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**CONTROVERSIAL MARKETING EFFECT ON BRAND**

**REPUTATION AS PERCEIVED BY CUSTOMERS**

Bachelor's thesis

Programme: International Business Administration, specialisation: Marketing

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors has been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading. The document length is 9451 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Invariably, the concept of controversial marketing is a debatable one. On the one hand, supporters of controversial marketing believe that controversy is necessary for business. On the other side of the debate, hold that controversial marketing campaigns are always exaggerated beyond acceptable social norms. Regardless, either side of the debate is supported with solid examples that suit each argument. So then the questions that remain include; “What are the benefits of controversial marketing?” Is all controversy beneficial for business?”

**Aim:** These old-age questions summarise the essence of this paper. More than that, this paper will delve deeper into the issue of controversial marketing by exploring the issue from the customer’s perspective. Specifically, this paper explores customers’ dominant perceptions and attitudes toward controversial marketing campaigns.

**Methods:** The researcher focuses on three viewpoints; negative, positive or unchanged. In this regard, four interviews were conducted to determine the dominant perceptions and attitudes among consumers.

**Conclusions:** This paper concludes that controversial marketing is a necessary evil; a high-risk, high-reward strategy that boosts brand reputation at low levels but often disastrous at high levels. In other words, while some controversial marketing campaigns often go overboard by engaging in actions that defy social, ethical, personal and cultural norms, it is possible to regulate the level of controversy and leverage the attention-grabbing aspect that is typical of all controversy, to positively boost brand image and reputation.

**Keywords:** Controversial Marketing, Brand Reputation, Consumer Perception



## **INTRODUCTION**

Controversial marketing is the act of using blunt slogans or graphic imagery to capture consumers' attention, bring awareness about a particular product or create a buzz. Controversial marketing takes the form of shock advertising. As the name suggests, shock advertisements are designed to shock the audience by creating a controversy that the audience remembers. Traditionally, mainstream advertisement and billboards were used to execute these campaigns, but with the advent of the internet, brands are increasingly using social media and other online platforms to get consumers looking and talking (Waller, 2004; Xie & Wei, 2018).

For brands, controversial marketing is an essential marketing tactic that has the potential to increase brand awareness, brand engagement, and even sales. However, controversial marketing can also have adverse effects. Take clothing giant, Gucci, for instance. Their most recent controversy almost erupted into a social media crisis after the brand's latest line of polo jumpers sparked criticism on the grounds of being racially offensive. Gucci described the polo jumper as "balaclava" because it could be pulled up to the eyes, with a hole exposing the mouth. However, most people said it symbolised black imagery, specifically blackface. Gucci was forced to issue a public apology and withdrew the polo jumpers from its stores. This paper aims to explore controversial marketing as used in the brand strategy.

### **Background of the Study**

Marketing is essential in both digital and traditional settings because it helps brands to navigate the clutter of comparable brands that seek the selective attention of customers. Marketing also boosts brand reputation, and there is evidence showing that corporate marketing directly affects sales, although the effect is rarely immediate (Todor, 2016). A common theme that emerges in previous research is that the most effective marketing campaigns are those that create goodwill and enhance brand reputation by showing constituents the organisation's value proposition. Moreover, many brands prefer image and video advertising due to their ability to grab attention. Image and video advertisements are the most used marketing tactics because of their ability to

influence human behaviour on a large scale. Through such ads, marketers can increase buying intentions by emphasising the favourable aspects of a product or service.

Controversial advertising goes beyond essential attention seeking because it includes an unexpected factor/shock. It is this shock factor that makes controversial advertising an effective strategy. Messages conveyed using shock advertisements affect viewers directly so that they are usually imprinted in the viewer's subconscious so profoundly that they trigger action. Research also shows that for marketers to use controversial marketing effectively, they should at least understand their audience's weakest nerve such as fear and anger (Djambaska, Petrovska & Bundalevska, 2016). Brand promotion and brand value are also important concepts of marketing. In this regard, advertisers often take bold and sometimes controversial steps to remain relevant to the consumers and to influence consumer behaviour.

## **The Psychology Behind Controversial Advertising**

Controversial advertising leverages the emotional aspect of marketing. Images advertisements, for example, use visual elements to communicate and their interpretation is subjective. This means that each viewer interprets the meanings of a specific image from his/her unique perspective. Paul Martin Lester proposes five perspectives that consumers may use to analyse and interpret images: *Personal perspective*: This is based on the viewers deeply held beliefs, attitudes and mindset. Personal values do not necessarily agree with the cultural perspective and are often hard to change personal values so that the viewer interprets the image differently.

*Ethical perspective*: When images are viewed from the ethical perspective it means that the image and the maker must be ethically responsible. Some of the conventional techniques used under the ethical perspective include utilitarianism, hedonism, categorical imperative, the veil of ignorance.

*Historical perspective*: Viewers may also interpret images based on their past use and popular connotations associated with similar kind images. For example, pictures of naked women are typically associated with sexism.

*Technical perspective*: This is based on analytical techniques such as the use of a dark room, position adjustment and other technical presentations of an image. A typical example of this

technique is the use of light to improve image quality or bring certain features into focus. Also with the development of new technologies, computer modifications techniques such as Photoshop are increasingly becoming popular tools for image analysis.

*Cultural perspective:* From this perspective, viewers judge images based on cultural implications and symbolization. Viewers look for the use of forbidden words, images and other cultural symbols.

## **Statement of the Problem**

For customers, controversial marketing strategies raise crucial ethical issues especially when such campaigns suggest a disregard for personal ideals or seem to violate social values (Xie & Wei, 2018; Sen, 2016). There is evidence to show that organisational ethics have a substantial impact on the way customers perceive brands and how they respond to controversy in the short-term. Also, the effect of controversial marketing has been extensively explored using the theory of selective perception (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002; Kadić-Maglajlić et al., 2017) According to this theory; individuals select, organise and evaluate external stimuli to achieve meaningful and pleasing experiences. In other words, people perceive certain features in the user environment uniquely, assigning different levels of importance to each. However, there seems to be a gap in the literature about how consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards controversial marketing affect brand reputation. Therefore this is the main focus of the current study.

## **Purpose of the Study**

### **Objectives of the Study**

This paper will explore how consumers perceive brands that use controversial marketing campaigns: whether more positively, negatively or unchanged after controversial marketing.

### **Research questions**

What is the effect of controversial marketing on Brand Reputation as Perceived by Customers?



## **Research Hypotheses**

Controversial marketing is a high-risk, high-reward strategy that boosts brand reputation at low levels but often disastrous at high levels,

## **Significance of the Study**

Research shows that consumers are increasingly becoming aware of their ability to complain about unethical marketing activities. However, only a few studies have explored how controversial Marketing affects Brand Reputation and consumers' perceptions of the brand image. Organisations seem to face a dilemma of finding the right balance between being controversial and intriguing and some companies end up distressing buyers by dealing in questionable marketing activities. In today's business environment, public scrutiny of brands is high, and customer confidence in brands is low. In such an environment, the changing customer perceptions have important implications for brand reputation. More so, with the increasing importance of CSR and the rapid progression of digital media channels and information sources, it is important for brands to build and maintain a strong reputation. This study aims to shed more light on the proposed topic with the expectation that business managers and other researchers will gain insightful information from the findings.

## **Limitations of the Study**

As a research method, interviews is enormously beneficial because it helps build a holistic picture and detailed reports from the informants. Interviews are limited in various ways that are relevant in the current study; most notably, it appears that interviews are selective and only provide information that is prepared to share their opinions or perceptions. This is important because the perceptions usually change over time and according to specific circumstances.

## **Assumptions of the Study**

Assumptions are an indispensable element in research because they give the researcher fundamental principles to conduct research. As Leedy and Ormrod (2010) assert, "Assumptions are so basic that, without them, the research problem itself could not exist" (p. 62). The first assumption made in this study is that controversial advertising will continue to be relevant to customers. This study also assumes that interviewees will respond truthfully and that responses are representative of the target population. The researcher contributes to this end by explaining how confidentiality and anonymity will be preserved.

# **1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

## **1.1 Intersectionality Theory**

Previous studies have shown that the use of academic theories is an essential aspect of research. In the current research, the theoretical element is used to understand the mechanisms underlying stereotypes such as racism and religious insensitivity. For example, Inman and Baron (1996) propose that the degree to which an individual interprets an action as prejudicially driven and often depends on the nature of experiences and their expectations from the perpetrators and the victim. (Aosved, Long, & Voller, 2009; Cantor, Michel, & Swartz, 1982) In essence, past experiences help individuals to predict the most likely turn of events about the various types of stereotype. There is also evidence to show that most forms of stereotype such as racism or sexism depend on a person's social dominance orientation (SDO) (Sidanius et al., 2004).

Intersectionality asserts that different categories of social identity such as sexuality, gender, and race are interdependent and operate simultaneously to create either marginalisation or privilege. Intersectionality theory is useful in conceptualising a social issue that a group of people or an individual face. This approach considers the individuals' overlapping experiences and identities to comprehend the nature of a particular social problem (Collins & Bilge, 2016). The proposed paper will utilise the theory of Intersectionality in exploring the use and effect of using racial and gender-based stereotypes in marketing.

## **1.2 Selective perception**

Potential customers are always being bombarded with various advertisements daily. To help sift through the clutter, people use selective attention to attend to the most attention-grabbing messages (Taylor, Franke & Bang, 2006). This means that the role of marketers is to create offerings that grab the attention of viewers by emphasising the elements that are pleasing to the target audience.

The theory of selective attention also explains the reasoning behind repetition in marketing to ensure that customers do not overlook your product.

Selective perception often results in enhanced purchase intentions although this does not always guarantee the actual purchase. It is up to the marketing brand to ensure that customers act on their purchase intentions by closing a deal; this is achievable in various ways (Taylor, Franke & Bang,2006). Discounts and the provision of offers, for example, are proven methods of encouraging purchase. Coupons and competitions are also effective incentives for customers because they facilitate integration and product recognition.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Who uses Controversial Marketing and Why**

Marketers often engage in questionable marketing, for example, by using provocative images or remarks in advertisements. Historically, companies within controversial industries are more likely to use dubious marketing. Examples include alcohol brands, cigarette, and pharmaceutical companies. Such products are labelled as "socially sensitive products," or "unmentionables," (Waller and Fam, 2000). According to Wilson (1981, p. 92) these are . . . "products, services, or concepts that for reasons of delicacy, decency, morality, or even fear tends to elicit reactions of distaste, disgust, offence, or outrage when mentioned or when openly presented." Brands that deal in consumer products are also likely to engage in controversial marketing as a way of attracting attention creating immediate awareness (Waller, 2006). In other words, controversial marketing is a strategic and deliberate tactic as used by brands. As a form of marketing tactic, advertising is researched extensively. Many organisations began to adopt advertising in the early 1980s as a way of countering the negative image that the media often creates. Through advertisements, companies can successfully present their desired message to potential customers with overly worrying about negative opinions. Advertising is an effective way of improving brand reputation; however as companies often fail when they focus too much on the form and too little to the content of the advertisements.

A careful review of the literature suggests that there is a raging debate over the benefits of engaging in controversial marketing, with some researchers arguing that controversial marketing campaigns rarely succeed and frequently result in negative perceptions of a brand. Customers may also perceive controversial advertising as lacking credibility, for example, if it is an attempt to communicate corporate values, but the company's activities do not reflect those values. In other words, advertising is more effective when done strategically; ensuring that it closely aligns with the overall company goals and objectives as well as the value proposition. It is also important to note that advertising often fails to change customer perceptions when used as the sole marketing

tactic. Waller et al. (2005) posit that the impact of controversial marketing primarily depends on physiological and religious beliefs held by the recipients. Furthermore, the authors reveal that the effect of marketing certain products rarely depends on the recipients' geographical location. On the contrary, beliefs are important because they affect recipients' ethical judgment, which in turn shapes attitudes and perceptions towards the marketing approach. Notably, customers' perceptions also depend on a person's commitment level to ethical and religious beliefs. Thus, advertisements that are viewed as being ethical are associated with less controversy.

## **2.2. The Brand Reputation Concept**

Brand reputation represents the entirety of the public's opinion about brands corporate activities. Employing questionable marketing tactics could affect brand reputation through its influence on consumers' perception and the quality of experiences a brand provides. Holt (2004) describes brand reputation as one of the four elements of brand value. Brand value is the “difference between what a consumer will pay for a branded product (a product experienced through the lens of its brand culture) and a physically identical product without the culture.” (Holt, 2004 pg. 10) The other components of brand value are experimental value, symbolic value, and relationship value (see figure 1). Customers use brand reputation to assess the risk associated with certain branded products, including whether or not the products provide utilitarian value such as timeliness, tear and wear proof. The explanation for such tendencies is that from a customer's point of view, purchasing a branded product constitutes a considerable risk, especially when the products promise to remain useful for a long time.

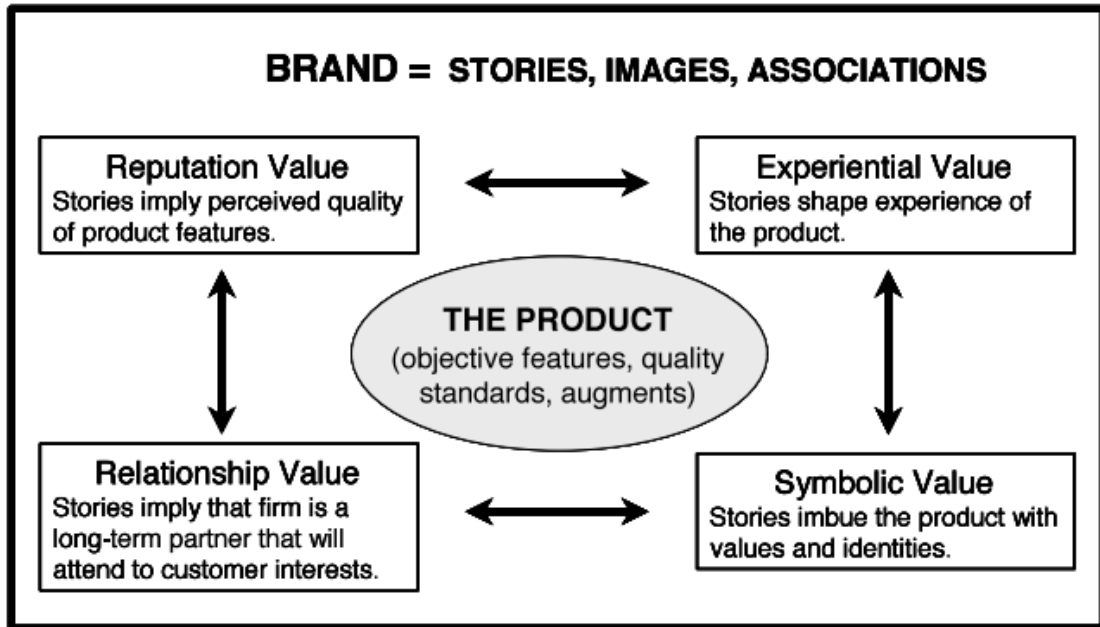


Figure 1: The Brand Reputation concept, Holt (2004)

Brand reputation depends significantly on customers' perceptions (customers' perceptions depend on the product value or the functional and non-functional advantages associated with a brand) (Bae, Rudd, & Bilgihan, 2015). Moreover, there seems to be a strong correlation between advertising, customer perceptions and brand reputation according to Argenti (2009). A strong brand reputation can also help brands reduce the negative consequences of a crisis. This was the case during the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) Tylenol cyanide crisis. Similarly, soft drinks giant Coca-Cola leveraged its strong reputation to avert long-term damage in the wake of contamination accusations in India.

Brand positioning is an essential aspect of brand reputation. In this regard, previous research asserts that the concept of positioning is primarily concerned with the tactics and methods used to bring brands to a target customer's attention. Thus, brand perception is essentially a reflection of a brand in terms of functional benefits or limitations as viewed by customers. Brand perception is a relative concept on the basis that consumers develop opinions about brands in comparison to competing brands. The total number of brands that a consumer interacts with make up the product class which is held in the consumers' perceptual space. (Jethwaney, Jain, 2006).

### **2.3. Consumer Perception of Controversial Marketing**

According to previous research consumer perceptions towards unethical marketing depend on factors such as gender, age, social-cultural factors, and socio-demographics. Factors such as product information, consumer benefits, and economic value also affect consumer perception.

Depending on the level of controversy, controversial marketing may also result in distrust, "defined as a belief that a person's values or motives will lead them to approach all situations unacceptably."

Previous studies have also demonstrated that consumer attitudes and perceptions towards controversial marketing are subject to external and internal contextual factors such as the media channel used and personal factors, including religious beliefs and ethical judgment. About the choice of media platforms, research shows there is a significant difference between traditional media and digital media channels. More specifically, digital audiences are less tolerant of questionable online marketing tactics (Prendergast and Hwa, 2003). This assertion is supported by previous research by Christy and Haley (2008) who assert that different media platforms produce varying perceptions about advertisements on different media channels resulting in various user outcomes

### **2.4. Case study Analysis: Example of Stereotypes in Controversial Marketing**

#### **2.4.1 Sexism: Suit Supply**

In 2014 Dutch Company, Suit Supply came under heavy criticism on social media for a marketing campaign called 'Toy Boy.' The campaign that shows small men clad in suits Photoshopped on top of naked women was an attempt by the menswear brand to sell suits for the summer. Instead, the campaign sparked an outburst on social media, with many labelling the series of images as sexist and objectifying women. The outrage spread offline, with one anonymous person sticking sanitary napkins over one of Suit Supply's advertisement on a bus park, writing; 'I am not a playground. Imagine your sister'. Suit Supply carried on with the controversial campaign, oblivious of the outrage.

### 2.4.2. Racial Controversy: Dove

Dove is used to controversy. In 2011, for example, the soap making company shared a Facebook advert showing three women standing next to each other each with varying skin complexion. Behind the three women was writing on a wall reading "before" and "after." The "after the sign" was positioned behind a white woman with smooth skin, while the black woman standing next to her had cracked skin, with the sign behind her reading "before."

More recently in 2017, Dove published yet another Facebook post showing a black woman "transforming" into a white woman by removing her top. Using Dove's body wash caused this remarkable transformation. The result for Dove was a public outcry with social media users sharing hashtags such as #DoneWithDove and #DoveMustFall. Dove offered a public apology in both cases. This is the apology from the latest incidence, "Dove is committed to representing the beauty of diversity. In an image we posted this week, we missed the mark in thoughtfully representing women of colour, and we deeply regret the offence that it has caused."

In 2017 YouGov, a global data and public opinion monitoring company researched to assess the impact of the controversy on Dove's brand perception index. After measuring the number of people talking about the brand since the controversy began, YouGov suggests that the controversy increased the conversation related to Dove. Another interesting finding from this research is that a significant number of people negatively perceived the headlines. A "Buzz Score" supports this assertion (a measure of how many people heard something negative or positive related to Dove in the last fortnight).

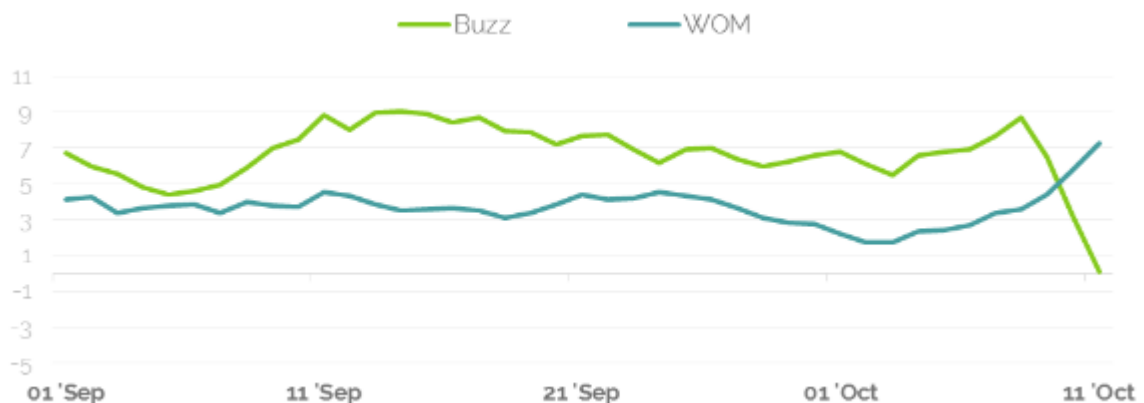


Figure 2: YouGov Brandindex, October 2017.



As shown above, Dove's buzz score decreased sharply in October, falling by at least 7 points. Notably, YouGov's research insists that Dove did not suffer significantly in terms of overall brand perception. The brand maintained an impression score of approximately +40 furthermore, "it (Dove) has hovered at that mark for several months, meaning previous advert controversies also failed to harm the company seriously."

#### **2.4.3. Religious Insensitivity: Starbucks**

In 2015, Starbucks decided to switch to a more minimalist holiday cup by removing Christmas symbols including the Christmas tree and reindeer. From the official statement, Starbucks said that intention was to "create a culture of belonging, inclusion, and diversity." Starbucks' noted that the switch to a new red cup design was a way of welcoming diverse stories, not just Christian ones. Instead of the accolade for supposedly religious inclusivity, Starbucks' decision sparked online attacks from angry Christians and conservatives such as Donald Trump who accused the coffee brand of being anti-Christmas.

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Thus far, this research has made conclusions based on assumptions and evidence from other studies. This section specifies the data collection methods and participants for the collection of first-hand consumer insights. Research design guides the researcher by helping them rationalise the intended research. This section describes the research approach used including research methodology, the design of interviews, data collection methods, sampling methods, target population, ethical issues, and research limitations.

#### **3.1. Methodology**

Business research can be either based on three methodologies; qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. Depending on the research objectives, each approach presents unique challenges and benefits. This research will benefit the most from a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is primarily exploratory meaning that it provides insights on opinions, motivations, and reasons (Sutton & Austin, 2015). This is essential for the researcher to make holistic conclusions.

Previous research has demonstrated how to use qualitative research methods (Quinlan, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2019). Notably, when using the qualitative methodology, researchers rely on individual epistemological and ontological perspectives; research practices; and research skills. Moreover, the benefits of using qualitative research are vast. For example, researchers are better poised to understand the basis of certain phenomena, i.e., why and how they occur (Taylor Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). According to Maree (2016) qualitative research is traditionally linear, but the current study will adopt a more holistic and non-linear approach as proposed by Maxwell (2009) In other words, rejecting the idea that the idea of having to adhere strictly to the research design because the process is bound to change as the study unfolds.

Qualitative research takes either of five approaches: a case study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory and narrative (Maree, 2016). A phenomenological approach is ideal for this study

because its focus is to gain insight into human experiences and the effects of such exposures on other people. It is important to note that the by design phenomenology methods are affected by the researcher's perspective; therefore, he/she should put aside personal bias. Ideally, the purpose is to gather data from people who have experienced the phenomena in question and develop an overarching report of the insights gained.

### **3.1.1. Measurement of Variables**

The measurement of qualitative variables generally varies depending on attributes and characteristics. For this research, the analysis of variables is based on nominal or unordered categories including perception, attitudes, gender, and area of residence. Variables were firstly defined by their conceptual constructs which is a way of explaining the concepts that the variables are attempting to measure. One of the critical issues associated with the measurement of qualitative variables such as attitudes and perceptions is related to the fact that such variables are non-observable meaning that it is difficult for researchers to define such variables. In other words, it is impossible to operationalise constructs such as attitudes and perceptions. To counter this challenge, the researcher should identify actions that are representative of the perception in question so that the changes in behaviour are measured as indices of perception and attitudes.

### **3.1.2. Study Area**

The study focuses on the Valencia region in Spain.

### **3.1.3. Target Population**

The study targets individuals of college age who are enrolled in university. More specifically four individuals are selected for the interview sessions; Russian, Swiss, Peruvian and Dutchman

### **3.1.4 Sampling Techniques**

Purposive sampling is an ideal sampling method in qualitative (and non-probable) studies such as this one (Maree, 2015). In this sampling method participants are selected based on a predefined criterion, maybe a specific thing that they share, for example, location, gender or experience. The primary advantage of using purposive sampling is that the researcher can control the topic for discussion in such a way that every element benefits the research (Maree, 2015) In other words, the purposive sampling provides an opportunity to emphasise on specific aspects of the investigation. Previous studies have described some of the limitations of using purposive sampling

(Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Acharya et al., 2013). Most notably, a lot of pre-planning is required to ensure that participants turn up for interview sessions. Also, there is a likelihood that the researcher's personal bias affects respondents.

### **3.1.5 Research Instruments**

This research would fail without the following tools:

- Consent forms
- Laptop
- Notebook
- Pen
- Voice recorder
- Interview schedule
- Printer

### **3.2. Reliability and Validity of Issues**

The fact that qualitative research depends on interpretative information increases the likelihood of criticism or scrutiny. Reliability and validity are two areas that form the basis for such investigation; therefore, it is essential for the researcher to ensure that the conclusions made are credible, consistent and believable. Accordingly, reliability is a measure of the consistency of results for the same experiment when conducted more than once. On the other hand valid defines the correctness and accuracy of such findings. About validity Seliger and Shohamy (1989, 95) state, "Any research can be affected by different kinds of factors which, while extraneous to the concerns of the research, can invalidate the findings."

The validity of this study is determined by the accuracy of the researcher's interpretive findings because these form the basis for formulating the hypothesis and assess the accuracy of generalising results to the target population. Golafshani (2003), as well as other authors (Noble & Smith, 2015; Silverman, 2015), assert that reliability in qualitative research depends on the researcher's ability to build trust with respondents and to identify themes correctly.

### 3.3. Data Collection Procedure

The data collection method adapted is the use of in-depth interviews. This means that the researcher will seek the opinions and the stories behind individual experiences with controversial marketing campaigns. Interviews are better than other methods such as questionnaires because the interviewer works directly with the respondents. In-depth interviews provide a detailed account of the respondents' point of view because, by design, such questions elicit comprehensive answers such as detailed explanations of the subject matter. Moreover, the interview questions are Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (See appendix 1), meaning that the interviewee will not ask straightforward yes or no answers; instead, the questions are crafted in a way that allows for follow up questions and detailed discussions (King, Horrocks & Brooks, 2018). This research also leverages projective techniques to elicit straight answers and to tap into respondents' deeply held values, motivations, attitudes, and beliefs. Projective techniques are essential in this research because the researcher is interested in exploring deeply held beliefs and orientation. Of course, there is evidence to show that direct questions work well in most qualitative research; however, this approach fails to paint a holistic and comprehensive picture, especially when researchers want to understand deeply held beliefs and values. This assertion is backed by the fact that most of the times people act irrationally and unconsciously under the emotional influence (Hindley & Font, 2018).). In other words, people are naturally unable to articulate their desires and motivations accurately.

Projective techniques come in handy when investigating topics that customers may find challenging, for example elucidating their perceptions about a specific brand (Banović et al., 2016).). Generally, these techniques entail posing particular questions to respondents although sometimes respondents are required to fill in or interpret visual stimuli, discuss the meanings associated with specific words (or items) or complete sentences.

Some of the commonly used projective techniques include,

1. Rorschach test
2. Construction techniques
3. Word Association Test.
4. Expression Techniques
5. Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

This research will use the thematic appreciation test (TAT) approach. The TAT projective technique requires respondents to evaluate up to 20 pictures of things in various recognisable setups and create a story explaining the events in each image. An essential advantage of this method is the fact that respondents are required to describe the current activity as well as the potential events that led up to the moment and the feelings or mindset of the characters (Banović et al.,2016).). To ensure that this method is valid, the researcher will emphasise respondents to think freely and engage their creative side, while being honest and transparent in their response.

It is important to note that this research does treat data collection and analysis as an ongoing process that will be carried out simultaneously. In other words, interviews will be unpacked further to obtain in-depth research. Moreover, the researcher may go back to respondents depending on whether they draw new insight or identify new issues from other respondents.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are part of any research. At the very basic, the research process is a source of tension between the objectives of the study to produce generalizable results and the participant's rights to privacy and autonomy. In most cases, such pressure is prevented through acknowledgement of critical ethical principles such as the protection of human participants. This issue is compounded by the fact that qualitative research aims to examine and describe human behaviour in their natural environments.

Ethical issues that may result from the interview process are usually difficult to predict. Regardless, researchers should attempt to predict the issues that may cause a conflict of interests with research participants. For the current study, the researcher acknowledges the fact that problems such as privacy, consent and confidentiality are a vital aspect of interviews. For this reason, all participants were provided with a consent form. Also, the researcher guaranteed confidentiality and privacy before the beginning of each interview. Also, to avoid privacy dilemmas, the research instruments were designed to minimise the amount of identifiable data collected from research participants. Precautions will also be taken to safeguard the confidentiality of the information gathered; participants will also be informed of the parties who are allowed access to research data.

Another profound aspect of qualitative studies is the balance of power between participants and researchers. For participants, the decision to take part in qualitative research is determined by their openness and willingness to share personal experiences. In other words, researchers should be willing to accept the fact that research subjects are autonomous humans who can share information on their own accord. When researchers can balance this relationship, they develop trust with participants who are then more willing to share their experiences. A section of previous research asserts that several ethical issues arise when researchers conduct studies in areas that they are knowledgeable in or in their areas of work (Neuman & Robson, 2014; Noble & Smith, 2015). In this regard, it is argued that researchers are apt to make more certain deductions based on preconceived knowledge or because of their relationship with research subjects (Noble & Smith, 2015). On the other hand, the researcher who studies a new area is likely to get less insight from participants especially when subjects feel intimidated by the researcher or when they feel coerced. In essence, researching an area that one is knowledgeable in creates reliability and validity issues while researching a different field might mean that the researcher needs to perform a broad range of preliminary research. The key to the current study is limiting objectivity to avoid bias.

## 4. QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This research uses content analysis to enumerate and identify occurrences of essential messages in interviewee responses (Mayring, 2004). Content analysis is one of the most commonly used empirical methods of qualitative text analysis. According to Mayring (2004, the concept of content analysis refers to the techniques of data analysis that focus on the quantifiable and definable elements /variables of qualitative data. Some of these variables include the relative and absolute frequencies of specific words in a text.

Content analysis is basically a process of human coding communications to transform raw data into a standard form. The Content analysis approach aims to give a detailed account of the responses by trying to discern what was said, who said it and the effect. The interviewer started with general questions such as querying whether interviewees understood the meaning of the term “controversial marketing.” This way the interviewer was able to understand the fundamental interviewees’ perceptions thus avoiding imposing pre-conceived perceptions and understandings of the concept of controversial marketing. This technique is preferred because the researcher’s primary concern is to interpret the meanings associated with particular messages. In other words, the interviewer seeks to discern the topics (thematic units) contained within the responses. Furthermore, qualitative descriptive techniques such as content analysis, thematic analysis, and descriptive phenomenology are ideal in situations when the researcher wants to who wish to employ a relatively low level of interpretation. Sandelowski and Barroso (2003) assert that qualitative research data can be categorised in continuums indicating the transformation of the researcher’s interpretation and understanding during the research process.

Qualitative researchers can use different methods to analyse raw data gathered during the research process. Among these, the most commonly used methods include content analysis, grounded theory, ethnography, hermeneutics, and phenomenology. Unlike quantitative research generally, rely on statistical methods, qualitative researchers rely on non-quantifiable data such as human perceptions and opinions. This means that the risk of leaving out essential conclusions is greater



in qualitative research. Therefore in the current research, the researcher was keen to adhere to the qualitative perspective by focusing on issues such as credibility, trustworthiness and reliability of the results. Regardless of the approach taken the process of qualitative data analysis generally cuts down the volume of content by identifying categories and groups of information with similar or comparable data. The important thing is for the researcher to ensure that they remain true to the research results and to achieve a comprehensive summary. Moreover, the researcher should be well aware of the aims of their research because there are no definitive criteria for decision making when using qualitative methods. According to MAYRING qualitative researchers can adopt either of these qualitative content analysis approaches.

**Explication:**

This technique is basically all about explaining the research results but in fewer words than the original content. When using this method researchers also annotate the original text as a means of clarifying the desired message.

**Structuring:**

This approach is a crucial step in the qualitative content analysis that is less like classical content analysis. As the name suggests the main concern for researchers when structuring is to organize the research data into a specific structure. Various approaches can be used to structure qualitative data including scale form and the nature of the content. But regardless of the approach taken structuring typically begins with the identification of units and the elements of structuring. This step creates the basis for conducting the analysis after which the different structures are established.

**Summary:**

When using this method, the main of the researcher is to reduce the original content in a manner that preserves the intended message. To achieve this, researchers usually paraphrase, generalise or create abstractions of the original content.

The three approaches identified above can either be used to complement each other or as independent analytical procedures as Titscher et al. (2000) assert. For the current case, the researcher was more concerned with summarising the interviews although explication and structuring were also used to verify the analysis.

### *Summarizing interview findings*

As the researcher analysed the interviewees' responses, several themes became evident. Texts and passages that conveyed similar topics were categorised together thus allowing the researcher to establish a framework for interpretative description. More specifically, the researcher used the research question and prior knowledge in the literature as the basis for establishing categories and thematic units.

- The theory of selective perception underlines the impact of controversial marketing messages. All the interviewees perceived certain features in the advertisements uniquely, assigning different levels of importance to each element (see table 1).
- A vast majority of customers do not understand the label "controversial marketing" although they know what constitutes controversy in marketing.
- People from different countries and cultures have unique attitudes and perceptions of controversial social media campaigns.
- Generally, controversial marketing campaigns raise crucial ethical issues especially when interviewees see such campaigns as disregarding cultural ideals or when they seem to violate social values

### *Thematic units and categories:*

#### **Attitudes & perceptions:**

Each participant expressed different attitudes and perceptions of controversial social media campaigns. The decision as to whether or not a campaign is controversial or not was largely dependant on the culture and personal values, but respondents generally felt that extremely controversial campaigns expressed negative attitudes towards the brands responsible for such campaigns (see appendix 2). In particular, Dove's campaign was criticised by the 3 of the participants who said that the campaign was overly controversial.

Respondent 1 (Dutchman): The Dutchman did not see anything wrong with the most controversial marketing campaigns. In fact, the Dutchman did not change attitudes even after viewing controversial campaigns because they understood the essence of such campaigns, thus, *"Because I already saw the campaign and well, in my opinion, it was not so controversial as what I've seen in other campaigns."*

R2 (Russian): The Russian expressed mixed attitudes towards the various campaigns shown to them. For example, the respondent thought that the Starbucks campaign was okay but sad. Thus, *"I'm sure in Europe, in the USA people are like hooo, they care about reputation, but in our country, nobody cares about no one, but if you love to go to Starbucks they will continue going to Starbucks."*

R3 (Swiss): The Swiss expressed different attitudes towards controversial marketing campaigns depending on the level of controversy as perceived by the respondent. Thus for example, after seeing Suit supply's campaign, the response was *"Yeah, showing me the pictures that you showed me now not knowing the company it doesn't have a good reputation for me."* On the contrary, the respondent was okay with Starbucks' campaign, thus, *"I still think the same about Starbucks." . . . Because for me it doesn't matter cos...I kind of understood I think the reason behind . . . They talked about the religions now. . . Because they're like different religions that don't celebrate Christmas like even some of my friends so they [inaudible] but that was like a big thing then every religion should have their Starbucks cup or something like that. I don't mind that they did it."*

R4 (Peruvian): The Peruvian also had mixed perceptions of different brands. For example, after seeing Dove's campaign, the respondent thought that the campaign was *"Completely racist and insensitive."* On the contrary, the Peruvian did not have a change of attitude after seeing Starbucks' campaign which some respondents thought was offensive; thus, *"I think it (Starbucks campaign) was ok. I don't believe this has...that had to happen like. It's just so simple. Are you ...from my perspective, are you actually going to worry about what a cup has or doesn't? For me, that's what the boy there I think was more about a joke he was joking and social media just trying to... social media basically is expanded that in a totally different way."*

### **Feelings and Emotions:**

In summary, all the participants expressed mixed feelings towards the use of controversial marketing campaigns. In fact, all the respondents had different feelings regarding the use of controversy in marketing.

R1(Dutchman): The Dutchman, for example, was less concerned with a brand's campaign, focusing instead on whether or not the quality of the brand's products are appealing. Thus when asked about the feelings raised by suit supply's campaign, the Dutchman replied *"Yeah, I think*

*SuitSupply is not the best quality you can buy for suits, so that's eh...yeah, well, I don't know. It's a good company but not the best quality."*

The Dutchman expressed similar feelings when asked about Dove's campaign, suggesting that although some people might find the campaign offensive, such feelings vary from one person to another, thus, *"... Ah well, not that much but I can imagine other people might do," the Dutchman said.*

R2 (Russian): The Russian was sensitive to controversial marketing campaigns such as SuitSupply's campaign. For the Russian brands that exaggerated controversy raised negative feelings, thus, *"I never actually bought this (suit Supply). I was not a very (big) fan of this brand, but I don't know. I'd never buy this, and I'm not going to buy this anymore. That's all."*

R3 (Swiss): According to the Swiss, "it (controversial marketing) is always an exaggeration mostly" therefore, it should be strictly controlled. The Swiss also expressed mixed feelings about specific campaigns, thus *"Maybe the people that go to Starbucks... I mean they take pictures with like... I mean the thing that Starbucks is famous for is their image, their reputation. You go there to study, have your Starbucks coffee. That's the thing they are famous for. That's their reputation. Those are the clients they have. So for those clients, that they changed the cup was a big deal but for me changing the cup so no Christmas decoration, not a deal. I didn't even notice. They made it a bigger deal than it should have been"*

R4 (Peruvian): R4 expressed mixed feelings towards the use of controversy in marketing. For example, the respondent did not see the need to use controversial marketing campaigns despite acknowledging its benefits. Thus *"I don't think they have to be used. It depends if for example, hmmm....I don't think it has to be used especially with come along this kind of problems (exaggeration) for a long, long period."*

#### **Basic knowledge of terms used:**

All the participants were well aware of the concept of controversial marketing although 2 out of the 4 participants had not heard of the term "controversial marketing." In fact, each respondent the participants had a certain level of knowledge about why brands use controversial marketing campaigns although some of the participants were not sure whether or not controversial marketing always achieves its intended goals.

R1(Dutchman): The Dutchman did not understand the meaning of the term controversial marketing, although they understood the essence of it, thus, “*I think a little bit, but I don't really know, no.*”

The Dutchman understood the essence of the marketing campaign, “*I think it accomplished what they want to do. To get more and more attention to the news. So it's kind of funny*” he said.

R2 (Russian): Russian remarked that they were not sure whether or not controversial marketing is necessary, stating that she didn't know “*when to understand if this advertisement will bring you surplus or damage.*”

R3 (Swiss): The Swiss interviewee was particularly knowledgeable on the issue of controversial marketing (although the term “controversial” is a foreign term to them). According to the Swiss, controversial marketing is just one of the many techniques used by brands to make money; thus, “*... in the end, they always want their money, so they do like anything to gain the money. But yeah, never heard of that technique now.*”

The Swiss had not experienced controversial marketing from their favourite brands such as under armour, thus “*From Under Armour, maybe but I don't know if they've done it.*”

R4 (Peruvian): The Peruvian was aware of what constitutes controversial marketing despite not knowing the specific definition of the term, thus “*Maybe, when, there's this thing for example in an announcement, and the put thing underlines on explicit content, maybe that's when I see controversy...controversial marketing.*”

### **Cultural influence and ethical issues.**

Cultural background played an essential role in respondents brand preference and also affected individuals' attitudes and perceptions towards controversial marketing campaigns. Some participants also judged campaigns from a cultural perspective and an ethical perspective. In fact, the interviewee used this understanding as to the basis for judging various marketing campaigns.

R1(Dutchman): The Dutchman was sensitive to the use of culturally explicit materials such as was in Suit supply campaign, thus “*Well, it was a very eh...I don't know. Ehh... I do not really agree with this one. Because of the comments on the video, I'd agree to the people who comment on the*

*video. Because you see a dark woman changing her clothes, then she became a white woman or something like that. So I think this is a little bit too controversial.*

R2 (Russian): The Russian, in particular, expressed very strong emotions towards two of the campaigns shown to them, saying that Dove's campaign was sexualized while Suit supply's campaign was disgusting because *"There are some topics in our life that we cannot discuss that openly and you cannot have fun in front of everybody with this."*

R3 (Swiss): The Swiss disapproved campaigns that are exaggerated beyond cultural norms, although such exaggeration *"depends on what country."* *" . . . It depends on what country. In the U.S for example, if you are Nike and your main competitor is Adidas you can make bad publicity about Adidas. In Switzerland and most European countries, it's illegal. So I think you should have laws about marketing. What you may do and I think that should be strictly controlled."*

About specific campaigns, the Swiss reported that *"Because for me it doesn't matter cos...I kind of understood I think the reason behind...they talked about the religions now...because they're like different religions that don't celebrate Christmas like even some of my friends so they [inaudible] but that was like a big thing then every religion should have their Starbucks cup or something like that."*

R4 (Peruvian): The Peruvian judged specific marketing campaigns based on cultural and ethical values such as respect for every human, thus *"Yeah police brutality and also the problem with Muslims hmmm that is really specific themes, and I think there's a lot to do for not. . ."*

About specific campaigns, the Peruvian expressed a similar opinion, thus, *" I think it's (suit supply's campaign)...they sexualised a lot. There's this kinda things, explicit things that come, especially with girls and there is the image of two guys kissing that I don't mind but the other images, they were way too sexualised from my opinion.*

### **Brand Preference**

All participants had unique tastes in brands, with each one expressing leniency towards brands that they preferred. The assertion that participants expressed bias/tolerance towards certain brands was consistent among all participants even in cases that the brand's campaign was perceived as controversial by other participants.

R1(Dutchman): The Dutchman favoured big brands such as BMW and Mercedes regardless of their reputation, thus, *“Well, I like cars. So car brands I like the most...Mercedes BMW for example but also big companies like Apple and Amazon...and Netflix.”*

R2 (Russian): Another common characteristic among the 4 participants is that all of them use brands with appealing products that meet individual needs. For example, the Russian said that she prefers *“Nestle and Ferrero because I loves their sweets . . . “*

R3 (Swiss): Most notably, the Swiss thought that Dove's campaign was okay, even though every other participant was convinced that the campaign had gone overboard. Thus, *“I know the brand a bit already before, but I think it's a good brand.”*

The Swiss expressed a preference for brands with unique products that separated him from the crowd. Brand preference is also determined by the viewer's culture, for example, the Swiss prefers under armour because *“. . . It's kind of cool 'cos when I go to the U.S... because I'm half-American...when I go to the U.S I buy Under Armour clothes; I bring it to Switzerland, and that's still a trend.”*

R4 (Peruvian): The Peruvian was more concerned with brands which make products that the respondent is interested in, thus, for example, *"I just like the way that they (Calvin Klein and then Mango. Zara.) make their clothes. I think they are original especially if I thinking originality I would think that finally my first option Desigual. I'm really into clothes. I just like it.”*

## 5. DISCUSSION

Consistent with previous studies, findings of this research support the assertion that controversial marketing campaigns usually alarm people, sometimes resulting in discomfort. Results of this research also support the claim that effective controversial marketing campaigns are those that convey the desired message even though they might create some levels of controversy. In other words, Controversial marketing is a high-risk, high-reward strategy that boosts brand reputation at low levels but often disastrous at high levels. According to Myers (2004), marketing effectiveness can be assessed from three perspectives, namely; audience engagement, communicator and the contents of the message. Questionable marketing tactics are effective when they are designed according to these factors, even though some usually go overboard by being too controversial. As the interview data reveals, some respondents raised the point that controversial advertisements are often exaggerated and show extreme situations. For example, according to the Dutchman, “. . . every company is doing their best to attract more and more people so yeah I think it’s funny and...sometimes funny and sometimes it’s very shocking, but I think that’s good. Yeah.” Similarly, the Peruvian observed that, while some controversial marketing is okay, advertisers often go overboard when they address specific themes such as police brutality and religious insensitivity. This was the case in the Dove campaign with two participants claiming that the campaign was explicit and sexualised. From these findings, it is evident that marketers should be attentive to ensure that they generate moderate levels of controversy in ads to avoid offending their audiences. In fact, organisations that continuously use questionable marketing tactics end up becoming monotonous to the extent that customers easily ignore them. More so, with the ever-increasing clutter of shock advertisements, people are more inclined to ignore messages that fail to arouse any personal interests.

### **What is the effect of controversial marketing on brand reputation as perceived by customers?**

Results of this study reveal that controversy increases the likelihood of discussion at low levels, and beyond a moderate level of controversy, it decreases the possibility of positive brand



engagement. This assertion is manifested in various dimensions in the current research: firstly, respondents who felt that advertisements disregarded moral, ethical and cultural values perceived the responsible brands negatively. This observation is consistent with previous research which asserts that marketing recipients make judgments depending on selective perception which means consumers are more receptive of messages that appeal to their beliefs and values. In fact, even participants who were introduced to controversial advertisements by the researcher expressed negative attitudes pertinent to the level of controversy associated with specific campaigns. On the contrary, research shows that customers will go to the extent of boycotting brands that are linked with controversies or public scandals. In particular, headlines related to harmful behaviours such as gender insensitivity or tax evasion have been shown to affect customers' perceptions negatively. This is so because customers hold underlying viewpoints and opinions about specific brands. And when brands fail to live up to the purpose associated with them, then customers perceive them negatively.

Consumers usually buy from brands that they recognise. Good reputation becomes critical because of it the beginning of brand recognition; if a brand is perceived negatively, customers will not be interested enough to engage with it, making difficult for them to recognise or understand the beneficial aspects of the brand's offerings. It is important to note that brand reputation does not accumulate with time. Instead, organisations have to remain active in building, managing and maintaining a positive reputation. As hypothesised at the beginning of this paper, negative attitudes and perceptions culminate in a damaged brand reputation and negative publicity. The results of this study support the assertion that depending on the message and the audience, controversial marketing can affect consumer perceptions either of three ways: negatively, positively or unchanged. These results are comparable to other studies which have demonstrated how consumers' evaluation affects their purchase intentions and brand loyalty. Some of the main points for the assessment in this regard are based on moral values and ethical perspectives. From a personal standpoint, ethics are closely associated with organisational values which have been defined multiple. But although there is no standard definition of ideal corporate values, violating values that customers associate with a brand (or its competitors) is generally seen as unethical behaviour.

On the contrary, organisations that create a positive image and brand reputation can position their products competitively. Most products are easily imitable. However, the impact of strong brand

reputation, brand image, and brand commitment are not easily imitable and thus represent a differentiated competitive advantage for businesses.

Organisations that are strategic in management of the aspects of the reputation such as transparency and ethical behaviour gain a potent competitive edge over companies that do not pay attention to their reputation. This is because customers regard reputation with great significance when evaluating brands. However, earning a good reputation is a challenging task that requires strategic execution of best practices. In other words, a damaged reputation can be hard to rebuild; it often results in a degraded firm image and can potentially lead to a crisis. According to Ingram, Skinner, and Taylor "If corporate actions are perceived, as unethical, the company stands to lose favour with their most committed customers" (Ingram et al. 2005). Customers' commitment is a top aspect of the brand equity pyramid, and it can be used to assess customer loyalty. Negative reputation is often associated with multiple adverse effects for brands because it affects a wide range of organisational aspects. For instance, it reduces customer commitment and brand loyalty which results in the loss of market share and business revenue. This assertion is rather logical because a negative reputation means that customers view a brand as being inferior in certain aspects which limits its competitive advantage. A bad reputation also affects business associations because brands are less likely to associate themselves with controversy. Evidently, these effects are undesirable, even when they are short-lived because a lot of effort and time is spent in rebranding to create sustainable relations with potential and existing customers.

Moreover, brands find significant value when they acquire and to maintain loyal customers. For example, maintaining a loyal customer base reduces marketing costs because such customers are easily reachable. Also, loyal customers are more likely to spend more on brands products, including new products because they trust the brand. Essentially, a loyal customer base helps brands to gain and maintain a competitive advantage. Consistent with previous research, the findings of this study also suggest that various factors moderate the effect of a bad reputation. Some of the dominant factors include prior history of controversy, level of consumer engagement, organisational response and past reputation for corporate social responsibility, technical and analytical thinking, etc.

## CONCLUSION

Business cannot operate without marketing activities. Moreover, controversial advertising is a common practice, especially in industries where raising awareness is the topmost agenda. For example, condom and cigarette advertisements almost always include shock messages or controversy. However, shock or controversial marketing is also used in other industries, in which case the primary purpose is to grab the audience's attention and to get them thinking about a particular marketing message. For brands that engage in such marketing practices, it is essential to embrace the risks that are associated with controversial marketing, an assertion that is particularly relevant in the digital business space whereby it is difficult to predict outcomes in terms of customers' openness to marketing messages. Because as this paper has demonstrated controversial marketing campaigns do not always achieve their intended intention and sometimes brands have suffered adverse consequences such as damaged reputation.

Still, it is evident that brands can always gain by pushing the boundaries of controversy as long as they remain within acceptable limits. But this aeration presents another dilemma on the basis that different people respond differently to different messages. So then the question is: what is the acceptable limit? Well, findings from this research suggest that multiple factors influence how people respond to numerous controversial messages. Among these, the most dominant include selective perception, personal perspectives, and culture.

The results of this study demonstrate that marketers can use controversy to pass on powerful messages that trigger specific and implicit changes in perceptions and consumer behaviour. However, this is not all; to create a lasting impression and long-term attitude changes, persuasive communication must contain strong arguments that can be quickly processed by the recipient. After all, social psychologists agree that people's actions are underlined by their attitudes which form a preconceived response in a manner that is consistent with individuals' beliefs.

## **Recommendations for effective use of controversial marketing tactics**

### **Have a reason for taking the risk involved.**

Controversial marketing campaigns can be a risky strategy, and it is almost impossible to predict the outcome. Therefore it is crucial for marketers to understand the context of advertisement and the value associated with the marketing risk. If the benefits outweigh the risk, then it stands to reason that a marketer should pursue the relevant marketing campaign and vice versa. Also, it is essential to know the desired purpose of using controversy; for example, it may be to raise awareness or to disrupt the market.

### **Know your industry and its limits.**

The key to successful use of controversy in marketing is determined by how far the marketer is willing to push the boundaries of controversy. Also, it is essential for marketers to know their brands, including how customers view the brand and the values associated with the brand.

### **Know and respect your audience**

Smart marketers learn to understand their target market. This allows insight into the kind of marketing campaigns that are likely to be appealing. One of the essential aspects to understand is the culture and personal values associated with the target audience. As this research has shown, what works for one culture may be perceived as being offensive in another culture.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1. Interview questions**

1. What kind of brands are you like?
2. Do you understand the concept of controversial marketing?
3. Are you aware brands sometimes use controversial marketing?
4. Has it ever happened to some of the brands you use / like?
5. Do you recognize any of these three brands (SuitSupply, Dove, and Starbucks)?
6. What do you think about this brand's marketing campaign (Show the campaign in question)?
7. How do you feel about the brand after viewing the marketing campaign?
8. How does the campaign influence how you feel about the brand? Positively, negatively or unchanged?
9. Do you think other people would boycott the brand because their marketing campaign is controversial?
10. Do you feel controversial marketing campaigns sometimes generate good publicity for a brands product?



## Appendix 2. Response Summary

Interviewee	Ad	Starbucks	Dove	Suit Supply
Dutchman	Remarks  perception	funny/attention seeking  Perceptions unchanged	Explicit  Negative perception	The campaign is funny.  Unchanged perception
Swiss	Remarks  perception	Not a big deal  Perceptions remain the same.	Happy  Perceptions changed positively	Not politically correct Triggered Negative perceptions
Russian	Remarks  perception	Campaign is okay  Perceptions change in a negative way	Sexualized  Attitudes change in a negative way	Disgusting  Perceptions changed negatively
Peruvian	Remarks  perception	Okay (It's a joke)  Perceptions remain unchanged	Racist and insensitive  Perceptions change in a negative way	Sexualized  Negative perceptions after viewing the campaign.

### Appendix 3. Interview Transcripts

Link: [https://livettu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/olowoe\\_ttu\\_ee/ETeuPuYxkcFMuoydkVF4IK8BMfcVfzxc24dmDmeb9pgxEw?e=QrebbJ](https://livettu-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/olowoe_ttu_ee/ETeuPuYxkcFMuoydkVF4IK8BMfcVfzxc24dmDmeb9pgxEw?e=QrebbJ) (TalTech login required)