

## Offensive advertising: A perspective on Muslim consumers

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### Keywords

Islamic Marketing, Islamic Business ethics, Religiosity, Offensive advertising, Controversial advertising, Consumer response

### Abstract

*The use of offensive advertising is a growing trend adopted by some advertising agencies, with the attempt to "cut through the clutter", to gain consumers' attention. However, marketers fail to consider the effect of offensive advertising on consumers' attitudes in other cultures, such as the Islamic culture. This research attempts to integrate the advertising practices with the Islamic business ethics, through discussing the applications of offensive advertising in the light of Qur'an and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). A questionnaire was distributed using non-probability sampling technique, among 384 post graduate students in great Cairo. Results showed that religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim consumer response toward offensive advertising.*

### Introduction

Consumers believe that they are exposed to more and more advertising, frequently to the point of feeling overwhelmed, and as a result they choose to ignore advertising as much as they can. Advertising is seen as an inevitable part of daily life (Hasan, 2020). As a result, some businesses employ excessive advertising to attract consumers' attention (Noor et al., 2022). Advertisers, on the other hand, ought to pay closer attention to cultural values, which are closely tied to social and religious conventions. When acting in a way that contradicts such principles will be seen as disrespectful, this could result in customer perceptions of the brand and the product being negatively impacted (Hasan, 2020). As a result, marketers shouldn't undervalue the role of religion since it is a fundamental component of culture and has a profound impact on every aspect of society (Abbas et al., 2020).

The use of some appeals (materialistic, sexual, etc.) has been prohibited by religion, which also always assists in determining what is acceptable and appropriate, whereas some aspects of a marketing message may be considered offensive or controversial because they go against some people's religious views (Hasan, 2020). Additionally, there is discussion surrounding controversial advertising because it is ineffective at capturing consumers' attention or modifying their perceptions of the advertised products (Noor et al., 2022). Accordingly, offensive advertising could affect the sales of the advertised product negatively (Rice & Al-Mossawi, 2002).

As for Muslims, all actions are integrated together, either pleasing or displeasing Allah (Ashraf, 2019), and therefore Muslims are very careful about what, when, how, where, how much and from whom to consume (Noor et al., 2022). Thus, it is important to understand that execution styles or products that are considered to be prohibited (*Haram*) will be controversial when promoted in a Muslim society (Cyril et al., 2010). Consequently, using offensive advertising in Muslim countries is very controversial and risky, as some studies revealed that offensive advertising have negative effect which is called "negative-offensive" where the audience is offended to the extent that the outcome is anything that is far away from being positive (Abbas et al., 2020). Thus, understanding the attitude of Muslims towards offensive advertising can be used to help advertising agencies develop a better understanding of which products and advertising manners are perceived to be offensive (Hasan, 2020).

## Literature Review

### *Offensive Advertising*

When a product violates the social and religious framework of a society or it disturbs the fundamental teaching of a religion will be considered as offensive product (Noor et al., 2022). An advertising being offensive depends on either the nature of the product or the manner in which the product is advertised even if the product is generally acceptable (Barnes & Doston, 1990). Hence, offensive advertising can be classified into: *First*, advertising that is offensive due to the nature of the product or service being advertised known as 'offensive advertising product' or 'offensive matter'. *Second*, advertising that is offensive due to the creative execution known as 'offensive advertising execution' or 'offensive manner' (Wilson & West, 1981; Barnes & Doston, 1990; Noor et al., 2022).

Moreover, Noor et al., (2022) classified the offensive advertising product (matter) into four main groups: sex related products, social/political groups, addictive products and health care products. In addition, previous studies showed that professionals consider advertising of feminine hygiene products in general were in "poor taste", "irritating" and "most hated" (Alter, 1982; Barnes & Dotson, 1990; Hume, 1988). Nevertheless, several criticisms of offensive advertising included issues of 'general taste' rather than the nature of the product being advertised, as most probably what makes an advertising offensive, not the offensive product, but the offensive execution, because people believe that some products are offensive but necessary, whereas consumers understand that advertising of some products, as feminine hygiene products, cannot be made inoffensive and cannot be avoided (Noor et al., 2022). On the other hand, the perception of offensive execution is different, since it is an optional creative strategy chosen by the advertiser to execute and it could be avoided (Prendergast, et al, 2008). This paper follows Barnes & Doston (1990) classification of offensive advertising; 'offensive advertising product' and 'offensive advertising execution'.

### *The Role of Islamic Religion in Shaping Marketing Efforts and Consumer Response*

Islam goes beyond being a religion; it regulates the ways of society and issues related with family, dress, cleanliness and ethics (Ashraf, 2019). Since, Muslims are required to live and think the way Allah has stated and derive their life system from the teaching of *Qur'an* (Book revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad in the Arabian seventh century) and from the *Sunnah* (The recorded saying and behavior of Prophet Muhammad) (Noor et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the Islamic law (Shari'ah) is derived from the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* to run business relationship between buyers and sellers. Whereas activities are categorized either as lawful (*Halal*), or prohibited (*Haram*), as decreed by God (Shyan et al., 2004).

According to *Qur'an*, the products that are considered to be *Haram* will be controversial when promoted in a Muslim society (Ashraf, 2019). On the other side, there are some products, which cannot be explicitly categorized as *Haram* in Islam, either because the religion is silent regarding the issue or the product is invented lately and require deductive interpretation from religious scholars to declare whether the product is *Halal* or *Haram*, and in such cases individual Muslims see the acceptance of religious judgment as subjective (Noor et al., 2022).

Islam develops a particular way of life for people in many areas of their lives, both personally and professionally, and this results in the creation of a certain culture (Ashraf, 2019). People in Islamic countries have different management styles, communication values and decision-making process, which evoke challenges in doing business in such countries (Zakaria & Abdul-Talib, 2010). For instance, Waller & Fam (2002) stated that, Islamic followers consider the advertising of health & care products, gender/sex related products and social/political groups are the most offensive advertising compared with other three religions; Buddhism, Christianity and Non-religious believers (Noor et al., 2022).

In addition, Religiosity is one of the tools used to measure religion (Abou Youssef, 2011), whereby every individual will tend to have a certain degree of it. Religiosity includes several elements of religion: knowledge, experience, practice, belief and the effect of those elements on daily activities (O'Connell, 1975). Most of the believers and worshippers have doubts, thus they differ in their religious degrees and commitments, and this would clarify why in the same religious group there might be variances in religiosity measures (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997). Moreover, Vitell & Paolillo (2003) stated that individuals with

high religiosity level follow virtue, integrity and morality because they fear God's punishment. For instance, some studies showed that the more the level of religiosity a Muslim hold, the more he/she disapproves sexual advertising (Shyan et al., 2004).

Thus, Marketers have to take in consideration the sensitivities of Islamic values and consumer religiosity levels, while choosing the nature and culture of their advertising campaign (Ashraf, 2019). Otherwise, they may lose sale or might lose the company's image.

### ***The Marketing Mix of Global Business from Islamic Perspectives***

**First, (Product: Production process)**, according to Saeed et al., (2001) and Noor et al., (2022), The quality of the production process is one of the core concepts in Islamic ethics, the Qur'an affirms that fulfillment of safe and high-quality ideals is one side of actualizing safe and trustworthy products and services for the customers (Ashraf, 2019). Moreover, Islamic perspective enhances moral and supreme elements within the production decision making process, and is guided by lawfulness, purity, existence, deliverability and particular determination rather than decisions based on the profit maximization (Abbas et al., 2020).

**Second, (Pricing of the product)**, several practices have been viewed as unethical and are banned in Islam such as: Islam prohibits getting something too easily without hard labor or getting a profit without exerting any effort (Noor et al., 2022). In addition, changing the price should be a result of changing the quality and/or the quantity of the product, also Islam prohibits cheating the easy-going customer for unlawful gain (Taymiya, 1983; Abbas et al., 2020). Besides, monopoly is forbidden in Islam, as well as practicing price discrimination between the bargainers and non-bargainers by selling the same product to them for different prices is prohibited (Ahmad, 1995). However, Islam encourages healthy competition and self-operating mechanism of price adjustments (Ashraf, 2019).

**Third, (Promotion of the product)**, it is unethical for the marketers to over praise their products or pretend that their products possess qualities which they do not have (Al-Ukhuwwa, 1938). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) condemned all manipulative promotional behavior stating that one who cheats is not one of us (Abbas et al., 2020). Moreover, according to Islam, promotional techniques must not use sexual appeal/connotations, emotional appeal; fear appeal, false evidence, or encourages extravagance (Ashraf, 2019). Islamic ethics strictly prohibit stereotyping of women in advertising, excessive use of fantasy, the use of suggestive language and behavior, and the use of women as objects to tempt and attract customers (Noor et al., 2022).

**Fourth, (Place: distribution channels)**, According to Islamic principles, distribution channels are not supposed to create any burden to the final customer, either in terms of higher prices or in delays (Abbas et al., 2020). Since the main aim of the distribution channels is to create value and move up the standard of living by providing ethically satisfactory services (Ashraf, 2019). Consequently, Islamic financial institutions will adhere to the following standards: avoiding coercion in the marketing channel; not altering a product's availability for the purpose of exploitation; and not excessively influencing a re-seller's decision regarding how to handle a product (Hassan et al., 2018).

**Fifth, (People)**, Information on marketing that is truthful and uninfluenced by force shouldn't be hidden to society at large (Ashraf, 2019). The privilege of a customer to obtain such information is his right, and it reflects both the standing that Islam accords him and the deeply rooted rights of his wealth, which he uses to pay for goods and services (Hassan et al., 2018). According to Islamic principles, sexual appeal, emotional appeal, fear appeal, and subliminal advertising all contain elements of coercion that render them unethical as a form of marketing (Noor et al., 2022). Coercion, or 'ikrah' (Al-Qur'an 23:7), is the act of compelling someone to act without their consent. Therefore, a morally competent marketing mix requires that customers' freedom of choice be safeguarded from all forms of pressure (Ashraf, 2019).

## **Methodology**

### ***Sampling Technique and Sample Unit***

The current study followed the positivist paradigm that is associated with the quantitative method, which seeks the facts and causes of social phenomena, using causal research method. Moreover, the current research was applied on the Egyptian Muslim consumers in great Cairo, targeting both males and females.

Also, the study was applied on postgraduate students in both public and private universities. The researcher used *non-probability sampling* technique, i.e. convenience and judgmental techniques to select the needed samples. As probability sampling technique was difficult to be used due to several reasons: *First*, this topic is very sensitive as it deals with Islamic religiosity degrees and level of respondents' religious commitment. *Second*, the scale used is tailored only for Muslims, so it is very complicated to have a leading question about religion at the beginning of the survey, as this is not culturally accepted in Egypt. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed only on the intentionally selected Muslim respondents. *Third*, a Non-probability sampling technique was used in similar studies (Bonne et al., 2007, 2008; Gibbs & Ilkan, 2008; Rehman & Shabbir, 2010).

In order to obtain the relevant information, the questionnaires were distributed among 384 post graduate students in Ain shams university, Cairo university, American university in Cairo (AUC), German university in Cairo (GUC), and Arab academy for science and technology and maritime transport. Respondents answered the questionnaire after they watched two types of offensive advertising. The first type was an advertising for women's pads for brand (Always™), which represented the "Feminine hygiene products" that is categorized as 'offensive matter'. Second type was an advertising for a malt drink for brand (Birell™), which represented the "Sexual appeal" used in advertising that is categorized as 'offensive manner'. Whereas Birell™ used sexual connotations in their advertising campaign, since the campaign showed that Birell™ malt drink will enhance men's sexual abilities.

### **Research Variables and Scales**

This study has only one independent variable which is 'Religiosity' and two dependent variables which are 'Attitude toward the advertising' and 'Purchase intention'. Although Religiosity will be measured by 'Islamic behavior religiosity scale' (Abou Youssef, 2011), this scale is concentrated on Muslim Sunni and not on other Islamic groups as *Sunnis* are dominant in Egypt. Besides, *Sunnis* are 85% worldwide whereas the *Shi'a* is 15% (Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). The scale included thirty-three statements, where respondents had to indicate their level of religiosity on a five-point likert scale, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree.

On the other hand, attitude toward advertising scale is adopted from Mittal & Lassar (2000) that was used by Zimmerman & Dahlberg (2008, p.74). The scale included ten attitudinal statements, whereas, respondents had to answer twice the same questions, one for (attitude toward offensive advertising products) and another time for (attitude toward offensive advertising execution), where respondents had to indicate their level of offence on a five-point likert scale.

Finally, the scale of purchase intention is adopted from Baker & Churchill (1977), which consisted of four statements, where respondents had to indicate their level of intention to buy the product on a five-point likert scale, whereas, respondents had to answer twice the same questions, one for (purchase intention toward offensive advertising products) and another time for (purchase intention toward offensive advertising execution).

### **Data analysis and results**

#### **Analysis of the Islamic Behavioral Religiosity Degree:**

The Islamic behavioral religiosity degree consisted of three factors: 1<sup>st</sup>, Islamic Doctrinal; 2<sup>nd</sup>, Intrinsic Religiosity; and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Extrinsic Religiosity. The percentage of each factor is as follows (36.65, 31.32, and 32.16) respectively. These percentages represent the weights in the equation used in the scale to measure Islamic behavioral religiosity degree; it is clear from the results that Islamic Doctrinal has the highest weight. Concerning the religiosity level, respondents were divided into two Clusters according to their religiosity degree. The first cluster has a "High" religiosity degree with mean 3.92 and standard deviation 0.120, which represents 88.6% of the respondents. While the second cluster has a "Low" religiosity degree with mean 1.90 and standard deviation 0.071, which represents 11.4% of the respondents.

**Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables:**

Concerning the demographic variable (Gender) distribution was as follows; males represent 69.4%, while females represent 30.6% of the whole data samples. Whereas, Table (1) results showed mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation (C.V.) for the study variables.

Table (1): (Mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation (C.V.) for the study variables)

Variables	Mean		Std. Dev.	C.V.
	Statistic	Std. Error		
Islamic Doctrinal	3.72	0.033	0.713	19.16
Intrinsic Religiosity	3.67	0.032	0.676	18.41
Extrinsic Religiosity	3.64	0.030	0.639	17.54
<b>Islamic Religiosity (Total scale)</b>	3.68	0.030	0.647	17.61
Attitude towards the Advertising "product"	2.15	0.032	0.694	32.26
Attitude towards the Advertising "execution"	2.13	0.032	0.678	31.99
Purchase Intention "product"	2.14	0.035	0.748	35.03
Purchase Intention "execution"	2.01	0.035	0.741	36.81

**Developing of Hypotheses**

Schiffman & Kanuk (1994) stated that consumer behavior gets influenced by family values or beliefs as well as the religious system. While Hirschman (1982) stated that religion was classified as a multiple subculture that shaped a part of environmental influence on buying decision, added that consumption process is affected by religion and its affiliation.

Religion influence how we live and experience life, as a result affects our aims, motives and satisfaction by influencing how a consumer lives and practices in life (Ellison & Cole, 1982). According to Shyan et al. (2004), religion plays a dominant role in consumer world influencing consumption behavior. Religion shapes attitudes and attitudes in turn are reflected in consumer behavior, religion affects the behavior of individuals, the group's behavior and the structure of any society.

It is not all about religion that dominates human attitude towards life, but it is the degree of religious affiliation (Religiosity) that has an influence on individual's attitude and subsequent behavior, researchers showed that degree of religiosity is a better indicator than religion when it comes to individual's consumption behavior (Cyril et al., 2010).

Moreover, religious beliefs may also play a major role in influencing Muslims attitude toward offensive ads, Muslims tend to be more offended by advertising with offensive manner (Waller et al., 2005), and offensive appeals in advertising have been found to have a negative impact on purchase intention (Ford et al., 1997; Cyril et al., 2010). Religion always helps to find out what is proper and fitting, also it has prohibited the use of certain appeals (Materialistic, sexual, etc.). Some elements of an advertising message might be seen as being against some people's religious belief, categorized as offensive or controversial, taking in consideration that the controversial advertising will not be effective in capturing the attention of people or changing their attitude toward the advertising product (Michell & Al-Mossawi, 1995), and may even negatively affect the sales of the Advertised product (Rice and Al-Mossawi, 2002). Consequently, H1 and H2 were hypothesized as follows:

**H1:** Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim attitude toward the TV commercial using offensive advertising.

**H1a:** Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim attitude toward the TV commercial using offensive advertising (product)

**H1b:** Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim attitude toward the TV commercial using offensive advertising (execution)

**H2:** Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim purchase intention toward the product using offensive advertising.

**H2a:** Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim purchase intention toward the product using offensive advertising (product)

**H2b:** Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim purchase intention toward the product using offensive advertising (execution)

### Testing of Hypotheses

Table (2) (regression model - 1) showed the output of regression analysis. Where results showed that the Religiosity significantly affected attitude towards the advertising "product" as a dependent ( $F = 2230.409$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). While the correlation coefficient between the two variables is strong and negative ( $r = -0.911$ ) and the coefficient of determination is (Adjusted R Square = 0.830). This means that 83% of the change in the Muslim attitude toward the TV commercial using offensive advertising product can be explained by the change in Religiosity.

Table (2): (Regression model -1)

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	F	Sig.
-0.911	0.831	0.830		0.286	1.423	2230.409	0.000

Table (3) showed the output of regression model -1 coefficients. The coefficient of regression equals -0.977, (Standardized Coefficient = -0.911), with significant t value ( $p < 0.05$ ). This supports that Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim attitude toward the TV commercial using offensive advertising product.

Table (3): (Regression model -1 coefficients)

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.743	0.077		74.367	0.000
Religiosity	-0.977	0.021	-0.911	-47.227	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards the Advertising "product"

Accordingly, **H1a could be accepted**

Table (4) (regression model - 2) showed the output of regression analysis. Where the results show that the Religiosity significantly affected Attitude towards the advertising "execution" as a dependent ( $F = 3524.076$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). While the Correlation coefficient between the two variables is strong and negative ( $r = -0.941$ ) and the coefficient of determination is (Adjusted R Square = 0.885). This means that 88.5% of the change in the Muslim attitude toward the TV commercial using offensive advertising execution can be explained by the change in Religiosity.

Table (4): (Regression model -2)

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	F	Sig.
-0.941	0.886	0.885		0.229	1.831	3524.076	0.000

Table (5) showed the output of regression model -2 coefficients. The coefficient of regression equals -0.985, (Standardized Coefficient = -0.941), with significant t value ( $p < 0.05$ ). This supports that Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim attitude toward the TV commercial using offensive advertising execution.

Table (5): (Regression model -2 coefficients)

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.740	0.062		92.660	0.000
Religiosity	- 0.985	0.017	- 0.941	-59.364	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards the Advertising "execution"

Accordingly, **H1b could be accepted**

Comparing the statistical results of table (2) with Standardized Coefficient = (- 0.911) and table (4) with Standardized Coefficient = (- 0.941), it could be concluded that Muslim consumers could be more offended toward offensive advertising execution than offensive advertising product.

Table (6) showed the (correlation matrix -1) for the three variables Religiosity, Attitude towards the advertising "product", and Attitude towards the advertising "execution".

Table (6): (Correlation matrix -1)

Variable	Religiosity	Attitude towards the Advertising "product"	Attitude towards the Advertising "execution"
Religiosity	1		
Attitude towards the offensive Advertising "product"	- 0.911**	1	
Attitude towards the offensive Advertising "execution"	- 0.941**	0.924**	1

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

The matrix showed: first, the correlation between "Religiosity" and "Attitude towards the advertising "product"" is strong and negative ( $r = - 0.911$ ). Second, the correlation between "Religiosity" and "Attitude towards the advertising "execution"" is strong and negative ( $r = - 0.941$ ). Third, the correlation between "Attitude towards the advertising "product"" and "Attitude towards the advertising "execution"" is strong and positive ( $r = 0.924$ ).

This shows a strong inverse relation between "Religiosity" and the two variables measuring the attitude towards the advertising. This indicates that the greater the religiosity level the lower the attitude toward offensive advertising.

Accordingly, **H1 could be accepted**

Table (7) (regression model - 3) showed the output of regression analysis where the results show that the Religiosity significantly affected Muslim purchase intention toward the TV commercial using offensive advertising product as a dependent ( $F = 1010.783$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). While the Correlation coefficient between the two variables is strong and negative ( $r = - 0.830$ ) and the coefficient of determination is (Adjusted R Square = 0.689). This means that about 69% of the change in the Muslim purchase intention toward the product can be explained by the change in Religiosity.

Table (7): (Regression model -3)

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	F	Sig.
- 0.830	0.690	0.689		0.417	1.559	1010.783	0.000

Table (8) showed the output of regression model -3 coefficients. The coefficient of regression equals - 0.959, (Standardized Coefficient = - 0.830), with significant t value ( $p < 0.05$ ). This supports that Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim purchase intention toward the product.

Table (8): (Regression model -3 coefficients)

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.663	0.113		50.263	.000
Religiosity	-0.959	0.030	-.830	-31.793	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention "product"

This means that **H2a could be accepted**

Table (9) (regression model - 4) showed the output of regression analysis where the results show that the Religiosity significantly affected Muslim purchase intention toward the product as a dependent ( $F = 1496.977$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). While the Correlation coefficient between the two variables is strong and negative ( $r = -0.876$ ) and the coefficient of determination is (Adjusted R Square = 0.766). This means that 76.6% of the change in the Muslim purchase intention toward the execution can be explained by the change in Religiosity.

Table (9): (Regression model -4)

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	F	Sig.
-0.876	0.767	0.766		0.358	1.906	1496.977	0.000

Table (10) showed the output of regression model -4 coefficients. The coefficient of regression equals -1.003, (Standardized Coefficient = -0.876), with significant t value ( $p < 0.05$ ). This supports that Religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim purchase intention toward the execution.

Table (10): (Regression model -4 coefficients)

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.701	0.097		58.915	0.000
Religiosity	-1.003	0.026	-0.876	-38.691	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention "execution"

This means that **H2b could be accepted**

Comparing the statistical results of H2a and H2b, represented in table (7) with standardized Coefficient = (-0.830) and table (9) with standardized Coefficient = (-0.876), it could be concluded that Muslim consumer will be less intention to buy a product using offensive advertising execution than offensive advertising product.

Table (11) showed the (correlation matrix -2) for the three variables religiosity, purchase Intention "product" and purchase intention "execution". From the matrix: First, the correlation between "Religiosity" and Purchase Intention "product" is strong and negative ( $r = -0.830$ ). Second, the correlation between "Religiosity" and Purchase Intention "execution" is strong and negative ( $r = -0.876$ ). Third, the correlation between "Purchase intention "product" and "Attitude towards the purchase intention "execution" is strong and positive ( $r = 0.752$ ). This means that there is a strong inverse relation between "Religiosity" and the two variables measuring the purchase intention.



Table (11): (Correlation matrix -2)

Variable	Religiosity Degree	Purchase Intention "product"	Purchase Intention "execution"
Religiosity	1		
Purchase Intention "product"	- 0.830**	1	
Purchase Intention "execution"	- 0.876**	0.752**	1

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

Accordingly, **H2 could be accepted**

Comparing the correlation matrix of Religiosity with Muslim attitude and purchase intention, presented in table (6) and table (11), it could be concluded that religiosity has more effect on Muslim consumer attitude toward offensive advertising than Muslim consumer purchase intention toward offensive advertising.

### Study Results

The results showed that the current research hypotheses H1 and H2 with their sub hypotheses could be accepted. This means that religiosity has a significant effect on Muslim consumer response. Therefore, marketers should not neglect the role of religiosity when studying factors affecting consumer attitude and behavior toward offensive advertising.

### Recommendations

#### Recommendations for Marketers

The study suggested several recommendations for Egyptian marketers. *First*, advertisers should pay more attention to cultural values; specifically, the social and religious values, as going against those values will be very offensive and may lead to a negative perception toward the brand (Wazir & Ezaz, 2012). *Second*, understanding that offensive advertising is culturally unacceptable in Egypt, thus using offensive ads could affect consumer attitude and purchase intention negatively. *Third*, practitioners should differentiate between the two types of offensive advertising (offensive advertising product and offensive advertising execution) and to have a clear understanding for their different effects on consumer attitude. *Fourth*, marketers should understand that Muslim consumers are more offended toward offensive advertising execution than offensive advertising product. Thus, practitioners are not obligated to use offensive advertising execution; they could execute the advertisements in other creative manners to attract consumers' attention rather than using offensive one. *Fifth*, advertising of feminine hygiene products or executing ads using sexual connotations both are perceived to be offensive in Egypt, and consumers are sensitive toward those two types of ads. *Sixth*, Marketers have to avoid using sexual content and nudity, portrayal of body image, gender stereotypes, and dancing models in their campaigns when advertising to a Muslim community, and specifically in Muslims religious occasions, i.e. Ramadan, as a sort of respecting their spiritual times. *Seventh*, offensive advertising products like feminine hygiene products, male/female undergarments, condoms, birth control and sex related products in general are perceived to be offensive and sensitive products by nature, thus, it is better for marketers to avoid using broadcast media, as TV or radio, when marketing for those types of products, in order to minimize the feel of audience embarrassment while watching or hearing the ads. Instead, it could be substituted by using printed ads, banners and social media.

*To sum up*, marketers should reevaluate their techniques used in advertising and adapt to trends ethically and culturally accepted that are preferred by Muslim customers.

### Recommendations for Future Research

The study proposed numerous recommendations for future research. *First*, religiosity degree should be taken in consideration while studying factors affecting consumer behavior. *Second*, Islamic Behavioral religiosity scale (Abou Youssef, 2011) is recommended to be used while studying religiosity degree from Muslim perspective, as this scale link religiosity with consumer behavior and attitude. *Third*, other religious groups in Egypt could be added to the study as Christians, to measure their attitude toward offensive advertising as well. *Fourth*, continue studying on this filed, as there is a gap in the literature of offensive advertising and the role of religiosity degree in eastern countries. *Fifth*, the study could be applied on other Eastern countries other than Egypt, to determine whether there will be any difference in consumers' attitudes among different conservative cultures. *Finally*, applying the same study on any other Media rather than TV commercials as the attitude and behavior of the respondents may be different for printed advertisements compared to studies applied on TV commercials (Wazir & Ezaz, 2012).

### Conclusion

The main interest of the current study is giving a clear understanding of the "Islamic marketing" concept and determining the role of religiosity degree on consumer attitude toward using offensive advertising. It was clear from the previous studies that religion is an integral part of culture values, and going against those values will be very offensive, which may lead to negative consequences (Wazir & Ezaz, 2012). Moreover, the current study results revealed that using offensive advertising to cut through the clutter to attract consumers' attention is rejected from Egyptian Muslim perspective and could affect their attitude and purchase intention negatively. Consequently, marketers should reevaluate their techniques used in advertising and adapt to several trends ethically and culturally accepted and preferred by Muslim consumers.

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