence on the participants buying behaviours (see Appendix 9.3.10).

Interviewee Muslim E: “In my opinion, there is no need for nudity in ads, to sell the product or to make it look expensive and posh a lot of nudity is involved which should not be the case as it takes away from the product.”

Interviewee Muslim D: “I am confused if advertisement is for a perfume or body lotion.”

Tough, that being said, the participants also added that level 0 of sexual appeal i.e. no sexual appeal in advertisements would potentially go unnoticed or lead to no recall, thus, decreasing their propensity to buy the products. The overall view was that, if sexual appeal was to be utilized in advertisements a more subdued usage of sexual appeal would most likely influence the Irish Muslims buying behaviours.

5.2.2. Christian Participants

To investigate the impact that sexual appeal in advertising has on young Christian students buying behaviours.

Majority of the participants were of the opinion that sexual appeal in advertising could most definitely influence their buying behaviours, as they deem sexual appeal to be quite effective, as discussed in the preceding section 5.1.2. interviewee C and interviewee D especially, amongst the other three stated that nudity/ sexual appeal incorporated in advertisements would be no reason for them to avoid a brand or likewise not purchase the products being advertised.

Interviewee Christian C: “Such advertisement would never have a negative effect on my purchase of the brand's product, if anything it would be the opposite.”

Interviewee Christian D: “I consider it a very narrow-minded point of view to say that advertisements have become inappropriate due to advertisements containing sexuality and nudity or would have negative influence on the viewer because the models are slightly nude or whatever.”

Other interviewees proceeded to talk about the models, stating that if the models in the sexual appeal advertisements are ones they recognise or follow it too would influence their buying behaviour positively. Though, the product itself must be of quality and as described in the advertisements to actually make a the purchase. Having sexy models and eye catching advertisements is not enough to make the purchase but is enough to influence buying behaviours i.e. interest the viewers to consider buying the products being advertised.

Interviewee Christian A: “It is quite remarkable that an actress I like very much is featured in this product advertisement. Such advertisements certainly affect my purchasing behaviour regarding the product”
(see Appendix 9.3.4).

Interviewee Christian E: “Since the advertisements in question are perfume advertisements, the scent of the perfume will have an impact on my purchasing tendency rather than just the advertisement”

5.3. Objective 3 Findings

5.3.1. Muslim Participants

To investigate the impact and response to one of the many factors of sexual appeal in advertising, interpersonal sexual behaviours (physical touch between the models) on young Muslim students buying behaviour.

Two advertisements at each level, from level 0 – level 1 had been shown to all five participants (see Appendix 9.3.1 – 9.3.10), the first one with the models physically touching one another and the second with the models not physically touching one another. Participants

were given the option to discuss which advertisement they were more drawn to and why. From the five Irish Muslim respondents in this study, all five had varying perspectives on these advertisements, although, majority were leaning more towards the advertisements that incorporated no physically touch between the models, stating the following recurring terms/phrases when discussing the advertisement with no physical touch ‘symbolise love’ ‘represent a connection’ ‘warmth’ and ‘close embrace.’

Interviewee Muslim A: ‘Image 6 is definitely more alluring and appealing to me. There isn’t anything offensive in my opinion and it gives a feeling of warmth unlike image 5, which incorporated physical touch, which seems more intensified’
(see Appendix 9.3.5 and 9.3.6).

Two of the five participants mentioned that people are enticed at different levels and towards different sexual behaviours, thus don’t feel upset by physical touch, though, as practicing Muslims themselves that choose to follow their own guidelines, principles and morals, would not have the same influence as those who are enticed at higher levels and with more intense sexual behaviours. Although these two participants are neutral with the use of physical touch between models in advertising, they too are on a general consensus with the other three participants that no physical touch between the models in advertisements would impact them more positively than with no physical touch in advertisements, unless it was utilized for showcasing warmth, love or a connection between the models. Thus, the overall opinions of the Irish Muslims on the use of physical touch in advertisement were recurrently described as ‘quite intimate’ ‘intensified’ and ‘tension creating.’

Interviewee Muslim E: Again, both of the images have that little aspect of sexual tension and so it does not really bother me yet image 5 has some aspect of touch that may be fine for others but does not work for me.”
(see Appendix 9.3.5).

5.3.2. Christian Participants

To investigate the impact and response to one of the many factors of sexual appeal in advertising, interpersonal sexual behaviours (physical touch between the models) on young Christian students buying behaviour.

From the five Irish Christian respondents in this study, similar to the Irish Muslims respondents, the utilization of physical touch in advertisements does not influence their buying behaviours more than those advertisements that incorporate no physical touch, it's quite neutral. Though, that being said the Irish Christians leaned more towards the advertisements that did incorporate physical touch between the models, stating the following recurring terms/ phrases when discussing the advertisement with physical touch 'powerful couple' 'attractive' 'classy.' Although physical touch is not a huge aspect when it comes to influencing Irish Christians buying behaviours, it is still rather preferred by them to be incorporated in the advertisements as noted through all five interviews.

Interviewee Christian A: "Image 5, that's better for sure! It is more sexual than the other ads but more appealing and sexual but not offensive."

(see Appendix 9.3.5)

Interviewee Christian C: "I prefer image 1. I feel it is more classy. Moreover, I don't really like that in image 2 the woman is standing so far away from the man."

(see Appendix 9.3.1 and Appendix 9.3.2)

Chapter 6. Discussions

This chapter will compare the findings of this study to those of the earlier studies that are discussed in the literature review of this paper. It will serve to prove or disprove the theories that were previously put out and to essentially compare and conclude what influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Irish Muslim and Irish Christian students buying behaviours in regards to the three main research question and objectives outlined in Chapter 3 'Research Question' of this paper.

6.1. Objective 1

“To investigate the response to all 5 levels of nudity, referring to ‘the nudity scale’ on young Muslim and Christian students in Ireland.”

The Irish Muslim participants in this study believed that the overall effectiveness of advertisements would be higher with a more subdued usage of sexual appeal. Sexual appeal in Islam is viewed as ‘Haram,’ and many mentioned that they abide by these rules i.e. the Shari’ah and the Quranic verses, one of which being to stay away and not reflect on any sexual images or activity and to not subdue into premarital activities. Thus this echo’s findings from Alserhan (2011), Bennett (2007), Bari and Abbas (2001) who all talk about the ‘haram’ in Islam. Alserhan (2001) amongst all specifically discusses “The Islamic Advertising Framework” stating that product advertisements should not violate Islamic law ‘Shari’ah,’ be haram neither be harmful. Two of the Muslim participants further discussed their emerging discomfort when nudity/ sexual appeal advertisements hit levels above 2 “suggestive clad,” although, as Muslims living in Ireland they understand and believe that this is the new norm. Thus, are somewhat in agreement with the other three respondents who believe this level of sexual appeal/ nudity in advertisements is acceptable to a certain extent, taking into account the surroundings and environment. This is in line with Ahmadi (2003, p.318) that states that immigration or living in a country where sexual appeal is highly visible and acceptable, it can cause young Muslims to challenge their existing views on sexual perceptions.

The Irish Christian participants in this study believed that with the rapid growth of the internet, social media has normalised sexual appeal, thus, people are becoming more used to

seeing 'nakedness.' These findings disagree with Meuther (n.d.) who explains a Biblical verse, stating that the 'lust of the eyes' is an inclination to become enthral on the visible i.e. sexual appeal. Tough, echo the findings from Matthews (2022) who states that Christians are moving away from the Biblical teaching of repressing sexual pleasure to more sexual hedonism. Not even once did any of the five Christian participants mention religion or any aspect of religion, as did the Muslims participants. The participants responses were more focused on the widespread use of sexual appeal in advertising in the span of the 20th/ 21st Century, especially in the 21st Century. Sexual appeal is extremely normalised in western countries today i.e. in this case Ireland, that it has become the new norm to violate God's plans and desires for human sexuality, as mentioned throughout the Biblical versus and discussed by Elwell (1996) and Easton (1897) hence now, one can come across such advertisements everywhere and anywhere as in agreement with Matthews (2022). Our primary findings proved this by showing that the Christian respondents viewed level 2 and 3 as the new 'norm' in western countries.

6.2. Objective 2

"To investigate the impact that sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students buying behaviours."

The Irish Muslim participants in this study feel that they would not buy a product if it had sexual appeal in its advertising, especially when it hit levels of sexual appeal/ nudity above 1, 'subtle sexual nuance,' due to its violation of religious norms, i.e. anything deemed 'Haram.' These findings agree with Henderson (2003) who found that Muslim consumers have strong convictions in the Islamic religion thus, its ideals greatly influence their buying behaviours. Likewise, level 1 sexual appeal/ nudity in advertisements appeared to have a finer influence on our five participants as long as there was no negative aspects or anything going against the Islamic law, thus, indicating that level 1 could potentially influence their buying behaviours. If contrasted with Suki and Salleh (2016) this primary research agrees with their findings that that Muslims have a strong desire to ensure that their purchase decisions are in line with the halal image and to steer clear of the non-halal images such as, in this case the use of sexual appeal in advertising.

The Irish Christian participants in this study were of the opinion that sexual appeal in

advertising could most definitely influence their buying behaviours. Though, this finding disagrees with Brooks (2017) who explained that it is quite evidently outlined throughout the Biblical verses that Christians should be cautious about what they take in as this will ultimately mirror what is in the heart of the follower. It is quite evident that our findings are in agreement with (Matthews, 2022) showing a progression with the open-mindedness of sexual appeals in western nations in the 20th / 21st Century. This is impacting consumer perceptions of sexual appeal in advertisements to a more positive outlook, thus, influencing Christian consumers buying behaviours positively in regards to sexual appeal i.e. many participants mentioned that nudity/ sexual appeal incorporated in advertisements would be no reason for them to avoid a brand or likewise not purchase the products being advertised.

6.3. Objective 3

“To investigate the impact and response to one of the many factors of sexual appeal in advertising, interpersonal sexual behaviours (physical touch between the models) on young Muslim and Christian students buying behaviour.”

The Irish Muslim participants in this study were leaning more towards the advertisements that incorporated no physical touch between the models. One of which was, to an extent is against the utilization of physical touch due to its violation of religious norms. This is in line with Frazer (2002) who discussed that many Muslims view such advertising tactics as unethical, offensive and in contradictory with the Islamic law, ‘The Shari’ah.’ Although, Four of the five participants mentioned that when taking into account the local culture in Ireland they don’t feel upset by physical touch between the models utilized within advertisements but as Muslims they choose to follow the Islamic guidelines, principles and morals, therefore, would not have the same influence as those who are enticed with higher intense sexual behaviours. These findings slightly disagree with both Frazer (2002) as aforementioned and Akhter (2001) who found that the use of erotic images in a Muslims' perspective is repugnant and offensive and further discussed that there is no need to showcase such images openly in public as this form of advertising is contentious in the eyes of the Muslim public. Our findings suggest that Muslims raised in Western countries are becoming more accepting of the use of physical touch between models in advertising, considering the environment they are surrounded by. That being said, it was yet a general consensus throughout all five participants that although many don’t feel upset or offended, Islamic

guidelines, principles and morals still play a huge part in how their buying behaviours are influenced by such advertisements.

The Irish Christian participants in this study stated that the utilization of physical touch between the models in advertisements does not influence their buying behaviours more than those advertisements that incorporate no physical touch between the models. Although, all five Christian participants leaned more towards the advertisements that did incorporate physical touch between the models, stating that this is becoming the ‘norm’ in advertisements today. This finding agreed with Reichert and Carpender (2003, pp. 823) who found that physical contact in advertisements have become more prevalent over the past few decades, stating that *“since 1993 to 2003 there has been an overall rise in physical contact between models, with more physical contact in 2003 (49%) than in 1993 (40%).”*

Chapter 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1. Conclusion to the Study

The purpose of this research was to investigate the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on Irish Muslim and Irish Christian students buying behaviours. The author's goal in conducting this research study was to better comprehend the subject of interest and, in essence, respond to the research objectives outlined in Chapter 3, thereafter, presented in Chapter 5, as findings and Chapter 6, as discussions. To investigate this study a qualitative method of research, 'structured interviews' was deemed most appropriate thus, adopted. The findings from these structured interviews were attentively and conceptually analysed hence, It may be said that the author has succeeded in gaining a more thorough grasp and comparison of the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on students of two different monotheistic religious backgrounds, Islam (Muslim students) and Christianity (Christian students), buying behaviours.

Based on the primary research data gained from the interviews, this study indicated that when it comes to the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Irish Muslim students buying behaviours, they, to date abide by the rules of Islam i.e. outlined in the Shari'ah and the Quranic verses. Thus, sexual appeal in its advertising would not influence their buying behaviour, due to its violation of religious norms and anything deemed 'Haram.' On the contrary, based on the primary research data gained from the interviews, this study indicated that when it comes to the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Irish Christian students buying behaviours, they, have moved away from the Biblical teaching of repressing sexual pleasure to more sexual hedonism. Thus, sexual appeal in its advertising would influence their buying behaviour, due to the progression with the open-mindedness of sexual appeals in the western nations.

In relation to young Muslim consumers it can be concluded that a no sexual appeal or subtle sexual nuance is deemed most appropriate, any level above this would be 'offensive'. On the contrary, In relation to young Christian consumers it can be concluded that due to the progression with the open-mindedness of sexual appeals any of the five level of sexual appeal/ nudity may be deemed appropriate. As both monotheistic religions have vastly different views on sexual appeal in advertising, the findings of this study suggest that in order

to be able to influence the consumers buying behaviours, relevant sexual appeal must be showcased in advertising otherwise it may lead to offending potential customers.

7.2. Recommendations

Indicative of the research findings provided and examined in the literature review, and through thorough assessment and conclusive evidence based on the qualitative interviews conducted between five young Irish Muslims and five Irish Christians students aged between 18 – 25, the author henceforth purported that the research findings show that Muslims living in Ireland today perceive sexual insinuations in advertisements to be moderately profane with sexual appeal being a sensitive topic in the conservative religion of Islam. The research has analysed that Muslims would consider sexual appeal to be within the limits of obscene profanity.

Recommendations going forward retrieved from this aspect of the research, the author proposes to advertisers that according to this literature study, advertising companies should improve their understanding of cultural variations by considering moral and social factors. Islam is becoming increasingly common in Ireland with a current population of 63,443 Muslims (Central Statistics Office, 2016). To subdue the increasingly multi-cultural youth in Ireland into buying the merchandise and commodities displayed in these wide arrays of advertisements, it is considerable to make less use of sexual appeal, and also utilize other methods of advertisement techniques to invest the audience into increasing their buying behaviours. This recommendation will prevent consumers of religious backgrounds from feeling deceived, offended, reduces the risk of backlash (Reichert et al. 2011). Thus, preventing any consumers from feeling exploited or misled (Sengupta and Dahl 2008).

Another conclusive finding from the research is that although young Muslim students in Ireland do not outright deplore the use of sexual appeal in advertisements, and Christian youth find that sexual appeal can be quite useful in appealing to one's senses and emotions, it would be advised by the author that marketers employ sexual attraction sensibly in their advertising. Therefore, if sexual appeal is used in advertising tactfully and effectively for the product and/ or product being advertised, it may be attractive to consumers and enticing to their eyes.

Additionally, the author also denotes that consumers are more than likely to have a vastly different and outward opinion of the product if the advertisement displays sexual appeals of varying degrees that is inconsistent and incompatible with the nature of the advertised product. The young generation in this situation, Muslims and Christians alike, may be more inclined to be against advertisements that inappropriately employ sexual appeal in their advertising, and they may even decide not to purchase the products intended as the message displayed strayed from the product's main characterisations.

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Chapter 9. Appendix

9.1. Structure & pre – determined questions of the semi – structured interview

Q1. What do you think about advertising generally?

Q2. Many view advertisings to be offensive, what aspects offend you, if any?

Q3. What are your thoughts on the use of sexual appeal in advertising?

Q4. What are your thoughts on the various levels of nudity? At what point would you start to feel uncomfortable and/ or offended by the advertisement?

5 Levels	Descriptions
Level 0	No sexual appeal.
Level 1	Subtle sexual nuance.
Level 2	Suggestively clad.
Level 3	Partially clad.
Level 4	Full nudity.

Q5. I'd like to show you some examples of advertisements I have here with various levels of sexual appeal. I would like you to explain in detail what level of nudity, referring to the nudity scale, you believe each advertisement shows, whether that level of nudity will turn you away or entice you towards the advertisement's content and/ or message and if it would influence your buying behaviour?

Image 1 & Image 2

Q6. Image 1 and 2 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 1 involves physical touch and image 2 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Image 3 & Image 4

Q7. Image 3 and 4 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 3 involves physical touch and image 4 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Image 5 & Image 6

Q8. Image 5 and 6 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 5 involves physical touch and image 6 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Image 7 & Image 8

Q9. Image 7 and 8 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 7 involves physical touch and image 8 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Image 9 & Image 10

Q10. Image 9 and 10 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 9 involves physical touch and image 10 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Q11. Overall, what are your thoughts on these advertisements? Do you think advertisements are becoming inappropriate? If so, at what level?

Q12. Did any of the advertisements make you interested in buying the product and/ or service advertised? Would it/ they, or any similar advertisements influence your buying behaviours?

9.2. The 'Nudity Scale'

5 Levels	Descriptions
Level 0	No sexual appeal.
Level 1	Subtle sexual nuance.
Level 2	Suggestively clad.
Level 3	Partially clad.
Level 4	Full nudity.

9.3. 'Visual aid' advertisements used in semi – structured interview

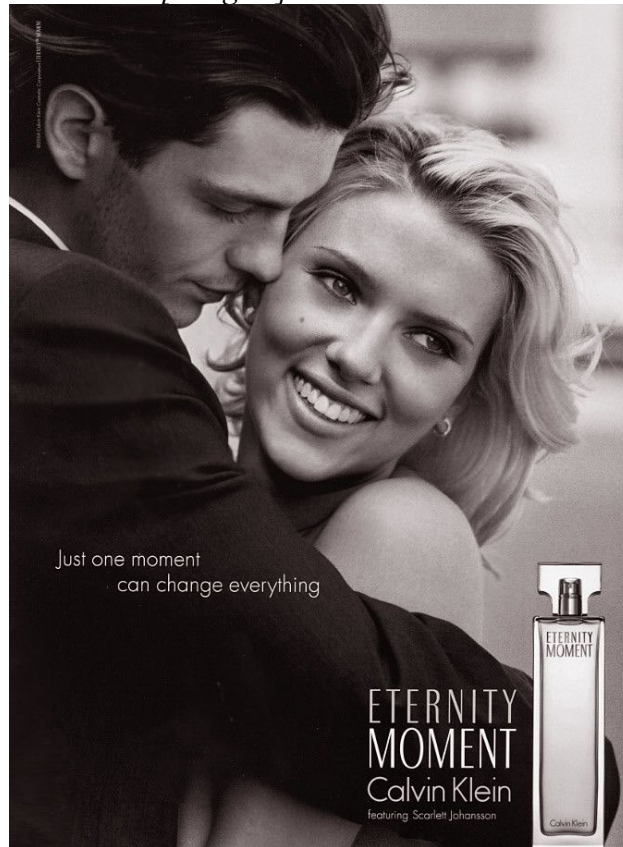
9.3.1. Yohji Yamamoto Advertisement [Image 1] Level 0



9.3.2. Givenchy Advertisement [Image 2] Level 0



9.3.3. Calvin Klein Advertisement [Image 3] Level 1



9.3.4. Azzaro Advertisement [Image 4] Level 1



9.3.5. Revlon Advertisement [Image 5] Level 2



9.3.6. Van Gils Advertisement [Image 6] Level 2



9.3.7. Dolce & Gabbana Advertisement [Image 7] Level 3



9.3.8 Michael Kors Advertisement [Image 8] Level 3



9.3.9. Calvin Klein Advertisement [Image 9] Level 4



9.3.10. Tom Ford Advertisement [Image 10] Level 4



9.4. Interview locations and times

9.4.1. Muslim Participants

Interviewee	Date	Time	Location	Duration
Muslim A	Saturday July 23 rd	12.00 p.m.	Interviewees house Cavan, Co. Cavan.	49 mins
Muslim B	Saturday July 23 rd	3.00 p.m.	Interviewees house Cavan, Co. Cavan	45 mins
Muslim C	Sunday July 24 th	3.00 p.m.	Interviewees house Cavan, Co. Cavan	42 mins
Muslim D	Sunday July 24 th	6.00 p.m.	Interviewees house Cavan, Co. Cavan	37 mins
Muslim E	Tuesday July 26 th	6.30 p.m.	Interviewees house Sandyford, Dublin	30 mins

9.4.2.. Christian Participants

Interviewee	Date	Time	Location	Duration
Christian A	Thursday July 21 st	6.00p.m.	Interviewees house Kildare	38 mins
Christian B	Monday July 25 th	7.00 p.m.	Interviewees apartment Dublin 8	36 mins
Christian C	Friday July 29 th	7.00p.m.	Interviewees apartment Dublin 1	42 mins
Christian D	Sunday July 31 st	12.00p.m.	Interviewees house Cavan, Co. Cavan	40 mins
Christian E	Sunday July 31 st	3.00p.m.	Interviewees house Cavan, Co. Cavan	49 mins

9.5. Semi – structures interview transcripts

9.5.1. Muslim Participants Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Hamna Akhtar (the author)

Interviewee: Muslim A

Interview Setting: Interviewees house. Cavan, Co. Cavan.

Date: Saturday July 23rd

Time: 12.00 p.m.

Duration: 49 minutes

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer: I want to start by saying thank you for taking part in this interview. The purpose of this study is to discover and compare the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students, buying behaviours. Roughly 35 - 45 minutes will be allotted for the interview, depending on how extensive your responses are. A few key points just before we get started, this interview will be audio recorded, to aid in transcript generation at completion of this interview. Anything you say during the interview will recorded, though, will be confidential and your name will also remain anonymous in the written paper, assuring that you may be open and honest about your perspectives, opinions and inner feelings during the interview process. We will now begin the interview, if that's okay with you?

Interviewee: Yes that sounds great and thank you for having me.

Interviewer: What do you think about advertising generally?

Interviewee: I believe advertising is an important factor into how we perceive the world around us. Advertising influences our choices and behaviours from what we were to what we eat or drink to our lifestyle. Advertising is very important as it appeals to our senses and emotions.

Interviewer: Many view advertising to be offensive, what aspects offend you, if any?

Interviewee: To me, I wouldn't say advertising is offensive as sometimes the product needing to be advertising would require certain lengths of evoking ones senses to get the message across. If however the advertising would be indirectly or directly invoking a religion or an ethnic, diverse or cultural group then I would consider that to be offensive and crossing the line.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on the use of sexual appeal in advertising?

Interviewee: Well I would say I am indifferent to how companies wish to showcase their products. If they feel the need to add a sexual emphasis to portray the product then by all means. But to me I tend to avoid looking at such advertisements as I consider myself to be a

Muslim who abides by the rules in my religion and the Shari'ah, one of which being to stay away and not reflect on any sexual images or activity and to not subdue into premarital activities.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on the various levels of nudity? At what point would you start to feel uncomfortable and/ or offended by the advertisement?

Shows a picture of 'The Nudity Scale'

Interviewee: As a Muslim living in Ireland I would say I have come across all levels of nudity whether intentionally or unintentionally but in general regards, for me I would begin to feel uncomfortable after level 2.

Interviewer: That's great! Now, I'd like to show you some examples of advertisements I have here, with various levels of sexual appeal. I would like you to explain in detail what level of nudity **referring to the nudity scale** you believe each advertisement shows, whether that level of nudity will turn you away or entice you towards the advertisement's content/ message and if it would influence your buying behaviour?

Interviewee: Sure!

Interviewer: **Shows Image 1**

Interviewee: Image 1 to me would be at level 1. A close bond Between 2 people would hint at subtle sexual nuances as they are in an embracing position. To me it is indirect subtle sexual nuances and therefore I wouldn't mind buying the product, it doesn't have a negative aspect so I would consider buying it.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 2**

Interviewee: I would also put Image 2 into level 1 as well as it represents a connection between 2 people who are in pursuit of each other. I would be ok with buying this product in this advertisement.

Interviewer: So, Image 1 and 2 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 1 involves physical touch and image 2 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: To me, personally I think both of them are appealing in their own way. I would go for Image 1 as it represents a connection between two people.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 3**

Interviewee: I would also say image 3 is also level 1. There is nothing suggestive but a close intimacy between two people. To me the woman seems happy to be embraced with the man, Its more about love than it is about sexual appeal and nudity. There is no nudity shown in my opinion. Image 3 would make me want to buy the product advertised in the image.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 4**

Interviewee: Image 4 could also be level 1 on the nudity scale. The woman is enticed by the man in image 4. Personally I would not buy this product as I do not like to see the way the woman is lingering close to the man in the image. To me it seems quite provocative as a Muslim women. Therefore I would not buy this product.

Interviewer: Image 3 and 4 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 3 involves physical touch and image 4 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: Image 3 is more appealing to me as I like the intimate connection the man and woman are sharing with their close embrace. The woman is smiling in the presence of the man in the picture.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 5**

Interviewee: Image 5 would fall under level 2 in my opinion. It is suggestively clad and it is clear what the advertisement is intending to represent. The woman is being seduced by the man in the pic. I think this is a product I wouldn't buy as I don't like the way the advertisement is represented.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 6**

Interviewee: I would also say Image six falls at Level 2 of the nudity scale. The man and the woman in the picture are being quite intimate but in a way that doesn't offend me like the previous picture somewhat did as they are not physically touching on another. I would be fine buying this product.

Interviewer: Image 5 and 6 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 5 involves physical touch and image 6 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: image 6 is definitely more alluring and appealing to me. There isn't anything offensive in my opinion and it gives a feeling of warmth unlike image 5, which incorporated physical touch, which seems more intensified. I would prefer image 6.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 7**

Interviewee: Image 7 falls under level 3. Partially clad. Both the man and woman have exposed clothing on. And they are touching each other. Personally I would not mind this advertisement as it is not showcasing anything provocative although I would prefer if they were clothed more. It does entice me to buying the product though.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 8**

Interviewee: Image 8 is similar to image 7 falling under level 3 with the partial clad. Although they are not sharing any physical touch. I still would prefer if they were more clothed but the advertisement does not offend me at all. I would also be ok with buying this product.

Interviewer: Image 7 and 8 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 7 involves physical touch and image 8 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: Image 8 is more appealing to me as it was more suitable for my preferences. I prefer the ad with less physical touch as I do not like to see physical touch being represented in advertisements.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 9**

Interviewee: Image 9 falls under level 4. The woman is fully nude. This to me is not a good representation of women in an advertisement. I do not think we should be viewed as sexual objects to men. Therefore I would not buy this product.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 10**

Interviewee: Image 10 also falls under level 4 of full nudity. I feel quite offended to see full display of nudity represented in a brand and personally I would never buy a product that promotes obscenity and full nudity in advertisements.

Interviewer: Image 9 and 10 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 9 involves physical touch and image 10 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: I do not prefer either image. Too much nudity, such as maybe level 3 and 4 is deemed as offensive to me.

Interviewer: Overall, what are your thoughts on these advertisements? Do you think advertisements are becoming inappropriate? If so, at what level?

Interviewee: There are a lot of different aspects of intimacy being displayed in these advertisements all showing relationships but with different factors such as physical touch or embracing or the different levels of nudity on display in these advertisements. I do think some advertisements are becoming more risqué but then again people are enticed at different levels and if I do not feel enticed by an advertisement it could be the opposite for another. Therefore I do not feel upset by the sexual appeal in advertisements even though it would offend me when it hits a certain level, I choose to follow my own guidelines, principles and morals.

Interviewer: Did any of the advertisements make you interested in buying the product and/ or service advertised? Would it/ they, or any similar advertisements influence your buying behaviours?

Interviewee: The advertisements where there was no nudity and the models were close to each other in a warm embrace evoked my senses of creating connections and therefore it would influence me to buy such products or something similar.

Interviewer: Great! Are there any other points or comments you would like to make?

Interviewee: Well I would like to add that advertisement is an important factor in our lives and that is why representation matters in advertising. In terms of sexual appeal I would say there needs to be a level that should not be passed in terms of displaying nudity and sexual appeal in advertisements. Other than that, advertising is a good way to evoke our senses, emotions and primal instincts.

Interviewer: Okay perfect! We have now reached the end and there are no more questions for me to ask. I would like to thank you for taking your time out to participate in this interview.

Interviewee: Thank you for having me. Have a great day.

9.5.2. Christian Participant Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Hamna Akhtar (the author)

Interviewee: Christian C

Interview Setting: Interviewees apartment. Dublin 1

Date: Friday July 29th

Time: 7.00p.m

Duration: 42 minutes

(Start of Interview)

Interviewer: I want to start by saying thank you for taking part in this interview. The purpose of this study is to discover and compare the influence sexual appeal in advertising has on young Muslim and Christian students, buying behaviours. Roughly 35 - 45 minutes will be allotted for the interview, depending on how extensive your responses are. A few key points just before we get started, this interview will be audio recorded, to aid in transcript generation at completion of this interview. Anything you say during the interview will be recorded, though, will be confidential and your name will also remain anonymous in the written paper, assuring that you may be open and honest about your perspectives, opinions and inner feelings during the interview process. We will now begin the interview, if that's okay with you?

Interviewee: Yes, no worries.

Interviewer: What do you think about advertising generally?

Interviewee: In general I think it is fine and sometimes it can be useful even. For example if there is a product or service that can help people, with advertising you can reach the right people. However, sometimes organisations/brands cross some (ethical) lines, such as advertising to children

Interviewer: Many view advertising to be offensive, what aspects offend you, if any?

Interviewee: I don't find much advertising offensive to be honest. The only thing that I find offensive is if organisations/brands portray people according to their stereotypes

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on the use of sexual appeal in advertising?

Interviewee: It can be really successful! When done right and if it fits with the organisation/brand I do not have anything against it

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on the various levels of nudity? At what point would you start to feel uncomfortable and/ or offended by the advertisement?

Shows a picture of 'The Nudity Scale'

Interviewee: As I said before, I do not have anything against nudity or sexual appeal if it's done right/ used in a classy way. Thus it really depends on the ad which level I would find offensive / makes me feel uncomfortable

Interviewer: That's great! Now, I'd like to show you some examples of advertisements I have here, with various levels of sexual appeal. I would like you to explain in detail what level of nudity **referring to the nudity scale** you believe each advertisement shows, whether that level of nudity will turn you away or entice you towards the advertisement's content/ message and if it would influence your buying behaviour?

Interviewee: Sure

Interviewer: **Shows Image 1**

Interviewee: I would rate this level 1, since there is some slight sexual tension used in the ad, but nothing serious in my opinion. For this image I would say I'm more enticed that turned away, but it would not really influence my buying behaviour.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 2**

Interviewee: I would rate this between level 0 and level 1 since I feel it is slightly less sexual than the first image but I would not rate it 100% at level 0. I don't particularly like the ad itself, so I would probably not buy the product, but it is not due to the sexual appeal that is used.

Interviewer: So, Image 1 and 2 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 1 involves physical touch and image 2 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: I prefer image 1. I feel it is more classy. Moreover, I don't really like that in image 2 the woman is standing so far away from the man.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 3**

Interviewee: I would rate this image again level 1. I feel that it is rather similar to the first image and I like it. Especially the use of the greyish colours, it makes it look more retro.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 4**

Interviewee: I would rate this image between 1 and 2 since it is still rather subtle; however, in my opinion, it sort of suggests that with this perfume you attract women.

Interviewer: Image 3 and 4 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 3 involves physical touch and image 4 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: I like image 3 more. I think it is because of the colour scheme, and it looks a bit more romantic than image 4. Nevertheless, neither are offensive to me.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 5**

Interviewee: I would rate this level 2. The ad suggest that wearing the perfume attracts men. Again, I'm still do not find this level offensive, but I like the ad less than for example image 3.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 6**

Interviewee: I would rate this level 2 again, because it is still romantic like image 3, but a bit more sexual.

Interviewer: Image 5 and 6 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 5 involves physical touch and image 6 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: I think image 6 is more appealing to me. Again, I think this has do to with the more romantic feeling it gives me than image 5. However, I find neither one of the images offensive.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 7**

Interviewee: I would still give this image a level 2. I don't think that there is too much sexual appeal, even though they were swimwear.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 8**

Interviewee: I think this image if fairly similar to image 7, and thus I would rate it again level 2.

Interviewer: Image 7 and 8 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 7 involves physical touch and image 8 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: I think image 7 would be more appealing to me, but just for the fact that it advertises also perfume for women instead of only for men.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 9**

Interviewee: I would rate this one a level 3. I find it a bit offensive that the woman in fully naked while the man is fully dressed. Nevertheless, I would not turn away if I saw this image.

Interviewer: **Shows Image 10**

Interviewee: I would rate this image level 4, since both the people in it are fully naked. I don't find it offensive, but it is not the best ad that I've seen.

Interviewer: Image 9 and 10 actually have the same level of sexual appeal in the advertisements. Except, image 9 involves physical touch and image 10 does not. Can you please explain which one of the two advertisement is more appealing to you and why?

Interviewee: None of them are really appealing to me. Maybe because I don't fully get the idea behind them.

Interviewer: Overall, what are your thoughts on these advertisements? Do you think advertisements are becoming inappropriate? If so, at what level?

Interviewee: I don't think that these ads are inappropriate. Overall, I liked the more romantic feeling advertisements more, but I wasn't offended by any of them. I understand why many beauty/perfume brand use this kind of advertisement. I would just take into consideration where these ads should be shown. For example, I don't think it is a good idea to show image 10 near a school or so, where mostly children would see it, but I think that usually organisations/brands think about the location of the ads.

Interviewer: Did any of the advertisements make you interested in buying the product and/ or service advertised? Would it/ they, or any similar advertisements influence your buying behaviours?

Interviewee: Yes, for sure! Such advertisement would never have a negative effect on my purchase of the brand's product, if anything it would be the opposite. Again this is the new norm.

Interviewer: Great! Are there any other points or comments you would like to make?

Interviewee: While I personally don't get offended quickly by these type of advertisements, I can understand that some people do. I feel that organisations/brands using these type of advertisement should consider the location of the advertisements and the people who would see them, as not everybody is open to them.

Interviewer: Okay perfect! We have now reached the end and there are no more questions for me to ask. I would like to thank you for taking your time out to participate in this interview.

Interviewee: Thank you for having me.

9.6. Open Coding & Axial Coding

9.6.1. Muslim Participants

Religion

Follow – *“I choose to follow my own guidelines, principles and morals”*

Offensive – *“I’ve personally come across many advertisements that directly have offended many people, could be because of religion, could be because of culture or just how one was raised”*

Revealing – *“I believe as a Muslim myself I would rather not see models that are too intimate or wearing revealing clothing, showing their cleavage, legs, or other body parts”*

Disagree - *“As a Muslim I wouldn’t totally agree with it but it is the new norm.”*

Rules – *“I tend to avoid looking at such advertisements as I consider myself to be a Muslim who abides by the rules in my religion and the Shari’ah”*

Uncomfortable - *“As a Muslim living in Ireland I would say I have come across all levels of nudity whether intentionally or unintentionally but in general regards, for me I understand its use but would begin to feel uncomfortable at level 2”*

Level of Nudity

Bond – *“A close bond Between 2 people would hint at subtle sexual nuances as they are in an embracing position”*

Connection – *“it represents a connection between 2 people who are in pursuit of each other”*

Connection – *“represents a connection between two people”*

Connection – *“I like the intimate connection the man and woman are sharing with their close embrace”*

Love – *“To me the woman seems happy to be embraced with the man, Its more about love than it is about sexual appeal and nudity”*

Intimacy – *“There is nothing suggestive but a close intimacy between two people,”*

Intimacy – *“Close interactions are being showcased but not overly intimate”*

Romantic Touch - *“It does start to show signs of the female being somewhat attracted to the male after he used the product, which showcases a romantic touch but not nudity or sexual appeal for me”*

Exposed – *“Both the man and woman have exposed clothing on and they are touching each other”*

Revealing – *“I still would prefer if they were more clothed but the advertisement does not offend me at all”*

Offensive – *“Too much nudity, such as maybe level 3 and 4 is deemed as offensive to me”*

Embrace – *“The advertisements where there was no nudity and the models were close to each other in a warm embrace evoked my senses of creating connections”*

Subtle – *“It is subtle in my opinion you can see the side view of the woman’s chest but that nowadays is something I would expect”*

Sexual – *“I wouldn’t really bother to look at image 10, Main focus here is the sexual aspect rather than the product”*

Sexual – *“With some sexual tension”*

Buying Behaviour

Subtle – *“To me it is indirect subtle sexual nuances and therefore I wouldn’t mind buying the product, it doesn’t have a negative aspect so I would consider buying it”*

Interesting – *“I think the more interesting the advertisement, the more I would be influenced to buy the product, it is not all about sexual appeal at the end of the day”*

Dull - *“The sixth one looks a bit dull and isn’t aesthetic so I personally wouldn’t be influenced to buy this product”*

Ok – *“I would be ok with buying this product in this advertisement”*

Lingering – *“Personally I would not buy this product as I do not like to see the way the woman is lingering close to the man in the image”*

Unnecessary - *“To sell the product or to make it look expensive and push a lot of nudity is involved which should not be the case as it takes away from the product”*

Entice – *“It does entice me to buying the product”*

Obscenity – *“I feel quite offended to see full display of nudity represented in a brand and personally I would never buy a product that promotes obscenity and full nudity in advertisements”*

No Nudity - *“Where there is no nudity and the models are close to each other in a warm embrace evoked my senses of creating connections and therefore it would influence me to buy such products or something similar”*

Physical Contact

Intimate – *“The man and the woman in the picture are being quite intimate but in a way that doesn’t offend me like the previous picture somewhat did as they are not physically touching on another”*

Close – *“I think this is a product I wouldn’t buy as I don’t like the way the models are extremely close”*

Intense – *“Gives a feeling of warmth unlike image 5, which incorporated physical touch, which seems more intensified”*

Not Work – *“Image 5 has some aspect of touch that may be fine for others but does not work for me.”*

Less – *“I prefer the ad with less physical touch as I do not like to see physical touch being represented in advertisements”*

Objectified – *“I do not think we should be viewed as sexual objects to men”*

Basic – *“Is more appealing as it contains a very basic form of physical touch which in my opinion symbolises love and shows somewhat of a level of intimacy”*

Exposed – *“both genders are exposed, although there is not physical touch them being exposed puts me off”*

Sexual – *“I wouldn’t really bother to look at image 10, Main focus here is the sexual aspect rather than the product”*

Tension – *“The intimacy of the couple suggests more tension than image 8”*

Objectified – *“As it seems objectifying and it influences me to feel disinterested in the product”*

9.6.2. Christian Participants

Religion

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Level of Nudity

Successful - *“It can be really successful! When done right and if it fits with the organisation/brand I do not have anything against it”*

Classy - *“I do not have anything against nudity or sexual appeal if it’s done right/ used in a classy way”*

Classy - *“I feel it is more classy”*

Tension - *“some slight sexual tension used in the ad, but nothing serious in my opinion”*

Subtle - *“Still rather subtle”*

Subtle - *“I don’t think that there is too much sexual appeal, even though they were swimwear”*

Romantic - *“It looks a bit more romantic”*

Romantic - *“Overall, I liked the more romantic feeling advertisements more, but I wasn’t offended by any of them”*

Offensive - *“I find it a bit offensive that the woman is fully naked while the man is fully dressed”*

Norm - *“but now since TV and especially social media has normalized partially clad, even nudity, people have become more used to seeing nakedness”*

Leaning - *“I think there is no sexual appeal in it due to the fact that they’re leaning in for a kiss, and there is no focus on their bodies”*

Bodies - *“I think there is no sexual appeal in it due to the fact that they’re leaning in for a kiss, and there is no focus on their bodies”*

Objectifying - *“This makes me believe it is part of the issue with sexualising women’s bodies”*

Excitement - *“it works especially with lingerie and perfume ads it builds up the excitement to buy the product”*

Power - *“First image shows more of a power couple and this aspect is often used within brands that do scents for men and woman”*

Classy - *“It looks very classy”*

No Problem - *“I generally don't see a problem with nudity in advertising activities”*

Objectification - *“There can be only one issue that bothers me in this regard. It is the presentation of a woman or man as an object by the company that carries out advertising activities”*

Pretty normal - *“I consider it a pretty normal perfume advertisement”*

Impressive - *“The ad in 8 impresses me more. Because in the 8th advertisement, the theme is presented to customers in a more impressive way”*

Clever - *“I found the 10th ad more effective. Because the element of nudity was used in this advertisement with a different and clever perspective”*

Outdated - *“It is outdated in my opinion and needs to change as it is not a great image to have on display in front of a younger generation of children”*

On Theme - *“I just think it's important that the company using the high level sexually-based ads match the theme”*

On Theme - *“It is a product related to the summer, the people in the advertisement wear clothes related to the season. This is why nudity in this ad gets a 0 on the nudity scale”*

Buying Behaviour

Positive - *“Such advertisement would never have a negative effect on my purchase of the brand's product, if anything it would be the opposite”*

Narrow Minded – *“I consider it a very narrow-minded point of view to say that advertisements have become inappropriate due to advertisements containing sexuality and nudity”*

Subtle - *“As it is subtle, it does not appeal or turn me away from the advertising”*

Normalized - *“Since sexual nuance has been so normalized nowadays, the level of it in this image is not enough to either be appealing or to turn me away”*

Positive - *“Such an advertisement would never have a negative effect on my purchase of the brand's product”*

Recognition - *“It is quite remarkable that an actress I like is featured in this product advertisement. Such advertisements certainly affect my purchasing behaviour regarding the product”*

Product - *“Since the advertisements in question are perfume advertisements, the scent of the perfume will have an impact on my purchasing tendency rather than just the advertisement”*

Physical Contact

Innocent - *“There is nothing to suggest sexual intimacy between the two people in the image. It seems innocent enough and not yet on the sexual side”*

Classy – *“I prefer image 1. I feel it is more classy. Moreover, I don't really like that in image 2 the woman is standing so far away from the man”*

Appealing - *“The physical touching aspect slightly alters the appealness”*

Neutral - *“Both images are similar and with no sexual appeal, regardless. Of the touching or not”*

Sexual - *“It is more sexual than the other ad but more appealing and not offensive”*

Romantic - *“That's romantic. I feel like these perfumes would smell really fresh or something. It's romantic and not offensive”*

Fancy - *“They're both giving me relaxing, fancy and sexy vacation vibes”*

Sexy - *“Image 9 appeals to me more with the physical touch appealing to me, because it does look sexy”*

Appeal - *“The first ad, the one with physical contact, appeals to me more”*

Compliance - *“The third ad provides more ban compliance. As I said before, odor is a very sensitive issue between partners”*

Normal - *“In the ads, physical attraction between partners, which is quite normal, is taken as the theme”*

Effective - *“the advertisement with physical contact is much more effective for me”*

Narrow Minded - *“I consider it a very narrow-minded point of view to say that advertisements have become inappropriate due to advertisements containing sexuality and nudity”*

Pawning – *“The girl is not just pawning after the man, she is treated more equally as they are both embraced in the hug”*

9.7. Selective Coding

9.7.1. Muslim Participants

Themes	Codes
Religion	Follow, Offensive, Revealing, Rules, Disagree, Uncomfortable, Upbringing, Culture.
Level of Nudity	Bond, Connection, Love, Intimacy, Quite Intimate, Exposed, Revealing, Offensive, Embrace, Subtle, Slight Tension, Romantic Touch, Toned Down Tension.
Buying Behaviour	Subtle, Interesting, Dull, Ok, Lingering, Unnecessary, Entice, Obscenity, No Nudity.
Physical Contact	Intimate, Close, Intensified, Less, Not Work, Objectified, Basic, Exposed, Sexual, Tension creating, Objectified, Quite Intimate.

9.7.2. *Christian Participants*

Themes	Codes
Religion	-
Level of Nudity	Successful, Classy, Tension, Subtle, Romantic, Offensive, Norm, Nakedness, Leaning, Bodies, Objectification, Excitement, Power, Innocent, Classy, No Problem, Objectification, Pretty normal, Impressive, Clever, Outdated
Buying Behaviour	Positive, Narrow Minded, Subtle, Normalized, Positive, Recognition, Product Entice.
Physical Contact	Innocent, Classy, Appealing, Neutral, Sexual, Romantic, Fancy, Sexy, Appeal, Compliance, Normal, Effective, Narrow Minded, Pawning, Power Couple, Attractive.