



The Risk of Rain.

By

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Abstract:

Shock marketing is a form of advertising/marketing strategy that intentionally shocks and offends its consumers by defying accepted societal norms. It is primarily intended to cut through dull and repetitious and recurrent content to draw attention to a particular issue, product, or service.

The main argument of the study was to showcase that shock marketing could in fact be used as a method for both non-profit and for-profit organisations, regardless of operational capacity and scale to increase consumer attention surrounding the brand, its merchandise and activities, despite a positive or negative increase in brand image reception.

The identified problem that the research aimed to fix was, that the existing waters of online content are too bountiful for the average consumer to ever engage with, let alone the capacity to retain it; thus, organisations need to rely on ultramodern tools and frameworks such as shock marketing to engage with their audience in order to ensure future success.

The approach to this problem was the creation of online surveys, used to gather findings and insights that could be analysed quantitatively, which proved if shock marketing could be utilised to increase consumer attention compared to traditional methods.

From the data analysis and findings, the supporting evidence suggested that the reactions towards shock marketing content were mixed, but often positive and gender did not play a major role in the overall result.

Key words: Shock Marketing/ Shock Advertising, Selective Perception, Traditional Marketing, Consumer attention, consumer behaviour, customer retention, brand recall, brand image, non-profit, for-profit.

Declaration:

I, Julian James Gorrie, hereby declare that the research report submitted for the BCOM Honours in Strategic Brand Management to The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for a postgraduate qualification.

Signature: _____

Date: 05/ 12/ 2022

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Title:

The Risk of Rain: Shock marketing tactics, the link between customer behaviour, consumer attention and consumer retention.

Chapter 1: Introduction to research

This chapter aims to introduce the research topic by explaining the context which inspired it. In addition, this chapter aims to explore the problem identified, together with the rationale behind the research and the purpose for why the research is being conducted. Furthermore, this section aims to list the questions the research aims to answer, as well as the hypothesis, being a proposition made as a basis for reasoning.

Contextualisation of Research:

The modern consumer is inundated with a multitude of messages in the advertising space due to social media and omnichannel marketing tactics (LaBerge, O'Toole, Smaje & Schneider, 2020), which large brands and corporations seem to dominate (LaBerge, et al, 2020). Subsequently the ability for brands to grab consumer attention is one of the most valuable “currencies” of the digital age (LaBerge, et al, 2020).

As a result, many companies including large firms as well as Small and Medium Enterprises (henceforth SMEs) in the current climate lack distinct innovative marketing initiatives such as shock marketing to influence customers' purchasing behaviour in regard to better acquisition of customer attention, loyalty and retention (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003). Seminal shock marketing theorists agree that traditional marketing in this respect has its limitations (Dahl et al, 2003).

Rationale:

Shock marketing is a form of advertising designed to surprise or shock the audience with stimuli that the viewer typically does not see, such as graphic imagery or the violation of norms. Shock marketing has many different levels as highlighted by Engelbart, Jackson and Smith (2017, pg 44).

The purpose of shock marketing is to draw customer attention and publicity to the brand, while oftentimes the brand image may be damaged as a result (Engelbart, Jackson & Smith, 2017, pg 44).

Shock marketing materials are used in a bid to draw consumer attention to a specific brand through an advertisement or select piece of marketing material, with the expectation that further attention will be drawn to the brand if it enters public consciousness and is widely discussed, leading to a form of word-of-mouth marketing as the advertisement is noticed (Engelbart, Jackson & Smith, 2017, pg 44).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness and viability of shock marketing tools for brands seeking competitive marketing advantage in a South African context, specifically in the youth market of consumers.

The research looks at both non-profit and for-profit organisations. In addition, this research shall be used to debate if shock marketing tools can be utilized to shift customer behaviour positively towards a specific brand without damaging said brand's image; in regard to generating consumer attention towards the brand, and to test if there is long term viability in using shock marketing as a customer retention strategy. Furthermore, this research attempts to identify and pinpoint specific cases when shock marketing is appropriate and when it is not, particularly to an audience of male and female South Africans, aged 18-25.

Problem Statement:

Consumer attention rates are rapidly dwindling due to the instant gratification of the digital age, this is especially true in millennials and generation Z consumers (Laberge, O'Toole, Smaje & Schneider, 2020) Traditional marketing has its limitations in regard to holding customer attention long term (Laberge et al, 2020).

The smartphone and related digital technologies may link users to a variety of content exposure avenues, yet they can also be a major hindrance regarding lowered attention spans in children and adults, with the potential to foster an "always online" mentality (Belar, Katherine, Ballard, Bufka, Diaz-Granados, Beatty, Wright, Bosolo, Bethune, & Lewan, 2017).

Brands adapting to the future must shift focus to using ultramodern tools and frameworks, such as shock marketing, while also incorporating technology and innovation to make their messages more impactful and disruptive, in order to create mentally stimulating experiences that, while polarising and controversial, will still segment themselves in the mind of the consumer, and create discussions surrounding the brand (Laberge, et al, 2020).

According to Belar, et al (2017), with the corporate adoption of social media in the early 2010s, marketers were seeing extensive organic reach on social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube by producing unique and exciting content. However, it did not take long for an increasing number of marketers to understand this, which led to a sharp rise in content production and a standardization of companies advertising online (Belar, et al, 2017).

Currently, there is so much information online that viewers will never have the capacity to retain it; even powerful and insightful content can be buried quickly (Belar, et al, 2017). The advertising industry is extremely saturated, especially through visual and vocal touchpoints, which shows that the rate of content generation is outpacing the human capacity to consume it. This does not imply, however, that there is no value in producing content; rather, it means that businesses must alter their strategies and use ultramodern tools and frameworks, like shock marketing (Laberge et al, 2020).

Brands that do not shift towards using these tools will eventually be at a severe marketing disadvantage.

There exists a minimal amount of research on the relationship between shock marketing tactics, customer attention, and retention strategies, this is especially true in the case of South African research. Which if done successfully would benefit many SME brands in regard to having a competitive marketing advantage over large corporations.

Research Purpose:

The purpose of this research would be a comparative study of customer attention using traditional marketing versus shock marketing in both non-profit and for-profit industries, for the purpose of exploring customer retention and acquisition strategies and the viability of shock marketing tactics in South Africa. Specifically, to see what areas shock marketing would be best applicable to, such as if it is operationalized better by non-profit causes or if it is better to be used by for-profit companies addressing sensitive topics or societal issues.

In addition, this research aims to explore the existing body of knowledge by addressing the relationship between reactions to shock advertising and consumer attention. With the outcome of determining whether or not shock marketing tactics are viable for both big brands and SMEs in South Africa, by looking at previous examples of success and failure within the non-profit and for-profit sectors of the market.

Finally, this research also aims to explore and expand the existing body of knowledge of shock marketing in a South African context. This will enable future research to be more focused and explore different understandings of the relationship between consumer attention and retention.

Research Questions:

1. What are the brand perceptions of customers after viewing shock marketing content?
2. Is shock marketing more effective than traditional marketing in relation to customer retention and acquisition?

Research Hypothesis:

H1: Customers that view shock advertising are more likely to remember the brand and the product.

H2: Shock marketing is more effective than traditional methods and is not detrimental to the customer retention rate.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter aimed at expanding on the content covered in this research report, including a comprehensive breakdown of the theories and concepts that pertain to this study. In addition, this chapter also looked at previous literature to acknowledge and note the findings of previous scholars, to see if there is any comparison to this study, regarding the effect shock marketing has on consumer attention, customer retention and acquisition strategies.

Theoretical Foundation: Theory 1

Shock Marketing Theory:

The theory and framework for Shock Marketing as outlined by Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) stipulates that advertisements containing taboo topics and are designed to shock or surprise the audience will leave a much deeper and longer lasting effect on the consumer compared to other stimuli (Dahl, et al 2003).

In addition to the theory, shock marketing is also a promotional tool that marketers use to deliberately shock or offend their audience by using taboo topics in order to capture consumer attention and brand exposure (Dahl, et al 2003).

Shock Marketing is a strategy that is used in both non-profit and for-profit organisations to varying degrees of success. Seminal theorists such as Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) in addition to more current researchers, Funke and Olofsson (2019) agree that shock marketing has a more profound effect to attract consumer attention than traditional methods of advertising and promotion, which do not take risks.

Furthermore, shock marketing theory believes that the shocking or disturbing material from the advertisements this theory has spawned leaves a lasting effect on the consumer wherein discussions are had, leading to word-of-mouth marketing (Urwin, 2014).

Theoretical Foundation: Theory 2

Selective Perception Theory:

Seminal author James P Walsh (1988) describes selective perception as the tendency to ignore and forget stimuli that cause emotional distress and contradict the views of the individual who is exposed to said stimuli (Walsh, 1988).

The theory of selective perception is paramount when discussing shock marketing and its theory, as many seminal theorists agree, such as Walsh (1988) and Dahl (2003) the theory is fundamental to describing subject behaviour surrounding shock marketing and its materials, in addition to analysing said behaviour in order to determine if a behavioural pattern exists (Walsh, 1988). The theory still maintains relevance in a modern context of shock marketing, as outlined by Kane (2019) where “consumers direct their attention away from irrelevant stimuli in order to focus on what is more important.”

To summarise, when people have been exposed to specific content that contradicts their personal narrative or beliefs, they only extrapolate certain aspects of a message (Walsh, 1988).

The theory is significant to the research since selective perception is closely tied to shock marketing reactions (Dahl, et al 2003). For instance, an organisation may launch an advertisement that is controversial to one segment of users but not to others; persons in a specific sample group who are viewing the shock advertisement may not notice the controversy, however others might (Dahl, et al, 2003).

Applying the theory of selective perception to this study will allow the researcher to analyse individuals in the sample group to determine if there is a personal bias in their responses (Walsh, 1988); or to see if specific target groups are more desensitised to shocking content than other groups (Dahl, et al, 2003).

Conceptualisation:

Shock Marketing/ Shock Advertising: A marketing tactic wherein marketers exploit taboo, controversial and sensitive topics to intentionally shock or disturb their target audience in order to capture their attention. (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003) Shock marketing, shock advertising materials and reactions to said materials, forms the basis of this study. As identified by Engelbart, Jackson and Smith (2017, pg 44), there are levels of offence to shock marketing, ranging from a low-level incorporating humour to a high level containing graphic imagery and upsetting content.

Selective perception: A behavioural theory that occurs when people focus on only a few aspects of their environment at the exclusion of others (Walsh, 1988). Furthermore, according to the theorists, individuals filter stimuli as perceived both consciously and unconsciously (Walsh, 1988). The individual can consciously shut out specific stimuli like colour, sound, and images (Walsh, 1988).

Selective perception acts as a supporting theory and concept to the analysis of reactions surrounding shock marketing and its materials (Dahl et al, 2003).

Traditional marketing: Pre-digital era methods of marketing, such as print media, radio, television, billboards, newspaper and magazine (Subramanian, 2015). With respect to this study, traditional marketing aims to achieve customer attention through repetition of advertisements, high value for money deals and reward-based competitions (Subramanian, 2015).

Brand Image: Consumer perceptions of a brand are formed based on interactions and associations with the brand itself, which are correlated with brand image (Gökerik, Gürbüz, Erkan, Mogaji & Sap, 2018, pg 7).

For example, interactions may be based on how a customer has interacted with the brand, and associations may be created based on the features of the product or service, however in the case of this study brand image associations are made through advertising (Gökerik, Gürbüz, Erkan, Mogaji & Sap, 2018, pg 7).

Consumer attention: Selected focus on stimuli and delivering relevant experiences and stimuli based on the consumer's interests, needs, and wants (Kane, 2019). Consumers direct their attention away from irrelevant stimuli in order to focus on what is more important (Kane, 2019).

Consumer behaviour: Refers to one's purchasing patterns, as well as societal trends and other variables that influence consumer decision making (Virvilaitė & Matulevičienė, 2013, pg, 137). Brands analyse customer behaviour in order to better understand their target market and develop more desirable and engaging products and services (Virvilaitė & Matulevičienė, 2013, pg,137).

Customer retention: Refers to a business's capacity to convert customers into repeat buyers and keep them from switching to a rival company (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019).

An organisation's customer retention rate or churn rate is an indicator of the product or service quality and the ability for the organisation to appease the customer (Hawkins & Hoon, 2019).

Brand recall: A measurement of how well a humorous, shocking, or emotionally charged advertisement is remembered or recalled (Srivastava & Dorsch, 2019, pg 801). Brand recall is assessed through surveys or interviews in which participants are asked relevant brand-related questions (Srivastava & Dorsch, 2019, pg 801). Brand Recall is relevant to the study as it acts as a gauge for testing customer retention through analysing reactions and memory to marketing materials.

Review of Previous Literature:

This review of literature serves as an account of the research done by many of the seminal authors of shock marketing. The seminal work will then be validated by more recent studies conducted by scholars and researchers which have analysed the relationship between consumer behaviour, consumer attention and customer retention in regard to shock marketing tools and shock advertising reactions used in both for-profit and non-profit ventures.

The Impact of Shocking Advertising Towards Customer Attention:

Many seminal shock marketing authors such as Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003) in addition to Virvilaite and Matulevičiene (2013) as well as Urwin (2014) agree that consumers are exposed to an estimated 3,000 advertisements per day, which begs the question; “what does it take to get an advertisement noticed in today's climate?”

While there is no exact number of how many advertisements and marketing material an individual is exposed to daily, a recurring estimate of 3000 advertisements daily appears in the work of many current theorists, as confirmed by Laberge, O’Toole, Smaje and Schneider (2020). Additionally, Laberge, et al (2020) state that due to the large quantity of content consumers are exposed to daily, it is usually all filtered out cognitively and the average consumer generally will not remember or recall a vast quantity; if not all the advertisements that are perceived in a day, unless certain factors are in play. Including a high frequency or relevancy to the consumer, a memorable experience or shocking content (Laberge et al, 2020).

This number has increased rapidly with the advent of social media and the wider adoption of the internet as a promotional channel and business ground for organisations both large and small (Laberge et al, 2020).

McKinsey & Company authors; Laberge, O'Toole, Smaje and Schneider (2020) found that; in a period of just a few months, the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated change in consumer behaviour and business strategies across most of the nations of the world (LaBerge et al, 2020).

This corresponds to more businesses competing for online retail space, and rising popularity of omnichannel marketing tactics that leave the consumer inundated with advertisements and promotions (LaBerge et al. 2020).

Laberge et al (2020) argue that the ability for brands to grab consumer attention is one of the most valuable “currencies” of the digital age. Seminal theorists Dahl et al (2003) identified shock marketing as a form of marketing innovation specifically aimed at increasing consumer attention towards an organisation at the potential detriment to the public image (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003, pg 269).

According to other academics such as Urwin (2014), Parry et al (2013) and Hagenbuch (2015), shock advertising with unpleasant, offensive or objectionable images may be successful in attracting public attention and distinguishing itself from other advertisers in the short term, but it risks hurting the brand's image and reputation in the long run, which is said again by Engelbart, Jackson and Smith, 2017).

As a result, many brands and large corporations believe it is more effective and beneficial to use more traditional, safer methods of advertising (Engelbart, Jackson & Smith, 2017, pg 4).

From another perspective, little is known about the effect of shock marketing on customer retention, however from what can be gathered from the literature of Funke and Olofsson (2019), it would be assumed that shock marketing has a detrimental effect on customer retention only in certain industries.

As evidenced by Funke and Olofsson (2019), it is noteworthy that shock marketing has a greater effect on customer attention and acquisition in a non-profit business context, with the

assumption being that shock marketing also increases the likelihood of customer retention in the for-profit sector as well (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 11).

Although shock advertising is effective and leads to increased brand awareness and a potential increase in sales volume (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 11), it has the potential to alienate consumers and engender disdain for the organisation which posted it, which may lead to boycotts, which is a risk that many businesses are unwilling to take (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 11).

Brand Recall and Attitudes Towards Shock Marketing:

Scholars and researchers are constantly debating attitudes towards shock marketing and its impact on consumers. Fundamentally, shock advertising is designed to elicit strong emotions and cause people to act (Dorsch, 2019). Although shock advertisements may raise brand or product awareness, according to Srivastava and Dorsch (2019, pg 804), the long-term impact of shock advertisements is largely unknown.

The primary goal of brand recall (as listed in the conceptualization) is to attract more customers to the brand's product and retain their loyalty until the product is either finished or deteriorated (Dorsch, 2019). As outlined by Srivastava and Dorsch (2019, pg 804) the brand recall approach could take the form of humour, shock, or emotional advertising.

Advertisements with humour draw in more customers and cause them to remember them.

Humour, more than any other form of entertainment, increases purchase intent, whereas too much humour reduces purchase intent (Srivastava & Dorsch, 2019, pg 804).

Emotional consumer reaction to shock advertising is evaluated as negative or positive, consumers may also experience mixed reactions. As per the research conducted by Srivastava and Dorsch (2019), consumers have mixed feelings about shocking advertisements, and they are viewed differently in commercial and social advertising contexts. Therefore, the recall may vary from one individual to the next (Srivastava & Dorsch, 2019, pg 804). Many elements such as gender, religion, race and nationality affect the emotional reactions to shock marketing, this

is because selective perception also plays a subjective role in the reaction (Srivastava & Dorsch, 2019, pg 804).

Brand and Consumer Perception of Shock Marketing, Including Metrics That Affect Reactions:

The advent of social media advertising channels brought a new perspective for shock marketing tactics since it allows companies to reach a much greater population through the internet. (Gökerik, Gürbüz, Erkan, Mogaji & Sap, 2018, pg 7).

Gokerik et al (2018, pg 8) elaborates in their study that these forms of advertising tactics prove their effectiveness specifically in college aged individuals.

In what is considered a seminal piece of research within the framework of shock marketing theory; researchers from Cambridge University Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda (2003, pg 271) investigated the impact of shock marketing materials in HIV/AIDS prevention among a group of university students. Their research discovered that shocking material in advertisements elevated attention levels among those who were stimulated by the material (Dahl, Frankenberger & Manchanda, 2003, 271). The ability to recall the advertisements also saw an increase as well as behaviour in the sample group when compared to traditional advertising strategies used in the control group (Dahl et al, 2003, 272).

These findings reaffirm two theories: firstly, that shock marketing has a higher rate of customer attention among a youth audience, people aged 18-25; and secondly that if shock marketing is used to bring attention to societal issues individuals react strongly as positively to the material (Dahl et al, 2003, pg 272).

To add to the above, shock advertising is primarily based on the violation of societal norms. However, different societies have different societal values, customs, or beliefs, all of which can influence how shock advertising is executed and how people react to it. Cultural factors may have an impact on people's reactions to shock advertising, such is the case with other factors such as race, gender, religion and age as mentioned previously (Engelbart, Jackson & Smith, 2017, pg 4).

Researchers Virvilaite and Matulevičiene (2013) examine the impact of shock marketing on Lithuanian college students and youth consumers in a journal pertaining to "Innovative Marketing Methods" (Virvilaite & Matulevičiene, 2013, pg 136).

Disgusting imagery, sexual content, profanity, vulgarity, moral offensiveness, and religious taboos are among the characteristics of shock marketing that increased attention from their sample groups (Virvilaite & Matulevičiene, 2013, pg 137). However, it should be noted that many of these factors are shown to elicit a negative response from the study participants (Virvilaite & Matulevičiene, 2013, pg 137).

According to the findings of the study conducted among Lithuanian customers, socio-demographic and cultural characteristics influence the audience's reaction and behaviour in response to shock marketing material (Virvilaite & Matulevičiene, 2013, pg 138).

In a similar study, participants who are more religious exhibit higher morality have a more negative view and behaviour of shock marketing material, while younger consumers have a more positive view and behaviour toward shock marketing (O'Connell, 2021, pg 9). In addition, the researchers discovered that women have a more negative view than men when exposed to shock marketing, especially in response to sexual imagery (O'Connell, 2021, pg 9).

These statements are also backed up by researchers Parry, Jones, Stern and Robinson (2013) who in an exploratory investigation of emotional reactions to shock advertising found that

religion, culture and gender have an impact on reactions to shock marketing (Parry et al, 2013,pg 55).

Parry et al (2013) in their research analysed Muslim countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. Which were identified as strong resisters of “Western advertising, themes and approaches”, which includes shock marketing methods (Parry et al, 2013). This contrasts with countries with a dominating religion, such as Catholicism in Ireland, or cultures with strong authoritarian governments, such as China, which have been found to hold conservative values where shock marketing seems to be ineffective (Parry et al, 2013, pg 58).

This demonstrates that religion and culture are powerful influencing factors on social behaviour, and as a result will influence views regarding shock marketing (Parry et al, 2013, pg 56).

According to O’Connell (2021), their research suggests using shock marketing in the for-profit sector only when a specific target market has been identified and heavily researched (O’Connell, 2021, pg 32).

Ethics and Application of Shock Marketing:

Although shock marketing can capture attention in the long term, evidence has shown that it may be bad for the brand image as a result of disgust, belief violation and personal offence amongst many other factors (Hagenbuch, 2015, pg 22).

In addition, shock marketing can be and is successful in certain areas such as bringing attention to societal issues in non-profit ventures and when humour is introduced to specifically targeted audiences (Funke & Olofsson, 2019).

As evidenced by seminal theorist Dahl et al (2003) shock marketing has worked in a very positive manner when promoting safety in HIV studies, promoting a form of ‘good for society’

Subramanian (2015) posits that viral advertising demands creative thinking and a bit of luck, but a successful viral ad may bring a company or product a lot of positive attention. This sentiment is supported by Gökerik, Gürbüz, Erkan, Mogaji and Sap (2018, pg 7) which states that “untraditional advertising activities such as eye-catching street graphics, surprising product placements and memorable events; is considered effective to grab consumers’ attention”.

Keeping the advertising material light-hearted with only slight themes of shocking content will almost certainly result in strong positive feelings towards the brand in this regard (Subramanian, 2015, pg 22).

Subramanian posits that gaining exposure is great for the brand however there is still a need to generate sales, thus when designing a campaign consider things from the customer's point of view.

Hagenbuch (2015) makes the assessment that brands are quick to adopt trends, but not to adopt risks, many organisations naturally want to take advantage of trends that bring relevance to their brand and organisation, however not at the expense of their image. Hagenbuch goes further to show that the efficiency of shock marketing, on the other hand, is far from certain, given the diverse results of actual campaigns and other research (Hagenbuch, 2015, pg 56-58).

In contrast, Hagenbuch (2015) warns that "psychoactive advertising," which corresponds to negative reactions to shock marketing in this case, can elicit major negative emotions such as excessive fear, anger and vitriol in particular sensitive demographic groups (Hagenbuch, 2015, pg 57).

Parry, Jones, Stern and Robinson (2013) outline that shock advertising is an excellent method of getting public attention, especially when developing a new product or brand (Parry et al, 2013). However, if the campaign is mismanaged, too extreme or graphic in nature or promotes the

wrong message it can also lead to negative sentiments and lower purchase intent (Parry et al, 2013, pg 112).

Examples of shock marketing campaign failures outlined by Parker and Wright (2018) include Benetton's "Unhate" campaign which depicted world leaders and important figures kissing (Parker & Wright, 2018). This resulted in a negative backlash that caused many people in religious circles to boycott the brand (Parker & Wright, 2018), leading to Benetton deleting the commercial after receiving a warning and threat of legal action from the Vatican over a "completely inappropriate" depiction of Pope Benedict XVI kissing an Egyptian imam (Parker & Wright, 2018).

Nivea is another example of a brand with a failed attempt at shock marketing, the German skincare brand, apologized and withdrew a discriminatory advertisement (Parker & Wright, 2018).

"White is purity," printed alongside an image of a woman in an advertisement for their recently launched invisible deodorant collection (Parker and Wright, 2018). It was shared on the brand's Facebook page, with the commercial directed at Middle Eastern fans. The post was "misleading," according to Nivea (Parker and Wright, 2018).

This led to the company receiving major backlash on social media that the tweet was racially insensitive and was extensively reposted by alt-right users. (Parker and Wright, 2018)

Differences in reaction in For-Profit and Non-profit Sectors:

In their research, Funke and Olofsson (2019) found that for-profit organisations are increasingly using shocking images in advertising campaigns to break through the clutter and gain customer attention, or as part of a cause-related marketing campaign, in addition to this, they assume

that shock marketing is better received emotionally when it is used to address societal issues and bring positive conversation to otherwise difficult and divisive situations or topics (Funke & Olofsson, 2019).

In both the non-profit and for-profit sectors, participants' reactions to shock marketing material are distinctly different (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 30). In fact, participants believe that the shocking images were more acceptable and justifiable in the Non-profit sector (Funke and Olofsson, 2019, pg 30).

Research from Funke and Olofsson (2019) shows that shock marketing is more effective for non-profit organisations than for commercial organisations. This is due to consumers (for-profit) and contributors (non-profit) having different levels of tolerance for incongruent and explicit imagery, which explains the discrepancy (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 35).

To add to the above, research from Mukattash, Thomas, Nusair and Mukattash (2021) reveals similar information regarding the use of shock marketing in the context of non-profit ventures and addressing societal issues in advertising. They elaborate that shock appeal and advertising are effective tools for addressing social issues, as when compared to other appeals such as fear, humour, and information (Mukattash et al, 2021, pg 4).

The authors further state that there is evidence suggesting that shock appeal in these fields (non-profit use of shock marketing and the use of shock marketing in addressing societal issues) results in better memory recall of the consumer (Mukattash, Thomas, Nusair & Mukattash, 2021, pg 5), which relates back to the concept of customer attention. Shock advertising results include not only capturing attention, but also creating recall and inducing behavioural change. Some audiences, however, may be more receptive to emotional advertisements than others (Mukattash, Thomas, Nusair & Mukattash, 2021, pg 5).

Mukattash et al (2021) reaffirm that youth consumers (by their definition 18-30) are more susceptible to shock advertisements than fully grown adults and the elderly. According to the researchers, responsiveness to shock advertising is related to gender, ethnicity, and background culture, as has been unpacked by numerous researchers throughout the literature review (Mukattash et al, 2021, pg 5). Shock advertising, on the other hand, does not guarantee changing tentative purchasing decisions or successfully establishing intended behavioural change in consumers (Mukattash et al, 2021, pg 5). Mukattash et al (2021) go further to say that; "there is no clear evidence to conclude that shock advertising has an actual impact on changing consumer behaviour of the target audience, and this area of research requires further investigation" (Mukattash et al, 2021, pg 5).

The data from both research journals is supportive of the findings by seminal theorists Dahl et al (2003), which demonstrated that shock marketing techniques have an established track record in boosting consumer attention and awareness towards the brand or cause but no direct effect on changing consumer behaviour (Dahl et al, 2003, pg 278).

To contextualise further, the findings from Mukattash et al (2021) in addition to, Funke and Olofsson (2019) reaffirm the findings of Dahl et al (2003), that advertising practitioners and policymakers should consider using shocking content in their advertising campaigns only when the target market is heavily researched and used in the correct context (Dahl et al, 2003, pg 278). "Sceptics have criticised the effectiveness of shocking advertising, but our research indicates that shocking communications can have positive effects on attention, memory, and behaviour. Still, we believe that direct norm violation in advertising should be used responsibly. This would entail careful target audience selection and savvy creative execution" (Dahl et al, 2003, pg 278).

Shock advertising is still currently used by a number of organisations, regardless of whether or not it is effective in gaining increased consumer attention (Mukattash, Thomas, Nusair & Mukattash, 2021, pg 9). Many organisations, from major multinational mega-corporations to small non-profits, feel that shock will drive members of their target markets from awareness to

action regardless of a positive or negative action, which it occasionally does, as stated in the previous paragraphs Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 35).

Conclusion of Literature:

As the preceding literature demonstrates, research on customer retention in relation to shock marketing and SMEs is sparse, and further research is needed. There are numerous studies on the efficiency of shock marketing in attracting attention for large brands and organisations in the for-profit and non-profit sectors, but despite this fact the literature on shock marketing within a South African context, in addition to the relation between shock marketing and SMEs is insignificant and mostly unexplored.

The literature reveals that consumers are exposed to a large quantity of content daily and said content is usually all filtered out cognitively, ignored or goes unperceived (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 35). Unless certain variables are in place, such as shocking content, a memorable experience, or a high level of relevance; the ordinary consumer often won't retain or recall a substantial portion, if not all of the advertisements that are perceived in a day (Laberge et al, 2020).

The literature also reveals that shock marketing can easily send out the wrong message, resulting in an overwhelmingly unfavourable reaction for the brand or organisation conducting the shock campaign (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 35).

Many authors, including Dahl et al (2003), Virvilaitė and Matulevičienė (2013), Parry et al (2013), and Urwin (2014), feel that shock marketing has a negative impact on a brand's reputation and image over time.

To reiterate from the above literature, Funke and Olofsson (2019) discovered that for-profit organizations are increasingly adopting shocking imagery and content in their marketing material to stand out from the endlessly growing volume of promotional content or as part of a

cause-related marketing campaign. Furthermore, they consider that shock marketing is more effective emotionally when it is utilized to address social concerns and promote civil discourse in places where it would otherwise be difficult and controversial (Funke & Olofsson, 2019).

As a result, if firms want to continue running shock commercials, they must have a strong brand image or reputation (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 35). In addition to making prior research on the target market a critically important component of a shock marketing campaign as selective perception occurs naturally (Funke & Olofsson, 2019, pg 35).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction to Methodology:

This chapter aimed to expand on how the research problem was both framed and looked at, before a deep-dive into the data analysis and findings in the following chapter. The topics expanded on in this chapter include an extended view of the research paradigm, the research approach, in addition to the population, sampling, data collection and data analysis method.

Paradigm Outlined:

The school of thought that this research would attribute to would be Positivism, which assumes that 'there is a single, concrete reality that can be identified, defined and measured' (Maree, 2019, pg 66). The reason that this research situates itself in a positivist paradigm would be to further the understanding of how people interpret and interact with their social environment and the reactions to stimuli they are exposed to (Maree, 2019, pg 66).

Positivist methodology approaches are usually associated with quantitative social science (Maree, 2019, pg 67), this is because positivist methodology research results are arrived at by analysing data from multiple perspectives. Which accommodates the nature of this study as the outcome is to observe consumer reactions to shock marketing (Maree, 2019, pg 67).

The relevance of this paradigm to this research would include studying consumer behaviour when exposed to both traditional advertising and shock advertising to discern if a pattern emerges within a specific audience (Maree, 2019, pg 68). The outcome aims specifically, to see if shock marketing has a positive, or negative effect on customer attention and retention, allowing the customer to better recall the brand and product advertised (Maree, 2019, pg 68).

In addition, a positivist lens takes a similar approach or outlook on the research as the theory of selective perception (Maree, 2019, pg 68). This is in respect to analysing complex individual behaviour when viewing specific material to see if a pattern emerges and to determine the 'single concrete reality' that the positivist paradigm is formed around (Maree, 2019, pg 68).

Research Design/Approach:

As the paradigm of this study is positivism, the research methodology would be quantitative, thus the data types expected will primarily be numerical (Maree, 2019, pg 188).

The overall aim of the study is to explore how individuals interpret and interact with their social environment. The primary research method for this study was various quantitative questions asked of the respondents at their own convenience with their consent, done via an online administered questionnaire which acted as the research instrument. The study was experimental in nature, meaning the research aimed to study the cause-and-effect relationship between shock marketing, consumer attention and customer retention (Maree, 2019, pg 188).

In addition, the study was deductive in nature; meaning that there was a study of the existing theories, as outlined in the literature review, followed by an analysis of the work of other researchers, concluded by a testing phase where the hypothesis was be put to trial and scrutinized objectively (Maree, 2019, pg 188).

In an online survey that was conducted, the respondents were asked a variety of quantitative questions; however, they were first required to watch two survey-related videos; which were two short advertisement videos, one being shock marketing and the other being a traditional advertisement, both from the same company.

The survey questions evaluated which advertisements the respondents found interesting (as a measurement of which advertisement grabbed a greater proportion of attention) as well as which advertisements respondents thought were successful and why. This assisted in answering

both of the research questions; which were "What are the brand perceptions of customers after viewing shock marketing content?" and "Is shock marketing more effective than traditional marketing in relation to customer retention and acquisition?"

After being exposed to the two brief advertisements, the respondent's attitudes were evaluated in order to see whether any attitudes or anticipated behaviours had changed.

Population:

The study examined shock marketing as an ultramodern tool or framework that many brands and organisations of varying scale and capacity could utilise to gain a competitive advantage. Rather than focusing on any one company in particular, the study aimed to focus on the advertising industry as a whole, in comparison with consumer behaviour; however, Nando's advertisements were chosen to represent shock marketing in this study, as two advertisements from the brand were chosen in the survey issued. This ultimately made the potential population group quite broad and expansive as it included everyone who has ever witnessed a Nando's advertisement or, for that matter, any shock advertisement given Nando's considerable reach in South Africa.

This caused the study to contain more observable elements overall, however for the sake of time, ethics, validity and convenience; the primary demographics that were looked at in this study was gender (both male and female participants) and the age group of 18–25-year-olds. The study being quantitative in design suggested that probability sampling was typically the favoured sampling technique (Du ploooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout 2014, p. 136). Which would have been ideal for the study as it would have minimized the possibility of human bias as it used both random and methodical ways to select the sample. Additionally, this technique would have ensured that every member of the population could have had a fair and equal probability of being included in the sample (Du ploooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout 2014, p. 136). However due to practical constraints this sampling technique could not be applied and instead utilized non-probability based random sampling, which also supported the anonymity of the respondents and also ensured a low level of bias in the answers.

Nature of the Population: This included South African male and female tertiary education students who use social media apps and services and engage with media regularly (both traditional and digital) or had prior knowledge of Nando's or shock advertising; participants would have had certain important concepts explained to them before answering the survey, such as the term and theory of shock marketing and the term of traditional marketing.

Target population: Consumers aged 18-25 who regularly engage with social media platforms and mediums, in addition to traditional media.

The Accessible Population: The source of the data for this research was South African College students, specifically students aged 18-25 (both men and women) from Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal attending various tertiary education centres such as colleges and universities.

Sampling:

Sampling Method: Although as mentioned previously, probability sampling was ideal for this study for reasons outlined above, the researcher did not have access to a sampling frame of respondents and was also limited by budget constraints. As a result, the researcher used non-probability based random sampling, which was applied to tertiary education students from Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa (Maree, 2019, pg 214-220).

This type of non-probability-based convenience sampling focused on gathering data from individuals (the sample) who are easy for the researcher to reach (Maree, 2019, pg 219-220). Which is ideal for quantitative studies using a positivist paradigm.

With this sample strategy, the researcher for this study chose subjects at random who are open to being approached and participating in the study, rather than selecting individuals at random based on any criteria, such as demographics of location, political views, religious beliefs or personal values; however the only demographic looked at was the age range of 18-25.

The data collection tools chosen for this study would primarily be WhatsApp and followed by Instagram as the survey was shared through these platforms. As stated previously, the survey was shared twice on each platform via the 'story' and 'status' features of the respective applications, allowing the researcher to broadcast the survey to a mass of individuals, which allowed for no bias in the answers. In addition, the survey was at no point directly messaged to any of the participants in the study and was not emailed or sent out on an individual level.

Sample Size: The researcher for this study originally had aimed for 50+ participants in an online administered questionnaire, as recommended by the research report outline, however closed the survey at 40 responses due to time constraints and already had a highly sufficient level of data to gain findings and insights from.

Unit of Analysis: The age range of the male and female participants in the study ranged from 18-25.

Data Collection

The study's main objective was to investigate how people perceive and engage with their social surroundings. This study used an online administered questionnaire as its primary research instrument, with numerous quantitative questions being asked of the respondents at their convenience and with their consent.

Due to the study's quantitative nature, it was necessary to collect data that had the capacity to be analysed, quantified, and represented in statistical and numerical terms, while also making it easy to present on tables, graphs, charts and figures. A survey questionnaire was the most effective way to collect the primary data required for the research study in this instance. In terms of data gathering, questionnaires generally offer an objective insight and illustrate people's attitudes and actions regarding a given research topic, which is what was achieved with this research.

In addition, these objective insights are invaluable to the researcher as the nature of the study is behavioural, looking at specific elements such as: customer behaviour, selective perception, consumer attention, brand Image and brand recall.

The survey was designed on Google Forms and shared over WhatsApp and Instagram using the respective 'status' or 'story' features, which exposed the survey to an unfiltered mass of individuals, thus reducing any possible bias in the answers. The only requests of the researcher was that only people aged 18-25 could take part in the study and to please watch the attached videos to the survey. In addition, the survey was at no point given to a participant directly, as to ensure complete anonymity for the entire sample. The target for the response rate was expected to be at 100% for the desired maximum of 50 respondents, however the final number of responses to the survey ended at 40.

A link to the research survey itself was placed as Annexure A, accompanied by images of the questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire was to provide information that may prove one or both the hypotheses of this study.

Before responding, participants were required to watch two YouTube videos that were attached to the survey. Both of these videos feature advertisements for the fast-food restaurant business, Nando's in South Africa, which is occasionally noted for its contentious advertising. The first of the survey's two advertisements was a shock marketing piece with only mildly shocking content, whereas the second advertisement contained no shock marketing elements and merely acted as a control test for respondents.

Data Analysis & Methods

This study adhered to the positivist school of thought, which debates that "there is a single, concrete reality that can be identified, characterised, and measured" (Maree, 2019, pg 66).

As a result of this, the study developed a measuring instrument which collected quantitative data from a sample of respondents within the target population. The data from the sample was analysed using descriptive statistics.

Brief informational coefficients known as descriptive statistics were used to sum up a particular data set, which may be a sample of a population or a representation of the complete population (Maree, 2019, pg 226-238).

The majority of items (questions) used in the questionnaire were measured using a nominal scale, where each category of response within each item was different by name alone, for example: there was no order to the categories (Maree, 2019, pg 187). A few questions had only two categories of response and were thus dichotomous in nature whereas other questions had more than two categories of responses (Maree, 2019, pg 187-188). All items used in the measuring instrument were closed ended, satisfying the quantitative nature of the project and also allowing for a much more simple and quick data analysis of findings.

The descriptive statistics used in this study were aligned with the type of data collected. There were no ordinal, interval or even ratio scaled data thus eliminating the need for the use of the arithmetic mean or median and for that matter any use of any measures of dispersion, for example: the variance or the standard deviation to name a few. This also eliminated the need to look at any measures of skewness or kurtosis .

However, the study did employ one measure of central tendency namely the mode in analysing the data. In doing this, the descriptive statistics used, looked at frequency tables and then transcribed those results into pie charts and bar charts, breaking the categories from each question into frequencies and percentages per category which were then discussed in the context of the question (item) asked, and then finally assessed in terms of the research questions and hypothesis posed for this project.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction to Findings

The goal of this section was to elaborate on the definitions provided in earlier sections of the overall research by means of data analysis and proving findings. A more detailed, all-encompassing overview of the subject matter was taken and led to an evaluation of the methodologies employed for data collecting and analysis to derive conclusions.

Additionally, this component of the overall study concludes with an assessment and evaluation of how effectively the results were addressed, pertaining to the research problem, question, and hypotheses.

Research Findings

The findings for each question were laid out as follows; first an introduction to the question, which included a layout of options respondents could have chosen, the question number, and a description of the data generated from the question, followed by a numbered figure linking to the overall results and statistics.

From what was gathered, a total of 40 respondents had answered the survey, which was 80% of the target goal of 50 respondents. The survey asked participants to view two Nando's advertisements before answering the questions. Both advertisements were less than a minute long each, as not to take up too much of the participants' valuable time, in addition so that the answers provided were genuine.

It was stated that "the purpose of this study is to determine if customers that view shock advertising are more likely to remember the brand and the product after advertising. And to see if Shock marketing is more effective than traditional marketing." In addition, shock marketing was defined in the survey, so that participants were more informed as to the form of shock marketing as used in this study.

The survey consisted of fourteen questions in total, thirteen of which were questions related to the content and stimuli that the participants were exposed to (henceforth using numerical figures with regards to question numbers). The lone remainder being an isolating question which sought out certain aspects and demographics about the sample, which was used to identify if there was any discretion surrounding selective perception theory, which was outlined by Walsh as; “when individuals focus on select parts of their perceived environment to the exclusion of others” (Walsh, 1988). Furthermore, a detailed datasheet can be found attached as Appendix B; which showcased information relating to which participants in the study had selected what answers.

The 1st question out of 14, being the isolating question, asked respondents their gender, with 3 options; Male, Female and Other. The question saw a mostly even split between participants answering ‘Male’ and ‘Female’, with 55% (22 respondents) being female and 45% (18 respondents) being male, meaning there is little demographic difference with regards to gender participants in this survey. The question was unnumbered in the measuring instrument as it served as an introduction to the questions that followed it. A pie chart can be found below showcasing the data in Figure 1.1.

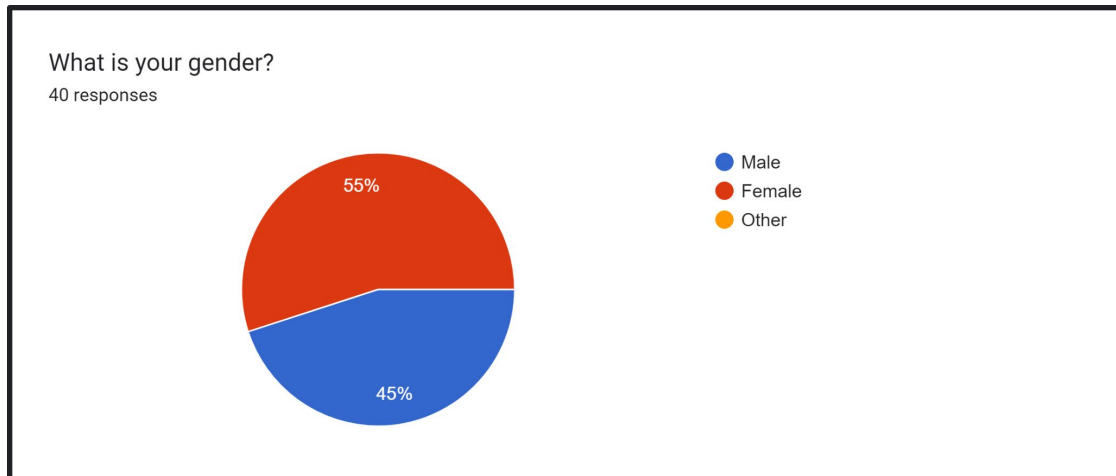


Figure 1.1 – Sample segmentation of gender (Source: developed for the study).

The 2nd question (Q1 on the survey) asked participants “Which of the Two Advertisements captured your attention more?”. The purpose of this question was to test reactions towards the first of the two advertisements shown. In Figure 1.2. below, in a large majority of 95% (38 respondents out of the total 40), respondents answered that advertisement one had caught their attention more when compared to both.

Out of the 2 participants that answered, “Advertisement 2”, 1 respondent was male and the other was female, which evidenced no selective perception was present in the overall answer, and no gender bias towards the content shown in the advertising. 21 ($21/22 = 95\%$) female respondents had chosen “Advertisement 1”; while 17 ($17/18 = 94\%$) male respondents had answered “Advertisement 1”, while the overall number of male answers is lower, it is comparatively equal to the female respondent’s answers when it comes to percentages as reported on above.

The data generated from this question showcased that shock marketing had a greater effect on capturing consumer attention and captivating memory, regardless of gender.

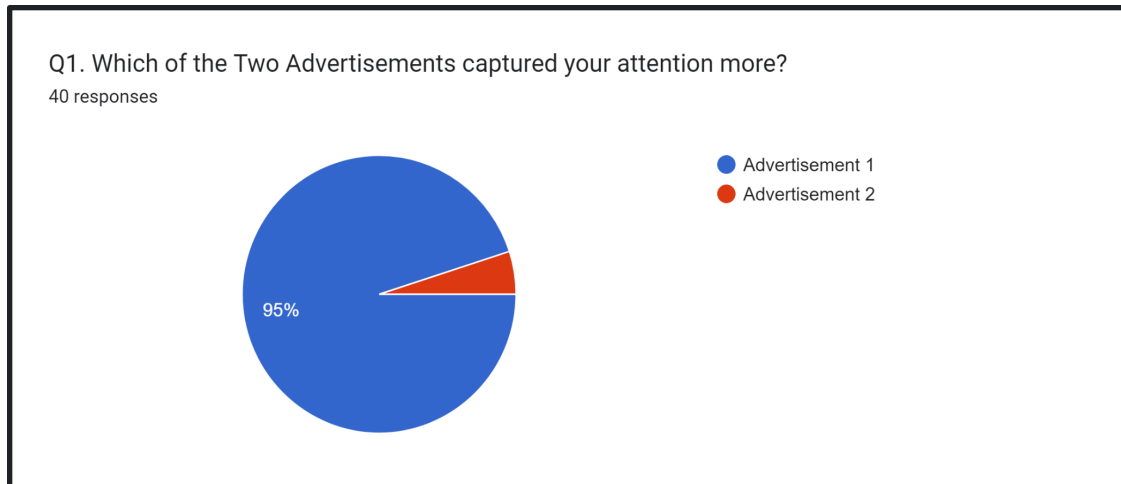


Figure 1.2 - Results of Q1 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 3rd question (Q2 on the survey) asked participants “In terms of the Two Advertisements which are you more likely to remember?” The data generated from this question was identical to that of the previous question, showing a 95% lean towards Advertisement 1 as an answer. 21 (95%) female respondents chose advertisement 1, while 17 (94%) male respondents had chosen the same. These results are illustrated in Figure 1.3 below.

This combined with the results from Q1, showed that shock advertising grabs the attention from consumers aged 18-25 regardless of gender.

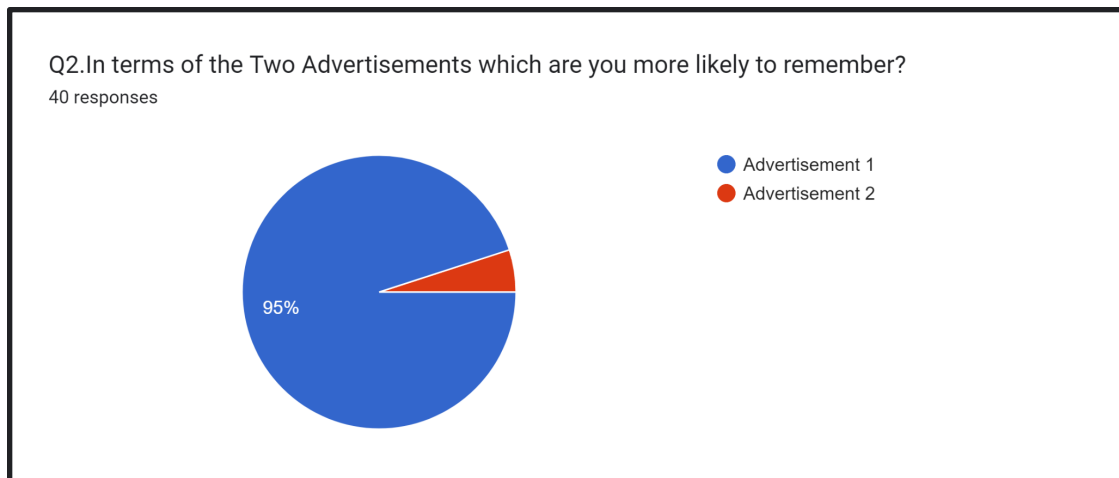


Figure 1.3 - Results from Q2 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 4th question (Q3 on the survey) sought to investigate how people reacted towards advertisement one, participants were given five answers to choose from in a checkbox manner, participants were allowed to choose more than one answer.

As is displayed in Figure 1.4 below, the majority of 25 overall respondents, making up 62.5%, answered that "I found it entertaining/fun or created a positive brand image." Out of this total, 13 male ($13/18 = 72\%$ of males) respondents said they found it entertaining, while 12 female ($12/22 = 55\%$ of females) respondents had stated the same.

27.5% of the total respondents answered that "I found it offensive/disturbing or created a negative brand image." 8 female ($8/22 = 36\%$ of females) respondents said they found it offensive or disturbing while only 2 male ($2/18 = 11\%$) respondents said they found it offensive. In addition, 1 male respondent had also chosen answers one and two, which the researcher interpreted as; the respondent found the advert entertaining, while creating a negative brand image.

12.5% of the overall respondents had stated “Surely this type of advertisement is illegal”, showcasing a negative reaction to the shock marketing material. 3 Male (3/18 = 17% of males) participants had stated that they found the advertisement should be illegal, while 2 female (2/22 = 9% of females) participants said the same.

A further 10% of total respondents selected “If I was a Nando's customer this advertisement would lead me stop purchasing” Out of this, 4 Female (4/22 = 18%) participants had stated that “If I was a Nando's customer this advertisement would lead me stop purchasing”, while no male (0%) participants had selected this option.

Finally, 15% of the total respondents had stated that “It did not affect me at all”. From a more in-depth look, 4 Male participants had chosen that the advertisement did not affect them at all, while 2 female participants said the same.

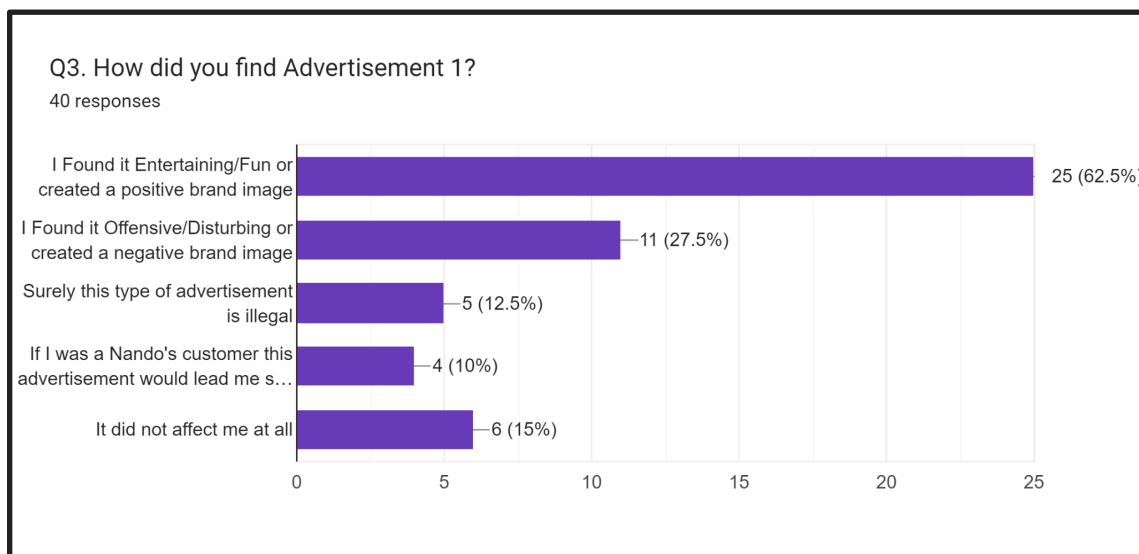


Figure 1.4 - Results from Q3 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 5th question (Q4 on the survey) asked participants to “Elaborate on the reasons for your findings/feelings as chosen with regards to Advertisement 1 above.” The reason for including this question was to evaluate the emotions of the respondents and see how they reacted directly to the shock marketing content in advertisement 1.

Twenty-eight (70%) of the respondents said with regards advertisement 1 that "I personally found nothing wrong with it". Further analysis showed that this translated to 15 (15/18 = 83% of males) male respondents and 13 (13/22 = 59%) female respondents. In addition, 10 (25%) of the respondents felt advertisement 1 "had racial/cultural tones that made me feel uncomfortable". These 10 respondents included 3 (3/18 = 17% of males) male respondents and 7 (7/18 = 32%) female respondents. 3 Participants said re: advertisement 1, "It upset me emotionally", and all were female. Finally, 4 respondents said re: advertisement 1, " It was unnecessarily political", 3 of those were female participants and 1 was male. These results show that females have more negative sentiments (as defined by the categories in this question) with regards shock marketing advertisements. The results are illustrated in Figure 1.5 below.

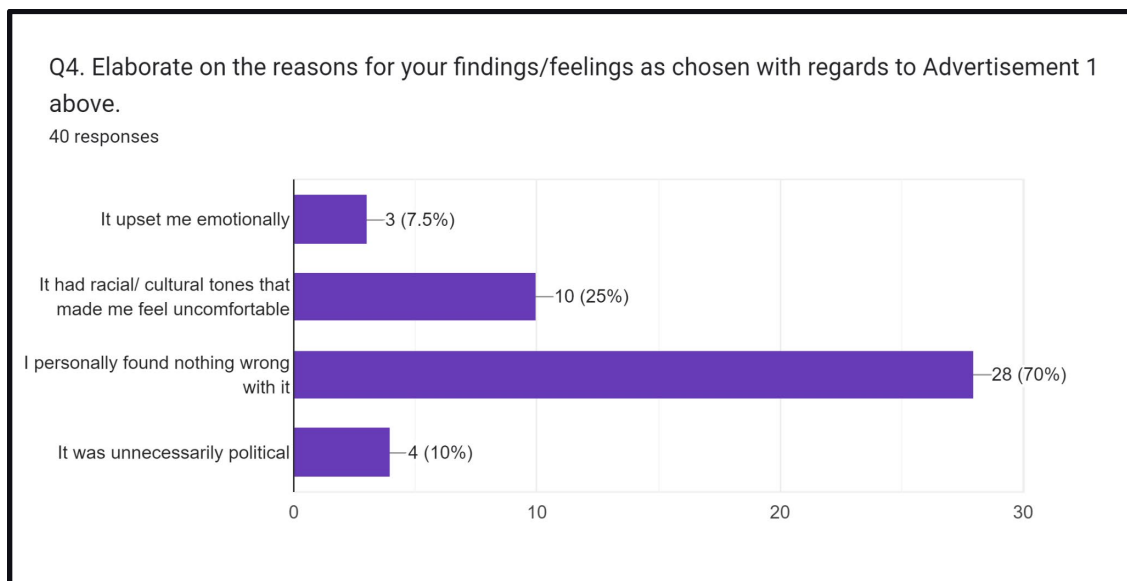


Figure 1.5 – Results from Q4 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 6th question (Q5 in the survey) asked respondents “Do you think shock advertising can become over-offensive or too vulgar?” The answers were coded as “Yes” and “No” and the findings are illustrated in Figure 1.6 below. 42.5% of respondents to the survey said no, while

57.5% said yes, showing that in partial the majority people do believe that shock marketing can cross the line, despite enjoying the advertisements shown to them in the survey.

From simple comparison it is shown that 11 male respondents (11/18 = 61% of males) said yes while 12 female respondents (12/22 = 55% of females) answered similarly. In contrast to this, 7 male respondents (7/18 - 39% of males) answered 'No', while 10 female respondents (10/22 = 45% of females) gave the same answer. Therefore, although relatively more males feel shock marketing can become over-offensive or too vulgar the relative differences between males and females do not seem significant.

This would need to be tested for using inferential statistics i.e.: a significant difference across 2 proportions of “yes” answers between males and female respondents. This study however, only focussed on the use of descriptive statistics, reporting on findings limited to within the sample group.

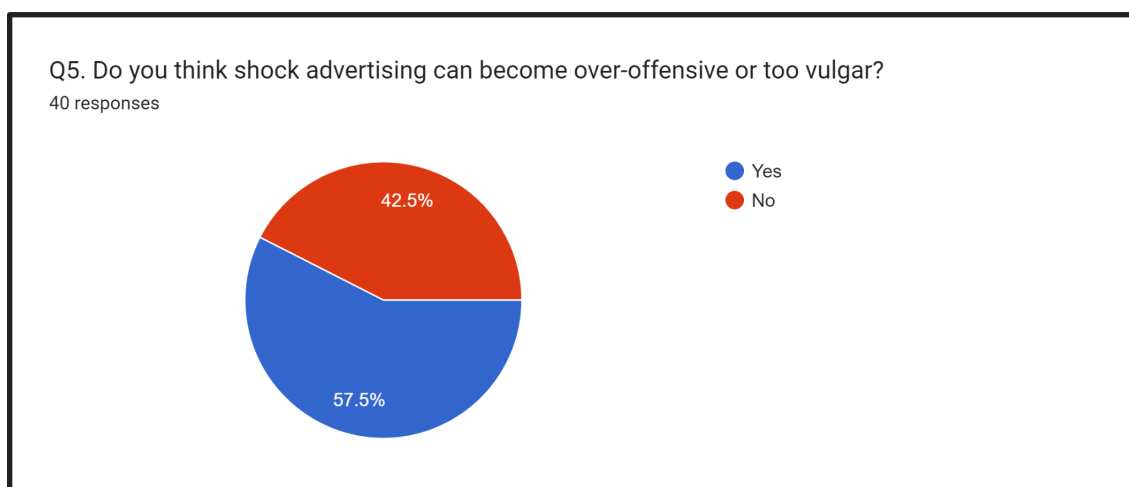


Figure 1.6 – Results from Q5 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 7th question overall (Q6 in the survey), asked participants “How did you find Advertisement 2?”. The question sought to dig deeper into the reactions of the consumers, similar to Q4. The results are portrayed in Figure 1.7 below.

37.5% of the total number of respondents found advertisement 2 created a positive brand image or was entertaining, whilst 57.5% of the total number of respondents found it did not affect me at all.

6 male participants (representing $6/18 = 33.33\%$ of males) in comparison to 9 females (representing $9/22 = 41\%$ of females) found advertisement 2 (the control test advertisement) had created a positive brand image or was entertaining. 11 male participants ($11/18 = 61\%$ of males) stated that advertisement 2 did not affect them at all while 12 female participants ($12/22 = 55\%$ of females) had stated the same.

In addition, there were 2 female participants ($2/22 = 9\%$) that found the control advertisement offensive, which contained no shock marketing content whatsoever.

From observation and having seen the data from a glance, apart from this the researcher found it noteworthy that the range of reactions towards advertisement 2 are much more consistent when compared to advertisement 1.

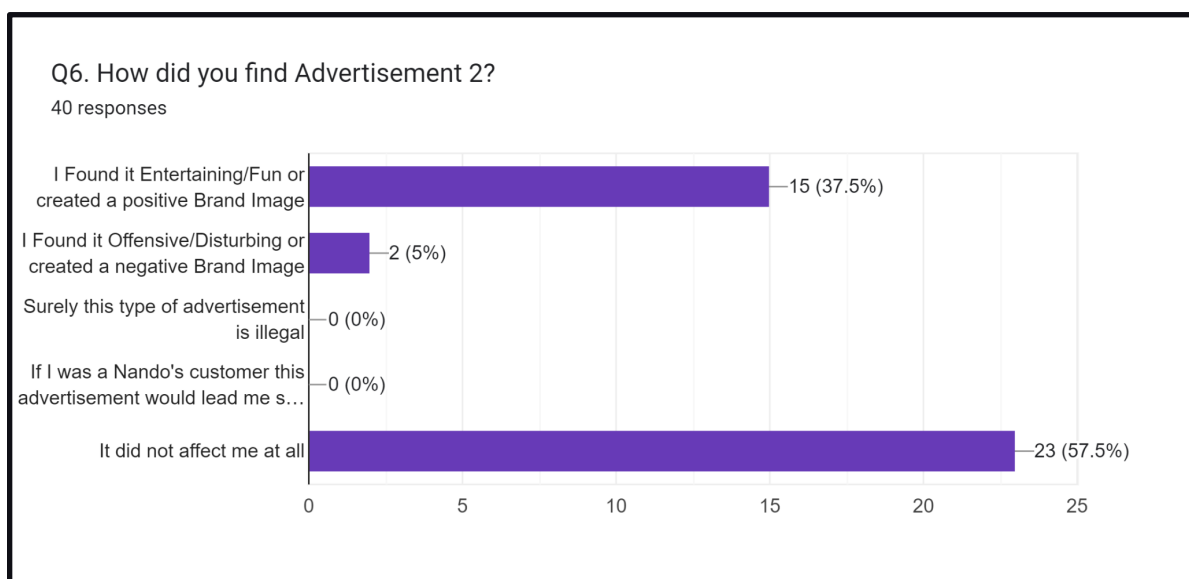


Figure 1.7 – Results from Q6 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 8th question overall (Q7 in the survey) asked participants to, “Elaborate on the reasons for your findings/feelings as chosen with regards to Advertisement 2 above.” Below in Figure 1.8, a bar graph can be found with the participants' answers.

Out of the total 40 participants who viewed advertisement 2 and answered the question, the answers were nearly universal. 38 (95%) respondents said "I personally found nothing wrong with it". This translated to 18 (18/18 = 100% of males) male participants and 20 (20/22 = 91%) female participants. In addition, 1 respondent who was female answered Q7 with "It upset me emotionally" while 1 respondent who was also female responded that "It was unnecessarily political".

From a general overview of the data generated by this question, it can be observed that there is very little selective perception towards the non-shocking advertisement with the exclusion of the 2 cases where participants had answered “It upset me emotionally” and “It was unnecessarily political”, although those frequencies were very small.

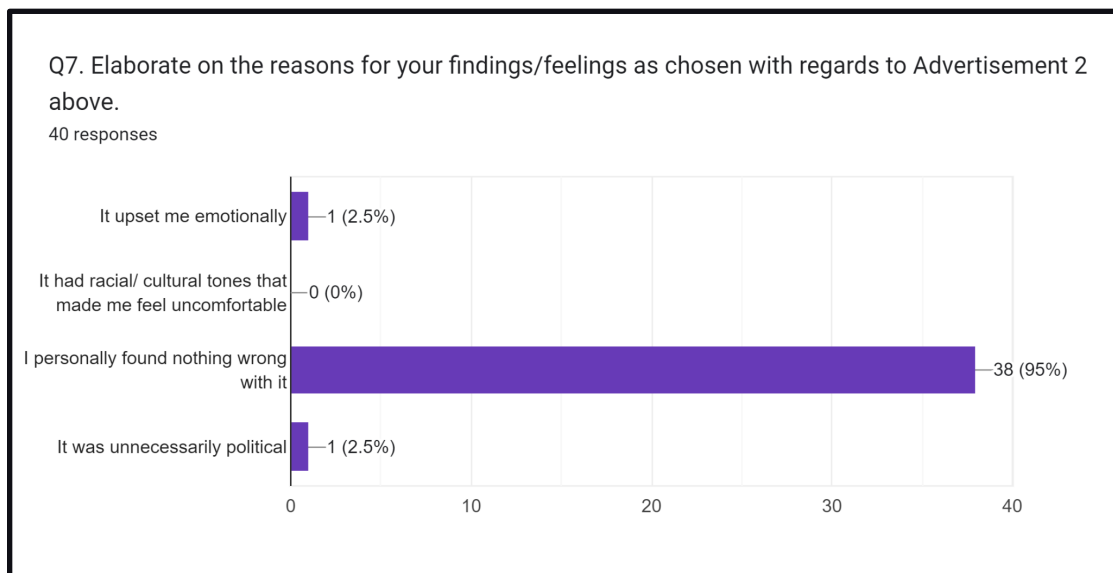


Figure 1.8 – Results from Q7 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 9th question overall (Q8 in the survey) asked respondents “Did any of the two advertisements alienate you toward the brand advertised?” Participants were given three options to choose from; being “Advertisement 1”, “Advertisement 2” and “Neither of them”. Results from the survey can be found in Figure 1.9 below.

The reason this question was included in the survey was to investigate whether or not participants who found advertisement 1 ‘enjoyable or entertaining’ still felt a sense of alienation or target exclusion from the video.

Thirty respondents (75%) said “neither of them” and this was made up of 15 ($15/18 = 83\%$ of males) male participants and 15 ($15/22 = 68\%$) of female respondents, which tends to show that females did feel a little more alienated to the adverts. By mining the results further no respondent chose advertisement 2 and 10 (25%) of them chose advertisement 1. Of those 3 ($3/18 = 17\%$ of males) were male respondents and 7 ($7/22 = 32\%$ of females) were females.

The results reveal that, as 0 participants chose advertisement 2 and 10 chose advertisement 1, this revealed that advertisements containing shock value led to a feeling of alienation which was of a greater effect than potential alienation from an advert with no shock value. In addition, 32% of females versus 17% of males mentioned that advert 2 alienated them toward the brand showing that females tended to be more alienated toward a brand due to shock marketing.

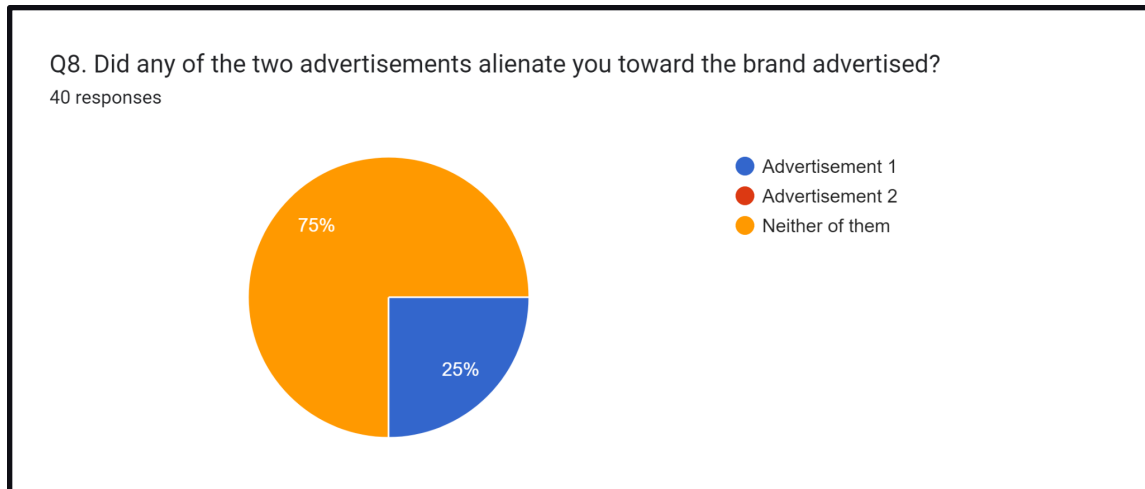


Figure 1.9 – Results from Q8 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 10th question in the survey (Q9 in the survey) asked respondents “Which of the two advertisements impacted you more emotionally? With three possible answers, “Advertisement 1”, “Advertisement 2” and “Neither of them”. In total, 36 respondents had answered that advertisement 1 had impacted them more emotionally, while the remaining 4 respondents had stated that Neither advertisement had impacted them emotionally. This can be seen below in Figure 1.10.

From taking an in-depth look at the data, 16 male respondents ($16/18 = 89\%$) answered “Advertisement 1”, while 17 female respondents ($17/22 = 77\%$) had answered the same. There was not a single case of any respondents answering, “Advertisement 2”, furthermore; 2 male ($2/18 = 11\%$) and 2 female respondents ($2/22 = 23\%$) had answered that Neither of the 2 advertisements shown impacted them emotionally. Although relatively the percentage of males was higher than females the difference does not seem significant. The answers generated from this question seem to reveal no gender bias, in addition it shows that shock advertisements, such as the one shown in Advertisement 1 do impact the consumer more when compared to a traditional, non-shocking piece of marketing material.

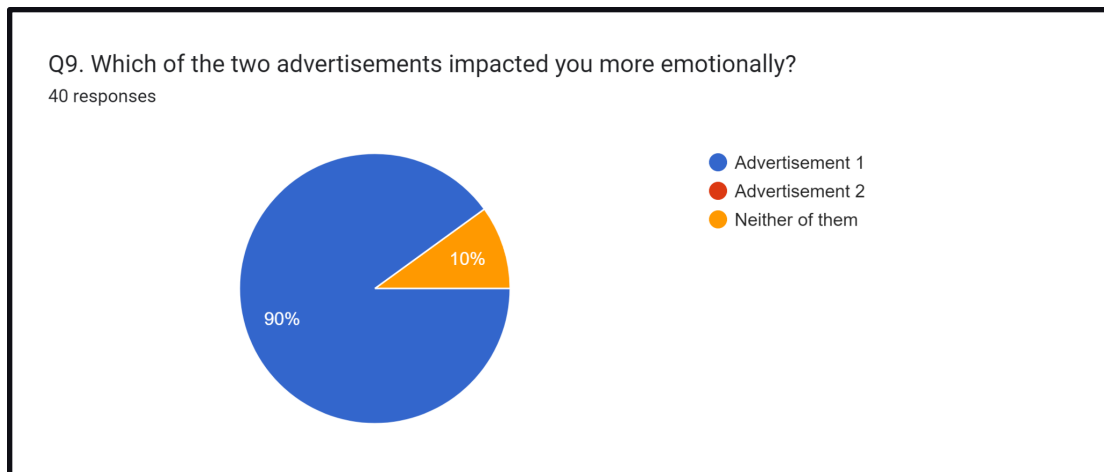


Figure 1.10 – Results from Q9 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 11th question in the survey (Q10 in the survey) asked respondents “Do you find that you purchase more from brands whose advertisements you engage with?”

Participants were given 3 options for this question, “Yes”, “No” and, “Advertising does not affect my purchase”. Results from this survey question can be found below in Figure 1.11.

2 of the latter answers are both a negative, thus would be treated similarly in the final data analysis. 2 negative answers were selected for this question, as to not ‘shoehorn’ respondents into simply saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’. As is illustrated in figure 1.11 below 24 (60%) of the total number of respondents answered yes to this question, which supports the notion that an engaging advert would more likely lead to a purchase.

With regards gender, 11 (11/18 = 61%) male respondents had answered “Yes”, agreeing that advertising can affect their purchase when they engage with the messaging, while 13 (59%) female respondents had also answered “Yes”. The findings reveal no gender differences with regards to this question. 1 male participant in the study had answered “No”, while 3 female respondents had answered the same. 6 male respondents answered that “Advertising does not

affect my purchase”, while the same number of female respondents had also answered similarly.

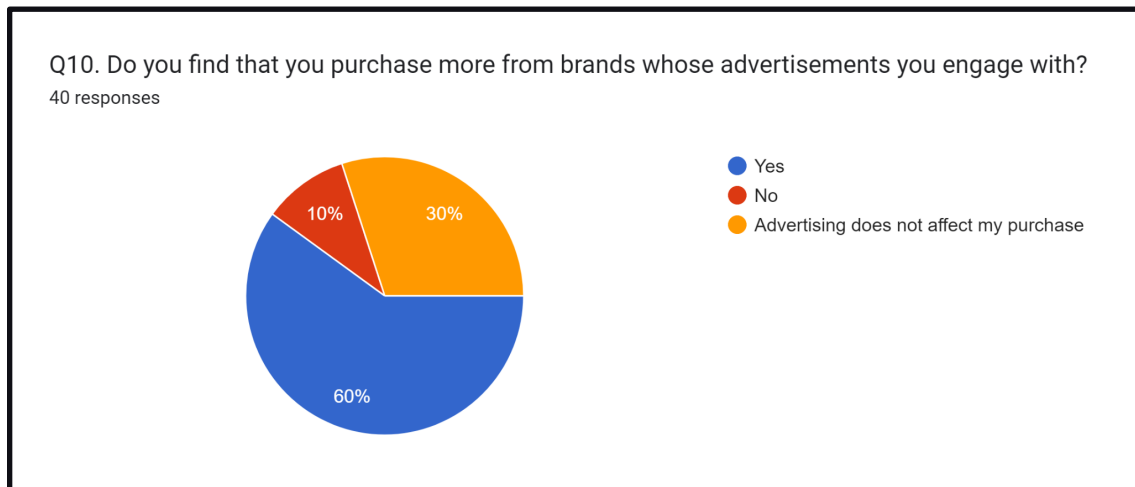


Figure 1.11 – Results from Q10 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 12th question (Q11 in the survey) asked participants “Which advertisement do you think would more likely influence your purchase decision?” Respondents were given the choice between “Advertisement 1” and “Advertisement 2” when answering. Results from this question can be found in Figure 1.12.

In a vast majority of 36 respondents (90% of the total), “Advertisement 1” was selected by 16 male participants, while 20 female participants had answered the same. While the remaining 4 participants (10%) had selected “Advertisement 2”.

These 4 participants included 2 males and 2 females showing that advert 1 had a very similar effect on both males and females.

The possible reasons for this are discussed in the research questions and hypothesis sections which are addressed below.

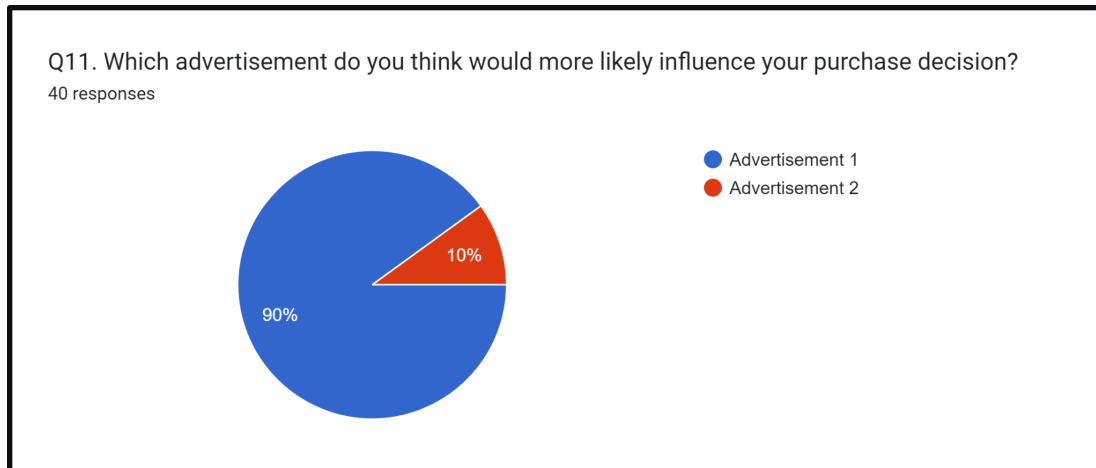


Figure 1.12 – Results from Q11 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 13th question (Q12 in the survey) asked participants “Do you think shock marketing tactics are more effective for social issues rather than brand or product marketing?” The question had 4 possible answers for respondents to choose from; “Yes”, “No”, “Maybe” and “I would have to see an example before I make a decision”. From an overall view, 17.5% of respondents answered “No”, 20% of respondents replied, “I would have to see an example before I make a decision”, 22.5% said “Maybe” and 40% of participants answered “Yes”. Results are portrayed in Figure 1.13 below.

Taking a more in depth look at the data from Q12, 3 female respondents said that “I would have to see an example before I make a decision”, while 5 male respondents answered the same. 4 male respondents had answered “Maybe”, while 5 female respondents answered the same. 7 male respondents answered “Yes”, while 9 female respondents said the same. 1 male respondent had answered “No” to the question, while 6 female participants had replied similarly.

Overall, while there was a large percentile of respondents that agreed that shock marketing tactics have the capacity to be more effective for social issues, a nearly equally large group of respondents remained unsure and required an example before answering “Yes” or “No”.

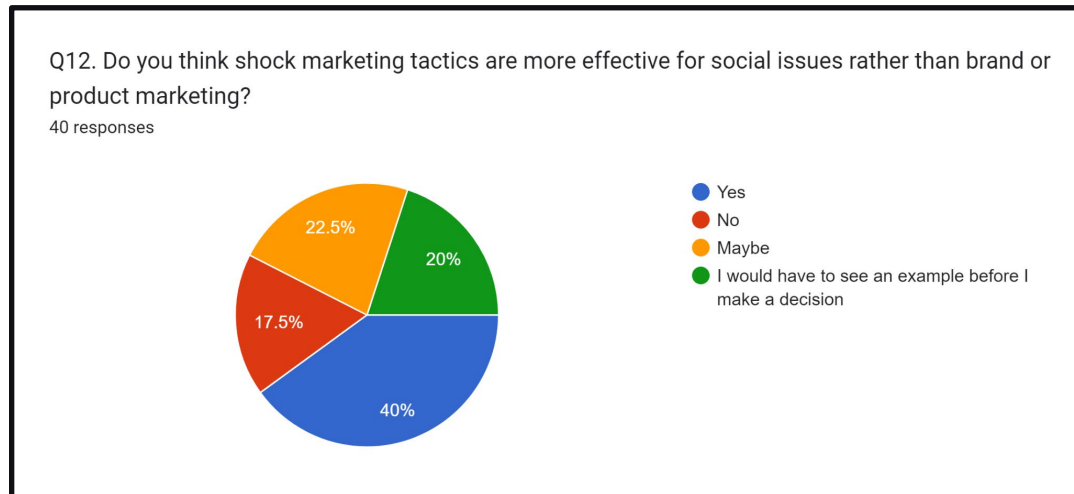


Figure 1.13 – Results from Q12 (Source: Adapted for the study).

The 14th and final question (Q13 in the survey) asked respondents "In reference to the above question (Q12.) and both advertisements, are these advertising types appropriate for the 21st century consumer?" The point of this question was to investigate if the majority of respondents who enjoyed the shock advertising content in advertisement 1, deemed it acceptable for the average 21st century consumer. Results from this survey question can be found in Figure 1.14 below.

To elaborate further, this question aimed to find if shock advertising is acceptable in general to the South African consumer, aged 18-25. The overall results as was illustrated in figure 1.14 below, reveals that for this question there were 27.5% respondents who answered “No”, 7.5% of respondents had answered “I don't have any particular feelings/ opinion about it”, while the majority of respondents, making up 65% had answered “Yes”.

Q13. In reference to the above question (Q12.) and both advertisements, are these advertising types appropriate for the 21st century consumer

40 responses

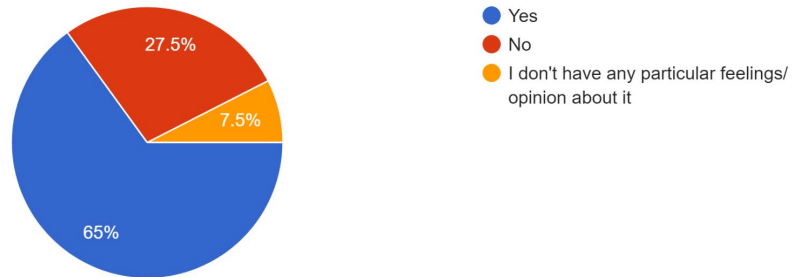


Figure 1.14 – Results from Q13 (Source: Adapted for the study).

Research Question, Problem and Hypotheses Addressed

In order to address the research hypothesis, each question asked in the survey was put into a table in order to examine the answers comparatively. Survey questions that correlated with a specific hypothesis and research question were put towards answering those specifically and furthermore were divided accordingly. Firstly, survey questions that directly correlated with Research Question 1 (RQ1) in addition to a further correlation with Hypothesis 1 (H1) were looked at first.

Hypothesis 1 Addressed:

H1: Customers that view shock advertising are more likely to remember the brand and the product.

Question:	Advertisement 1	Advertisement 2	% of Male who said advert 1	% of Females who said advert 2
Q1: Which of the Two Advertisements captured your attention more?	95%	5%	94%	95%
Q2: In terms of the Two Advertisements which are you more likely to remember?	95%	5%	94%	95%

Q1 and Q2 showed that consumers were more likely to remember the brand and the product advertised when exposed to them through shock marketing materials. The data also reflected how shock advertising was more effective at gaining customer attention than traditional

marketing methods; thus, in part answering H1. The results also reflect similar findings across both males and female respondents.

Question:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Q3: How did you find Advertisement 1?	62.5%	27.5%	12.5%	10%	15%
Male %	72%	11%	17%	0%	21%
Female %	55%	36%	9%	18%	9%

To save space on the table, options for this question were numbered instead of written; with option 1 being: "I Found it Entertaining/Fun or created a positive brand image", Option 2 being "I Found it Offensive/Disturbing or created a negative brand image", Option 3 being "Surely this type of advertisement is illegal". Option 4 was chosen as "If I was a Nando's customer this advertisement would lead me to stop purchasing", and option 5 was "It did not affect me at all". As can be seen from the results above a large percentage of respondents found advertisement 2 either entertaining and/or fun or it created a positive brand image to them. This is promising with regards to a shock marketing-based advert. In addition, the results by gender reveal that females tend to show more negative sentiments toward the shock marketing advert as opposed to the traditional based advert.

Question:	"I personally found nothing wrong with it"
Q4: Elaborate on the reasons for your findings/feelings as chosen with regards to Advertisement 1 above.	70% of total respondents selected this option.

Male %	83% of male respondents selected this answer.
Female %	59% of female respondents selected this answer.

Results from this question showcased that while the proportion of male respondents had a higher rate of tolerance towards shock marketing content than female respondents; the overall value, regardless of gender, was much higher than the other answers given. Showing that consumers aged 18-25 that answered this survey did not have a negative perception towards the brand advertised after viewing shock marketing content.

Question:	"Yes"	"No"
Q5: Do you think shock advertising can become over-offensive or too vulgar?	57.5%	42.5%
Male % of respondents	61%	39%
Female % of respondents	55%	45%

Results from Q5 show that male respondents feel more negatively towards the limits that shock advertising content can reach, in essence stating that there is a line that can be crossed before the content should be banned or removed.

Hypothesis 2 Answered:

H2: Shock marketing is more effective than traditional methods and is not detrimental to the customer retention rate.

Question:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Q6: How did you find Advertisement 1?	37.5%	5%	0%	0%	57.5%
Male %	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	61%
Female %	41%	9%	0%	0%	55%

The same coding from Q3 carries onto Q6; with option 1 being: "I Found it Entertaining/Fun or created a positive brand image", Option 2 being "I Found it Offensive/Disturbing or created a negative brand image", Option 3 being "Surely this type of advertisement is illegal". Option 4 was chosen as "If I was a Nando's customer this advertisement would lead me to stop purchasing", and option 5 was "It did not affect me at all".

The results from Q6 highlight that a much higher rate of participants, both male and female, felt that it did not affect them at all in comparison to the reactions generated in Q3.

Respondents also had less positive reactions to the advertisement in comparison to Q3; 37.5% of respondents displayed positive reactions in Q6, while Q3 had 62.5% positive reactions.

The results showcased that shock advertising had the capacity to be more effective than traditional advertising methods, when directly compared based on positive reactions.

Question:	"Advertisement 1"	"Advertisement 2"	"Neither of them"
Q8: Did any of the two advertisements alienate you toward the brand advertised?	25%	0%	75%
Male %	17%	0%	83%
Female %	32%	0%	68%

Question:	"Advertisement 1"	"Advertisement 2"	"Neither of them"
Q9: Which of the two advertisements impacted you more emotionally?	90%	0%	10%
Male %	89%	0%	11%
Female %	77%	0%	23%

The results from this Q8 revealed that the shock marketing content shown in advertisement 1, has a much higher rate of alienation than the traditional advertisement shown in advertisement 2. In addition, the results from Q8 and Q9 showcased that while shock advertising may have a higher capacity to gain consumer attention and emotionally resonate deeper with the consumer, it also has a much higher rate of alienation, with both male and female respondents.

Question:	“Advertisement 1”	“Advertisement 2”
Q11: Which advertisement do you think would more likely influence your purchase decision?	90%	10%
Male %	88%	12%
Female %	90%	10%

In addition, Q11 finalised the comparison of effectiveness between traditional and shock marketing; which was achieved by a 90% response rate in favour of “Advertisement 1”, when participants were asked, “Which advertisement do you think would more likely influence your purchase decision?”

Research Question 1 Answered:

What are the brand perceptions of customers after viewing shock marketing content?

From the data analysis and findings, the supporting evidence suggested that the reactions towards shock marketing content are mixed, but often positive. Q1-Q4 showed that customers are more likely to remember the advertisements, and in majority have positive feelings towards them. In addition, Q9 showed that consumers resonated deeper with advertisement 1 than 2, meaning that shock advertising also has a deeper emotional impact on consumers. However, participants in Q5 have stated in slight majority that shock advertising can become too vulgar or offensive.

Research Question 2 Answered:

Is shock marketing more effective than traditional marketing in relation to customer retention and acquisition?

From the above data, there exists sufficient evidence to support that shock marketing is more effective than traditional methods, in relation to customer acquisition, due to the results from Q8, Q9 and Q11. However, the data showed that there is still little evidence to support the positive effect on customer retention.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Validity:

The concept of validity (normally used when dealing with quantitative data) of a measuring instrument centre around the discussion of whether the measuring instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, pg 256). Validity is made up of both external and internal validity. The latter is enhanced if the correct research methodologies are used in the study and if errors are minimised. External validity on the other hand is strong if the results from the sample can be inferred onto the rest of the population with a high level of accuracy (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, pg 257). This type of validity is enhanced if the sample size used is both representative and if necessary, sufficiently large.

In order to improve the validity of the measuring instrument (online research survey) the researcher had conducted a review of the related literature and in line with such, developed the items (questions) to be used in the measuring instrument as simply as possible for the participants to understand, offering definitions and terms in the brief of the survey.

Internal validity has also been increased by ensuring that the correct research methodologies were used where possible, including but not limited to minimising the pitfalls of question and questionnaire design, however, the validity of external validity of the study could be questioned as the researcher has used non-probability convenience sampling with a small sample size of 40 participants due to the limitations of the research at honours level.

Reliability:

Reliability (normally used when dealing with quantitative data) relates to how the measuring instrument would have performed consistently, for example: a measuring instrument would produce the same set of results if the study was repeated with the same set of respondents at a different point in time. In addition, reliability also infers that the measuring instrument can be generalised, for example: that the same instrument can be applied to another set of respondents and they would interpret and understand the questions the same as the first set. (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, pg 257).

Initially it was difficult to confirm if the measuring instrument performed correctly, however after the process was applied and the research was conducted, it performed consistently.

In addition, the questions and survey was designed using the correct methodologies which enabled the sample group to easily understand what is being asked and respond accordingly. In addition, at no point of the research process, was the researcher given external moderation or feedback regarding failures or pitfalls of the measuring instrument.

Trustworthiness:

The trustworthiness (normally used when dealing with qualitative data) of the qualitative data is based on the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the data.

Credibility refers to how well the researcher interprets the open-ended data supplied by respondents (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, pg 258-259). Transferability is whether the findings will generate similar results if applied to another sample set and finally confirmability relates to how accurately the researchers' conclusions are supported by the data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, pg 258-259).

The thematic technique which was used when analysing the data within this research report was assisted by SPSS by improving the credibility, transferability and confirmability of the findings. In addition, the correct use of research methodologies was used in the design of the measuring instrument which also assisted in improving trustworthiness.

A few examples of potential pitfalls that were avoided in increase the reliability and trustworthiness in this research report were that; the questions in the questionnaire were short, unambiguous, easy to understand, used simple English, did not use sensitive or leading adjectives and were not double barrelled (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, pg 258-259). In addition, the researcher provided an audit trail of analysis which also improved the confirmability and hence trustworthiness of the findings (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, pg 258-259).

Contribution, Ethical considerations and Limitations:

Contribution:

The study employed an applied research approach in the hope that the findings would contribute significantly to advertising research, specifically the use of shock advertising in marketing campaigns from large mega corporations to SME brands operating in both non-profit and for-profit sectors.

In addition, this research aimed to prove that the brand image risk associated with shock marketing and ultramodern tools much like it can be minimised if extensive market research has been done prior to the launch of the marketing campaign, and how returns could be very profitable in terms of keeping older customers (customer retention) and generating publicity for the brand (consumer attention).

As discussed previously shock marketing can take many forms, and it is hoped that this research will help to identify the appropriate type and form of shock marketing that a company can use

for their specific target audience and brand mission. If nothing else, the research could help draw attention to the potential use of more shock marketing as an ultramodern tool in advertising campaigns, both in non-profit and for-profit ventures.

Ethical Considerations:

As the respondents had been informed of the study's purpose, ethics were evident throughout the data collection phase of the research. Participants' identities will remain private, as will their personal information collected that is not relevant to the study after their contribution. Participants in the study were not and will not be harmed in any way and were allowed to withdraw from the process at any time of the study.

During the data collection, participants were informed of the expectations and the aim of the study to avoid any suspicion of deception and personal bias. The advertisements shown to the participants were considered to be a light level of shock, as per shock marketing levels discussed in the literature review and concepts as indicated by Engelbart, Jackson and Smith (2017, pg 44).

Summary of Contribution, Ethical considerations and Limitations:

- The ethical framework for this study was done in line with the IIE Ethics postgraduate handbook.
- Participants were given forewarning of graphic or upsetting content shown during the testing and research phase.
- Participants were informed about the expectations and the aim of the study to avoid any suspicion of deception.
- Confidentiality and anonymity was maintained throughout the research process.
- Participants' identities were not revealed at any stage and no harm was promised to all participants at all stages of the research.

- Respondents were able to withdraw from the survey at any time but saw a withdrawal rate of 0%.

Limitations:

This study has some of the following limitations. Only one sample group, made up of individuals between the ages of 18 and 25, will participate in the study. This group of respondents has a small sample size of 50 people, which lowers the external validity of the results. Another drawback is the sample's reduced representativeness because the subjects will be selected through non-probability convenience sampling. Despite the fact that both of these restrictions were due to practical considerations of an honours level study, they should be mentioned, nonetheless.

Implications of Findings for Future Practises:

In answering research question 1:

The data analysis and conclusions provided supporting evidence that consumers' responses to shock marketing material are inconsistent but frequently favourable. According to data from Q1 through Q4, consumers are more likely to recall advertising and generally feel positively about them. Additionally, Q9 revealed that consumers connected more emotionally with advertisement 1 than with advertisement 2, indicating that shock advertising also affects consumers highly on an emotional level. However, a slight majority of Q5 participants said that shock advertising can sometimes become excessively vulgar or insulting.

The recommendations for future practises that this researcher can endorse includes a strong suggestion towards carrying out and implementing qualitative data collection methods for future use, rather than quantitative, in order to get a deeper and more refined response from participants. This can be done in the form of focus groups or group interviews, but with a strong emphasis on a physical meeting, rather than through a digital presence.

From answering research question 2:

Due to the findings from Q8, Q9, and Q11, the aforementioned data provides abundant evidence that shock marketing is more efficient than traditional marketing approaches in regard to customer acquisition. The statistics revealed, however, that there is currently insufficient evidence to support the beneficial impact on customer retention in relation to shock marketing.

The suggestion for future practises from the research would be to invest in a long-term study, potentially of multiple years, and recalling on past respondents to see if their perception of an organisation after being exposed to a shock campaign would remain the same or change, in addition the potential future study should have an aspect of focus relating to consumer spending, in order to test consumer loyalty as a method of customer retention. However, this potential future study would maintain difficulties in regard to maintaining anonymity for the respondents.

Final Conclusions:

To conclude, the research study succeeded in having a clear contribution to the field of marketing and bringing light to the fledgling idea of shock marketing in a South African context, in addition to pulling together a strong argument to support in answering the research questions for the use of shock marketing.

Albeit the success of shock marketing has considerations for parties willing to adopt it that can determine the success of the campaign, these considerations mainly include (as the findings illustrated) demographic factors; such as the sensitivity, age, gender and tolerance levels of the audience as well as the level of shock or nature of the content displayed in the promotional content.

The research was also successful in proving both hypotheses, by showcasing examples from previous literature, in addition to the findings that; 'Shock marketing is more effective than traditional methods and is not detrimental to the customer retention rate,' and that 'Customers that view shock advertising are more likely to remember the brand and the product.'

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