

**An Exploration of the Effect of Advertising Placement
and Messaging on Urban Durban Zulu Professional Millennials'
Purchasing Decisions of Funeral Services.**

Research Report

By: Gugulethu N. Hlophe 

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Research Supervisor: Sarah Freestone

Vega School Durban

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I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the IIE BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Signature



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ABSTRACT

Presently, there is limited literature within the faculty of marketing regarding effective advertising messaging and media placement for funeral services (Coetzee, 2013). The marketing of unsought services, specifically funeral services, poses intrinsic unique challenges for marketers (Coetzee, 2013). This challenge provokes primary research question: Which advertising channels and messaging optimally influences urban Zulu Durban professional millennials' purchasing decisions of funeral services?

The funeral industry is growing in its competitiveness, thus needing to advertise to differentiate and grow (Hernández, 2013). Strategic advertising messaging and media buying is required to market such necessary yet unsought services (AMASA, 2018), in a manner that overcomes advertising avoidance (Kaçınma, Kaçınma, Kaçınma, Kaçınma & Varlıği, 2015). Millennials are a lucrative market (Maluleke, 2018)., thus vital for the growth of the funeral services businesses and industry as a whole.

Through the interpretivist lens, qualitative data was obtained using semi-structured interviews to obtain detailed perceptual and behavioural data (Maree, 2019). 10 participants were obtained through non-probability convenience sampling. Findings indicated that price, word-of-mouth and brand experience are key determinants in funeral services purchasing decisions. Additionally, a diverse media mix, and creative informative content is required to connect with the target demographic. Further research is recommended to provide deeper insights that can be generalized to larger groups.

Key words: Advertising, Funeral Industry, Purchasing Behaviour, Media Placement, Traditional Advertising, Online Advertising, Advertising Avoidance, Millennials.

Study Title: An Exploration of the Effect of Advertising Placement and Messaging on Urban Durban Zulu Professional Millennials' Purchasing Decisions of Funeral Services.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research report consists of six chapters. All chapters serve a particular purpose within the overall structure of the report. This section details an outline of the content discussed in each of the consecutive chapters.

This chapter introduces the research study, outlines the study background, problem statement, purpose statement, relevance and rationale, research objectives and presents the research question. The chapter finally concludes with an outline of the remaining structure of the report.

1.1. Background

How do you advertise necessary yet gloomy services? Advertising funeral services is often avoided by both consumers and marketers as the services are perceived as a dismal trade (Coetzee, 2013). Marketers of such services are therefore faced with the challenge of needing to find the right platforms and messages to advertise these unsought services (Coetzee, 2013). Furthermore, funeral advertising has evolved from traditional media placement only, to incorporate digital media (Beard & Burger, 2020), thus, media planning strategies need to be formulated accordingly.

The profession of media buying has transformed into a complex process of understanding the unique relationships that people have with media so as to form meaningful brand connections taking into account the contact, context and content (AMASA, 2018). Therefore, understanding consumer behaviours in relation to media platforms is vital in order to create intelligent strategies, connect with consumers and avoid wastage (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999; cited in Rehman, Javed, Nawaz, Ahmed & Hyder, 2014).

Studies indicate that digital advertising should be the main focus when marketing to millennials (Naumovska, 2017). However, traditional media is also said to have its advantages, thus understanding how to appropriately use both is essential so as to utilize advertising budgets wisely (AMASA, 2018). This complexity aligns with the report that millennials are a diverse segment requiring complex marketing and media mix strategies (Naumovska, 2017).

Modern technology has resulted in millennials demanding brands to go beyond selling products to creating meaningful relationships (Naumovska, 2017). This phenomenon affects how millennials perceive and respond to advertising, as content that aligns with their lifestyle and convictions is better received (Naumovska, 2017). Furthermore, a combination of digital and traditional marketing is required to coexist strategically in a manner that creates customer brand advocacy (Kotler and Kartajaya, 2011).

From the earliest times that people have existed in groups, they have practiced various death rituals (Woodthorpe, 2017). As a result of universal westernisation, the practice of funerals as the dominant death ritual has increased significantly, to offer a space to receive and offer support at the time of grief (Woodthorpe, 2017). Presently funerals have grown to encompass different trends, and increased in personalization (Woodthorpe, 2017). Coetzee, (2013) further states that the funeral industry has become increasingly client-oriented, and a niche supplier of symbolic services which requires intelligent sophisticated tools. However, the grief associated with funeral services results in the services being unsought in nature, thus creating a complex challenge for marketers in this space (Coetzee, 2013). Furthermore, the funeral industry has become increasingly competitive, necessitating funeral brands to advertise in order to differentiate from competitors (Hernández, 2013). Traditional and religious factors have shaped funeral services (Zondi & Zwane, 2016), especially when servicing Zulu audiences. This has resulted in traditional requirements being applied to product design to accommodate customer needs (Mcoyi, 2021).

1.2. Problem Statement

Advertising is a key component of marketing used to drive purchase (Percy, 2018), however, there is limited data on how to strategically advertise funeral services (Coetzee, 2013). Additionally, the profession of media buying has evolved into a complex process of understanding the unique relationships that people have with media in order to form meaningful brand connections taking into account the contact, context and content (AMASA, 2018). Therefore, understanding consumer behaviours in relation to media platforms is vital in order to create intelligent strategies, connect with consumers (AMASA, 2018).

1.3. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between advertising placement, and messaging on purchasing decisions of funeral services for urban Durban Zulu professional millennial audiences.

1.4. Relevance and Rationale

There is limited literature within the school of marketing regarding the advertising of funeral services (Coetzee, 2013), while advertising is essential for funeral services brands as the industry is growing in its competitiveness (Hernández, 2013).

Advertising is noted to be a sales driver (Terkan, 2014) and purchase influencer (Percy, 2018), thus, is a vital component of a business' survival. Therefore, funeral services businesses need to be equipped with the knowledge of how to best advertise strategically to remain competitive and viable.

Additionally, there are reports that digital advertising should be the main focus when marketing to millennials (Naumovska, 2017). However, traditional media is also said to have its advantages (AMASA, 2018), thus understanding how to strategically utilize online and offline platforms is essential in order to use advertising budgets wisely. This notion is in line with a report by Vakratsas and Ambler (1999) stating

that effective advertising strategies are crucial to create the desired brand perceptions and avoid wasted advertising expenditure. The factors presented have not been directly explored in literature for the specific target demographic, thus the need to conduct the research study to contribute to the body of knowledge and the funeral industry.

1.5. Research Objectives

Based on the purpose of the research, the following aims will guide the study;

1. To describe the main media channels where African Durban millennials are currently discovering funeral services information.
2. To assess the impact of current funeral services advertising messaging on the African Durban millennial audiences.

1.6. Research Question

In line with the study's purpose, the primary research question is; Which advertising channels and messaging optimally influences urban Zulu Durban professional millennials' purchasing decisions of funeral services?

The subsequent research sub-questions are;

1. Which are the main media channels where urban Durban Zulu professional millennials are currently discovering funeral services information?

What type of funeral services advertising messaging resonates with the urban Durban Zulu professional millennial audiences?

Brand advocacy is the ultimate goal for brand building, (Keller, Aperia & Georgson, 2011), and millennials rely significantly on word-of-mouth when making purchasing decisions (Naumovska, 2017). Thus, in its quest to investigate the effect of funeral

service advertising placement and messaging on millennials, the study will discuss the impact of advocacy and word-of-mouth on purchasing behaviours.

This study will utilize the interpretivist approach, through a qualitative research method to investigate the factors that make funeral advertising effective in influencing purchasing decisions. AIDA and Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) models will create the theoretical framework through which information will be evaluated.

1.7. Anticipated Contributions

The primary contribution the study aims to make is aiding funeral services brands to have a better understanding of how their advertising platforms and messages impact their business goal of making sales. Though the study is limited in its generalization, it is hoped that it will be an addition to further studies in the limited body of research pertaining to funeral brands in South Africa. Additionally, there is limited data on Durban urban Zulu millennials' funeral services needs in relation to their culture. Thus, shedding light on this topic through the study may guide in the unique selling propositions that funeral brands need to highlight when advertising to this population group. Furthermore, the study aims to uncover the key advertising platforms that may be most suitable for advertising funeral services to the study's population group. Hence, contributing to the understanding of how media planning may be better planned and executed in the funeral services context. The researcher is a marketer who deals with funeral services brands, thus the information obtained will assist in her ability to better plan advertising messaging and platforms based on findings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As described by Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), the seeking, analysing and discussion of existing literature in order to frame an research study in light of existing literature is referred to as a literature review. Conducting a literature review serves to uncover the relevant material within the existing body of knowledge that could strengthen and refine the research process (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Furthermore, literature review provides a benchmark against which research results are compared and constructed to produce scholastic sound conclusions (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

The research study employed the thematic review process, focusing on the various relevant schools of thoughts, to arrange the literature into differing themes (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). In line with the research question the following literary themes were explored; advertising, media planning and placement, millennials, purchasing behaviour, and funeral industry.

The theoretical framework to this study is collated in Chapters 2, based on available commercial and scholarly literature, and is as detailed below.

2.1 Advertising

Advertising is the primary tool that brands utilize to influence consumer purchasing decisions (Huang, 2012), it also creates brand awareness and influences attitudes (Percy, 2018). Digital advertising, including a website, is vital especially when advertising to millennials (Naumovska, 2017). Websites are an unobtrusive advertising tool making them an ideal marketing tool for funeral service providers. (Beard & Burger 2020). However, traditional media is also still relevant (AMASA, 2018). Thus, this study aims to contribute to how marketers can create media mixes that enhance traditional and digital advertising relationships specifically for funeral services (Huang, 2012). The exploration to be conducted in the study will also assist

in the prevention of advertising wastage, hence advertising is central to fulfilling the research objectives (Vakratsas et al., 1999; cited in Rehman et al., 2014).

2.1.1. Traditional Advertising

Traditional advertising is the promotion of goods or services on traditional marketing platforms such as TV, radio, and out-of-home media (AMASA, 2018). Although digital advertising is growing rapidly, millennials are still reported to watch TV especially via the internet (Tanyel, Stuart & Griffin, 2013). Radio advertising is reported to be effective especially when combined with out-of-home media for localized advertising campaigns (AMASA, 2018). The degree of effectiveness of traditional media will be explored in the study, with the aim of understanding the perceptions of the platforms in relation to influencing purchasing decisions.

2.1.2. Online Advertising

Online advertising refers to a paid promotion on products or services that is distributed on digital channels such as smartphones, computers, and other digital devices (Tanyel et al., 2013). Social media advertising is one of the main forms of digital advertising, it is beneficial in that content can be tailored for the target audience (Pate & Adams, 2013). Personalization is vital when advertising to millennials, hence social media advertising is essential for advertising to millennials (Naumovska, 2017). Online advertising will be examined in this study to ascertain the level of preference and effectiveness when compared to traditional media.

Social media influencer marketing has become a key marketing tool for brands (Jarrar, Awobamise & Aderibigbe, 2020). Social media influencers (SMIs) are individuals who have a significant social media following that are able to influence specific markets (Jarrar et al., 2020). SMIs assist in driving sales (Jarrar et al., 2020) and will therefore be investigated in this study as purchase drivers." Since SMIs are an extension of traditional word-of-mouth advertising (Huang, 2012), their relationship with marketing to Zulu millennials will be explored in this study. This is

crucial as millennials are reported to respond optimally to word-of-mouth advertising as opposed to direct advertising (Ordun, 2015). There is limited information in literature specifically on advertising preferences of the Zulu millennials, hence the study aims to contribute towards the understanding of Zulu millennials. Furthermore, millennials are reported to value and share information, as well as valuable content on social media platforms (Pate & Adams, 2013). This notion is vital to the study, as informative content may be one of the keys to creating effective social media advertising for funeral services.

2.1.3. Advertising Avoidance

Customers are being bombarded by constant advertising messages on a daily basis which is resulting in “advertising avoidance” on both online and traditional media (Kaçınma, Kaçınma, Kaçınma, Kaçınma & Varlıği, 2015). Advertising avoidance is the act of deliberately avoiding advertising content (Kaçınma et al, 2015), and is prevalent in millennials (Taylor, 2018). This information is pertinent to the research study as it aims to discover the type of funeral advertising that resonates with millennials, and prevent advertising avoidance. Additionally, advertising avoidance has been reported to be one of the greatest obstacles in advertising (Huang, 2016), it must therefore be understood to ensure the efficacy of advertising (Rojas-Mendez & Davies, 2017). The research study aims to provide insights that will allow funeral services advertising to be efficient hence contributing to the reduction of advertising avoidance.

To overcome advertising avoidance, marketers need to create strategic advertising messaging that is attention grabbing (Rojas-Mendez & Davies 2017). High impact visuals, messaging that reinforces personal image and quirky offbeat humorous advertising messages have been reported to draw attention in millennials (Taylor, 2018). The impact of the type of connection that resonates with millennials will be explored in this study, to guide in how funeral services advertising can be engaging without being offensive.

2.2 Media Planning and Placement

Media planning is the process of using insights to place suitable messages on the appropriate platforms, at the right time, to achieve the desired reaction (AMASA, 2018), while media placement is the placement of advertising content on a specific platform or platforms (AMASA, 2018). The interconnected nature of these concepts in the context of this study necessitates that these be discussed jointly to understand the impact of traditional and online media on purchasing decisions.

2.2.1. Traditional Media

Traditional media refers to offline platforms such as television (TV), radio, out-of-home media, print, and personal selling (AMASA, 2018). Although there is a rapid growth in digital advertising; some traditional media, specifically TV (Gerber & Terblanche-Smit, 2012), out-of-home media, (Siddiqui, Tarani, Fatani, Raza, Butt & Azeema, 2016) and radio (Pitkänen, 2019) have been reported to aid in brand image creation and awareness. Additionally, outdoor marketing is affordable, wide-reaching, and provides 24-hour brand exposure. Additionally, out-of-home (OOH) advertising is an effective tool for advertising to millennials (Inman, 2018). This notion will be pertinent in the study's investigation, as it aims to understand the optimal media mix that funeral service businesses need to invest in to avoid penetration wastage (AMASA, 2018).

Print newspaper sales are declining both globally (Chyi & Tenenboim, 2019), and locally (BusinessTech, 2020). This has led to the closure of some of the major print publications in South Africa as the Covid19 pandemic accelerated pre-existing structural decline (BusinessTech, 2020). An understanding of media consumption patterns and popularity levels is pertinent to this study, as it aims to uncover the collaboration between general trends and actual audience perceptions and behaviours.

2.2.2. Online Media

Online media refers to digital platforms of communication and advertising such as social media, email, websites, internet marketing which includes pay-per-click (PPC), online billboards, and blogs (AMASA,2018). Online media has risen over the past two decades especially amongst millennials (Naumovska, 2017). The benefits of online media include cost effectiveness, interactive nature, targeted reach, feedback and timeous response (Kiang & Chi, 2021). Additionally, online media allows for the sharing of unlimited informative content across various platforms and is unlimited by space and time (Calli, 2016). An understanding of participants' relationship with the online platforms is central to this study, as it aims to investigate media effects on purchasing decisions. Furthermore, millennials are reported to prefer online media (Davidaviciene, Meidute-Kavaliauskiene & Paliulis, 2019), hence its understanding is central to the research investigation.

2.3. Millennials

Millennials are the generation born between the year 1980 to 2000 (Moreno, et al., 2017). Millennials form a significant part of the South African labour force (Maluleke, 2018). Thus, indicating that African millennials are a lucrative audience for brands including those in the funeral space, hence the group is relevant to the study.

Millennials are digital natives that spend a significant amount of time on online platforms, thus brand's need a strong online presence to connect with them (Davidaviciene et al., 2019). Marketers need to create strategic advertising content that is attention grabbing and storytelling to connect with millennials (Naumovska, 2017). This notion will be explored in this study, as to how messaging can be crafted to attract Zulu millennials, yet remaining inoffensive (Beard & Burger 2020).

Millennials connect with brands that are authentic, transparent, and honest about their services, and participate in meaningful social causes (Smilansky, 2016). Hence, the study will explore perceptions of cause related and transparent adverts in relation to purchasing decisions of funeral products.

2.4. Purchasing Behaviour

In this study the effect is investigated as the degree to which advertising results in purchase as the measure of success (AMASA, 2018). Millennial purchasing decisions are influenced by their relationship with the brand, and the brand's alignment to their values and self-expression (Ordun, 2015; Moreno et al., 2017). Therefore, brands that are targeting millennials need to go beyond products and services to build meaningful connections (Kotler and Kartajaya, 2011). The influence of brand connection on advertising perception and purchasing behaviour will be explored in the study, to ascertain the need for brand connection-oriented advertising.

Funeral services purchasing decisions were reported to be influenced by previous experience, word-of-mouth and perceived level of professionalism (Halpenny, 2013). Furthermore, in person and digital word-of-mouth are key drivers for millennial purchasing decisions, and outweigh direct advertising (Kotler and Kartajaya, 2011). Additionally, digital media channels assist in fostering engagement, and digital word-of-mouth (Kotler and Kartajaya, 2011), thus, making it a key component of advertising to millennials (Naumovska, 2017). Thus, the study will explore the impact of word-of-mouth on purchasing decisions of funeral services. Additionally, social media will be explored on its impact to drive funeral service purchases, as it has started to be the main purchase driver in millennials (Davidaviciene, et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Moreira, Fortes and Santiago (2017) state that positive brand experiences result in customers desiring to repeat the interaction with a brand, thus resulting in purchase. Additionally, in line with Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity model (Keller, et al., 2011), Moreira, et al. (2017) further indicate that brand experience is a key influencer in creating brand loyalty and equity. Brand experiences have also been stated to likely evolve into long term memories as brand associations (Moreira, et al., 2017). Hence, positive brand experiences may result in positive brand associations which positively influence purchasing decisions (Moreira,

et al., 2017). Due to its stated significance, the notion of brand experience in influencing purchase will be explored as a possible purchase influencer in the study.

2.5. Funeral Industry

Globally the funeral industry is reported to be lucrative and is becoming increasingly competitive, forcing competitors to differentiate on factors based on more than price and place (Hernández, 2013). Marketing is one of the ways brands in this industry can differentiate and showcase the quality of their services (Hernández, 2013). Advertising is used to highlight the brand's unique selling proposition in order to drive purchase (Percy, 2018). Thus, marketing is central to funeral services brands and should be investigated as per this research study. The industry is dominated with leading national brands such as Doves, as well as a variety of smaller businesses that operate on a more local scale (Dumisa, 2010). Thus, on a business level, this study aims to assist small funeral brands with creating strategic advertising messages and media mixes.

Funeral service practices are rooted in culture and personalization (Woodthorpe, 2017); for Zulu's funeral practices are rooted in the desire to respect the deceased through ancestral or Christian practices (Ngubane, 2019). The funeral industry has evolved to provide personalized services that align with the consumer's traditional requirements (Mcoyi, 2021). Traditionally the funeral services businesses operated as a purchase that took place once the death occurred, thus creating a sense of societal shame for individuals who did not afford a funeral (Woodthorpe, 2017). Consequently, Mcoyi (2021) stated that she started her funeral business with the primary motivation of providing dignified funeral services through monthly premiums, for people and families who would not ordinarily afford the cost of a funeral as a cash purchase at the time of death. Thus, the evolution of funeral financial planning through monthly premiums across the funeral industry in South Africa (Mcoyi, 2021) , has been instrumental in providing dignity for families and honour to the beloved deceased.

Zulus form a significant portion of the Kwa-Zulu Natal population, and though people are becoming more detached from their beliefs, Zulus are known to be unwavering in their tribal beliefs (Zondi & Zwane, 2016). Zulus who hold ancestral beliefs perceive dying is a gateway to becoming an ancestor, which involves a certain manner of conducting the burial (Nel, 2007). Thus, Zulus' choices of funeral service providers are reported to be motivated by religion and culture (Dumisa, 2010), thus the service providers need to understand and cater for the cultural requirements. For both Christian and ancestral believing Zulus, death is an important part of the life journey characterized with respect for the deceased (Zondi & Zwane, 2016). The cultural and religious factors affecting funeral services purchasing decisions will be explored in this study. Additionally, the element of respect in the Zulu culture will be explored in relation to advertising messages that best align with the values and beliefs of this people group.

Furthermore, in the Zulu tradition to die is seen as going home to be with your ancestors, an occasion worthy of dignity and respect through a proper burial (Ngubane, 2004). Zulus believe in treating the deceased's body with dignity and having a ritual of remembrance, with a set burial place where the deceased can be visited (Ngubane, 2004). This has influenced how some funeral businesses in Kwa-Zulu Natal have designed their products. Products such as inkomo (cow), catering, and tombstone plans have been added to funeral services (Mcoyi, 2021), so as to ensure that the funeral needs of Zulu consumers are met. The research study will explore the degree to which advertising of culturally linked products influences purchasing decisions in Zulus. This will also be explored in relation to its relevance to how Zulus connect with brands that accommodate their traditional beliefs.

Mcoyi (2021), further reported that funeral services are an essential need in the Durban Zulu community, as cash funerals are expensive and result in financial strain. Furthermore, through funeral insurance, customers are able to cover most of the family members for both basic cover and top-up plans such as catering which reduces the financial burden at the time of burial (Mcoyi, 2021). The concept of affordability is pertinent to the study as it investigates effective advertising

messaging for funeral services. Thus, the factor of advertising based on price point will be explored in light of its influence on purchasing decisions.

2.6. Conceptualization

This section details the research terminology descriptions pertaining to the methodological implementation of the study (Sequeira, 2021). As described by Sequeira (2021), this section specifies the precise meaning of terms and concepts in relation to how they are used and constructed in the research study.

The study employed the ontological tradition in the conceptualization process, as it describes concepts with the aim to explore experiences and perceptions (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). The interpretive assumptions epistemological framework was selected as the appropriate viewpoint through which concepts are defined in this study, as the research interprets ideas through subjective perceptions (Maree, 2019). This approach to conceptualization aligns with the overall research structure as it is interpretivist and quantitative in nature.

In accordance with the research question the following key concepts were defined; advertising, effect, media placement, media planning, millennials, purchasing behaviour, funeral industry, urban, Zulu and professions.

Advertising is paid marketing communications with a primary intent to create brand awareness, influence brand attitude, and it encompasses promotion to drive sales (Percy, 2018). Advertising is pertinent to the research study, as the study's main aim is to uncover the most effective manner to advertise, thus advertising is central to answering the research problem. Digital advertising should be the main focus when marketing to millennials (Naumovska, 2017), however, traditional media is also still relevant (AMASA, 2018). The study is an investigation of the most effective medium on which advertising is to be conducted for funeral services, hence factors of digital versus traditional advertising are of utmost importance to accomplishing the research objectives.

Effect refers to the degree to which the advertising placement achieves the desired communication results (AMASA, 2018). The concept of effect is of relevance to the study, as it investigates effect through the lens of purchasing as the desired response to advertising.

Media Placement refers to the placement of advertising content on a particular media platform or platforms (AMASA, 2018). Technology and communications advancements have transformed media placement to a human-centric approach of understanding how audiences perceive and respond to certain media in order to assist brands to reach their desired advertising response (AMASA, 2018). Media placement is a core factor that spearheads this study because of the impact of media placement on advertising outcomes, hence its importance to accomplishing the research objectives.

Media Planning is a critical component of marketing that utilizes customer insights to place appropriate messages, on the right platforms, and at the optimum time to achieve the desired reaction (AMASA, 2018). The study aims to uncover the optimal media planning strategies that may result in the best advertising outcomes; hence the concept of media planning is vital to answering the research question.

Millennials are the generation that was born between the year 1980 to 2000 (Moreno, Lafuente, Carreón & Moreno, 2017). Due to busy lifestyles, they often expect convenience, variety, and personalization from brands (Pate & Adams, 2013). They connect with brands that are informative, contribute meaningfully to society, and align with their values and lifestyles (Smilansky, 2016). The millennial generation is pertinent to the study as they are the group that will be investigated in order to uncover their perceptions of advertising messaging and platforms, hence fulfilling the research objectives.

Purchasing Behaviour is the evaluation period in which a customer forms preference towards a brand (Fung, 2021). Millennial purchasing behaviours are

noted to be influenced mainly by social media marketing, influencer marketing, and word-of-mouth (Davidaviciene et al., 2019). In this study, the concept of purchasing behaviour will be viewed through the lens of millennials as they are the subject of the study. Purchasing behaviour is central to this study as it investigates purchase as the main objective of the advertising efforts.

Funeral Industry, for the purposes of this study, funeral industry refers to funeral services providers for both insurance and burial services. Funeral businesses were traditionally family owned, and have now evolved to profitable, commercialised, and competitive businesses (Hernández, 2013). The research study's investigation is based on funeral services, thus the funeral industry, its structure and services are at the core of answering the research question and fulfilling the research objectives.

Urban is a complex term to define as it may refer to characteristics of places or people (Weeks, 2021). In the context of this study urban refers to a geographical residential location that is non-rural and non-township, thus referring to suburban and city dwelling. Additionally, the concept that urban areas are characterised with non-agricultural occupation (Weeks, 2021) is aligned with this study as the sample is centred around participants that hold professional positions as opposed to manual agricultural employment.

Zulu in the context of this study refers to the individuals belonging to the Zulu tribe, which primarily originates from the KwaZulu Natal province in South Africa (Harries, 1993). The study focuses on understanding the perceptions and priorities of the Zulu tribe in relation to funeral services as their requirements are stated to be influenced by their specific culture and religion dynamics (Ngubane, 2019). The narrowing down to one people group allows the study to have a specific focus and understanding against which findings were discussed.

Professional, for the purpose of this study refers to full time non-manual labour occupation that is obtained through tertiary qualifications. Defining the employment level and subsequent income bracket will allow the participants and findings to be

focused on socio-economic measure (SEM) 7 - 10 individuals (The Broadcast Research Council of South Africa, 2021). Thus, taking into account the impact of affordability and media access as participants would need to have access to TVs, radios, phones, internet, and travel on roads where they would be exposed to out-of-home advertising (The Broadcast Research Council of South Africa, 2021). This aligns with the research objectives as the study aims to understand perceptions of advertising placements for both traditional and digital platforms.

2.7. Theoretical Foundation

Valid theoretical frameworks are crucial in research as they provide validity and justification of the context and importance of the study (Lederman & Lederman, 2015). The research study is an exploration of the impact of advertising on purchasing decisions, thus the AIDA and Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) models are used to validify and contextualise the research.

The AIDA and Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) models are used as the guiding theoretical frameworks for the research study. The AIDA model is a marketing theory that describes how customers respond to advertising communication through a process of attention, interest, desire and action which is the decision to purchase (Strong, 1925b; cited in Rehman, Javed, Nawaz, Ahmed & Hyder, 2014). This theory is relevant to this study as it addresses the relationship between the advertising communications and purchasing decisions (Rehman, Javed, Nawaz, Ahmed & Hyder, 2014).

The AISDALSLove model which added "like, search, like and share" to the AIDA model is one of the models that has been proposed to accommodate the customer path in the current digital era (Wijaya, 2012). This model takes into account the assertion that the goal of advertising goes beyond mere persuasion for purchase, it also creates connections that lead to brand advocacy (Wijaya, 2012). This notion aligns with Keller's CBBE model which asserts that a customer's brand journey

stems from brand identity, to brand meaning, followed by brand response and finally brand resonance (Keller, et al., 2011).

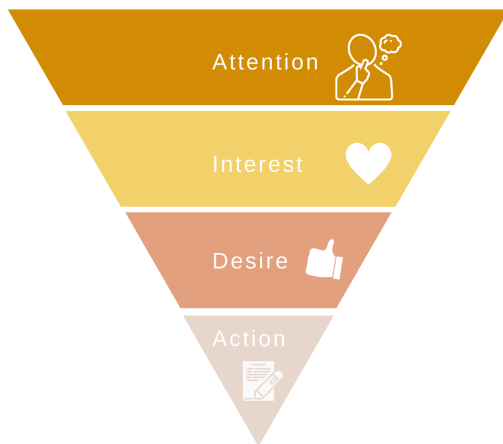


Figure 1: Illustration of the AIDA Advertising model (Strong, 1925b; cited in Rehman et al., 2014)

Based on the premise that brand equity is a function of the consumer's perceptions about a brand, the CBBE model cites that response to advertising is influenced by the perceived brand equity (Keller, et al.,2011). Hence, this model is relevant to guide the study's investigation, and reveal how brand equity influences response to funeral advertising. The notion that brand equity is the function of the customer's perception is supported by Keller, et al (2011), stating that marketing is human-centric placing brand equity power on customers.

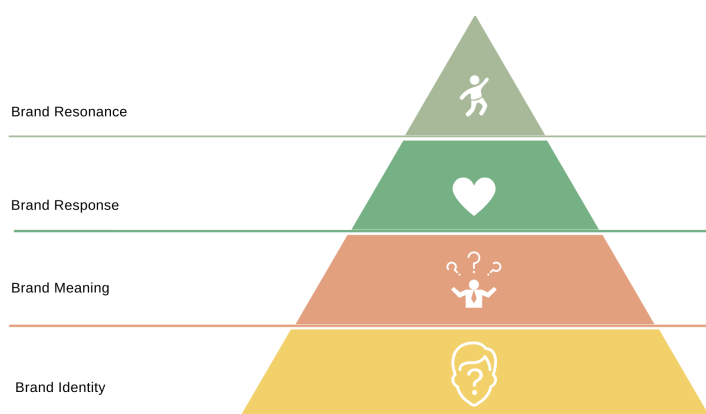


Figure 2: Illustration of Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (Keller, et al.,2011)

Advertising funeral services is necessary for business growth, however, information on this topic is limited (Beard & Burger, 2020). The lack of documentation in literature regarding advertising funeral services, indicates a knowledge gap in the marketing faculty (Coetzee, 2013). Hence, this study aims to contribute to closing this knowledge gap.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The goal of the study is to interpret ideas through subjective perceptions of a specific group, interpretivist research is an effective tool in unearthing knowledge pertaining to lived experiences (Maree, 2019). This chapter details the research design and methodology for the study. It resumes with a discussion of the research paradigm that was selected based on the research objective. It then discusses the research design which was utilised due to its suitability to research goal and in alignment with the research paradigm. The chapter then follows with a description of the study sample, population and data collection method to provide a comprehensive journey of the means and subjects from which data was obtained. Finally, the chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the data analysis process with specific examples from data to provide a clear trail of how data was analysed.

3.1. Research Paradigm

The interpretivist approach lens is the overarching framework used to develop, and understand knowledge in the research study. (Žukauskas, Vveinhardt & Andriukaitienė, 2017). This approach strives to comprehend and interpret human experiences and behaviours, and allows data to inductively reveal meaningful insights (Maree, 2019). The ethnography qualitative tradition is employed as the study aims to uncover perceptions (Bolderston, 2012). The epistemology selected utilised the interpretive assumption, as the study aims to interpret ideas through subjective perceptions of respondents (Maree, 2019).

Interpretivism will enable a subjective investigation of the participants' relationships with various traditional and digital media platforms, and how those relationships influence their processing of funeral advertising. The interpretivist lens will also allow for an examination of the type of funeral advertising content that best resonates with Durban's Zulu millennials. Furthermore, the interpretivism viewpoint will guide in the understanding of the behavioural effect of advertising placement and messaging on the participants' purchasing decisions of funeral products. Therefore, the interpretivist lens is suitable for the study as it aims to interpret perceptions and behaviours of Zulu millennials in relation to funeral advertising.

3.2. Research Design

The Qualitative research approach was used, as the study aims to obtain detailed information regarding the perceptions and behaviours of a specific target market (Aaker, Kumar, Day, & Loene, 2011). Specifically, exploratory quantitative design was deemed suitable to meet the research objectives, as it is structured to explore and uncover insights regarding the target audience's funeral service's needs, viewpoints, and experiences (Aaker, et al., 2011). Furthermore, the research design aligns with the selected interpretivist paradigm which allows for perceptions and behaviours to be understood inductively (Maree, 2019).

3.3. Population

A population is the holistic people group that can provide a researcher with the information required, and a target population group is the people that fall within the study's sample parameters (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Whereas, accessible population refers to the participants within the target population that the researcher is able to access to complete the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

The research study aimed to explore the effect of media placement and messaging of funeral services by African millennials of South African origin which are the wider population. Due to the small-scale nature of the study, it was further narrowed down

to professional Zulu millennials residing in urban Durban areas, which are the study's targeted population. The participants in the study were within the researcher's social or professional reach, thus forming the accessible population.

The study population consisted of Zulu males and females between the ages of 29 to 38 years of age, as per the study's age and gender parameters. The researcher's personal and professional acquaintances assisted in obtaining the relevant people who reside in the urban Durban areas. In line with the research objective, only millennial professionals from various fields were considered from the study's accessible population. The diligent accessible population selection ensured that the participants selected fell within the study's framework on all parameters to maintain validity.

3.4. Sampling

The quantitative nature of the research study within a limited timeframe necessitated that a small sample be utilized to collect and analyse data efficiently within the given time (Maree, 2019). The smaller sample enabled the researcher to obtain detailed data within a specified cultural context to meet the study's objectives (Maree, 2019). Additionally, the sample was in line with the qualitative approach of the study as it seeks to comprehensively understand and interpret human experiences and behaviours to reveal meaningful insights through detailed data (Maree, 2019). To accommodate the small research sample, in-depth questionnaires were used to obtain detailed quantitative data (Maree, 2019). The sampling and data collection methods were noted to be relevant for the study's interpretivist framework as it aims to obtain detailed information regarding the perceptions and behaviours of a specific target market (Aaker, et al., 2011).

The Non-probability convenience sampling method was used for the research study as the research is aimed at a very specific audience, to assess their judgments of and experiences of funeral services advertising (Aaker, et al., 2011). Additionally, due to financial and time constraints this sampling method was ideal for obtaining participants that fit within the research objectives (Aaker, et al., 2011). Participants

were selected through identifying persons that fit the sampling parameters within the researcher's social and professional accessibility.

The research sample comprised 10 millennials who are Zulu I professionals residing in urban Durban areas. The sample was made up of 50% males and 50% females to account for any gender related differences or biases (Rich-Edwards, Kaiser, Chen, Manson & Goldstein, 2018). The participants were preselected through personal and professional acquaintances to ensure that they meet the research qualifying criteria and parameters. 50% of the participants had funeral cover and while the other 50% did not have funeral cover. The evaluation of both groups, those with and without funeral cover, provided learnings regarding the types of advertising content and platforms that prompts purchase in the defined research group. Based on the findings, the study aims to describe the motivation as to why certain millennials in the study group have taken funeral covers and explain why others have not yet taken up funeral covers.

Additionally, only professionals residing in urban Durban participated in the study, as different residential demographics may have yielded different results that cannot be comprehensively addressed in this study. The income bracket and residential demographic was chosen based on convenience, and to enable the researcher to evaluate participants with similar affordability of funeral services, who likely have exposure to similar brands and advertising. This aligns with the need for this small-scale study to be as focused as possible considering the time limit for data collection and analysis (Maree, 2019).

The participants were from various professional fiends and holding different employment positions from professional photography, to administration clerk and small company directors, all with enough income to afford basic funeral cover. Demographically the participants were all full-time residents of various areas in Durban CBD and suburbs within the Durban area. Selecting participants within the same geographical area allowed for the exploration of data in a manner that is reflective of local brands, trends and regional advertising patterns. This focused

approach was selected to obtain rich, comparable data that is confined in order to conduct an analysis that efficiently answers the research questions and meets the study's objectives. This focus aligned with the need for this small-scale study to be as focused as possible for effective data collection and analysis within a limited time period (Maree, 2019).

3.5. Data Collection Method

Quantitative semi-structured interview respondents were 10 Zulu millennials who are professionals residing in urban Durban areas. Large qualitative studies conduct 50 - 60 interviews (Bolderston, 2012), therefore 10 participants participated in this small-scale study. In-depth semi-structured interviews were deemed to be appropriate for the study as they allow for questions posed in a manner that reveals beliefs, views and opinions regarding a topic (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014), which correlates with the objective of the study. The study data collection was conducted in the months of July and August 202. Although all interviews were meant to be conducted in person due to the unavailability of certain participants to make time for in person interviews, and some participants preferring online interviews due to the coronavirus, some interviews were conducted online. As a result, face to face interviews were conducted with 6 participants, while the remaining 4 interviews were conducted online via the Zoom platform. For all the in-person interviews, social distancing was adhered to and the venues strategically selected to ensure sufficient ventilation while maintaining privacy.

Once the identified participants had agreed to participate in the research study, the researcher communicated with them to book interviews. The study aims and consent forms, **annexure A and B**, were explained to participants prior to the interviews. In person participants signed the consent forms in person before starting the interview. Online participants were sent the consent forms, which they signed ahead of the interviews. The soft copies were sent back to the researcher who has printed and stored them securely.

An interview schedule as per **annexure C** was used to guide the interviews through a series of open-ended qualitative questions. The researcher conducted the role of interviewer which included taking notes of verbal and non-verbal cues, as well as recording the interviews for the analysis process (Maree, 2019). During the interview probing questions were asked to obtain elaborations on ideas, perceptions and thoughts in order to obtain detailed data for analysis.

In person interviews were audio recorded with a recorder, notes of non-verbal cues were noted by the interviewer during the interview. Online interviews were recorded for audio on the Zoom platform and here too the non-verbal cues were noted by the interviewer during the interview. The interview audio recordings were stored in a password protected laptop and a password protected cloud storage facility to maintain privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, the recordings have all been renamed in a code format that will indicate gender without revealing identifying details about the participants to further ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

Ethical Considerations

Careful consideration was taken to ensure that the data collection process was as non-intrusive as possible (Maree, 2019). Interview questions were designed in a manner that is inoffensive, concise and easy to comprehend (Maree, 2019) as per **annexure C**. The IIE Ethics Postgraduate Handbook was used to ensure that ethical practices such as getting ethical clearance, as per the **annexure D** were adhered to. Proper channels were followed to ensure that participants provide consent to participate and for the interviews to be voice recorded, as per **annexure A and B**. The data collection only commenced once ethical clearance was received, and the participants personal data was kept confidential to be known by the researcher and supervisor only (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014), as per the consent agreement. Collected data was stored in a password protected file, the transcribed data was evaluated by the supervisor to avoid distorting or flashing results (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). The data obtained from participants was only used for the academic purposes stated in the consent agreement to uphold ethical conduct (Maree, 2019).

3.6. Data Analysis Method

To obtain themes inductively from acquired data, the thematic analysis approach was used for this study (Maree, 2019). Thematic data analysis is a technique where patterns are noted in data analysis, these are then categorized into themes which are interpreted into phenomena which provide meaningful insights (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016). Thematic data analysis approach provides an accessible means of data analysis which is appropriate as the researcher is at an early research career phase (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). As per thematic data analysis principles, the data analysis process was conducted sequentially from “initialization”, “construction”, “rectification and finalization” (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016) as detailed below.

Initialization Phase

Once all the interviews were conducted, the audio recordings were saved and filed with the notes that were made during the interview. The initialization phase commenced with the researcher listening to the recordings to transcribe the interviews with the inclusion of non-verbal the notes taken during interviews (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014) on an online word document. The translating and trailing phase were moved up to the beginning of the process as participants spoke mainly IsiZulu whereas data was analysed in English. This included translating audio data shared in IsiZulu into English through paraphrasing and complementing meaning of words, phrases and sentences from IsiZulu to English. This allowed themes to be obtained through analysing language use (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016).

While transcribing, the researcher made reflective memo notes to keep track of impressions that arose from transcribing and reading through the text (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). The reflective notes were submitted with the transcripts as means of providing an audit trail of the systematic process used to analyse the data so as to increase trustworthiness (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

For the next step the researcher read and re-read through the transcripts to be familiar with the data and to highlight meaning units (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016), this included highlighting quotes that were possibly core representatives of themes. At this step of the process the researcher was cognizant to remain closely focused on the data to consider the emergence of possible meanings and the interplay between meanings from which themes may originate (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). Some of the quotes by participants that were identified to be of possible be of importance in the data analysis theme development are as follows;

- *“When it comes to the message my priority is dignity, because at the end of the day you want to give the person a respectable funeral...”*
- *“I prefer seeing funeral adverts on TV.”*
- *“I think funeral advertising would be better on social media because we are always on our phones...”*
- *“The live read ones do not resonate with me, I just feel like this one is just being paid to say this, like they are just doing their job.”*
- *“It's a combination of things, so word-of-mouth can start the thinking process that maybe I should consider this. But attending and seeing the final product would be what takes the goal home.”*
- *“I think English is easier to comprehend, because you find that with some things it's simpler to say them in English whereas in Zulu it may sound complicated.”*

In the next step, the researcher resumed identifying research relevant meaningful units and arranged them into word codes and phrases, thus arranging the data into manageable portions (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). The data code categories were arranged into; conceptual code, relationship code, participant perspective code, participant characteristic code, and setting code categories will be used (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). The main code categories were further broken down into further broader categories as guided by the themes that inductively arise from the data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). For example, *“testimonies, testimonials and people’s experiences”* were categorized in a single unit titled **“word of mouth”**. These code

classifications assisted the researcher to compare and classify data in detail prior to the analytical steps (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016).

Some of the quotes from which the “word of mouth” category was created are as follows;

- *“It's a combination of things, so word-of-mouth can start the thinking process that maybe I should consider this.”*
- *“Word-of-mouth has the greatest impact on how I chose funeral services brands.”*
- *“Experience matters the most and referrals from people in my life influences which company I would choose.”*

Construction Phase

In the construction phase the researcher reflected on the codes and categories created to identify and compare similarities and differences in order to create cluster codes in connection to the research question (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). At this phase the researcher applied a five-step approach of “classifying, comparing, labelling, translating and trailing, lastly defining and describing” (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016).

During the classification process the codes were arranged into a wide range of codes into similarity groups, codes that fit into more than one group were placed in the group that they best fit (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). This process was followed by comparing, where the researcher tested, scrutinized and compared codes to identify themes (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). The codes that appeared often in the data, and those that capture the essence of the research question were considered as possible themes (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). At this step the codes and categories were scrutinized to ensure consistency, and corroborate that coding and categories are well defined (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

At the labelling phase, the researcher labelled the transcripts based on the perceptions, feelings and meanings that arose during transcription (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). Phrases and sentences were used at the labelling stage as they revealed complete and meaningful ideas to the reader (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). An example of an interesting phrase regarding radio live read adverts which was contradictory to literature review was; *"The live read ones do not resonate with me, I just feel like this one is just being paid to say this, like they are just doing their job."* Additionally, another key phrase that confirmed existing literature was; *"...I think from word of mouth they are doing a good job."*, which became one of the significant themes confirmed by the research.

The defining and describing step was conducted where the researcher defined the identified themes in relation to existing literature and explained how each theme was analytically constructed (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). A theme map was used to describe themes, their relation to each other and to the research question to create their analytical interpretation (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). The main themes that were uncovered at this stage of the analysis were the dual media mix, informative messaging and advertising avoidance.

A collaboration of traditional and online media mix strategies is essential in advertising to connect with target audiences, and due to rapid growth in technology the complexity has increased significantly (AMASA, 2018). The theme of dual media mix were noted through these conflicting phrases regarding TV and social media;

- *"I prefer seeing funeral adverts on TV..."* - Lady A
- *"TV I block out easily, but when it comes to radio you don't jump to change the station when you hear an advert, so they would catch me on radio"* - Lady P
- *"I think funeral advertising would be better on social media because we are always on our phones."* - Gent X
- *"I wouldn't block it but I will pass it. [social media funeral services adverts]"*
- *"Do not mind seeing funeral adverts, let them be."* - Lady N2

Millennials are said to connect with brands that are informative, contribute meaningfully to society, and align with their values and lifestyles (Smilansky, 2016). This literature theme was uncovered in the data themes as participants stated in importance of informative, transparent content as per the examples below;

- *“Personally, it’s seeing the thing that I will be getting. So, a picture of the tables, tents, images of lowering the coffin, those kinds.”* Lady L
- *“It’s about when they pay-out, how quickly they pay out so that the ones left behind are not stressed.”* - Gent S
- *“What matters for me is the contractual agreement between me and the brand, they must list what I will get with the terms and conditions and we just stick to that agreement.”* - Lady A

The theme of advertising avoidance was revealed through the data, and supported the existing literature regarding advertising avoidance (Kaçınma, et al., 2015) being prevalent in millennials (Taylor, 2018). The theme of advertising avoidance was noted through these exemplar phrases;

- *“I just close internet adverts.”* - Gent S
- *“I am annoyed, I block it out, I am not there for it.”* - Lady P
- *“I wouldn’t block it but I will pass it.”* - Lady N1 [social media funeral services adverts]
- *“I would feel disturbed on YouTube and just press skip, but on TV I am forced to focus.”* - Gent T
- *“TV and Radio because you have no choice but to listen so you end up getting the information. Whereas on social media it’s easy for me to ignore and pass that post without even reading.”* - Lady N1

Rectification Phase

At this phase the researcher appraised the analysis process, then distanced for a period of time from the data to increase sensitivity and ensure that analysis is comprehensively conducted (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). The process of immersion

and distancing assisted the researcher to be able to be close enough to the data to create meaning, yet distant periodically to self-correct and critique the analysis (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). “Relating themes to established knowledge” was the next step in the rectification process, where the researcher was equipped to formulate themes, statements based on the literature review to create the research storyline (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016).

Finally, “stabilization” was conducted by the researcher to link the sub-themes to the main themes systematically to reveal context that explains the phenomenon (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). This provided integration and the analytical descriptions that will provide transparency for the reader to determine the level of trustworthiness achieved by the data analysis (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016).

Finalization Phase

The last phase of the data analysis process was the finalization stage, where the researcher developed a storyline that provides a holistic perspective of the phenomenon that emerged through themes (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). The researcher then used theoretical foundations, relationships between themes, and evidence-based data to create the storyline as a means of defining meaning and perceptions in a logical and coherent manner (Vaismoradi, et al., 2016). Based on literature and data collected the storyline was built along as follows;

We live in a fast-paced world where capturing the audiences of millennials is increasing in complexity, yet brands, including those of funeral services, still need to connect with this lucrative market. In a world cluttered with advertising, urban Durban millennials are saying “speak directly to me and needs, educate me on your services as simply and quickly as possible. When your advertising is harassing me on my socials I will block and skip because I am not here for that. If you want me to trust you and pay attention to you then speak through my friends and family. The proof is in the pudding, so show up through service delivery, and also make it easy for me to reach you and to work with you.”

Trustworthiness

The qualitative nature of the study required that trustworthiness be applied in the data analysis process to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Maree, 2019).

To ensure credibility, thematic data analysis, which is an established data analysis method, was used as it aligns with the research objective of inductively understanding perceptions and behaviours (Maree, 2019). Additionally, the data analysis process was transparently made available to the researcher's supervisors to ensure that the data is analysed and interpreted accurately (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

The research process leading to the findings was well documented to allow for readers to understand the extent to which the findings are transferable to other contexts (Maree, 2019). The research limitations are also available to the readers in order to guide on the parameters to which connections regarding the study's research findings can be made (Maree, 2019).

A clear path between data collection, analysis and theoretical links are documented to allow readers to understand the degree to which the findings are dependable (Maree, 2019). The data collection interviews were recorded, the data was comprehensively translated, transcribed and the thematic data analysis approach was applied diligently as per literature under the supervision of an experienced research supervisor to ensure that findings are dependable.

Confirmability was achieved through documenting a transparent path between the data collected and findings, including quotes from participants with clear context and motivation for the inclusion (Maree, 2019). This enables the readers to understand the researcher's interpretations and formulate their own. Additionally, data collection limitations are available to readers to guide on confirmability boundaries (Maree, 2019).

4. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter purposes to present and interpret the research findings. The chapter begins with a brief reflection on the research objective, in order to frame the findings in light of the predetermined goals. The following section details the themes obtained in the findings through various illustrations and detailed descriptions. The chapter then presents a discussion of the results interpretation as per the research objectives in correlation with the presented literature and theoretical frameworks. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings in direct correlation to the research problem.

The study set out to evaluate the effectiveness of funeral services advertising and messaging on influencing purchase. Subsequently the primary research objective was to evaluate the type of advertising channels and messaging that optimally influences urban Zulu Durban professional millennials' purchasing decisions of funeral services. Based on the research objectives, the following findings were obtained from qualitative data;

4.1 Presentation of Findings

2.1 OBJECTIVE 1: To describe the main media channels where urban Durban Zulu professional millennials are currently discovering funeral services information.

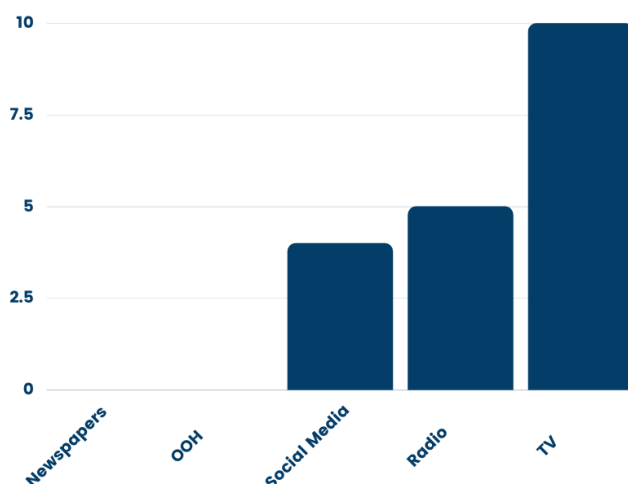
Data analysis pertaining to the first research objective revealed three main themes in relation to the media channels where the target demographic is discovering funeral services information, namely 'top of mind media', 'media preferences' and 'advertising avoidance'. The "top of mind" themes came through in data analysis for questions related to where funeral services information and advertising is and has been experienced by the participants. Additionally, the theme regarding "preference" was uncovered through questions that were related to the choice of media platforms

where the target audience would prefer to discover funeral services information. Lastly the 'advertising avoidance' theme was uncovered based on responses that indicated deliberate avoidance of advertising on certain media platforms. The theme is findings as discussed below;

TOP OF MIND MEDIA

Research findings revealed that traditional television, social media and radio are some of the main platforms that provide top of mind brand awareness, as presented on the graph below;

Top of Mind Media



100% Recall Clientele
TV Ad

Figure 3: Responses to question 1.1 regarding top-of-mind media platforms where participants had seen funeral services advertising (Hlophe, 2021)

It is reported that although there is rapid growth in digital advertising; some traditional media, specifically television (TV) (Gerber & Terblanche-Smit, 2012) and radio (Pitkänen, 2019) have been reported to aid in brand image creation and awareness. The research findings depicted on figure 3 indicate a strong correlation with existing literature regarding the effectiveness of TV and radio in creating brand

awareness, however, OOH was noted to not be effective. One of the brand's that had used TV, Clientele, was recalled by all the participants as a brand that provides funeral services. While 40% of participants recalled seeing various funeral services advertising on social media platforms with limited detail recall.

Findings indicated that none of the participants had top of mind recall from out-of-home media and newspapers. This finding is in contradiction to reports by Inman, (2018) who stated that out-of-home (OOH) advertising is an effective tool for advertising to millennials. However, the finding was in support of the reports that print media, specifically newspapers, is declining both globally (Chyi & Tenenboim, 2019), and locally (BusinessTech, 2020).

PREFERED PLATFORMS

In line with the platforms on which participants are discovering funeral services, an investigation into the platforms on which they would prefer to engage with funeral services advertising and information was conducted and the findings are depicted on the pie graph below;

Platform Preferences

Where would you want to see funeral policy adverts or information?

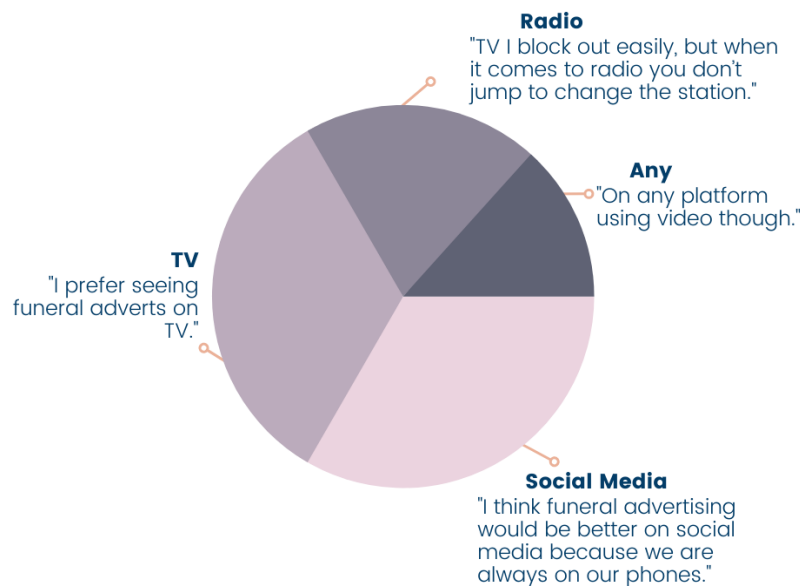


Figure 4: Responses to question 7.1 regarding platforms on which participants would prefer to engage with funeral services advertising and information (Hlophe, 2021)

The research findings indicated that millennials are diverse in their media consumption patterns and preferences. The above figure 4 illustrates the various preferred media with TV and social media preferred by 50% of the participants, while radio sat at 30%, and 20% indicated that any platform would be accepted as long as the content is presented in an interesting manner. Additionally, research findings indicated that 30% of participants preferred more than one media platform. These varying findings align with literature that states that the profession of media buying is a complex process of understanding the unique relationships that people have with various media in order to form meaningful brand connections (AMASA, 2018). As indicated by findings, brand's need to apply strategic media placement tactics across the traditional and social media platforms in order to create brand awareness and connect with the millennial group investigated in this study.

The strong preference towards discovering funeral services advertising on social media aligns with the notion that millennials are digital natives that spend a significant amount of time on social media platforms, thus brand's need a strong online presence to connect with them (Davidaviciene et al., 2019). However, the findings also indicate the relevance of traditional media in the millennial group as TV and radio is still preferred by a significant portion of the participants. Thus, supporting AMASA, (2018) stating that traditional media is still a vital component of media planning and should be taken into account to ensure that optimal advertising reach and effectiveness is accomplished.

It is worth noting that of the respondents that preferred to engage with funeral services advertising and information on social media, the main reasons included ease of engagement with brands and ability to see the brand reviews. In addition, the internet has created availability of information regarding brands which allows customers to compare and contrast between brands in order to make buying decisions, this shift dilutes the power of advertising messaging as clients are able to make more informed decision rather than take marketing messaging at face value (Kotler et al., 2017). This is in line with literature that states that the advancements in technology, especially in social platforms, has increased connectivity amongst customers creating a power shift from the brand managers to the consumers (Kotler & Katajaya, 2017).

ADVERTISING AVOIDANCE

In line with the reviewed literature regarding advertising avoidance, which is the act of deliberately avoiding advertising content (Kaçınma, et al., 2015). Research findings revealed advertising avoidance for both traditional and digital media, the word cloud below illustrates the themes from data in relation to the perceptions and actions taken in relation to advertising avoidance;

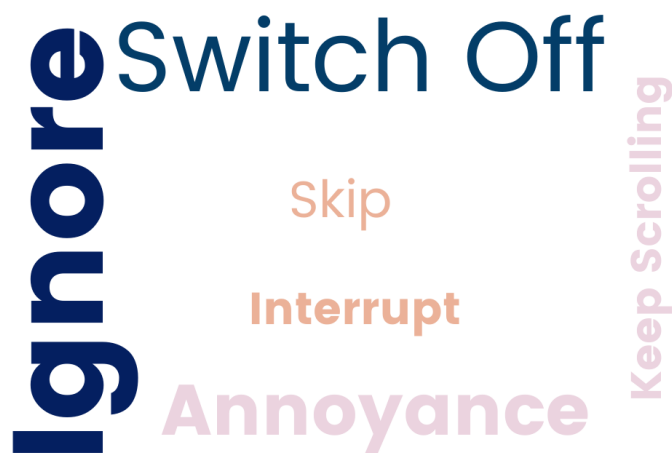


Figure 5: Word cloud illustrating findings related to the means and perceptions related to advertising avoidance (Hlophe, 2021)

As per figure 5, research findings revealed that participants avoided advertising in various manners from scrolling through on social media, switching channels when watching TV and skipping adverts on YouTube. Additionally, pop up internet banner adverts were adversely perceived by participants as one stated; “I just close internet adverts.” The findings correlate with literature which states that customers are being bombarded by constant advertising messages on a daily basis which is resulting in “advertising avoidance” on both online and traditional media (Kaçınma, et al., 2015), which is prevalent in millennials (Taylor, 2018). This finding further highlights the need for engaging, informative and personalized content when communicating with millennials on tradition and digital media.

2.2. OBJECTIVE 2: To assess the type of funeral services advertising messaging that resonates with the urban Durban Zulu professional millennial audiences.

Data analysis revealed for the second objective uncovered two themes in relation to funeral services messaging that connects with the target demographic, namely ‘informative personalised messaging’ and ‘effectiveness influencers’. The

‘informative personalised messaging’ theme was discovered in response to questions regarding the type of funeral services advertising that is relevant and speaks to the target audience’s needs. Whereas the ‘effectiveness influencers’ theme was revealed through data in response to questions pertaining to influencers of purchase and brand preference. The findings for objective two themes are as discussed below;

INFORMATIVE PERSONALIZED MESSAGING

In the investigation of funeral services advertising that resonated with the participants, it was discovered that product education is important in effectively advertising to the study group. The word and phrases image below depicts the factors that are important in line with educational advertising;



Figure 6: Word cloud illustrating findings related to preserved advertising messaging (Hlophe, 2021)

As per figure 6, research findings indicated that showcasing the actual services in action, and clearly communicating the service terms and conditions was regarded as important by the target audience. 100% of participants indicated that educational

product information is a priority when communicating funeral services. This notion confirms literature that states that millennials connect with brands that are authentic, transparent, and honest about their services (Smilansky, 2016). Thus, revealing the need for funeral services to be detailed with regards to what the services actually entail.

EFFECTIVENESS INFLUENCERS

The theme of effectiveness influencers emerged from the research findings which was further broken down to 'preference influencers' and 'purchase influencers'. As per the study parameter effectiveness is described both in relation to purchase as per the AIDA Advertising model (Strong, 1925b; cited in Rehman et al., 2014) and brand advocacy as per Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity model (Keller, Aperia & Georgson, 2011). Data revealed the various factors that influence brand preference and purchase and depicted by figure 7 and 8 below;

Brand Preferences

Influencers of Brand Preference

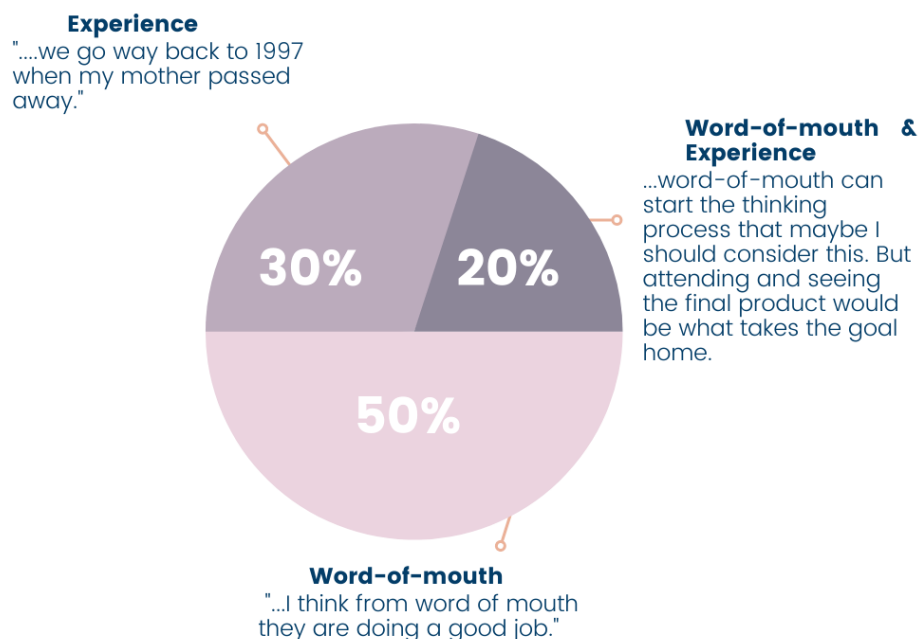


Figure 7: Depicting the findings for question 9 regarding preferred funeral services brands (Hlophe, 2021).

The study explored the influencers of funeral services brand preferences drivers in order to understand how advertisers need to communicate in order to create brand loyalty. As illustrated on the above figure 7, the findings revealed that 50% of the participants have formed brand preference based on word-of-mouth, while 30% was primarily influenced by experience and 20% reported that the combination of word-of-mouth and experience are equally important. These findings collaborate with literature which reports that funeral services purchasing decisions are influenced by previous experience, word-of-mouth and perceived level of professionalism (Halpenny, 2013). Additionally, the findings highlight the importance of positive brand experience in building funeral services brands in order to build brand advocacy (Keller, et al.,2011).

Purchase Influencers

Product Purchase Influencers

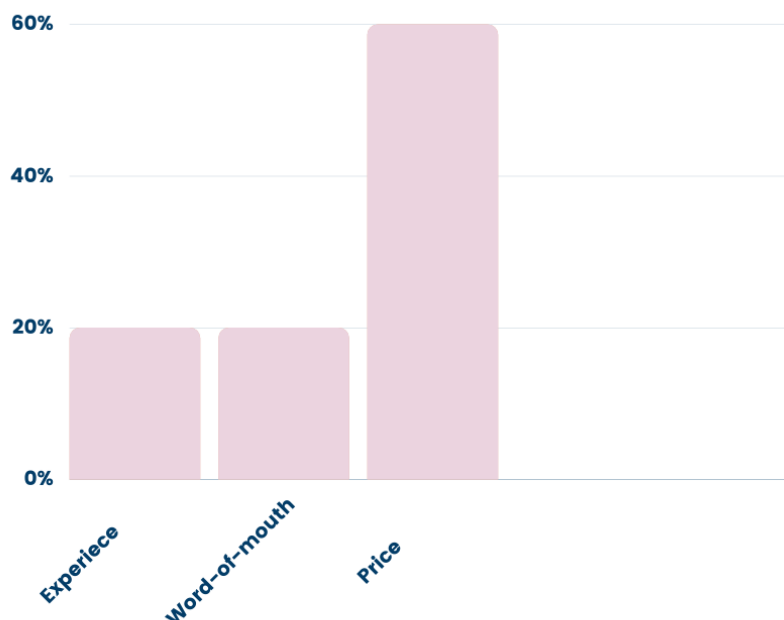


Figure 8: Depicting the findings for question 9 regarding funeral services purchased (Hlophe, 2021).

The study consisted of 50% participants with funeral cover and 50% without funeral cover. As depicted on figure 8, 60% of participants indicated price was the determinant for funeral services purchasing decision, while 20% stated that word of mouth influenced their purchase, and another 20% indicated that brand experience motivated their purchase. The findings revealed that the main purchase driver for funeral service is price, followed by word-of-mouth and experience. These findings support literature that states price perception (Fung, 2021) is a significant influencer in purchasing decisions. Additionally, findings collaborate with literature stating that millennials rely significantly on word-of-mouth when making a purchasing decision (Naumovska, 2017). Lately, findings regarding brand experience being vital supports the notion that positive brand experiences result in customers desiring to repeat the interaction with a brand (Moreira, et al., 2017). These findings require further investigation as the current study combined cash pay-out funeral services and burial services. This may have influenced the purchase divers as cash outs services appear to be driven by the premium prices, whereas, burial services purchases appear to be quality and service driven. Thus, a deeper investigation is required in this regard in order to investigate the two types of funeral products individually to obtain a more accurate indicator for purchase motivations.

The findings, however, revealed that none of the participants were fully without cover, as 100% of them were covered in some capacity by family members. Thus, indicating that funeral cover is common and viewed as a necessity within the study group.

As illustrated on graph 3 and 4, none of the participants reported that advertising had not determined their brand preference or purchasing decisions. Thus, aligning with literature which states that in person and digital word-of-mouth are key drivers for millennial purchasing decisions, and outweigh direct advertising (Kotler & Kartajaya, 2011).

4.2. Interpretation of Findings

4.2.1. QUESTION 1: Which are the main media channels where urban Durban Zulu professional millennials are currently discovering funeral services information?

The research findings to the first research question supported literature in that it revealed that millennials that formed part of the study have varying relationships with media platforms. While there were variations in where the participants had seen funeral services advertising and information, results indicated that television, radio and social media are the main platforms on which funeral services information is being discovered. The combination of traditional and digital media consumption correlates with literature by AMASA (2018) reporting the need for both traditional and digital media in advertising.

Additionally, to better understand the relationships that the participants have with various media, their preferred media platforms for receiving funeral services information and advertising were explored. Similarly, to the findings regarding funeral services information discovery, here again participants preferred a mix of both traditional and digital media. This phenomenon further supports the need for a strategic media mix when communicating funeral services to the studied millennial group. Interestingly, the research findings indicated that traditional TV is preferred equally to social media, followed by radio. This aligned with literature that emphasizes the importance of understanding consumer behaviours in relation to media platforms is vital in order to create intelligent strategies, connect with consumers and avoid wastage (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999; cited in Rehman, et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the preference towards obtaining funeral services information on social media was stated to be driven by a number of factors including the ability to engage conveniently with brands and access reviews on comments sections. These reports collaborate with literature stating that online media has risen over the past two decades especially amongst millennials (Naumovska, 2017) with the attractive

benefit of being interactive and its ability to provide timeous responses (Kiang & Chi, 2021). While on the other hand, participants also stated that they focus on adverts on radio and TV as well, which further supports the need for a strategic media mix (AMASA, 2018). The findings affirm that understanding how to appropriately use both traditional and digital media is essential when advertising funeral services to the target demographic. This complexity aligns with the report that millennials are a diverse segment requiring complex marketing and media mix strategies (Naumovska, 2017).

4.2.2. QUESTION 2: What type of funeral services advertising messaging resonates with the urban Durban Zulu professional millennial audiences?

Overall findings revealed that the target audiences prefer funeral services advertising that is informative, creative, simple and engaging. Thus, aligning with existing literature that explains that marketers need to create strategic advertising content that is attention grabbing to connect with millennials (Naumovska, 2017).

Furthermore, the participants indicated that funeral services messages would resonate better if the messaging were to be directed to millennials in an age and needs specific manner, as opposed to a blanket approach. Findings also indicated that the preference is to keep the messages summarized. Additionally, Zulu is not the preferred language of communication, as English and mixing languages was reported to be simpler to grasp. This is in line with the report that due to busy lifestyles, millennials often expect convenience and personalization from brands (Pate & Adams, 2013). Convenience in a sense that the message is delivered in a simple manner that still covers the pertinent details, and personalization in a manner that the messages need to speak to the specific group directly.

With regards to the type of the format in which funeral services advertising messages should be delivered, most participants preferred interesting visuals with easy-to-follow text and video. To overcome advertising avoidance marketers, need to create strategic advertising messaging that is attention grabbing (Rojas-Mendez &

Davies 2017). These findings confirm literature that states that high impact visuals, messaging draws attention in millennials (Taylor, 2018). This factor is vital as advertising avoidance was reported on both traditional and digital media, thus personalised and engaging content is required to optimise funeral services advertising for the target demographic.

Findings also indicated that funeral services brands need to detail their services in their advertising messaging for transparency purposes. Additionally, there is preference for brands to speak for themselves in their own voice especially when it comes to radio advertising. This was motivated mainly by participants indicating that the brand's adverts may be more engaging, whereas the DJ could be reading out something that they may not even believe in. Furthermore, the authenticity of testimonials was noted to be questionable by most participants. These findings are crucial for marketers to note as per report by Smilansky, (2016) stating that millennials connect with brands that are authentic, transparent, and honest about their services. Therefore, funeral services brands need to be cautious when using testimonial and live read advertising strategies when advertising to the study group.

An investigation into the factors that contributed to brand preference indicated that word-of-mouth and brand experience were the most influential factors in urban Durban Zulu professional millennials. However, of the participants that had purchased funeral cover, affordability was the primary influencer for cash pay-out funeral services. While those with burial services funeral cover prioritised word-of-mouth and brand experience. The findings regarding burial funeral services purchasing decisions correlate with reports that funeral services purchasing decisions are influenced by previous experience, word-of-mouth and perceived level of professionalism (Halpenny, 2013). Thus, indicating that above advertising efforts, funeral services brands need to focus on positive brand experiences in order to build brand advocacy (Keller, et al., 2011). Furthermore, in person and digital word-of-mouth are stated to be key drivers for millennial purchasing decisions, outweighing direct advertising as stated by Kotler and Kartajaya (2011). Additionally, Fung (2021) defines purchasing behaviour as the evaluation period in which a customer forms

preference towards a brand. Thus, the preference towards certain burial brands may lead to purchase for participants that had cash pay-out covers due to the stated relationship between preference and purchase.

Although the study group consisted of 50% males and 50% females to account for gender biases (Rich-Edwards, et al., 2018), there were no notable gender differences noted in the findings. Findings to the second research question indicates that digital and traditional marketing is required to coexist strategically in a manner in order to build connections with customers (Kotler & Kartajaya, 2011). Brand advocacy is the ultimate goal for brand building, (Keller, et al., 2011) and millennials rely significantly on word-of-mouth, as per research findings. Therefore, funeral services brands need to ensure positive brand experiences to build brand advocacy to grow the brand and subsequently the business.

4.3 Research Problem Findings

Advertising is a key component of marketing used to drive purchase (Percy, 2018), however, there is limited data on how to strategically advertise funeral services (Coetzee, 2013). Additionally, media buying has transformed into a complex process of using strategic media mixes to form meaningful brand connections (AMASA, 2018). In line with this problem statement, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between advertising placement, and messaging on purchasing decisions of funeral services for urban Durban Zulu professional millennial audiences.

Findings revealed that price, word-of-mouth and brand experience are key drivers for the target demographic's purchase and preference decisions, outweighing direct advertising as per (Kotler & Kartajaya, 2011). These findings are reflective of literature that states price perception (Fung, 2021) and that word-of-mouth is influential in millennials purchasing decisions (Naumovska, 2017). Additionally, the findings support that positive brand experiences result in customers desiring to

repeat the interaction with a brand (Moreira, et al., 2017), thus prompting the desire to purchase from the brand that previously provided a positive interaction.

Research findings revealed that the target demographic is complex and diverse in their media consumption and preferences, as noted in AMASA, (2018). TV and radio were noted to still be relevant for creating brand awareness as stated by AMASA, (2018). However, digital media was preferred for ease of engagement with brands as reported by Kotler and Kartajaya, (2011).

With regards to the type of content that resonates with the target audience, findings revealed that informative, personalised creative messaging resonates with this group. This supports literature that states that advertising entails the use of creative strategies to create brand and product awareness, share brand and product information in order to persuade consumers (Terkan, 2014). Therefore, findings revealed that funeral services brands require a diverse media mix, and creative, personalised and informative content in order to reach and connect with urban Durban Zulu professional millennials.

5. LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the various limitations of the study, this section is vital in placing the research findings in context and presenting possible resolutions to the limitations (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). Additionally, presenting limitations is crucial to indicate the validity, reliability and credibility of the work (Ioannidis, 2007). The chapter details the various study limitations pertaining to research design, data collection, data analysis, and presents the steps taken to attempt to reduce limitations.

The nature of the research study is exploratory in nature with the aim of understanding perceptions and behaviours, thus the above stated qualitative research design method is suitable for the study. However, due to the subjective nature of qualitative research the findings obtained will not be generalized to a larger population group (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Additionally, qualitative research

does not allow for reliability and validity to be measured, thus trustworthiness will be applied to the study to counter this limitation (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Due to time limitations and research scope at honours level, the sample group selected was narrow. Thus, findings cannot be generalized to the population of Zulu millennials outside of the Durban urban areas and the selected income brackets (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). This factor limits the contribution that the study will make to the research community, and will necessitate that further research be conducted in order to make a significant impact in the topic.

Non-probability convenience sampling was used in the study due to the researcher's time and access constraints (Aaker, et al., 2011), thus the results may be biased as the sample group will be professionally or socially linked to the researcher (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Although in-depth, semi-structured interviews are a relevant data collection tool for the purposes of the study, the tool depends on the researcher's abilities to conduct the interview (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014). Therefore, the researcher's skills may impact the manner in which data is collected. Additionally, the researcher works for an advertising agency which deals with advertising for funeral services which may lead to cognitive bias in research findings (Maree, 2019). Additionally, due to the coronavirus pandemic a certain portion of the interview was done in person and another portion was conducted online. Thus, the different data collection environments may have impacted the findings. To counter this challenge, the researcher took detailed notes on the non-verbal cues both in person and online in order to capture the respondents as accurately as possible.

To counter the above stated limitations, trustworthiness and transparency was applied throughout the research study under the guidance of the research supervisor and academic lecturer. (Du Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

6. CONCLUSION

There is limited literature within the faculty of marketing regarding the advertising of funeral services (Coetzee, 2013). While, the funeral industry is growing in its competitiveness and therefore funeral brands need to differentiate their advertising (Hernández, 2013). The necessity of this unsought product cannot be underestimated as all individuals will eventually require such services. Thus, advertising funeral services is ethically sound as it is the promotion of services that are genuinely required (Coetzee, 2013). Therefore, funeral services advertising needs to be investigated for the benefit of both the businesses and those requiring the services.

Advertising outcomes are directly impacted by the customer's relationship with the media platform and their preferences of advertising messaging and execution (AMASA, 2018). The rapid growth of digital media use in millennials (Naumovska, 2017), and the benefits of traditional media (AMASA, 2018), needs to be understood from a behavioural perspective of the audiences in order to create the appropriate media mixes for optimum advertising results. Additionally, millennials are attracted to interesting content (Taylor, 2018), however, unsought services are required to be advertised in an inoffensive manner (Coetzee, 2013). Hence, it is essential for marketers to understand this balance in order to influence purchase intentions.

Study findings indicated that price, word-of-mouth and brand experience are key determinants in funeral services purchasing decisions. As 60% of participants indicated price was the determinant for funeral services purchasing decision, while 20% stated that word of mouth influenced their purchase, and another 20% indicated that brand experience motivated their purchase.

Various factors have been identified that influence millennial behaviours and purchasing decisions. Additionally, factors of religion, tradition and burial affordability impact have been noted to be vital in to funeral services product design for the target demographic. The study thus concludes that a diverse media mix, and creative

informative content is required to connect with the target demographic. Additionally, funeral services brands desiring to connect with this target audience require marketing strategies that promote word of mouth, communicate price with a clear indication of value for money, and to be transparent regarding the services.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the presented study and conclusion the recommendations are presented in this section to detail how the study can be further expanded, and or improved.

The funeral services industry functions on two main purchase models namely cash and premium payments (Mcoyi, 2021). These different purchasing modes result in differences in purchasing patterns driven by various motivators. Thus, further studies into this topic may benefit from evaluating the specific purchasing model individually to obtain more accurate results regarding purchase experiences and motivators. This would also assist in understanding the appropriate media platforms and messaging depending on the target client's funeral services purchasing model.

Additionally, as previously stated the study was conducted using a small sample group using non-probability convenience sampling. Therefore, further research using a larger population group and a more subjective sampling method is still required in order to obtain results that can be generalised for larger population groups.

The funeral industry is a growing and lucrative market (Coetzee, 2013), while funeral services are currently more flexible and personalised (Woodthorpe, 2017). Therefore, further studies are required in this area to assist funeral services businesses to advertise more effectively. Additionally further studies can tap into other aspects related to the topic such as the evolving customer needs within this field, to assist in shaping the industry based on customer centred needs obtained through data.

Although the funeral industry is considered to be a dismal trade (Coetzee, 2013), the services are a necessity. Therefore, marketers have a responsibility to understand and serve this industry as best as possible using sound research. This study hopes to have contributed to this specific segment of research.

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Annexure A - Consent Form for Participation

CONSENT FORM

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Gugulethu Hlophe and I am a student at Vega School Durban am currently conducting research under the supervision of Sarah Freestone about the Effect of Advertising Placement and Messaging on Urban Durban Zulu Millennials' Purchasing Decisions of Funeral Services. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of how advertising influences the buying of funeral products. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because you fit the study's demographic profile. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to explain how the research interviews will be done. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your perceptions. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.
Do I have to participate in the study?
• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary; • If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so; • Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.
Will my identity be protected?
I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Vega School Durban will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.
What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication qualification. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

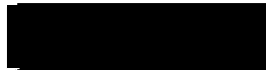
What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Gugulethu Hlophe



The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Sarah Freestone



Participant or respondent consent

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Gugulethu Hlophe about the Effect of Advertising Placement and Messaging on Urban Durban Zulu Millennials' Purchasing Decisions of Funeral Services.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

Signature	Date

Annexure B - *Consent for Audio Record*

CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to allow Gugulethu Hlophe to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the Effect of Advertising Placement and Messaging on Urban Durban Zulu Millennials' Purchasing Decisions of Funeral Services. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that: • My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private; • The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer; and • Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.	
Signature	Date

Annexure C - Interview Schedule

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

INTRODUCTION

Establishing Rapport - My name is Gugu, I am currently studying through Vega. I am doing this interview as part of my honours research.

Purpose - I would like to ask you questions about your views and opinions of funeral services adverts. This information will be shared in the research with the Vega learners and educators.

Time Frame and Structure - The interview will be around 40min to an hour. I will ask you a question and you will please answer as openly and honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers, I am just looking to understand your views. I will be recording this session as per the recording consent form that you have signed. The recording is for me to reflect back to make sure that I have captured the information accurately. Before we start I need to verify your details;

Demographics

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Suburb: _____

Current Employment Position: _____

[Transition: I will start by asking you about the different places where you have seen funeral services advertising]

A: FUNERAL SERVICES ADVERTISING PLATFORMS

1. Advertising Platforms:

1.1 Of the top of your head where have you seen or heard funeral advertising? [TV / radio / OHH / Digital]

1.2 Why do you think those adverts made an impact, how come you can still remember them?

2. Radio:

2.1 Are there any funeral service radio adverts that you remember?

2.2. Did that advert change the way you look at funeral services? [Did it make you want to buy].

2.3 Which radio station and shows do you listen to, and why? [Elaborate as much as possible]

2.4 With regards to funeral services radio adverts, what changes your attention more, a recorded advert or a live read from a Dj?

3. Out Of Home:

3.1 Are there any funeral billboards, street poles or adverts that you remember?
[Describe the advert / do you remember the brand - who was the advert for]

3.2. What did you think about the advert? [Did it make you want to buy].

4. TV:

4.1 Are there any funeral service TV adverts that you remember? [Elaborate on why the advert is memorable]

4.2. Did that advert change the way you look at funeral services? [Did it make you want to buy].

4.3 Which TV channels and shows do you watch, and why? [Elaborate as much as possible]

5. Social Media:

5.1 Are there any social media funeral adverts that you remember? [On which social media platform did you see the advert]

5.3 What did you think about the advert? [Did it make you want to buy / other response].

6.4 When you see funeral service adverts pop up on your social media feed, how do you feel? [Okay, annoyed, do not pay attention, wish I would not see them]

6. Other Digital:

6.1 When using the internet, do any adverts pop up? [Tell me what you remember about the advert].

6.3 What did you think about the advert? [Did it make you want to buy / what was your immediate thought].

6.4 When you see funeral service adverts pop up when using the internet how do you feel? [Okay, annoyed, do not pay attention, wish I would not see them]

7. Platform Preference

7.1 If you were to choose, on which platform would you want to see funeral services, adverts or information?

[Transition: We will now talk about different adverts and your preferred funeral service brands]

B: FUNERAL SERVICES ADVERTISING MESSAGES AND CONTENT

8. Advertising Messages:

8.1. What type of funeral advertising message makes you want to enquire more and why? [Talking about affordability / taking care of your family / not being a burden / other...elaborate]

8.2a What type of funeral images or videos do you relate with? [Happy people such as families / actual funeral visuals / testimonials/ other...elaborate].

8.2b Probe into the preferred mode of content such as images, videos, animation...and how that impacts purchasing decisions.

8.3 When an advert message is written in your native language, how does it impact the way you receive the message?

C: PREFERRED FUNERAL SERVICES BRANDS AND CULTURAL NEEDS

9. Funeral Brands:

9.1 When I say funeral services or funeral cover, what is the first brand that comes to mind? [Elaborate].

9.2 Do you have funeral cover? [Which one and why] If not, which one would you choose? [Elaborate on the motivation] - Discuss the impact of word-of-mouth, such as family, friends and neighbours.

9.3 The funeral cover that you prefer, how did you come to hear about it? [Discuss factors that have created the connection and preference]

10. Cultural Needs:

10.1a When choosing a funeral service provider do cultural or religious factors factor in your decision? [Elaborate].

10.2b Probe on motivators and details.

D: CLOSING

11. Closing:

11.1 Thank you very much for making time to assist with this interview. Is there any information that we have not covered that you think would be helpful?

Annexure D - Vega Ethics Checklist



Vega Ethics checklist: RESE8419/p/w

Student Details												
Title	Prof	☐	Dr	☐	Ms	☐	Mrs	☒	Mr	☐	Mx	☐
First name(s)	Gugulethu											
Last name(s)	Hlophe											
Title of study	An Exploration of the Effect of Advertising Placement and Messaging on Urban Durban Zulu Professional Millennials' Purchasing Decisions of Funeral Services.											
Qualification	BA Honours in Strategic Brand Communication											

Supervisor Details												
Title	Prof	☐	Dr	☐	Ms	☒	Mrs	☐	Mr	☐	Mx	☐
First and last names	Sarah Freestone											

Co-supervisor Details (if applicable)												
Title	Prof	☐	Dr	☐	Ms	☐	Mrs	☐	Mr	☐	Mx	☐
First and last names	Click or tap here to enter text.											

Explaining your research process						
Philosophical paradigm	Positivism	☐	Interpretivism	☒	Constructivism	☐
	Realism	☐	Objectivism	☐	Pragmatism	☐
	Functionalism	☐	Subjectivism	☐	Humanist	☐
	Other:					
Research design:	Interview	☐	Questionnaire (self administered)	☒	Focus group	☐
	Ethnography/ Observation	☐	Artefact analysis/website/ social media analysis	☐	Action Research	☐
	Case Study	☐	Design Research (Practice based)	☐		☐
	Other (if so, state)					
Brief explanation of the population and number of participants/items						
- Zulu Millennials - Residing in urban Durban areas - Employed professionally - 50% Male and 50% Female 50% with funeral cover and 50% without funeral cover						
Target group sampling methods/artefact (No under 18's or vulnerable groups allowed)	Purposive	☐	Random	☐	Snowball	☐
	Convenient	☒	Stratified	☐	Census	...
	Explain selection process					Click or tap here to enter text.

Ethics		
Documentation submitted with proposal	Gatekeeper's letter (institutional consent)	☐
	Completed Annexure E if you conduct research on IIE sites/students/staff	☐
	Instrument(s) (interview schedule or questionnaire)	☒
	Participant or respondent consent form	☒
	Audio-visual consent form (if applicable)	☒

Campus ethics committee recommendation	
Proposal has been reviewed by the supervisor and necessary ethics considerations have been included.	
☐ Accepted as is and provide letter ☐ Accepted with provisions: Nature of provision: e.g. Instrument is not sufficient / included and need to be signed off by the supervisor ☐ Major issues: Student should not continue with fieldwork. Actions to be taken: Click or tap here to enter text.	
Supervisor signature	
	Click or tap to enter a date.
Co-supervisor/Campus ethics panel member signature	
	Click or tap to enter a date.

Annexure E - Concept Document

Research Purpose/ Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors/ Sources	Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method(s)	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between advertising placement, and messaging on purchasing decisions of funeral services for urban Durban Zulu professional millennials audiences.	Which advertising channels and messaging optimally influences urban Zulu Durban professional millennials' purchasing decisions of funeral services?	The funeral industry is competitive, thus funeral services businesses need to be equipped with the knowledge of how to best advertise strategically to remain competitive and viable.	(Strong, 1925b; cited in Rehman et al., 2014) (Keller, Aperia & Georgson, 2011)	Theme 1: Marketing communication. Theme 2: The changing media trends. Theme 3: Evolution of advertising. Theme 4: Millennials, their media consumption and purchasing behaviours.	Paradigm: Interpretivist approach has been selected for the research study as it aligns with the research objectives that it enables for the exploration of social descriptions that inductively reveal meaningful insights (Maree, 2019). Epistemology: Interpretive - interpreting ideas through subjective perceptions of respondents.	Qualitative Population - Zulu Millennials - Residing in urban Durban areas - Employed professionally - Male and Female	In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to obtain research data, this tool allowed for rich insights to be obtained from a small sample of participants (Boyce & Neale, 2006),	- Consent compliance - Researcher biases - Ensuring confidentiality - Sensitivities around the topic of death - Ensuring that questions are clear, consider and easy to comprehend	Findings indicated that price, word-of-mouth and brand experience are key determinants in funeral services purchasing decisions. Additionally, a diverse media mix, and creative informative content is required to connect with the target demographic.	Further research using a larger population group and a more subjective sampling method is still required in order to obtain results that can be generalised for larger population groups. Additional research into this topic may benefit from evaluating the specific purchasing model, cash vs monthly premiums, individually to obtain more accurate results regarding purchase experiences and motivators.
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/ Hypotheses/ Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method(s)	Limitations	Key Contribution	
Advertising is a key component of marketing used to drive purchase (Percy, 2018), however, there is limited data on how to strategically advertise funeral services (Coetzee, 2013) to millennials.	Which are the main media channels where urban Durban Zulu professional millennials are currently discovering funeral services information? What type of funeral services advertising messaging resonates with the urban Durban Zulu professional millennial audiences?	- Advertising - Effect - Media Placement - Media Planning - Millennials - Purchasing Decisions - Funeral industry - Urban - Professional	AIDA is a marketing theory that describes how customers respond to marketing communication. (Strong, 1925b) The CBBE model cites that response to advertising is influenced by the perceived brand equity (Keller, et al., 2011).	Theme 5: Media buying trends Theme 6: Funeral services advertising trends	Ontology: Realism - the interpretation of the world, specifically by Durban millennials regarding funeral services, and media platforms.	Non-probability convenience sampling - to assess judgements of and experiences 10 In-dept semi-structured interviews Participants 50% male & 50% female 50% with funeral cover and 50% without funeral cover	The research insights were obtained inductively from data obtained, through thematic analysis approach (Maree, 2019)	- Qualitative research: therefore, cannot be generalized to more contexts. - Time limit: study is to be completed within a few months. - Convenient Sampling: may be prone to biases.	- Uncovered purchase and brand preference influencers. - Provided media buying insights that can be used within the funeral services industry. - Assisted with intel regarding millennial relationships with media platforms.	further studies can tap into other aspects related to the topic such as the evolving customer needs within this field, to assist in shaping the industry based on customer centred needs obtained through data.