

The Influence of Subcultural Beliefs on Attitudes towards Socially-Sensitive Advertising across Four Provinces of Pakistan

¹Shumaila Ammar, ²Muhammad Majid Khan, ³Mansoor Ahmad, ⁴Shandana Zafar

¹MS Scholar, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST)

²Assistant Professor, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad

³Assistant Professor COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad

⁴Lecturer, Burnhall College for Girls
(PAKISTAN)

Received: December 8 2013

Accepted: February 2 2014

ABSTRACT

The entry of foreign companies into Pakistan and influx of advertisements inspired by global formats has created an opportunity of exposure to potentially offensive advertising. In the culturally diverse Pakistan, certain regions could be offended by the execution of advertisements for certain products. The focus of this study is to examine differences in attitudes towards socially-sensitive advertising based on differences in four provincial subcultures of Pakistan and the resulting brand image that develops. The research was survey based, with 573 respondents exposed to advertisements for socially-sensitive products in today's media and subsequently, asked for their perceptions of the advertisements. Questions concerning reasons for offense and likelihood of rejecting the brand with offensive advertising were also included. The results were analyzed through descriptive statistics, ANOVA, Factor Analysis and Binary Logistic Regression, yielding significant differences in attitudes towards the advertisements across the subcultural groups. Negative perceptions also indicated likelihood to reject the brand.

These analyses are of interest to advertising managers who face the challenging task of promoting their products in the growing market of Pakistan.

KEYWORDS – socially-sensitive advertising, Pakistan, culture, attitudes

1. INTRODUCTION

With the world becoming a global marketplace over the past decade, the focus of research has been on understanding markets across the continents. Pakistan itself lies in Indian Subcontinent marketplace, however, the Pakistani market is very different from India or Bangladesh. That said, even if studies were conducted to examine Pakistan as a market in its entirety, Pakistan itself is a melting pot of subcultures across its four provinces. To understand consumers across Pakistan, it is necessary to study them as individual populations based on their subcultures for effective advertising. With more and more global brands being advertised frequently through various media, various influences are observed in the efforts of multinational corporations to homogenize advertising efforts across different countries in the same region and specifically within the country.

The entry of foreign companies into Pakistan and influx of advertisements inspired by global formats has created an opportunity of exposure to potentially offensive advertising. In a culturally diverse country such as Pakistan, certain regions may be offended by advertisements for certain products such as feminine hygiene products, contraception or addictive products and also through the execution of such advertisements. [1] Researchers Waller and Fam have conducted numerous studies around the globe to examine level of offensiveness to various controversial advertisements, in countries such as Australia, China, Malaysia etc. and have stressed the need to analyze various socially-sensitive products and their advertisements across different cultures around the world. [2] [1] [3].

Although Pakistan's primary religion Islam has been used a variable for examining level of offence to controversial advertisements, the impact of provincial sub-cultures on attitudes towards socially-sensitive advertisements has not yet been addressed. [4] This is further supported by the bias Frazer, Sheehan and Patti (2002) have noticed the focus of research to be on culturally dissimilar countries or cross-national, rather than cross-cultural. They called for further examination of culturally close countries to demonstrate that even small differences in cultures can result in differences in responses to advertising [5] (Frazer, Sheehan, & Patti, 2002). In this regard, a study conducted by Dahl (2004) to study advertising appeals in culturally close countries of Germany, Holland and Britain revealed that German, Dutch and British consumers had negative perceptions towards advertising from other countries and a strong preference for culturally congruent advertising [6] (Dahl, 2004).

*Corresponding Author: Muhammad Majid Khan, Assistant Professor, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad, (PAKISTAN)

For this research, the advertisements in focus are the ones for socially-sensitive products which are frequent in various media across Pakistan today. They may be socially acceptable to other Islamic countries, to other cultures and even progressive Pakistani segments across the country. However, it is necessary to examine target audience's attitudes towards these advertisements and the resulting brand image they develop. Waller (2004) stressed the importance of this practice as he asserts that marketers and advertising agencies need to determine which segments may find controversial advertising campaigns offensive and the reasons for offence. This is even more necessary when the products themselves may be "controversial" or socially-sensitive [7] (Waller, 2004).

This paper surveys 573 Pakistanis from four different provinces to determine their perceptions towards advertisements of various socially-sensitive products and the main reasons for their resulting attitudes.

1.1 Research Questions

RQ1. How do the apparent subcultural differences that exist between the populations of the four provinces of Pakistan influence their attitudes towards socially-sensitive advertisements?

RQ2. To what extent do consumers in each province respond to the same advertisements differently?

RQ3: Are there certain advertisements that are comparatively regarded more offensive than their counterparts by the different consumer groups?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is a pre-requisite for successful advertising to understand the influence of culture and its significance in the development of attitudes towards advertising. Early research on the subject has established the reciprocal relationship between culture and advertising in the sense that culture both influences and is influenced by advertising [8] (Belk & Pollay, 1985).

Specific cultures instill certain beliefs and values in individual consumers; they respond to advertising in accordance to these cultural beliefs and norms. Consumers who are raised in a particular culture become accustomed to that culture's values, beliefs, and perception processes. Their response to advertising messages is congruent to their cultural values and accepted norms. Consequently, Zhang and Neelankavil (1997) stress the need for a valid and reliable assessment of cultural differences in order to achieve successes in advertising campaigns. Marketers need to be continuously aware of cultural differences among countries when planning their global marketing strategies [9].

2.1 An introduction of Pakistan's subcultures

While Pakistan emerges as a homogenous nation on the basis of its religion and ecology, the Pakistani people consist of predominantly five to six ethnic groups, differentiated mainly on regional and linguistic grounds [10] (Malik, 2006). All provinces of Pakistan are pluralistic; however, they possess traditional ethno-lingual identities that are distinct from one another [11] (Nobleman, 2003). Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi and Pashtu are not just regional languages; they are also provincial identities that differentiate one province's people from another and form binding ties within the people of a particular province.

With so many differences on the provincial level in terms of ethnicity, descent, language and traditions, certain researchers still argue that the people of Pakistan reside under a unified layer of national values, beliefs and sentiments that envelopes the otherwise subcultures [12] (Qadeer, 2006). On the other hand, Pakistan's society is defined by social structures and cultural norms of provincial populations. The differences in subcultures and population are also highlighted by Taus-Bolstad, in her research on Pakistan, highlighting that Pakistan's leadership faces the phenomenal challenge of unifying the country's various ethnic groups through one national identity [13] (Taus-Bolstad, 2003).

2.2 Socially-sensitive advertising

Previous research has identified products which can be labeled as "socially-sensitive", "controversial" or "offensive"; among them are products such as cigarettes, alcohol, contraceptives, feminine hygiene products, or political advertising. For example, Fam, Waller and Erdogan (2004) state that feminine hygiene products has been mentioned in several industry articles such as Alter, (1982); Hume (1988) and Rickard (1994), as having advertisements that are in "poor taste", "irritating" and "most hated" [4] (as cited in Fam, Waller & Erdogan, 2004). Similarly, in a study focusing on "sensitive products", Fahy et al. (1995) surveyed a sample of over 2,000 respondents regarding their attitudes towards the advertising on certain "sensitive" products on television. These products were grouped into three main categories: "alcoholic beverages", "products directed at children" and "health/sex-related products" [15] (Fahy, Smart, Pride, & Ferrell, 1995). When comparing for attitude differences

across variables such as sex, race, religion, income and education, they found that females, specifically above the age of 50 years, had the highest disapproval rates for such advertisements [15] (Fahy et al., 1995).

Further clarifying this category of products, Wilson and West (1981), in their research defined "unmentionables" as: "... products, services, or concepts that for reasons of delicacy, decency, morality, or even fear tend to elicit reactions of distaste, disgust, offence, or outrage when mentioned or when openly presented" [15] (as cited in Waller & Fam, 2003). Katanis (1994) also defines unmentionables as "offensive, embarrassing, harmful, socially unacceptable or controversial to significant segment of the population" [16] (as cited in De Run, Butt, Fam, & Jong, 2010).

Shao and Hill (1994a, b) studied advertising of sensitive products from the advertising agencies' perspective on a global scale [4] (as cited in Waller, Fam & Erdogan, 2004). Such products had a controversy stigma attached with it for the advertising agency that handled the account. The products discussed in the studies were cigarettes, alcohol, condoms, feminine hygiene products, female and male undergarments, sexual diseases (e.g. STDs), and pharmaceutical goods.

An important break-through in the research of controversial advertising, Barnes and Dotson (1990) dissected the concept of offensive advertising into two dimensions: offensive products and offensive execution [17] (as cited in Taute, Lukosius, & Stratemeyer, 2008). Offensive products included in their list included condoms, female hygiene products, female and male undergarments. To define offensive execution, Rehman and Brooks characterize controversial advertisements as those which might be embarrassing or offensive to the audience [15] (as cited in (Waller & Fam, 2003)). These dimensions were further expanded by Waller (1999) and Waller and Fam (2000) in studies in Australia and Malaysia respectively. More recently, Christy (2006) provides a four-dimensional framework, the key components of which are; advertised product, execution of advertisement, the medium, and demographics of target audience. [18]

A majority of these studies looked at a few of these products within a sample from the one western country or a comparison of one western and one eastern country to establish differences in responses to controversial advertising. Phau and Prendergest (2001) have emphasized the need for more focus on research of Asian countries. As Asian economies open up to globalization and the infiltration of new media, Tai (1997) asserts that people across Asia are specifically vulnerable to the exposure of potentially offensive advertising [19] (as cited in Phau & Prendergest, 2001). This study will develop this area by expanding Waller's model (1999) through the introduction of a cross-cultural perspective in a single country.

2.3 Attitudes towards socially-sensitive advertising

De Run et al. (2010), in their study of offensive products in Malaysia, state that "*a controversial product or service is such that disturbs the social, moral or religious fabric of society.*" The outcome of such offence is the rejection or isolation of such products. However, as their study finds, the attitudes towards offensive advertising differs across and within cultures [16] (De Run et al., 2010). A certain product may be considered offensive to a certain sect of society, while a liberal segment of the same society will be least offended in comparison.

Waller and Fam (2003), in their study of marketing offensive products in China, asserted that exposure to advertising appeals for such products could clash with traditional Chinese values. This could result in disinterest for the product and low desire, keeping in mind respect for traditions and maintaining a sense of shame [15] (Waller & Fam, 2003). Further research by Waller and Fam (2003), comparing individualistic and collectivistic societies on the basis of responses to offensive advertising, found that individualistic societies such as New Zealand found offensive products such political products, addictive products and healthcare products less offensive than collectivistic societies Malaysian, Taiwanese and Chinese consumers (Waller & Fam, 2003). Similarly, An and Kim (2006) sex-related and addictive products were more offensive in Korean consumers than American consumers; the former were found less accepting of addictive products. The researchers hypothesize that these products are perceived as social ills with negative impacts on society [20] (An & Kim, 2006).

Essentially, this analysis keeps previous influential factors such religion and country culture constant, i.e. all respondents must be Muslim and must be Pakistani, so the differences in their attitudes towards the socially-sensitive advertisements are analyzed on the basis of the subculture. Despite the evidence that culture has an effect on social behavior, there is little literature on the effects of subcultural beliefs on the advertising of controversial products, specifically for Pakistan. This study examines the existence of a relationship between subcultural differences and offence towards the advertising of certain sensitive products and which socially-sensitive category is considered most offensive. This research expands the differences in responses to socially-sensitive advertising on the grounds of provincial cultural diversity as highlighted through previous research.

2.4 Hypotheses

In light of the above, the independent variable consists of the socially-sensitive advertisements used in the research and dependent variable is the attitude resulting from the same. Provincial culture acts as a moderating variable in the model.

This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: There will be a significant difference among the attitudes of the provincial subcultural groups towards socially-sensitive advertising.

H2: At least one category of socially-sensitive products will generate a higher offensive attitude than the rest within the subcultural group.

H3: The brands with the most negatively perceived advertisements will likely be rejected by respondents.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study design

To test the difference in attitudes towards socially-sensitive product advertising, a questionnaire with socially-sensitive advertisements as annexure, was distributed to participants from four provinces across Pakistan in major metropolitan cities. In the previous studies reviewed for this research, very few had exposed consumers to actual socially-sensitive advertisements, with an exception of Chan, Lyann, Diehl and Terlutter (2007) [21]. This practice was adopted for this research to give respondents' concrete examples of the potentially offensive advertisements they are exposed to on a regular basis.

3.1.1 Socially-sensitive advertisements

The advertisements used as stimuli were obtained from online sources and represented a variety of print advertisements, billboard snapshots or television advertisement stills to maximize fragmented media coverage. Four socially-sensitive categories of advertisements, as identified in the research of Fam, Waller and Erdogan (2004), were used as guidelines for the advertisement collection purpose [4]. These include:

1. Gender/sex related products (e.g. contraceptives, family planning messages, feminine hygiene products etc.)
2. Social/political groups (e.g. political parties, religious denominations etc.).
3. Addictive products (e.g. cigarettes, etc.).
4. Health and care products (e.g. donation appeals, weight-loss programs etc.).

The list of products/services inferred from the four categories was based on Waller (1999) which was, in turn, based on past literature (Wilson and West, 1981; Shao, 1993; Fahy *et al.*, 1995). The aim of the list is to have a wide range of potentially products/services, from extremely offensive (contraceptives; cigarettes) to those that might not be considered offensive at all (pharmaceuticals; charities), [15] (Fam, Waller, & Erdogan, 2005). Two control advertisements were also used in the final set. A total of 11 products were presented in the final questionnaire: These included charities, cigarettes, female contraceptives, male contraceptives, female hygiene products, political parties, sexual disease preventions (AIDS prevention) and weight-loss programs. The validity of the use of these products has been established by Fam, Waller and Erdogan (2004), who performed a Principal Components Analysis using different socially-sensitive products to categorize them into the four socially-sensitive categories. The control advertisements were of shampoo and cooking oil.

3.1.2 Pre-test

The advertisements used in the questionnaire were pre-tested among a group of six university students from Islamabad using focus-group interviews. Only those advertisements were included in the final study which the participants of the focus group were unanimously in agreement about representing a specific category and being potentially offensive.

The pre-test pilot involved conducting focus group interviews with a sample of 25 participants. The participants were presented with hard copies of the selected advertisements to express their perceptions with free associations. The researcher intervened with the scale adjectives to determine reliability and validity of the research design and gain general feedback for the questionnaires to be administered. Feedback was positive and showed no ambiguity in understanding the adjectives.

3.1.3 Instrumentation development

The purpose of the instrument was to measure two main constructs for attitude:

- Attitude towards advertisement
- Attitude towards brand

A questionnaire consisting of a perception scale, consisting of 12 adjectives depicting perceptions, used by Chan, Lyann, Diehl and Terlutter (2007) was used to construct the questionnaire. The scale comprises of six negative adjectives (i.e. offensive, uncomfortable, irritating, disgusting, ridiculous, and impolite). The other six adjectives were positive (convincing, lively, interesting, informative, creative, and clever). This scale has also been used in Chan's (1996) study of viewers' perceptions of television commercials [21] (Chan et al., 2007). Subsequently, respondents were presented with the list of reasons for offensiveness from which they were asked to indicate the reason for offence with the advertisements they found offensive. The reasons were adapted from previous studies, specifically used by Waller (2004) and subsequently, by other researchers. The reasons included; Anti-social Behavior, Foreign Images, Violence, Subject Too Personal, Indecent Language and Nudity. Concern for Children was added as an option after pilot-testing. Finally, the respondents were asked to indicate their intentions to reject specific brands because of the offensive advertisement.

First, the questionnaire was constructed in English, it was then translated into Urdu by a professional translator and back-translated by a second professional translator. The results were then compared to ensure consistency. During the pilot-testing of the scale, respondents were asked to compare the English and Urdu adjectives and improvements were made on their feedback. Respondents in the actual data collection phase were given an option to fill their questionnaires in Urdu or English.

3.2 Respondents

A sample of 600 participants was taken using the geographical convenience sampling approach. The participants were selected from various small, almost homogenous groups of micro and SME loans beneficiaries from nine metropolitan cities across the country. This segment reflected the majority middle-class population of Pakistani society.

Out of 600 participant sample, a total of 573 questionnaires were used for final analysis due to low response rate from Balochistan and certain incomplete questionnaires. The final sample consisted of 156 participants from Punjab, 148 from Sindh, 121 from Balochistan and 148 participants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The sample comprised of 281 male and 292 female respondents. The average age of all respondents across the four provinces was 39 years with a range between 35 and 43 years.

3.3. Data Collection

Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires where possible and through designated research assistants in regions where not possible. The respondents were asked to express their attitude towards the advertisement and subsequently, how they perceive the brand due to its offensive advertising. They were asked to check any of the 12 adjectives they found appropriate to describe their perception of each advertisement attached in the annexure of the questionnaire. There was an option to check none or more than one of the adjectives.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed utilizing the following methods:

1. A between-subjects analysis as to whether there are differences in attitudes towards offensive advertisements and which socially-sensitive category is found most offensive overall by which subcultural group.
2. A descriptive analysis as to which socially-sensitive category is most offensive within the subcultural groups
3. A descriptive analysis of the reasons for offence as to whether there were differences in the same subculture.
4. The likelihood of rejection of certain brands due to their negatively perceived advertisements

Against each of the eleven advertisements, the individual participant's selection of the perception adjectives was entered as dichotomous data. The data was first subject to cross-tabulation method to create perception profiles of each of the advertisements, categorized according to subculture.

The dichotomous data was then converted into interval data to enable parametric testing. As in Chan et al. (2007), this process involved the grouping of individual responses to the advertisements into percentages to convert to interval data. Subsequently, differences in each perception means were analyzed through ANOVA. The negative adjectives were normally distributed and hence all analyzed with ANOVA, however, half of the positive adjectives exhibited non-normal distribution and had to be analyzed with the Kruskal- Wallis test. The normally distributed were analyzed with ANOVA. Afterwards, PCA was conducted to examine dimensions of perceptions by each provincial group. The PCA was conducted five times; once for all the subcultural groups combined as a whole and then individually according to provincial subculture. Lastly, binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to analyze the possibility of a relationships between offence and rejection of brands using the factors identified by the PCA .

4. RESULTS

4.1 Perception profiles

The negative adjectives most frequently selected to describe the advertisements were offensive at highest frequency of 22 percent, and ridiculous and impolite, both at 19 percent. The positive adjectives used most frequently were convincing and interesting at 20 percent, followed by informative and lively at 14 percent each.

4.1.1 Province-wise perception analysis

Table 1 below presents a summary of the cross-tabulation analysis of the perception percentages of each of the 11 advertisements, arranged according to provincial subcultures.

Table 1 Composite results of cross-tabulation of perceptions							
Province	Advertisements with highest perceptions	Advertisements with negative perceptions	Negative adjectives with highest frequencies	Advertisements with highest perceptions	Advertisements with positive perceptions	Positive adjectives with highest frequencies	
Punjab	Exhibit C: Diplomat Cigarettes	Exhibit H: Sathi Contraceptives (>14%) ^a	Ridiculous Irritating (>38%) ^b	Exhibit B: Donation Appeal	Exhibit K: Cooking Oil (>14%) ^a	Interesting Convincing (>40%) ^b	
Sindh	Exhibit F: Greenstar Social Marketing	Exhibit H: Sathi Contraceptives (>15%)	Impolite Disgusting (>31%)	Exhibit E: Shampoo	Exhibit K: Cooking Oil (>15%)	Interesting Convincing (>35%)	
Balochistan	Exhibit F: Greenstar Social Marketing	Exhibit H: Sathi Contraceptives (>13%)	Offensive (>49%)	Exhibit E: Shampoo	Exhibit K: Cooking Oil (>22%)	Creative Interesting (>32%)	
KPK	Exhibit H: Sathi Contraceptives	Exhibit J: Weight-loss procedure (>15%)	Offensive Impolite (>60%)	Exhibit B: Donation Appeal	Exhibit E: Shampoo (>18%)	Interesting Convincing (>48%)	
Note:							
^a Figures depict percentage of total negative perceptions for individual advertisement							
^b Figures depict frequency of negative adjective among all six negative adjectives							

From the cross-tabulations, before analysis of means, the preliminary analysis shows that among the subcultural groups, Pakhtun and Baloch subsamples are more likely to find socially-sensitive advertising offensive, while Sindhi subsample considers it impolite. Punjabi subsample is more likely to find such advertisements irritating and ridiculous. There is also one advertisement which is perceived most negatively within the subcultural group. These analyses lead to the support of H2.

4.2 ANOVA of perceptions

At this stage, the perceptions towards individual advertisements were grouped on the basis on the adjectives to create interval data to apply the process of ANOVA. The computed interval variables of the negative perceptions were normally distributed after screening for outliers. Table 2 shows the results of the ANOVA for the different negative perceptions.

Table 2 ANOVA of Negative Perception Variables						
Variable	Mean Punjab	Mean Sindh	Mean Balochistan	Mean KPK	F	Sig.
Uncomfortable	1.79	1.86	2.90	3.03	44.34	.000*
Offensive	2.14	1.54	3.38	3.85	124.91	.000*
Ridiculous	2.01	1.46	2.67	3.59	89.40	.000 ^a
Irritating	2.01	1.72	2.83	2.76	23.50	.000 ^a
Impolite	1.38	2.30	2.40	3.82	88.07	.000 ^a
Disgusting	1.78	2.14	2.63	2.52	12.83	.000 ^a
Note:						
* p < .001, post hoc results indicate significant results in mean differences among groups						
^a ANOVA results significant, however, post hoc tests indicate non-significant results among certain groups						

For the negative variables “ridiculous”, “irritating”, “impolite” and “disgusting”, the ANOVA and subsequent robust Welch statistic indicated a significant difference among the subcultural groups, however, post hoc comparisons revealed in most conditions that the differences between Sindh and Punjab subsamples were insignificant as well as the differences between Balochistan and KPK subsamples. The groups of Punjab and Sindh were significantly different from the group of Balochistan and KPK. Similar was the case with positive variables “creative” and “convincing.”

For the positive variables, three variables, namely “creative”, “interesting” and “convincing” exhibited normal distribution, hence were analyzed using ANOVA. The remaining three variables; “clever”, “lively” and “informative” were analyzed using Kruskal-Wallis H test. Table 3 represents the results of the ANOVA.

Variable	Mean Punjab	Mean Sindh	Mean Balochistan	Mean KPK	F	Sig.
Creative	2.25	2.37	1.45	.99	52.34	.000 ^a
Interesting	3.36	2.95	1.10	2.14	113.88	.000*
Convincing	2.86	2.59	.94	2.91	65.64	.000 ^a

Note:
 * $p < .001$, post hoc results indicate significant results in mean differences among groups
^a ANOVA results significant, however, post hoc tests indicate non-significant results among certain groups

The Kruskal-Wallis H test reported significant differences among the subcultural groups for the variables “lively”, “clever” and “informative” with $H(3) = 66.56, p < 0.001$, $H(3) = 111.20, p < .001$, and $H(3) = 255.86, p < .001$ respectively. As a result, H1 was partially supported.

4.3 Principal Components Analysis

To observe differences in the underlying dimensions of the perception variables across provincial subcultural groups, factor analysis was conducted. A total of five factor analyses were conducted; one for the total sample and one each for the subcultural groups. Each of the factor analyses yielded four factors. Table 4 shows the results of the PCA.

Total Sample	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan	KPK
Factor 1: dislike	Factor 1: negative judgment	Factor 1: Outrageous	Factor 1: Like	Factor 1: dislike
Offensive	Impolite	Ridiculous	Lively	Offensive
Ridiculous	Ridiculous	Offensive	Interesting	Ridiculous
Impolite	Irritating	Irritating	Creative	Impolite
Uncomfortable	Factor 2: Appealing	Factor 2: Disturbing	Convincing	Uncomfortable
Irritating	Convincing	Uncomfortable	Factor 2: Irksome	Factor 2: Persuasive
Factor 2: Appealing	Lively	Impolite	Ridiculous	Informative
Lively	Interesting	Factor 3: Convincing	Irritating	Convincing
Clever	Factor 3: Revolting	Interesting	Disgusting	Factor 3: Like
Interesting	Clever	Convincing	Factor 3: Disturbing	Clever
Factor 3: Persuasive	Disgusting	Factor 4:	Impolite	Lively
Informative	Factor 4: Emotionally disturbing	Clever	Uncomfortable	Factor 4: Disgusting
Convincing	Offensive	Disgusting	Offensive	Disgusting
Factor 4: Disgusting	Uncomfortable		Factor 4: Informative	
Disgusting			Informative	
Cumulative variance explained				
65%	60%	60%	66%	71%

4.4 Reasons for Offense

Among reasons for offense, the reason with the highest frequency from the total sample was “concern for children.” The second highly selected reason was “subject too personal” with “foreign images” and “social behavior” and “nudity” in close third. The least selected reason was “violence.”

A descriptive analysis across the subcultural samples using Cross-tabulation analysis revealed that there were significant differences among the subcultural groups for reasons “foreign images”, “subject too personal”, “language” and “concern for children.” The differences among the subcultural samples for “social behavior” were not significant.

The main reason for offence as attributed by the Punjab and Sindh subsamples was “subject too personal” with 40 and 47 percent of the subsample-wide responses respectively. For the Balochistan subsample, “nudity” was the main reason for offence, with 68 percent of the subsample selecting this reason. For the KPK subsample, “concern for children” was the main reason for offence, as over 48 percent of the subsample selected this reason.

4.5 Binary Logistic Regression

Binary Logistic Regression was conducted separately using the two brands which received the highest rejection rate; Greenstar Social marketing with 40 percent and Sathi Contraceptives at 46 percent. The four factors identified by the PCA were used as covariates and the dependent variable was the probability of the rejection of brand Greenstar (Model 1) and Sathi (Model 2).

Table 5 Binary logistic regression: Rejection of Greenstar Social Marketing products					
Factor	B	Std Error	Wald	Sig.	R ²
					.10
F1: Dislike	.30	.09	11.12	.001*	
F2: Appealing	-.38	.09	17.75	.000*	
F3: Persuasive	-.37	.08	14.15	.000*	
F4: Disgusting	.15	.08	2.91	.088 ^a	
Constant	-.42	.08	22.69	.000*	

Note: * p <.05

^a Factor 4: Disgusting non-significant at p > .05

Model 1 yielded the following equation:

$$\text{Probability of Rejection of Greenstar Marketing Products} = -.42 + .30 (\text{dislike}) - .38 (\text{appealing}) - .37 (\text{persuasive})$$

Table 6 Binary logistic regression: Rejection of Sathi contraceptives					
Factor	B	Std Error	Wald	Sig.	R ²
					.10
F1: Dislike	.27	.08	9.732	.002*	
F2: Appealing	-.38	.08	19.01	.000**	
F3: Persuasive	-.34	.08	14.98	.000**	
F4: Disgusting	.085	.08	0.94	.332 ^a	
Constant	-.20	.08	4.83	.02*	

Note: * p <.05

**p<.001

^a Factor 4: Disgusting non-significant at p > .05

Model 2 presents the equation:

$$\text{Probability of Rejection of Sathi Contraceptives} = -.20 + .27 (\text{dislike}) - .38 (\text{appealing}) - .34 (\text{persuasive})$$

In both models, the largest contributor to the model was the factor “appealing”; the less appealing the brand, the higher the probability of its rejection. The second largest contributor was also a positive factor “persuasive”; the less persuasive a brand, the higher the probability of its rejection. The negative factor “dislike” also made a significant contribution to the model, while the factor “disgusting” did not and was excluded. These results indicate the probability of rejection of the brands increases as the negative perception of the advertisements increases. As a result, H3 was supported.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the study reveal that to some extent, there are significant differences in how subcultural groups perceive different socially-sensitive advertisements and that results into a reflection in their purchase intentions.

The mean perception levels for KPK were higher and for Punjab were lower; however, the Baloch subsample showed higher offensiveness for certain advertisements than the KPK subsample and the Sindh subsample showed less negative perceptions for certain adjectives than Punjab. A major difference also observed in the data collection

process; where respondents from the Baloch subsample were extremely reluctant to fill in the questionnaire and regarded it as offensive also.

The analyses reveal that the use of certain adjectives to express offense differs across provinces; Pakhtun and Baloch subsamples are more likely to find socially-sensitive advertising offensive, while Sindhi subsample considers it impolite. Punjabi subsample is more likely to find such advertisements irritating and ridiculous. Similar results were observed in Chan et al., (2007), where the research on Chinese and German consumers revealed that the former considered offensive advertisements more often offensive, uncomfortable, disgusting and impolite than the latter, but the German sample judged them to be more irritating and ridiculous [21].

Whereas the KPK subsample was the one to find most advertisements most offensive, on the other hand, they also showed the highest level of positive perceptions in certain aspects in terms of finding the advertisements convincing. Balochistan subsample exhibited the lowest positive perceptions towards the advertisements. The Punjab subsample found the advertisements most interesting, while the Sindh subsample placed more emphasis on their “informative” content.

The factor analyses revealed the differences in the underlying dimensions of the perceptions towards the socially-sensitive advertisements. The respondents from Punjab and Sindh grouped together the words “clever” and “disgusting”, although the original scale used by Chan et al. (2007) used “clever” as a positive variable [21]. Perhaps the meaning got lost in translation, to which the respondents used “clever” in a negative sense, as the word is typically used in Pakistan. The groups also showed two-dimensional positive perceptions; a brand can be “appealing” or “persuasive”.

Respondents were more concerned of the detrimental effects on such advertising on children as this is not intended for them and the results would be depleting society morals and ethics. This was reflected in the selection of the reason for offense as “concern for children”, which had the highest frequency. This is similar to the observation of De Run et al. (2010) in a study of Malaysian Muslims, that religious groups are opposed to the public promotion of advertising of contraceptives as they consider the promotion of such products to deplore the ethical and moral status of the younger generation in the country [16]. With a nationalist movement across the country and anti-foreign sentiments, “use of foreign images” was also a high factor attributing to offense, especially in the KPK subsample. Similarly, Mittal (1994), in a study of attitudes towards television advertisements, found that 46% of respondents believed that half or more television commercials are offensive and main reasons for offence were the portrayal of values incongruent to their own and inappropriate content [18] (as cited in Christy, 2006).

The inclusion of the effect of attitudes on acceptance/rejection of brands is important as it reveals that marketers in Pakistan need to be cautious when marketing socially-sensitive products. Results showed that the likelihood of the rejection of the brand increased with an increase in negative perceptions. If the advertisement did not appeal to the respondent, they were likely to reject the brand. Research shows studies that support this finding. However, a similar survey study in Pakistan last year, from a public health perspective, found that after the extensive promotional campaign of Touch condoms, the attitudes towards the product improved and resulted in improved usage and higher approval rating of utilization of family planning methods [22] (Agha & Meekers, 2010). In this study, Sathi contraceptives were negatively perceived and had the highest rejection rate.

There is need to emphasize for global marketers and advertisers to be aware of the conservative nature of certain Asian communities when marketing potentially offensive campaigns for socially-sensitive products. Differences also exist in collectivistic cultures across Asia as well as within sub-culturally diverse countries such as Pakistan. Waller and Fam (2003), have also stressed the need for managers to pretest images and copies of socially-sensitive advertising campaigns, specifically when using a standardized campaign that has originated in the West. [15]

5.1 Practical Implications

This paper has practical implications for managers and advertisers who face the challenge of advertising socially-sensitive products in a conservative Pakistani society due to the potentially offensive nature of such products and their advertisements. It gives managers certain insight into the risks involved with the acceptance of such sensitive products due to their advertisements. Such research acts as a pre-test of advertising campaigns of socially-sensitive products, specifically as advertisements are being standardized across countries.

5.2 Further research

This study opens up a wide range of studies that could be conducted, using the findings as indicators of differences in attitudes across Pakistan’s subcultural groups. Comparisons could be made across countries such as India, Pakistan and China, where collectivistic cultures prevail and multinationals market similar products to observe differences in attitudes towards socially-sensitive products. This study was focused on socially-sensitive products and can be further expanded to socially-sensitive execution; the dimensions identified by Barnes and

Dotson (1990). Of specific interest is the study of a significantly pervasive medium; i.e. billboards, which at times can cause offence.

6. CONCLUSION

0 more similar in responses as were Baloch and KPK samples. The negative attitudes resulted in the probability of rejecting the brands.

7. REFERENCES

- [1] D. Waller and K. Fam, "Cultural values and advertising in Malaysia: Views from the Industry", *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, vol 12, no. 1, 2000, pp 3-16.
- [2] D. Waller, "Attitudes towards offensive advertising: An Australian study", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1999, pp 288-294.
- [3] D. Waller and K. Fam. Offence to the advertising of controversial products: A study of gender attitudes in China and Malaysia. 2001, *Unpublished working paper*.
- [4] D. Waller, K. Fam and B. Z. Erdogan. Advertising of controversial products: a cross-cultural study. *Journal of Consumer Marketing* Vol. 22, Issue 1, 2005, pp 6-13.
- [5] C.F. Frazer, K.B. Sheehan and C.H. Patti, "Advertising strategy and effective advertising: Comparing the USA and Australia", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, vol 8, 2002, pp149-164.
- [6] S., Dahl, "Cross-cultural advertising research: what do we know about the influence of culture on advertising?", Middlesex University Discussion Paper no. 28. 2004, London.
- [7] D., Waller, "What factors make controversial advertising offensive? A preliminary study", ANZCA 04 Conference Proceedings. Auckland, New Zealand. 2004.
- [8] R., Belk, and R., Pollay, "Materialism and status appeals in Japanese and US print advertising", *International Marketing Review*, 1985, pp 38-47.
- [9] Y. Zhang, and J. P. Neelankavil, "The influence of culture on advertising effectiveness in China and the USA: A cross-cultural study", *European Journal of Marketing*, 1997, pp 134-147.
- [10] I. H., Malik, *Culture and Customs of Pakistan*. Greenwood Publishing Group.,2006.
- [11] M. T., Nobleman, *Pakistan*. Capstone Press. 2003.
- [12] M. A.. Qadeer, *Pakistan: Social and cultural transformations in a Muslim nation (Routledge contemporary South Asia series Vol 1)*. Taylor & Francis, 2006.
- [13] S.,Taus-Bolstad, *Pakistan in Pictures*. Twenty-First Century Books. 2003.
- [14] J. Fahy, D. Smart, W. Pride and O. Ferrell, "Advertising sensitive products", *International Journal of Advertising* vol 14, 2003, pp 231-43.
- [15] D. Waller, and K. Fam, "Advertising of offensive products: A challenge for marketing in China", *Asian Journal of Marketing*, vol. 9, no. 1. 2003.
- [16] E., De Run, M., Butt, K., Fam, and H., Jong, "Attitudes towards offensive advertising: Malaysian Muslims' views", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* vol 1, no. 1, 2010, pp 25-36.
- [17] H., Taute, V., Lukosius, and A., Stratemeyer, "The changing nature of controversial advertising: A content analysis study." *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators*, 2008, pp. 13-19 Houston.
- [18] T. P., Christy, "Females' perceptions of offensive advertising: The importance of values, expectations and control", *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising* vol. 28, no. 2, 2006, pp 15-32.
- [19] I., Phau, and G., Prendergast, "Offensive advertising: A view from Singapore ", *Journal of Promotion Management* vol 7, no 1/2, 2001, pp 71-90.
- [20] D. An and S. Kim. Attitudes towards offensive advertising: a cross-cultural comparison between Korea and the United States. *2006 Annual Conference of the American Academy of Advertising*. Reno, NV. 2006.
- [21] K., Chan, L., Lyann, S., Diehl, and R.,Terlutter, "Consumers' response to offensive advertising: A cross cultural study", *International Marketing Review* vol 24, no. 5, 2007, pp 606-628.
- [22] S. Agha, and D. Meekers, "Impact of an Advertising Campaign on Condom Use in Urban Pakistan", *Studies in Family Planning*, vol. 41, 2010, pp 277-290.