

**Project Dissertation Report on**

**STUDY OF FACTORS THAT MAKE AN**

**ADVERTISEMENT CONTROVERSIAL**

**Submitted By**

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the dissertation report titled “STUDY OF FACTORS THAT MAKE AN ADVERTISEMENT CONTROVERSIAL”, is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Megha Gupta of MBA 2020-22 and submitted to Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi-42 in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Masters of Business Administration.

Signature of Guide

Signature of HOD

(DSM)

Place:

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Date:

## **DECLARATION**

I, Megha Gupta, student of MBA 2020-22 of Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi – 42, hereby declare that the dissertation report “STUDY OF FACTORS THAT MAKE AN ADVERTISEMENT CONTROVERSIAL” submitted in partial fulfilment of Degree of Masters of Business Administration is the original work conducted by me.

The information and data given in the report is authentic to the best of my knowledge. This report is not being submitted to any other University, for award of any other degree, diploma or fellowship.

PLACE:

Megha Gupta

DATE:

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project report is based on offensive and controversial advertising. Over time, advertising has become an integral part of our lives. With the increase in products, the advertising level has increased too. In the times of social media, it has become easy to identify the likes, dislikes and patterns of a particular consumer on internet to target him with very directed advertisements.

Amidst this clutter, the advertising agencies and the advertisers are trying hard to capture the attention of the consumers. This leads to them coming up with creative ways to create path-breaking advertisements. However, often, an advertisement sparks out controversies and offends the target population.

This report dives deep into the factors responsible for an ad to be taken as offensive by the consumers. Based on the topic modelling performed on the reviews of various controversial advertisements according to news, a list of 11 factors is identified. Additionally, to better understand how these factors influence the controversy, 11 controversial advertisements are discussed in how the factors played a role in the consumers taking an offense to them.

A survey is administered to a sample of 63 respondents who rate various factors in how does each of them offends them in the context of an advertisement. The findings indicate that most of the predominant factors have an average rating of greater than 3, the mean score on a Likert-type scale of 1-5.

These findings are useful for any agency or advertisers to better understand the consumer perception.

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## INTRODUCTION

Advertising is the most commonly identified form of marketing. It has taken over the world so that to ask an ordinary person about their understanding of marketing; the first word is usually advertising. It is present in almost all aspects of our lives, though we may or may not be aware.

With the increase in competition, advancement in technology and employment of new creative, there have been a host of ways devised to get the message across to the consumers. However, with this rise in advertisements all around, there have been increasing questions about the ethics of advertising.

In advertising, where every agency is looking for ways to stand out or cut through the clutter, there will be scenarios when the audience is offended. As society advances, our perspective of what we consider offensive changes drastically. Agencies may try to break from the clutter by being more creative, leading to creativity that the general public may find offensive.

The feelings evoked by an advertisement campaign relate to and reflect both the ad and the brand. There has been a rise in advertisements related to personal hygiene products, explicit bra ads, condom ads and menstruation products. This rapid change in the strategy by the brands and advertising agencies has led to even more conflicting opinions.

### **Background**

The narrative around controversial advertising has two sides: either the product is controversial, like alcohol, cigarettes etc., or the ad campaign has elements that offend the general public. The controversial products are the 'Lost causes' (T Matthews', 1997) which include products like cigarettes, gambling, and alcohol. The advertising industry has what is called an **Unholy Quaternity.**



These four factors of Advertisers, Agencies, Media and Consumers relate to Product, Execution, Medium, and Audiences, respectively and can be used interchangeably. With the interplay of these four factors, it becomes necessary to review and examine every advertisement and campaign from these four perspectives and understand if there are any unethical or offensive for any of these elements.

A consumer who has no interest in a particular product is also exposed to the ad due to the TV show being interrupted by the commercial. Hence, something received well in print/radio campaigns may not work well for TV (Barnes Jr. and Doston, 1990).

Benetton released an advertisement campaign with images throughout Europe that received different reactions (Riyait, 1993). It is a common perception of the advertising agencies that one formula fits all. However, everyone has their own beliefs that change how different people look at the same thing. In advertising, these differences play their part in how other people look at a particular campaign. The essential component of advertising is to combine visual imagery and linguistic techniques to help shape the message being conveyed. The consumption ideology of the brand depends on the meaning being interpreted by the consumers.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

There can be reasons why a particular agency wants to take on such a product or campaign. The product may be well offset by the client, financial means, or such. The agency may wish to stir up emotions in the drive to get publicity. An agency may also want to establish itself as a pioneer in ads for controversial products or developing league campaigns that cause an uprise in emotions and can generate engagement with the brand.

The social organization and language vary widely. The two-way process of communication comes into the picture. If the message being sent by the sender is not the same as being interpreted by the receiver, there can be many complications. These differences need a typical frame of reference to absolve themselves.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to identify the advertisements that have been regarded as controversial in the past and analyze the reasons behind them from the perspective of factors collected from previous studies.

Several studies have been done on the factors, and the reasons responsible for an ad campaign are offensive. There have also been studies on the products and services that the public finds the most offensive when the advertisements are run for those.

In this study, we take a different approach and examine the advertisements that have already been found offensive, are discussed in detail and rated on the factors.

Additionally, a survey was conducted to understand how the respondents feel about the advertisements, which contain the parameters discussed in this report.

The findings of this study will help understand how the quaternity: advertisers, media, agencies and the consumers are inter-related to each other.

## **CHAPTER -02**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**(Barnes Jr. and Doston, 1990)**

#### **An Exploratory Investigation into the nature of Offensive Television Advertising**

The paper explores the multi-dimensional nature of offensive advertising by proposing two dimensions: awful products and offensive execution. This dimension gains importance because advertisers and agencies can control offensive performance, and they need to develop novel campaigns for gross products.

The paper defines improper advertising as being composed of two separate and unrelated dimensions: products perceived as offensive due to their nature and the execution of the advertisement, which may have harsh elements. While offensive performance can be mainly controlled, there is little to no control over the gross product. An exploratory study is conducted into the proposed dimensions.

Twenty-one commercials from previous studies are chosen and presented to the respondents. Commercials that were ranked to be the most offensive, above the mean score, are the ones that have a personal context. In this light, it is essential to understand the effects of particular groups and on specific groups.

Factor analysis is also conducted to understand the advertisement's perceived factors as offensive. The factors related to the dimensions of the improper advertising, i.e., whether the product or the execution is mean. Regression values are calculated by regressing the values for that advertisement on the factor.

Demographics also play an essential role in whether the advertisement is offensive. The study tests the demographics, i.e., age, gender, marital status, education and religious disposition. As age increases, the perception of the ads being offensive also increases.

This same trend is observed in education. However, this may be affected by the medium under consideration. People with strong religious ties are also more offensive toward the ads. Keeping in line with the trend, married people were more offended.

This study confirms the multi-dimensionality of offensive advertising and how demographics can be an essential deciding factor.

**(Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy, 1994)**

### **Ethical Judgments of Political Television Commercials as Predictors of Attitude toward the ad**

This study takes a fresh perspective on the nature of advertisements being played across by targeting the political advertisements and their ethical nature. In the United States of America, the least regulated categories are excluded from surveillance by the regulatory bodies. There is also an absence of self-regulation practised by advertising agencies.

Political advertising is criticized as being unethical often by the popular press. The practices which would be deemed evil and even illegal in commercial advertising are openly practised in political advertising. The most common method is emotional persuasion. Hence, the criticism of political advertisements also extends to the moral compass.

The emotional context in any form of advertising can downplay rational decision making. Messages with negative connotations are more harmful than ones with positive connotations. When we choose the wrong product due to product or commercial advertising, the effects are not felt as strongly as those of electing the wrong candidate. This raises ethical questions about political advertising.

This study aims to understand the way voters use 'ethics' when they see any political advertisement. To provide insights into this, several additional questions are answered.

Namely, the structure of cognitive responses and how the popular belief around the commercial is unethical or does not affect that advertisement's reception.

The study proposes a conceptual framework for examining the stimulus based on salient message cognitions, salient attitude, non-salient attitude and the global attitude towards the ad.

The study observes that ethics is one of the top salient attributes. There is a highly positive attitude towards considering ethics while evaluating a political advertisement. In terms of non-salient attributes, it is demonstrated that these also have a relatively significant perspective on how the ad campaign is being received and also act independently.

In terms of global attitude, there is a complex interplay of beliefs. The reception may vary from country to country and people across different political affiliations.

This study is a pioneer in listing the salient and non-salient features while looking at an advertisement from an ethical point of view.

**(Riyait, 1993)**

### **Is the Message Being Received? Benetton Analyzed**

Ian G. Evans and Sumandeep Riyait beautifully brought out the differences in perception within Europe.

The researchers used four images from the Benetton campaign consisting of the following:

1. Newborn baby with umbilical cord attached
2. Military cemetery
3. A zebra and a bright coloured parrot
4. Children from three different races stick their tongues out.

The company had specific themes in mind when the campaigns were released. Four nationals from different groups were selected, each from Britain, Norway, France and Germany. These four were given a questionnaire split into two sections. The first part was an open-ended questionnaire to adjudge what the respondents thought of each image. The second part was a close-ended question to whether the themes Benetton had in mind were being exactly understood and perceived by the respondents. A score point system of 1 to 5 is used to identify the indifference or relatedness to the theme, with one being strongly disagreed with the music and 5 being strong agreement. The study's objective is to bring out the differences in the perception of the nationality, and for this, a chi-square test is employed to get the measure used.

The images and the meaning had a significant relationship with the nationality. With the statistical tests being employed, it has been demonstrated that the photos were not perceived universally in the way Benetton had intended them to be.

This study sets a critical discussion point for print campaigns. The visual imagery does not tell the consumers what the image is trying to depict. And while a broad paradigm is set, individuals can push the boundaries to suit their frame of reference.

**(Waller, 1999)**

### **Attitudes towards offensive advertising: an Australian study**

David S. Waller, in his research paper, presents an Australian perspective on the advertising of offensive products and the reasons for it. Offensive advertising has been studied in many literature pieces.

David Waller conducted an experimental study on university students by giving them a survey to fill out consisting of two parts. The first part dealt with a list of products/services, and the other part had a list of reasons for improper advertising. By employing a five-point Likert-type format, the responses were collected. The list of the harsh products was collated from past studies on a similar issue, notably by Wilson and West 1981

mention; Rehman and Brooks, 1987; Triff et al., 1987; Shao and Hill, 1994a; Fahy et al., 1995

The study establishes that racist and extremist ad were the most offensive, followed by advertisements showcasing religious denominations. By employing a t-test to compare the responses between males and females, only two were significantly different.

In the second part. For the reasons for offensive advertisements, females were more offended than males by all the above products. Though both were almost similar in the mean score for the products and the reasons for alcohol and male underwear, females are more offended by advertisements highlighting indecency, nudity, sexist, and racist behaviour.

A controversial product can be a positive addition to the client list essential to determine what is offensive so that agencies can choose their client accordingly.

It is not just the product that is controversial but the advertisement too. This study forms a strong foundation for the audience's general dislike for specific products. Keeping this in mind, an agency must very carefully analyze the projects it wants to take on.

**(Fam and Waller, 2003)**

### **Advertising Controversial Products in the Asia Pacific: What Makes Them Offensive?**

This study presents a comprehensive view of offensive advertising in the Asia-Pacific region. There have been a lot of controversial advertisements and a lot of unethical practices being raised in many campaigns around the world. However, while this has caused a lot of brand damage to many companies, there also exist companies that have knowingly created controversy through advertisements.



This study looks at the controversy in advertisements through the lens of cultural values and heritage of the Asia-Pacific region. A questionnaire is distributed to Malaysia, Taiwan, China, and New Zealand university students. The respondents were asked to give their level of indicators of 'offence' for the 17 listed products from (Waller, 1999). They also had a list of reasons for offence taken (Hill, 1994).

The researchers used multivariate analysis to analyze the country's effect on offensive products and their reasons. It was observed that the variables did not have the same impact across the lands. Additionally, addictive products, health and care products, social and political campaigns, and sex-related products were the most diverse from each other and statistically significantly different.

The study's central finding is rooted in the fact that agencies need to consider the market and the culture while especially designing campaigns in markets around the world. Individualism, religion, and confusion dynamism play an essential role in the Asia Pacific market. Adhering to the norm rather than focusing on the criteria of the individual is more prominent here.

The study puts forth a view of media targeting strategy wherein the campaign is developed according to the distribution network of a particular medium.

**(Waller, Christy and Fam, 2008)**

### **Perceptions of Offensive Advertising Elements: A China–U.S. Comparison**

This study sheds light on the Chinese influx of new business and advertising opportunities. Amidst the increasing competition, it becomes essential for marketing and consumer communication to be increasingly creative. One of the unique things about the Chinese market and its consumers is their deeply rooted traditions and cultural values.

The researchers administered a questionnaire to university level students in different cities across the U.S. and China. The respondents were asked to rate the enlisted products and

services and, in the second part, answer the reasons for the offence. The researchers placed limitations on the age range from 18-23.

There is a wide disparity between the responses from U.S. and China. While the U.S. sample only found racially extremist ads to be offensive above the mean score of 3, Chinese counterparts had seven items above the mean score of 3.

For the offensive execution dimension (Barnes Jr. and Doston, 1990), the U.S. sample has a racist and sexist image as offensive. The Chinese sample has Indecent language, anti-social behaviour, nudity and racism as offensive execution.

The prevalent differences can be attributed to the advertising being relatively new in China compared to the U.S. Again, cultural values, traditions, and the importance of moderation in the Chinese community play a hugely important role in the results being as they are. This study gives a fundamental standing to the agencies that it's just not the language in the world of international advertising, and one size does not fit all.

**(Singh and Vij, 2008)**

### **Public Attitude toward Advertising (An Empirical Study of Northern India)**

This study focuses on understanding consumer behavior regarding controversial and offensive advertising from an Indian perspective. India is a multi-cultural and multi-religion country, is a complex market where religious feelings dominate offence and controversy in an advertisement. This study puts forth the concept of attitude-institution and attitude-instrument.

The attitude towards advertisement is greatly influenced by attitude towards advertising in general. This attitude forms the basis of why certain ads are perceived as enjoyable, irritating, or offensive. Attitude institution is the attitude towards an institution that is the purpose that advertising has, and attitude-instrument is the attitude towards the execution of the advertisement.

A survey is administered across seven states in North India to a pool of 900 respondents. The responses establish that people generally have a positive outlook toward advertising. However, attitude-instrument, attitude-institution and attitude towards advertising, in general, are three separate concepts. Despite this, these are correlated and vary significantly across samples. Demographics also seem to affect the attitude towards advertising. Young people, lower-income groups, females and people living in joint families have a more positive and favourable outlook towards advertising. Education affects the attitude that people in the higher education strata find advertising to be stronger and cleaner as compared with other populations.

This study gives out how the attitude towards advertisements correlates with the purpose and execution of advertising in general. It also relates to critical demographic features and their relation with ads.

**(Beard, 2008)**

### **Advertising and Audience Offense: The Role of Intentional Humor**

This study does a fresh take on humour in advertising and how humour can be offensive to the public under particular situations. With a great deal of research on potentially offensive products and services, humour does not belong to that category. However, there have been incidents of ad campaigns being criticized because the agency intended to use humour in the campaign that did not sit well with the receivers and the public. The outcry against Snicker's "slag of all snacks" and Snickers' "Car mechanic kiss" are the top examples of humour related controversies.

Based on previous research, it has been noted that humour is often used with offensive product/execution, though there have been multiple campaigns that have employed humour with essential items. One of the reasons can be to dissipate the tension and distract the consumers from the seriousness of the product or the execution of the campaign.

The researchers used 300 advertisement reports to the Advertising Standards Authority of New Zealand (ASA-NZ). The complaints were categorized into different categories based on humour, by scrutinizing them from the perspective of the complainant by using the comments provided by them.

The definitions used to further provide context to the study were, “was the humor intentional”, “basic ethics rules”, “medium of the campaign” etc. On humor type, the complaints were categorized as:

- Incongruity-Resolution
- Arousal-Safety
- Disparagement
- Relatedness

The study finds out that intentional humor often offends consumers, and the non-humour ad campaign can be just as offensive as humor-based campaigns. Whenever an ad campaign tries to disguise an inherent offensive theme under the guise of humor, the backlash is expected to be followed.

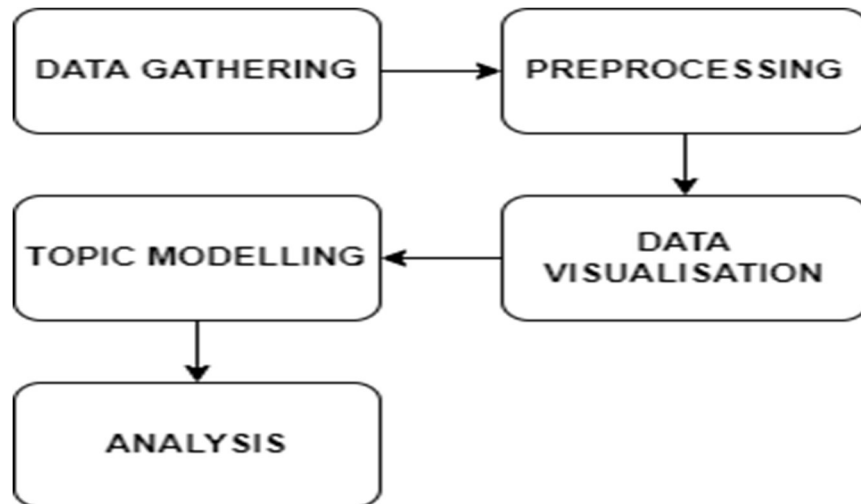
## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology followed in this report is two-fold. The design is Descriptive Research. Descriptive studies are well organized, they tend to be unyielding and their approach cannot be altered every now and then.

Descriptive studies are undertaken in many conditions. When the researcher is involved in knowing the characteristics of certain groups When the researcher is interested in knowing the proportion of people in a given population who behave in a particular manner, making a projection of certain things.

Fig: 3.1 Research Methodology



Own Creation

The 11 controversial advertisements are:

1. Pepsi 2017 ad 'Live for Now' starring Kendall Jenner
2. Cadbury Temptations 2002 ad 'too good to share'
3. Head & Shoulder 2014 ad – 'Stop, before you stop being a man'
4. Dove 2017 'Black to White' ad

5. Avon 2019 'Anti-cellulite' campaign
6. Kurl-On 'Bounce Back'
7. Tuff Shoes
8. Motorola 'Gotchamoto'
9. YouFoodz 'Forkin Fresh'
10. Meat and Livestock Australia 'Pick a Lamb'

The second aspect of the research is based on a questionnaire that asks for basic demographic questions: Age, Gender, Education, Religiosity. It then asks the respondents to rate certain factors for offensiveness on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 is the least offensive and 5 is most offensive.

This allows forming a profile of the consumers' attitude towards how the advertisements with certain factors are perceived by the users. The questions are so designed that they represent the factors. The factors used in the questionnaire are related to the factors used to analyze the controversial ad campaigns.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA COLLECTION**

The data for these campaigns is collected from multiple news publications. When an ad is found to be offensive or sparks a controversy, multiple news publications cover the issue. In addition, Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) websites have been taken to uncover some campaigns that were brought to the regulatory body's notice. For the survey, the questionnaire has been so designed that it covers the main factors discussed in this report. The sample population chosen for this survey are students and working people, predominantly in the age bracket of 19-35. The reason behind this is the wide diversity in background and their familiarity with various advertisements.

Along with the survey, reviews from the youtube videos of advertisements were also taken, and a machine learning algorithm of topic modelling was applied in them to understand the various factors involved in making an advertisement controversial.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **Campaign Discussion**

##### **1. PepsiCo's 2017 ad starring Kendall Jenner**

###### **Problem**

PepsiCo launched a protest-theme campaign titled 'Live for Now' in 2017. The ad was targeted at the Black Lives Matter movement that was gaining a strong foothold in the United States of America. The attempt was to show the brand being millennial-friendly and supportive of social movement. However, the brand ended up trivializing the matter by putting a white person at the Person of Color movement and showcasing that a Pepsi can bring the protesters and security forces close. The ad was removed within 48 hours of its release.

###### **Analysis**

The Live for now campaign starring Kendall Jenner trivialized an important social movement (Smith, 2017) and did not take into account the first-hand experience of the protestors. Racism (Tilman, 2017) is the main issue that made the offensive to a wide population.

##### **2. Cadbury Temptations 2002 ad 'too good to share'**

###### **Problem**

Cadbury released an Independence Day campaign in 2002 to promote its Cadbury Temptations. The campaign displayed an Indian map with the war-struck area of Jammu and Kashmir, highlighted and written over with the message, "Too good to share". The campaign's timing alluded to the fact that just months before, tensions had escalated and it was a raging issue. Cadbury issued a public apology for the same.

###### **Analysis**

The ad campaign played down the sensitivity around the political issue surrounding the status of Jammu & Kashmir. An issue that has led to millions of deaths, and escalating



tensions between two nations. Using a sensitized political campaign did not work in the favor of Cadbury (Cozens, 2002).

### **3. Head & Shoulder 2014 ad – ‘Stop, before you stop being a man’**

#### **Problem**

Head & Shoulder launched an ad campaign to promote its range of men's shampoo in 2014. The ad shows two males, in a gym, discussing the problems faced with their house-help, while the other females in the gym look at them disapprovingly. The ad then moves on to tell the audience that if you use women's shampoo, you too will start behaving like women. The context being that only women discuss household-related items. This particular campaign had other ads in the series where the punchline was to showcase women-like attributes in men and proceed to tell the audience that the reason is because the male is using a women's shampoo.

#### **Analysis**

The campaign did not fare well with the audience. There was not a huge backlash, which can be attributed to the absence of a strong presence of social media. However, the entire campaign was heavily criticized by the advertising community, and several leading publications. The ad was termed to be sexist, misogynistic and degrading women of any individuality.

### **4. Dove 2017 ‘Black to White’ ad**

#### **Problem**

The ad campaign was released on Facebook for promoting Dove Body Lotion. The ad showcases a black woman with a Dove Body Lotion displayed towards the bottom right. The woman then proceeds to remove her shirt, along with her skin, and the frame then shows her turning into a white woman.

#### **Analysis**

The ad inherently promoted racism by showcasing a black woman turning into a white woman by using Dove Body Lotion and faced a huge backlash. The community

backlashing the ad stated that the campaign feels like being black is something that should be changed. Dove proceeded to remove the ad from all platforms.

### **5. Avon 2019 ‘Anti-cellulite’ campaign**

#### **Problem**

The cosmetic brand AVON released a campaign in 2019 urging the customers to be ready for their summer body to promote its anti-cellulite gel. The product is aimed at removing stretch marks from the body and the cellulite marks. The print ad showcases a woman, headlined that dimple looks cute on face, and not thighs.

#### **Analysis**

This campaign hurt the body-positive PR that AVON was carrying on for so long. By showcasing what a perfect body looks like the print ad did not only stereotype the perfect image of women but also is a sexist take on how women need to look.

### **6. Kurl-On ‘Bounce Back’**

#### **Problem**

Kurl released a campaign in 2014 to promote their mattresses. The campaign had several famous personalities like Steve Jobs, Mahatma Gandhi, Malala Yousafzai in cartoon avatars. The print shows these personalities in their grim time of lives, bouncing back to reach even greater heights, Steve Jobs is seen being thrown out of Apple, Mahatma Gandhi is seen being thrown out of a train compartment, However, Malala is seen as being shot by the Taliban.

#### **Analysis**

The campaign was tone-deaf in using a horrible incident from the life of a teenage girl. The ad promotes violence and is insensitive to the ongoing tensions and politics in the South-Asian region

## **7. Tuff Shoes**

### **Problem**

1995 had an ad campaign from Tuff Shoes which was a major controversy. The ad showcases two models, Milind Soman and Madhu Sapre wearing Tuff Shoes. The two models were nude and a Python wrapped around them.

### **Analysis**

The ad showcased nudity at a time in India when there was no social media. A legal case was also filed against the models, publishers and the producers. The cultural and traditional mindset of the consumers did not allow them to dial down the issue and they were yet not sensitized to nude exposure in public.

## **8. Motorola 'Gotchamoto'**

### **Problem**

In the year 2008, before the advent of smartphones, Motorola released a handset, C550 Clicker, with powerful picture-taking abilities. In order to promote the handset, an ad was released which showcases the various situations in which the handset could be used to click photos. The situations shown are distasteful in taste, like a man and a woman going out of a ladies' restroom. The ad shows that taking pictures can be a fun activity.

### **Analysis**

The ad promoted anti-social behavior by promoting that taking pictures secretly, without the consent and stealthily is a good activity without mentioning that these are illegal activities.

## **9. Youfoodz 'Forkin' Fresh'**

### **Problem**

In 2017, Youfoodz released an ad to market its fresh products, The ad showcases a young boy stressing on the freshness of the ingredients in TV Chef Gordon Ramsay's style. The boy uses the term 'forking' as a direct reference to an obscene expletive.

### **Analysis**

The company was fined by the ASA committee in an order that states that the ad was aired during a family show, Moreover, the reference to the obscene expletive is clear. This promotes anti-social behavior in children and also promotes using indecent language as fun.

### **10. Meat and Livestock Australia ‘Lamb to share’**

#### **Problem**

In 2017, Meat and Livestock Australia released an ad campaign promoting their lamb meat. The ad showcases different deities and gods from religions all across the world. The ad also has a Hindu deity ‘Ganesha’. On the table, Lamb meat is being consumed and passed around.

#### **Analysis**

The ad shows complete disregard to the religious sentiments of many religions across the world. By showcasing the gods consuming and celebrating over lamb meat hurt the religious sentiments of many people over the world. A case was filed against the producers in Sydney by the Consulate General of India in Sydney and the High Commission of India, following which the ad was taken down.

### **11. Heinz ‘Learn the Can Song’**

#### **Problem**

Hein released an ad campaign in 2016 to promote Heinz Banz. Instead of promoting the product, the ad showcases a unique way to use Heinz Banz empty tin cans by turning them into musical instruments. The ad show adults and young children tapping away on empty tin cans to learn the Can song.

#### **Analysis**

The ad does not show any safety pre-requisites to seal the can before attempting to learn the song. Though the tutorials on how to safely tape the can are available, they are not

included in the ad. Since tin cans are sharp, they pose a threat to the children, who may inadvertently take up empty tin cans and hurt themselves.

## CHAPTER 6

### CODING

Fig: 6.1 Code for extracting the data from the videos

```
from youtube_comment_scraper_python import youtube
import pandas as pd
from tqdm import tqdm
links = ["https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-QTP176oJI",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PS95J4XjboE",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXGs59cjxXg",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrBrf3USPTY",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yu4_BIPkXU",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2IRcfBIJJA",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnfxTq7DWwg",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wm4kOghHQ24",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUNAMOCocDE",
        "https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SPfNSdREBY"
        ]

all_data = pd.DataFrame()
review_list = []
for link in tqdm(links):
    # for i in range(50):
        youtube.open(link)
        response = youtube.video_comments()
        data = response['body']
        all_data = all_data.append({"link":link, "data":data}, ignore_index=True)
all_data.to_csv("final_review.csv")
```

Own creation

Fig: 6.2 Code for Cleaning the data

```
In [12]: all_comment = []
links = []
for d in range(len(res)):
    a = res[d].split("\n")
    for i in a:
        print(d)
        z = i.split(":")
        try:
            all_comment.append(z[1].strip(", 'Likes'"))
            links.append(data.loc[d, "link"])
        except:
            pass

[["{'Comment': 'It's happening because of Modi governmentLet's vote him again', 'Likes':, '3', 'Time', '1 month ago', 'UserLink', 'https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyCOCKhwvDye_kULYSplmEQ', 'user', 'Best on Internet'"}]
8
[["{'Comment': 'This happens when college education gives the subject education but not the value education. Clearly, creator of this ad has not learned enough.', 'Likes':, '90', 'Time', '6 months ago', 'UserLink', 'https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrT8gFqFH9uj3bjuFea4Lg', 'user', 'Vivek Kumar'"}]
8
[["{'Comment': 'No one is against progressively changing customs, but when there is repeated pontificating of residual backwardness on a much proagressive religion vs absolute silence on absolutely backward and regressive thinking in other faiths, it does raise questions on impartiality!I personally didn't like this ad because of this ad created with very less research on Hindu tradition.', 'Likes':, '234', 'Time', '6 months ago', 'UserLink', 'https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgXqnV4mxeqxFS0IyIgupv', 'user', 'Being Amruta'"}]
8
[[]]
9
[["{'Comment': 'This ad is literally objectifying women', 'Likes':, '1', 'Time', '2 months ago', 'UserLink', 'https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpe2ofjmCs5DEmeYuy7da5g', 'user', 'Anupama Mall'"}]
9
[[]]
```

```

link_list = []
all_comment = []
j = 0
def convert_data(x):
    comment_list = []
    for i in range(len(x)):
        comment_list.append(x[i])
    all_comment.extend(comment_list)

```

```

all_comment = []
links = []
for d in range(len(res)):
    a = res[d].split(";")
    for i in a:
        z = i.split(":")
        try:
            all_comment.append(z[1].strip(", 'Likes'"))
            links.append(data.loc[d, "link"])
        except:
            pass

```

Own Creation

**Fig: 6.3 Code for topic Modelling**

```

def sent_to_words(sentences):
    for sentence in sentences:
        yield(gensim.utils.simple_preprocess(str(sentence), deacc=True)) # deacc=True removes punctuations

data_words = list(sent_to_words(data))

print(data_words[:1])

[['on', 'christma']]

```

...

```

# Build the bigram and trigram models
bigram = gensim.models.Phrases(data_words, min_count=5, threshold=100) # higher threshold fewer phrases.
trigram = gensim.models.Phrases(bigram[data_words], threshold=100)

# Faster way to get a sentence clubbed as a trigram/bigram
bigram_mod = gensim.models.phrases.Phraser(bigram)
trigram_mod = gensim.models.phrases.Phraser(trigram)

# See trigram example
print(trigram_mod[bigram_mod[data_words[0]]])

['on', 'christma']

```

...

```

# Define functions for stopwords, bigrams, trigrams and Lemmatization
def remove_stopwords(texts):
    return [[word for word in simple_preprocess(str(doc)) if word not in stop_words] for doc in texts]

def make_bigrams(texts):
    return [bigram_mod[doc] for doc in texts]

def make_trigrams(texts):
    return [trigram_mod[bigram_mod[doc]] for doc in texts]

def lemmatization(texts, allowed_postags=['NOUN', 'ADJ', 'VERB', 'ADV']):
    """https://spacy.io/api/annotation"""
    texts_out = []
    for sent in texts:
        doc = nlp(" ".join(sent))
        texts_out.append([token.lemma_ for token in doc if token.pos_ in allowed_postags])

```

```

: from pprint import pprint
  pprint(lda_model.print_topics())
  doc_lda = lda_model[corpus]

[(0,
  '0.052*"promote" + 0.052*"day" + 0.032*"opa" + 0.031*"full" + 0.031*"boss" + '
  '0.031*"marry" + 0.022*"wrong" + 0.011*"seriously" + 0.011*"mind" + '
  '0.011*"add"'),
 (1,
  '0.054*"much" + 0.038*"see" + 0.034*"ever" + 0.031*"create" + '
  '0.024*"beautiful" + 0.024*"amazing" + 0.014*"love" + 0.013*"time" + '
  '0.012*"people" + 0.012*"hard"'),
 (2,
  '0.072*"daughter" + 0.059*"brand" + 0.033*"feel" + 0.027*"night" + '
  '0.021*"problem" + 0.020*"guy" + 0.020*"hurt" + 0.020*"switch" + '
  '0.020*"father" + 0.020*"really"'),
 (3,
  '0.060*"well" + 0.047*"play" + 0.045*"brand" + 0.040*"stand" + 0.020*"take" + '
  '+ 0.020*"justify" + 0.014*"ad" + 0.014*"show" + 0.014*"look" + 0.014*"try"'),
 (4,
  '0.054*"treat" + 0.033*"reason" + 0.033*"main" + 0.026*"people" + '
  '0.023*"bakri" + 0.023*"ducky" + 0.012*"issue" + 0.012*"boycott" + '
  '0.012*"base" + 0.012*"video"'),
 (5,
  '0.078*"make" + 0.065*"give" + 0.014*"thirsty" + 0.014*"dude" + '
  '0.014*"hawas" + 0.014*"jashn" + 0.014*"stare" + 0.001*"double" + '
  '0.001*"dislike" + 0.001*"like"'),
 (6,
  '0.041*"cringe" + 0.041*"prove" + 0.015*"try" + 0.015*"attract" + '
  '0.015*"hard" + 0.015*"heroine" + 0.015*"look" + 0.015*"hero" + '
  '0.015*"stare" + 0.001*"witty"'),
 (7,
  '0.055*"live" + 0.055*"time" + 0.043*"add" + 0.033*"think" + 0.031*"hope" + '
  '0.031*"let" + 0.027*"instead" + 0.027*"say" + 0.025*"positive" + '
  '0.019*"review"'),
 (8,
  '0.082*"respect" + 0.060*"cricket" + 0.036*"match" + 0.036*"mutual" + '
  '0.025*"test" + 0.013*"right" + 0.013*"good" + 0.013*"street" + 0.013*"way" + '
  '+ 0.001*"daughter"'),
 (9,
  '0.084*"love" + 0.067*"celebrate" + 0.044*"religion" + 0.034*"true" + '
  '0.033*"culture" + 0.027*"call" + 0.025*"hindu" + 0.021*"mentality" + '
  '0.021*"always" + 0.021*"comment"'),

```

Own Creation



**Fig 6.4 Extracting Topic Modelling Words**

```
def format_topics_sentences(ldamodel=lda_model, corpus=corpus, texts=data):
    # Init output
    sent_topics_df = pd.DataFrame()

    # Get main topic in each document
    for i, row in enumerate(ldamodel[corpus]):
        row = sorted(row, key=lambda x: (x[1]), reverse=True)
        # Get the Dominant topic, Perc Contribution and Keywords for each document
        for j, (topic_num, prop_topic) in enumerate(row):
            if j == 0: # => dominant topic
                wp = ldamodel.show_topic(topic_num)
                topic_keywords = ", ".join([word for word, prop in wp])
                sent_topics_df = sent_topics_df.append(pd.Series([int(topic_num), round(prop_topic,4), topic_keywords]), ignore_index=True)
            else:
                break
        sent_topics_df.columns = ['Dominant_Topic', 'Perc_Contribution', 'Topic_Keywords']

    # Add original text to the end of the output
    contents = pd.Series(texts)
    sent_topics_df = pd.concat([sent_topics_df, contents], axis=1)
    return(sent_topics_df)

df_topic_sents_keywords = format_topics_sentences(ldamodel=optimal_model, corpus=corpus, texts=data)

# Format
df_dominant_topic = df_topic_sents_keywords.reset_index()
df_dominant_topic.columns = ['Document_No', 'Dominant_Topic', 'Topic_Perc_Contrib', 'Keywords', 'Text']

# Show
df_dominant_topic.head(10)
```

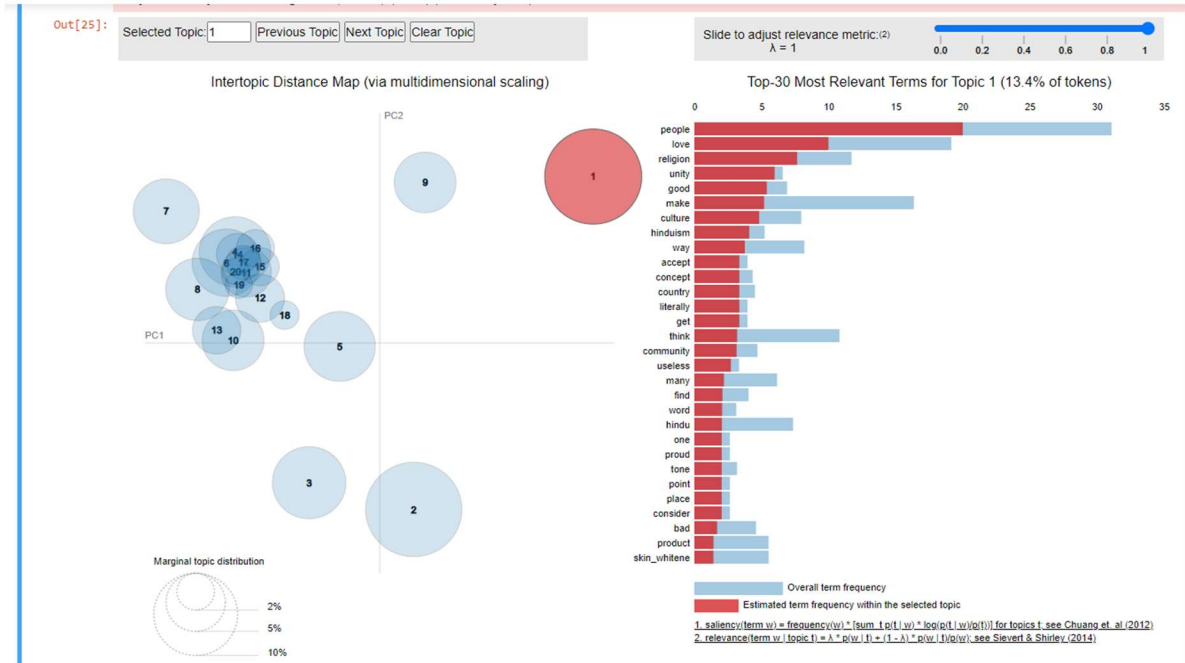
Own Creation

# CHAPTER 7

## FINDINGS

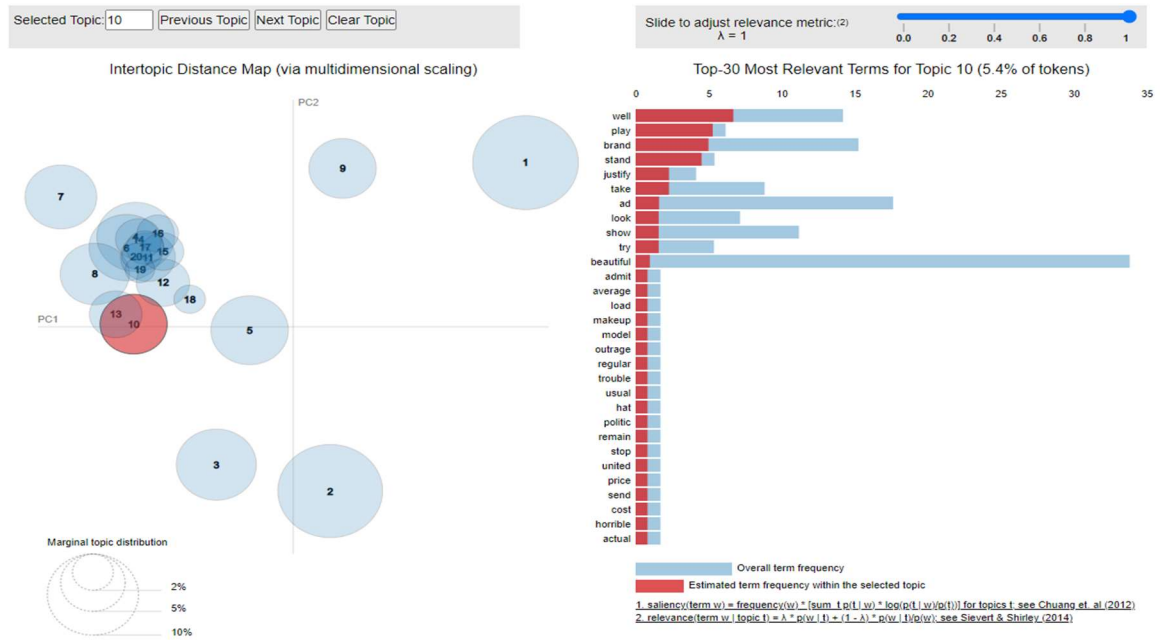
After Performing the topic modelling the most common words used in the reviews were extracted and survey was conducted for the same to understand the perspective of the people.

Fig: 7.1 Topic Modelling of Advertisement



Own creation

Fig: 7.2 Topic Modelling of Advertisement



Own Creation

By doing the above analysis it was found that

These words are used several times and are the main reasons for the controversial advertisements:

1. Anti-social behavior
2. Concern for children
3. Health and safety
4. Indecent language
5. Nudity
6. Racist
7. Sexist
8. Stereotyping
9. Violence
10. Religious concerns
11. Politics

After studying the analysis from users' words, I did the survey to understand the public perspective of the advertisements and has found the following:

Table 7.1 Mean Score Calculation

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Mean score</b>	<b>% Above mean score</b>
Promoting anti-social behaviour	3.6	69.80%
Promoting unhealthy behaviour in children	3.8	68.20%
Healthy and Safety issues	3.4	52.30%
Indecent Language	3	38.00%
Nudity	3.2	44.40%
Racism	3.9	74.60%
Promoting sexism in society	3.9	73.00%
Stereotyping a general group of population	3.9	69.80%
Promoting violence	4	55.50%
Deceptive/Misleading	3.7	63.40%
Showing a particular religion in bad-light	4	55.50%
Inter-faith marriage	2	30.15%

Interfaith celebration of festivals	1.9	38.00%
Using a political affair to promote the product	3.3	49.20%
Using body-image issues	3.6	61.90%

Own Creation

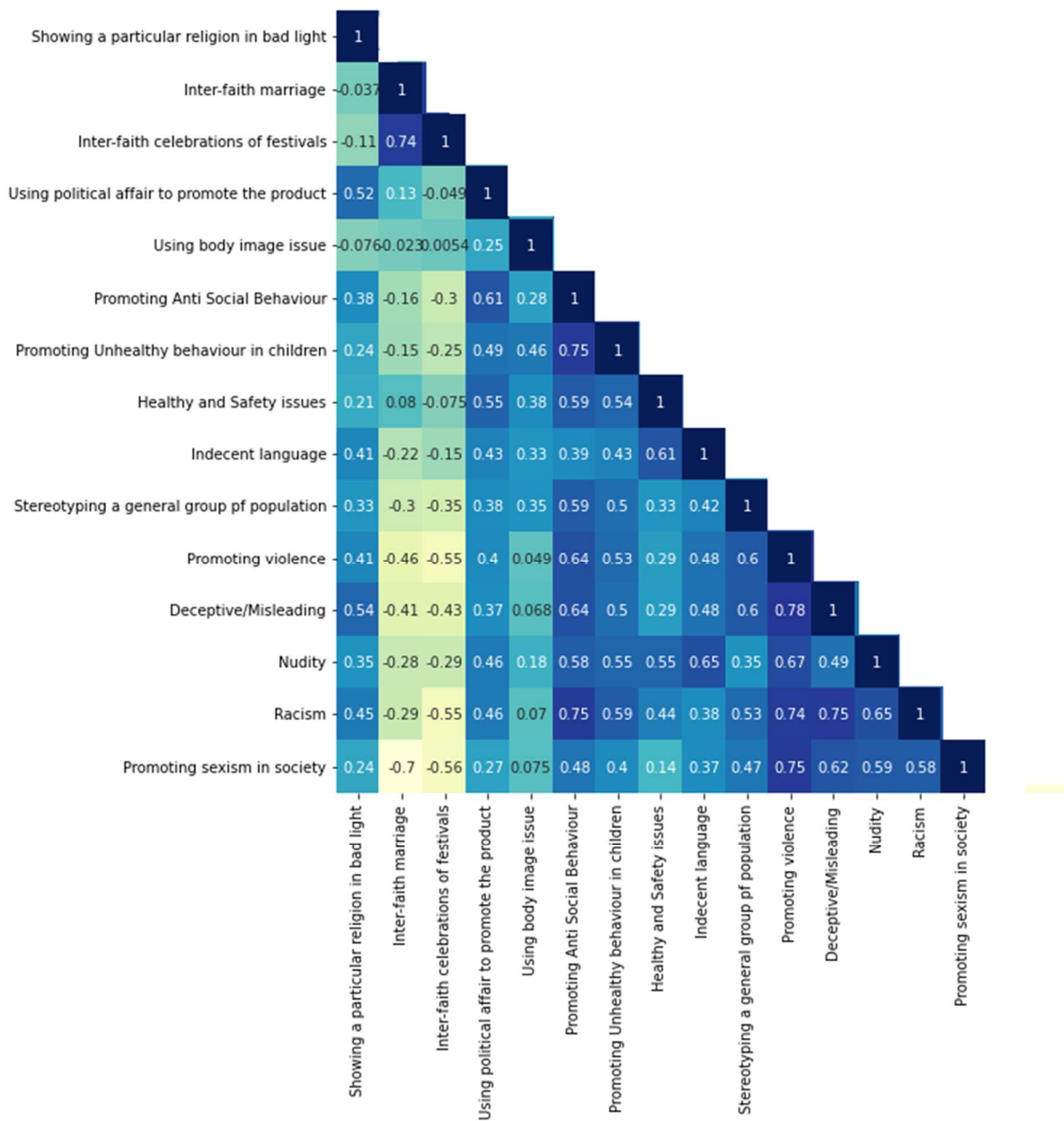
The table above summarizes the responses from the questionnaire administered.

- It is evident that out of 15 factors, 11 factors had more than 50% of the respondents above the mean score.
- Inter-faith marriage and interfaith celebration of festivals have an average score of less than 3, which is the general mean score on a scale of 1 to 5.

## Correlation Matrix

To help determine what makes controversial advertising offensive, a correlation of the results between different factors and reasons for the offence was made using a Correlation Coefficient.

Fig: 7.3 Correlation Matrix



Own Creation

It could be inferred from the correlation that:

- Lighter the color in the matrix, the less is the value of correlation coefficient and darker the color of the cell, more is the value of correlation matrix.
- Factors like Misleading and promoting violence has maximum Correlation coefficient that is 0.78 which means if value of one factor increases than the other also increases.
- Factors like Promoting Sexism and Inter-faith celebration of festivals have minimum value of correlation coefficient that means if one factor increases than the other one decreases.
- Factors like Racism and Promoting Anti-Social Behavior has the high value of correlation coefficient that is 0.75, which means both the value increases together.

### **SURVEY DISCUSSION:**

#### 1. Age

In this the respondents have to enter their age. The age has been divided into 4 brackets

>18

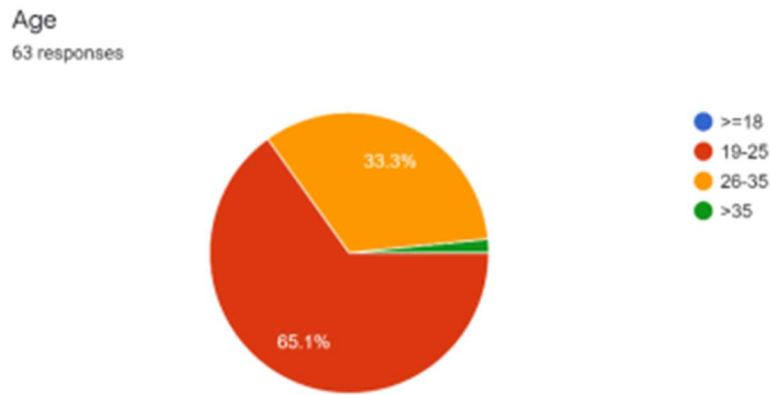
19-25

26-35

>35

Out of 63 responses, 65% of respondents belong to 19-25, 33,3% belong to 26-35, and 1.6% belong to >35

Fig 7.4: Distribution of Age of respondents



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## 2. Gender

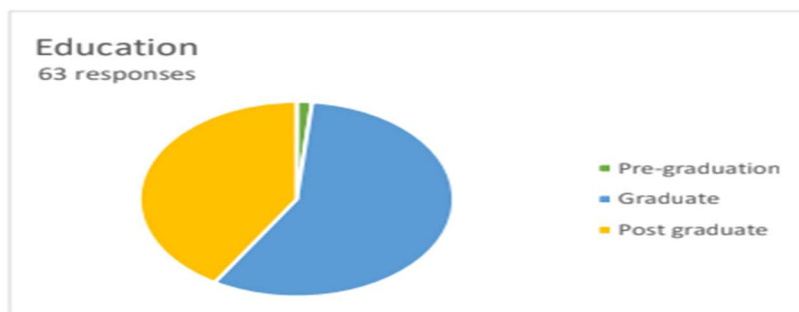
The Gender of the respondents can be male, female, or if the respondents prefer not to answer.

Out of 63 responses, 58.7% of the respondents are male, and 41.3% are female.

## 3. Highest Education

The respondents have to enter their highest education level (completed/pursuing). The responses are then split into graduation, post-graduation, pre-graduation.

Fig 7.5: Distribution of Education of Respondents



Own creation

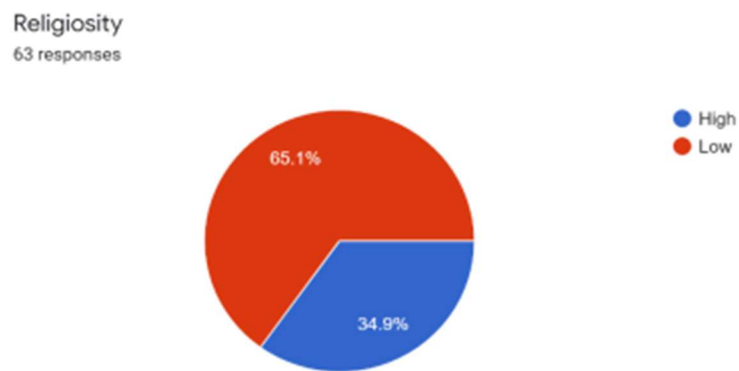


#### 4. Religiosity

This question attempt to ask the respondents how religious they are on a scale of high and low.

34.9% have high religiosity, while 65.1% have low religiosity.

Fig 7.6: Distribution of Religiosity of respondents



#### Own Creation

In the next section, factors are listed that play a role in making the advertisement offensive to a group of people. The respondents are asked to rate each factor on a scale of 1-5, 1 being least offensive and 5 being most offensive, on how offensive would an advertisement with the factor be offensive to them.

#### 5. Advertisements promoting anti-social behavior

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.65 on a scale of 5. 44 responses out of

63 (69.8 %) had score more than the average.

6. Promoting unhealthy behavior in children

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.8 on a scale of 5. 43 responses out of 63 (68.2 %) had score more than the average.

7. Healthy and Safety issues

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.4 on a scale of 5. 33 responses out of 63 (52.3 %) had score more than the average.

8. Indecent Language

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3 on a scale of 5. 24 responses out of 63 (38 %) had score more than the average.

9. Nudity

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.2 on a scale of 5. 28 responses out of 63 (44.4 %) had score more than the average.

10. Racism

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.9 on a scale of 5. 47 responses out of 63 (74.6 %) had score more than the average

11. Promoting sexism in society

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.9 on a scale of 5. 46 responses out of 63 (73 %) had score more than the average

12. Stereotyping a general group of population

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.9 on a scale of 5. 44 responses out of 63 (69.8 %) had score more than the average.

13. Promoting violence

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 4 on a scale of 5. 35 responses out of 63 (55.5 %) had score more than the average.

14. Deceptive/Misleading

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.7 on a scale of 5. 40 responses out of 63 (63.4 %) had score more than the average

15. Showing a particular religion in bad-light

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 4.0 on a scale of 5. 35 responses out of 63 (55.5 %) had score more than the average

16. Inter-faith marriage

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 2.0 on a scale of 5. 19 responses out of 63 (30.15 %) had score more than the average

17. Inter-faith celebration of festivals

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 1.9 on a scale of 5. 24 responses out of 63 (38 %) had score more than the average

18. Using a political affair to promote the product

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.3 on a scale of 5. 31 responses out of 63 (49.2 %) had score more than the average

#### 19. Using body-image issues

Out of 63 responses, the mean response is of 3.6 on a scale of 5. 39 responses out of 63 (61.9 %) had score more than the average.

It could be inferred from the above survey analysis that:

- Females are more offended by sexism in advertisements than their male counterparts, as indicated by their mean score
- Respondents with high religiosity are more offended by the portrayal of inter-faith marriage.
- Respondents with high religiosity are more offended than respondents with low religiosity with an ad portraying interfaith celebration of festivals.
- Respondents with high religiosity are least offended with ads showcasing a particular religion in a bad light.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK**

This study deals with discussing the offensive advertisements and gathering a general public perception of the factors responsible for the offensive. There are a few limitations to this study.

The sample used for this data is skewed in terms of age and education level of the respondents. The study should be conducted with a diverse set of populations to properly understand their concerns and get a comprehensive view.

The future work that can be attempted for this study is to merge the ads and the factors and conduct a survey to identify what did the sample population find offensive in the particular campaign. This study can be conducted with a relatively small set of advertisements, or by employing a diverse focus group.

This would allow gathering more insights into what aspect of the campaign did not fit in, and how the pitfalls could have been avoided. This can also help uncover any more factors for the ad being offensive apart from the one uncovered in this and previous studies.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **CONCLUSION**

Controversial and offensive advertisements do not only hurt the brand image but also can lead to complaints on advertising forums and regulatory bodies, boycotting products, plummeting stocks and in some cases, even loss of lives. It, therefore, becomes necessary to understand the general perception of the region in which the ad campaign is to be released, especially if the market is new. The more is the similarity between the thoughts expressed in campaigns and the audience's views, the greater will be the positive popularity of the brand, and vice-versa to the level to which the audience takes offence on a particular theme of the ad.

With the final aim of every advertising campaign is to generate awareness about the product, or the brand/company, a certain caution must be exercised by the agencies, in selecting the medium and setting the message being conveyed. It can be irresponsible to assume that the message being transmitted is the message being received. If the campaign is critical to the brand, it can be of great help to set up focus groups to identify alternate understanding.

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# Factors that make an advertisement controversial

 meghagupta307@gmail.com (not shared) [Switch account](#)



\* Required

Age \*

- >=18
- 19-25
- 26-35
- >35

Gender \*

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

**Highest Education \***

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

**Religiosity \***

This indicates how strongly are you aligned to your religion

High

Low

**Factors Making Advertisement Controversial**

We have seen several campaigns and advertisement being pulled down due to vocal outcry against them. Below we have listed factors that play a role in making the advertisement offensive to a group of people. Please rate each factor on a scale of 1-5, 1 being least offensive and 5 being most offensive, on how offensive would an advertisement with the factor be offensive to you.

**Showing a particular religion in bad light \***

1

2

3

4

5

Inter-faith marriage \*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Inter-faith celebrations of festivals \*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Using political affair to promote the product \*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Using body image issue \*

Showing a particular body type as ideal one

1

2

3

4

5

Promoting Anti Social Behaviour \*

Example: Promoting Drug use, Littering etc

1

2

3

4

5

Promoting Unhealthy behaviour in children \*

Example: Nagging Parents, Comparing childs, Bullying etc

1

2

3

4

5

Healthy and Safety issues \*

Example: Dangerous stunts, Hazardous activities with fire, unsafe online practices like sharing password

1

2

3

4

5

Indecent language \*

1

2

3

4

5

Stereotyping a general group of population \*

1

2

3

4

5

Promoting violence \*

1

2

3

4

5

Deceptive/Misleading \*

Fine print advertisement with typical high risk activity and not communicating the same to audience

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Nudity \*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Racism \*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promoting sexism in society \*

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

