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**THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOSITY, MATERIALISM AND MORAL-SELF  
IMAGE ON THE RESPONSE TO THE INDECENT LANGUAGE USAGE  
IN ADVERTISING**

**Final Bachelor's Thesis**

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## INTRODUCTION

Advertising is one of the key elements in the marketing communication which helps to create brand awareness, and promote and sell various products and services. It is the most popular tool used by companies who aim to grab the attention of the potential customers and consumers and sell them the product or service. Unfortunately, nowadays there is an obscene amount of advertisements that people encounter each day and most of them seemingly go unnoticed. Some sources even state that we see as many as 5000 ads every day (Pavel, 2014). In order to break through the clutter of all the advertisements and catch the eye of the potential customers and consumers, companies have to be different, creative, extraordinary, uncommon and sometimes controversial in their advertising. One of those ways is using “Shock Advertising” or controversial advertising which is a type of advertising intended to purposefully offend and surprise the audience receiving it by violating the norms of values of society and personal ideals. It is designed to “gain attention, encourage cognitive processing, and have an immediate impact on behavior” (Dahl, Frankenberger and Manchanda, 2003).

There are several types of shock advertising. Dahl et al. (2003) describe shock advertising and say that “offense is elicited through the process of norm violation, encompassing transgressions of law or custom (e.g., indecent sexual references, obscenity), breaches of a moral or social code (e.g., profanity, vulgarity), or things that outrage the moral or physical senses (e.g., gratuitous violence, disgusting images)”. The type of shock advertising chosen for this paper is profanity, as this type of controversial advertising has not been very deeply or widely analyzed, thus indicating a need for further analysis. As the Oxford Dictionary describes, profanity is blasphemous or indecent language (Oxford American Desk Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2010). Thus, profane language is not limited by usage of swear words or curse words alone, it can also include a type of language which is vulgar, strongly impolite, rude or offensive. According to a research done by Stapleton (2003) people use swear words for a variety of reasons such as for humor/storytelling, to create emphasis, for anger/tension release, etc. In total, 9 reasons were identified. Mortimer (2007) identified that 5 of the 9 reasons could be used and utilized within the advertising industry. Those reasons were humor/storytelling, to create emphasis, to show intimacy/trust, part of personality and to shock. All of those reasons are used by advertisers in order to create a relationship with target audience on a personal level such with friends or a family member. In addition, a study by Dahl et al. (2003) found out that the shock

appeal produced higher levels of attention, recall and recognition than the other advertising approaches such as fear and informational. Everything mentioned previously leads to one thing – by using profane language advertisers want to be more convincing and memorable.

Very limited research has been done in an effort to determine the effect of advertisements with indecent language on the following variables: consumer's attitude towards the advertisement, the brand and the purchase intention. However, a research conducted by Ilicic & Blakemore (2015) came to a conclusion that advertisements which feature indecent language lead to more positive advertisement attitudes, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions than when decent language is used. Unfortunately, one research is not enough to specify whether adverts with indecent have a positive effect on those variables, as it only incorporated demographic factors and used only non-controversial products, meaning further and additional analysis and research is required. For that reason, this paper will additionally incorporate a controversial and a non-controversial product in the research process, in order to test whether there is a difference in the response of consumers towards advertising with indecent language, when two types of products are advertised. Regarding the factors, which influence the response of consumers, several other researchers analyzed the impact of demographic factors, such as age, gender and level of education, towards a person's attitudes towards the advertisement with indecent language, the brand and the purchase intention (Barnes, Dotson, 1990; Grazer, Keesling, 1995; Waller, 2004; Zimmerman, Dahlberg, 2008; Ilicic and Blakemore, 2015). Those researches revealed that males, people who are younger and people who have an education level which is not higher than a bachelor degree, are less likely to get offended by adverts which include indecent language. However, there is a lack of researches analyzing the impact of psychographic factors on the variables, creating a gap in the customer profile, which is least likely to get offended by advertising with indecent language. To determine the effect of adverts with indecent language on the variables, psychographic factors, which are religiosity, morality and materialism, of the possible consumers will be analyzed in this paper. The reason of choosing these psychographic factors is that few researches have already explored the relation between some of those factors and attitudes towards controversial advertising in general (Andersson and Pettersson, 2004; Sabri, 2012; Virvilaite and Matuleviciene, 2013). The researches revealed that people with high levels of religiosity and morality will get offended by such ads. Materialism was also analyzed in the context of controversial advertising and it was found that there is no

relationship between materialism and evaluation of advertisements which use religious symbols (Gineikiene, Zimaitis and Urbonavicius, 2015), however, it was not analyzed in the context of advertisements with indecent language, indicating a need for further research. It would be safe to state that religiosity, morality and materialism are interrelated, as religion encourages people to have high morality and not be concerned with materialism. The link between those psychographic factors has been proven in separate researches (Machova, Serez, Toth, 2015; Stillman, Finchman, Vohs, Lambert, Phillips, 2012). Due to the reason of the factors being interrelated and having an impact on each other, it makes sense to analyze all of those psychographic factors together in a single research. Moreover, it was found that psychographic factors, e.g. religiosity, have an affect towards advertising of controversial products, such as contraceptive tools (Waller, 2004; Fam, Waller, Erdogan, 2005), with more religious people having negative views towards such advertising. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, finding out what kind of impact indecent language has on the variables, which are - attitude towards the advertisement, the brand and the purchase intention, would help companies decide whether they should utilize this tool or stay away from it. Additionally, Reichert, Childers and Reid (2012) suggest that usage of controversial advertising has increased in recent years, which further puts this topic forward for consideration. Had companies noticed that using controversy in their advertisements has a negative effect on consumer behavior and subsequently sales and revenue, they would shy away from it, however increased usage of this tool suggests the contrary. Using indecent language in advertising or coming up with an ad that uses that kind of language is not difficult or very different from creating an ordinary ad. If proven to have a positive impact on those variables, it could be an economically viable and cheap tool which companies could further utilize and incorporate in their advertisements in order to increase brand awareness and potentially increase sales.

**The problem:** What is the impact of religiosity, morality and materialism on consumer's attitudes towards the advertisement with indecent language, the brand and the purchase intention when the product advertised is controversial in nature or is a daily product?

**Aim of the paper:** To determine the impact of religiosity, morality and materialism on consumer's attitudes towards the advertisement with indecent language, the brand and the purchase intention when the product advertised is controversial in nature or is a daily product.

**Objectives:**

1. To analyze prior literature and researches regarding advertising and controversial advertising and provide an overview of the role of advertising in general, identify the main types of controversial advertisements and examine the reactions people get after encountering advertisement with indecent language.
2. By analyzing prior literature and research, provide an overview of religiosity, morality, materialism and their role in consumer behavior.
3. Based on prior research findings, propose a research model and hypotheses on the impact of psychographic factors on attitudes towards advertisement, brand attitudes and purchase intention.
4. To conduct a quantitative research by choosing appropriate scales to measure the chosen dependent and independent variables and collect empirical data from Lithuanian adults, using online survey as a data collection method.
5. To test the proposed research model and hypotheses using statistical analysis and evaluate the relationships between the proposed variables.
6. To draw conclusions from the theoretical and empirical researches and provide recommendations for advertisers, marketers and researchers.



# **1. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF ADVERTISING, CONTROVERSIAL ADVERTISING AND PSYCHOGRAPHIC FACTORS LITERATURE**

## **1.1. Conceptualizing of the role of adverting, brand attitudes and purchase intention**

### **1.1.1. Influence of advertising**

In order to depict the impact of advertising with indecent language, it is needed to define the influence of advertising on consumers in general. It is generally agreed that advertising is identified as one of the core components in the brand image creation (Meenaghan, 1995). Unfortunately, consumers process all received information, including advertising, in a complex and instant manner, which makes it difficult to understand how exactly does advertising impact or influence a consumer (Weilbacher, 2003). Meenaghan (1995) describes two theories of advertising effect on consumer behavior based on cognitive and behavioral approaches. The cognitive model describes a consumer as a rational decision maker, who goes through a series of physical and mental steps which help to approach a decision of purchase. Advertising has little effect on this kind of consumers because they buy something only when necessary and thus, their buying motives are utilitarian, which puts emphasis on practicality, functionality, rather than hedonic, which puts emphasis on emotional and sensory needs (Overby, Lee, 2006).

The other model described by Meenaghan (1995) is called the “brand image school”. It is closely interrelated with the theory of planned behavior which is a theory that suggests that people’s behavior is directly linked with their beliefs. That is convenient for advertisers because Weilbacher (2003) stated that advertising is “nothing more than a net addition to everything the consumer has previously learned and retained about the brand”. The researcher further elaborates and suggests that advertisers have to bypass the natural thought process of the consumer and build a lasting impression of the brand that would make it seem more desirable. Going back to the “brand image school”, Meenaghan (1995) discloses that this model is more related with the emotional view of the products that are being shown in an advertisement. The role of ads in this case is to create a relationship between the brand and the consumer using symbolism and imagery related with the product advertised. The researcher further clarifies his statement by writing that “the consumer is seen as active, knowledgeable, sophisticated and involved in the process of giving meaning to brands” Meenaghan (1995). This statement correlates with the

explanation of Weilbacher (2003), who suggests that consumers create images of brands using previous encounters with advertisements that they have seen or encountered.

Based on these theories, advertising does not have a direct impact on consumer buying behavior; it rather helps to shape an image of the brand in their mind, which could be helpful in the long run. However, there are some discrepancies between the theory and practice regarding whether attitudes towards advertising has an impact on buying behavior and purchase intentions. For example, a study done by Haider and Shakib (2017) analyzed the impact of four independent variables, seen in advertisements, on consumer buying behavior. Those variables were entertainment (tool to gain attention, customer satisfaction), familiarity (product-related or service-related experiences that have been gathered by the consumer), social imaging (tool, which helps to influence our perception of things around us) and advertising spending (in a sense that the more money is spent on the ad, the better quality of the ad). More than 500 people were personally asked to give an opinion whether those variables in an ad affect their purchasing behavior. Interestingly, the findings revealed that all of the variables, especially familiarity and entertainment, have a significant positive impact towards consumer buying behavior. Another research conducted by Jovanović, Vlastelica, and Kostić (2017) analyzed the impact of advertising appeals on purchase intentions and their research revealed different advertising appeals have a different impact on certain consumers. For example, emotional appeals have a stronger effect on women and rational appeals on men. Based on these researches it would be safe to assume that advertising not only creates an image of the brand in the mind of the consumer but can affect their buying behavior as well.

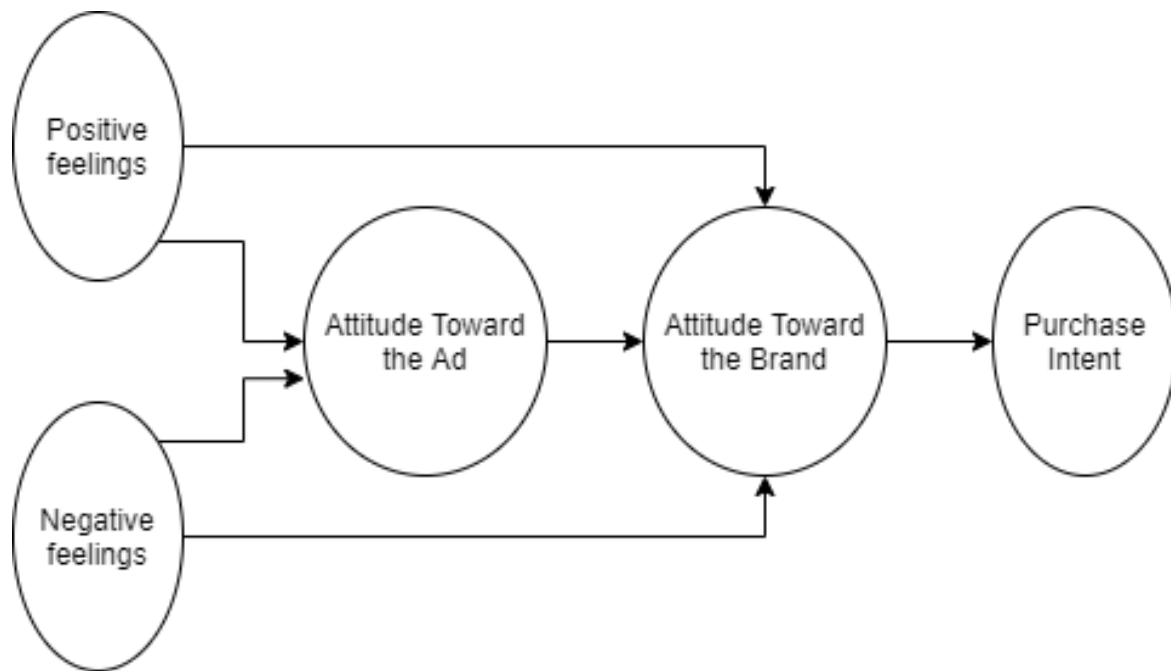
Discrepancies between theory and practice of advertising effect also make it more complex to define the exact influence of traditional advertising on consumer behavior i.e. whether it just helps to create a brand image or positively impacts buying behavior as well, meaning there is a need to analyze the relationship between those variables. In addition, advertising effectiveness was examined by Mehta (2000), where the researcher tried to evaluate when an advertisement is effective towards consumer attitudes. The results revealed that in order for advertising to be effective, it has to be something that people like looking at and believe. Furthermore, for people to like an advertisement and believe in its proposed value, it has to be entertaining, informative and truthful. Another study done by Mehta and Purvis (1995) suggested

that the more positive attitudes receivers of an ad have, the more attention they pay to it and are persuaded by it. These findings further confirm that there is a need to put controversial advertising up for consideration as a tool which could help to increase brand awareness and positively impact consumer buying behavior, as it could be used as a tool to attract the attention of the consumers.

### **1.1.2. Brand attitudes and purchase intention**

Advertising is more likely to shape an image of a brand in the mind of the consumer and creates brand attitudes rather than directly influence the buying behavior and purchase intention (Meenaghan, 1995; Weilbacher 2003). Spears and Singh (2004) describe brand attitudes as “a relatively enduring, unidimensional summary evaluation of the brand that presumably energizes behavior” and purchase intention as “an individual’s conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand”. On the topic of brand attitude formation, several researches analyze the effect of advertising on the variable. To begin with, Muehling and Laczniaak (1992) analyzed the mediating and moderating factors of advertising’s effect on brand attitude formation. Through an empirical research they were able to conclude that brand attitudes are formed through conditioned stimulus, which is the brand advertised, and unconditioned stimulus, which are features of the ad such as music, illustrations and other creative features. However, it is important to note that the effect was found to be not direct, but rather mediated through brand beliefs. Another research by Mitchell (1986) analyzed the effect of verbal and visual components of advertisements on brand attitudes and attitude toward the advertisement. Once again, using empirical research, it was proven that both visual and verbal information in the ad have an effect on brand attitudes and advertisement attitudes. It is worth mentioning, that depending on the way whether the ad will be positively or negatively evaluated, the attitude towards the brand advertised will be formed in the same manner. In the context of this paper, this is very crucial information, as indecent language in an ad is clearly verbal information, meaning the attitudes towards the ad will help to create positive or negative brand attitudes. According to Spears and Singh (2004), while brand attitudes can be affected by advertising, purchase intention cannot, it can only be affected by attitudes towards the brand. This contradicts with the results of the research done by Jovanović et al. (2017) and therefore, additional research will be done in this paper. The same research (Spears, Singh, 2004) elaborates, that receivers of the ad have affective

responses (feelings) towards the ad and subsequently, the same responses to the brand. According to the researchers, it is the attitude and response to the brand that directly affects the intention to purchase. This can be seen in Figure 1 provided below. In the proposed model by Spears and Singh, the proposed relationship between the variables can be seen.



**Figure 1. Attitude towards the ad framework. Source: Spears and Singh (2004)**

## **1.2. Theoretical explanation of shock/controversial advertising**

### **1.2.1. Shock and controversial advertising**

In order to understand advertising, which uses controversial elements in order to shock, gain attention and “cut through the advertising clutter”, it is needed to understand when and why controversial advertising started. According to some sources, this kind of advertising has been around for approximately 25 years and started during 1980’s AIDS crisis (Chan, Li, Diehl, Terlutter, 2007; Sabri, 2012). “United Colors of Benetton” is often named as the initiator and pioneer in the controversial advertising world and throughout their most controversial advertising campaign, which spanned from 1990 to 2000, they featured images such as a dying AIDS patient, a slain soldier's bloodied uniform, death row inmates staring into the camera, etc. (Pavel, 2014; Virvilaite, Matuleviciene, 2013; Dahl et al., 2003). They named the reasoning of

such shocking imagery to bring attention to various social issues (Dahl et al., 2003). The company quickly gained the attention of the public, being involved in serious discussions about the role of advertising and the content in it. However, not all the feedback was negative, and as Pavel (2014) stated “The company was both condemned for its appropriation of serious issues to sell goods and praised for highlighting urgent social concerns through its advertising “. Other researches devoted the attention gathered from those ads to the success of company (Crestanello, Tättar, 2010).

Another area which needs to be discussed is the dimensions of offensive advertising. Barnes and Dotson (1990) described that advertising can be offensive, controversial and shocking for two main reasons: offensive products and offensive execution. The case involving Benetton’s usage of shocking imagery is a perfect example for the offensive execution. Other ways of offensive executions are disgusting images, sexual references, profanity/obscenity, vulgarity, impropriety, moral offensiveness, religious taboos, racist imagery, nudity, etc. (Waller, 2004; Dahl et al., 2003). The other dimension, which is offensive products, is controversial solely due to the nature of the products advertised, not the execution itself. In a study done by Phau and Prendergast (2001) products like cigarettes, alcohol, condoms, female contraceptives, and feminine hygiene products, were found to be perceived as controversial products by the possible consumers, and that they could offend when being advertised. Other researchers classify the products, which are controversial by nature, as “unmentionables”, and Waller (2004) cites Katsanis (1994) as she describes them as “offensive, embarrassing, harmful, socially unacceptable or controversial to some significant segment of the population”. Another research done by Wilson and West (1981) describe unmentionables as “products and services, or concepts that for reasons of delicacy, decency, morality, or even fear tend to elicit reactions of distaste, disgust, offence, outrage when mentioned or when openly presented”.

### **1.2.2. Main types of controversial advertising**

Before analyzing the effects of ads with indecent language on consumer behavior, it is worth to understand what the other types of controversial advertising are and how they were defined. A major contribution done in this field was done by Dahl et al. (2003). In their research they grouped and described the 7 main types of shock appeals that had been used by the

companies for the creation of controversial advertisements. According to the researcher, the offence elicitors are: disgusting images, sexual references, vulgarity, impropriety, moral offensiveness, religious taboos, and profanity/obscenity. Their descriptions are provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Types of shock appeals. Source: Dahl et al. (2003)**

<b>Offense Elicitor</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Disgusting images</b>	References to blood, body parts or secretions, orifices, especially urinary/fecal, gases, odors, disease, parasites, bodily harm (e.g., dismemberment), death and decay
<b>Sexual references</b>	References to masturbation, implied sexual acts, sexually suggestive nudity or partial nudity
<b>Profanity/obscenity</b>	Swear words, obscene gestures, racial epithets
<b>Vulgarity</b>	References to crude or distasteful acts by humans or animals, such as nose picking, farting, licking, humping, or drinking from the toilet
<b>Impropriety</b>	Violations of social conventions for dress, manners, etc.
<b>Moral offensiveness</b>	Harming innocent people/animals, gratuitous violence or sex, alluding to people or objects that provoke violence (e.g., Hitler), violating standards for fair behavior (e.g., shooting a person in the back), putting children in provocative situations (e.g., sexual, violent), victim exploitation
<b>Religious Taboos</b>	Inappropriate use of spiritual or religious symbols and/or rituals Source

Some of the more frequently researched and used types are disgusting images and sexual references, thus deeper exploration of those types are needed along with a deeper explanation of the profanity/obscenity type, since that is the main focus of this paper. Beginning disgusting images, according to the description, disgusting images are not limited just by things that seem physically unappealing, they can also include violence. An example of this kind of ad can be from the knife company “Saber”. In one of their adverts, a man is shown, stabbed to death, using the company’s knives. By doing so, the company was aiming to disclose the quality and sharpness of their products. Unfortunately, these types of shocking ads are usually perceived as the most unpleasant ones (Urwin, Venter, 2014). This was also confirmed by a study done by Virvilaite and Matuleviciene (2013). In their study people were also shown different types of controversial ads, and again, people referred to the ad with disgusting imagery to be the most shocking. Some researches even go as far as stating that disgusting ads create a negative attitude

towards the ad itself and also that they do not create better brand awareness and recall (Dens, Pelsmacker, Janssens, 2008). Generally, a simple observation of ads reveals that this type of controversial advertising is not widely used nowadays, especially since “United Colors of Benetton” got into a number of heated discussions after their campaign, which arguably increased brand awareness, but at the same time potentially damaged the brand image in some people’s eyes.

Moving onto the next type, which is sexual references, some articles argue that this type of shock might appeal to the audiences which it is supposed to reach such as younger people in general (Bushman and Bonacci, 2002; Reichert, 2003), however, Urwin and Venter (2014) cite several researches (Alden, Crowley, 1995; De Pelsmacker, Geuens, 1996; Jones, Stanaland, Gelb, 1998) which state that women and people who are not comfortable with sex will not memorize the brand that is using such advertising. Perhaps the most infamous examples of this type of adverts come from “Calvin Klein”. During their marketing campaign in the 1990s they used explicit sexual images and based on findings by Anon (1995) and Irvine (2000) Waller (2004) states that at some point the company had to publicly apologize due to the allegations that they had used child pornography, after underage models appeared in their ads. Despite the claims made by the researchers, this type of advertising, which uses sexuality, will always be used, especially amongst companies that advertise underwear for example. Sometimes the simple nature of the product dictates the type of ad that has to be used. Extensive research done by Gallup & Robinson, an advertising and marketing firm, revealed that sexuality has been a very important technique used in the communication with the marketplace for more than 50 years, with one of the earliest being pin-up models. Streitmatter (2004) summarized that the extensive research done by that company has embedded the idea amongst companies, advertisers and marketers that “sex sells”.

The focus of this paper is directed towards the offense elicitor called profanity/obscenity. One of the ways this elicitor is used is through the usage of indecent language, which can be swear words, curse words, or a type of language which is generally vulgar, strongly impolite, rude or offensive. Basically, the language used does not have to include offensive and inappropriate words, a particular way of using decent words can also lead to a phrase being somewhat inappropriate. To give an example of the language that can be

considered indecent and controversial, let us turn the attention to “Pizza Hut”. While trying to encourage people to try out their new type of pizza which offered a crust which had stuffing in it, the company created a series of advertisements in Australia in 1997, with slogans such as "Go home and get stuffed," "Tell the collectors to get stuffed (They'll love it)" and "Welcome to Sydney. Now you can get stuffed". While the slogans do not feature any words in them that are indecent by nature, the phrase “get stuffed” has an inappropriate meaning in the urban language of the U.K. and Australia. Additionally, Pizza Hut is considered to be a family restaurant, which further makes those slogans seem more inappropriate and possibly offensive. This case was analyzed by Waller (1999a) and after reviewing statements and data from the company after the campaign was used, the researcher concluded that it was a very successful campaign both regarding the sales and also for bringing awareness to the company. Even after doing a separate research using a questionnaire which asked the respondents about their opinions on the campaign, the researcher was still able to conclude that people reacted to the campaign in a very positive way and it was a very successful effort from the company to generate more sales and create brand awareness. It is important to take into account that this particular case is an example of mild indecent language usage, as no direct swear words, curse words or even inappropriate words were used.

Another example could be an advert of a Toyota pickup, shown in Australia and New Zealand, which sparked some controversy but in the end, had significant impact. In a publication written by Mortimer (2007) a specific case about a “Toyota pickup” advert in Australia and New Zealand was analyzed. Some indecent language, in a form of a mildly offensive word, had been used to create the ad, and after some air time, 120 complaints were received from New Zealand and only 1 from Australia. A previous study done by the same author in 2006 suggested that “there is some discrepancy in levels of tolerance between the two countries” (Mortimer, 2006). Deeper analysis is required for this specific case in order to understand why these two neighboring countries with embedded Western culture reacted towards the ad in a different way. Regardless of that, the advert received 17 international awards and it is often being referred as an icon of New Zealand. Mortimer (2007) even goes as far as saying that the ad is “considered responsible for the word used in the advert becoming an accepted part of the New Zealand vocabulary.” It is important to bear in mind that Australia’s population is far bigger than New Zealand’s which could also explain the difference in the number of complaints. As seen from this



case, the ad can stir up quite a lot of complaints and negativity towards the advert, however, the number of awards as well as the impact of the ad on New Zealand's vocabulary confirms that the advertisement was a success due to its widespread attention, which it got because of using inappropriate wording.

### **1.2.3. Other factors influencing attitudes towards advertisements with indecent language**

As this paper examines only the impact of certain psychographic factors on the variables, it is worth to elaborate why demographic factors were not taken into consideration. The reason is quite straightforward, there are quite a few articles which examined them and all of them were consistent in their findings, thus there is no need to further look into them in this paper. The results of the previous researches suggested, that consumers, who were least likely to get offended by controversial advertisements, were young males, with an education level not higher than a bachelor's degree, who were living in a country with embedded Western culture (Barnes, Dotson, 1990; Grazer, Keesling, 1995; Crosier, Erdogan, 2001; Waller, 2004; Zimmerman, Dahlberg, 2008; Waller, Deshpande, Erdogan, 2013). All of these researches came to a conclusion that consumers with those demographics were least likely to get offended by controversial advertising, which meant that such advertisements result in more positive advertisement attitudes, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions (Ilicic, Blakemore, 2015). That means that if used appropriately, indecent language in advertisements indeed can help to positively affect attitudes towards the brand and consumer behavior, as some types of people do not get offended by such advertising and might have positive affective reactions towards, the brand itself and consumer behavior. Analyzing the research done by Ilicic and Blakemore (2015) a bit deeper, several variables related with attitude and intention were tested. For the research 2 non-controversial products were selected – beer and chocolate milk. According to their pre-test, out of a list of 10 products these were considered to be the least offensive. For the main experiment, 190 students were shown ads for each product – one including mild indecent language and one that used decent language. Students were asked to indicate such things as their perception of the offensiveness of the advertisement, attitude towards the advertisement, attitude towards the brand, and purchase intention. The results showed that using mild indecent language (type of language which does not include extremely offensive words) in advertisements had a

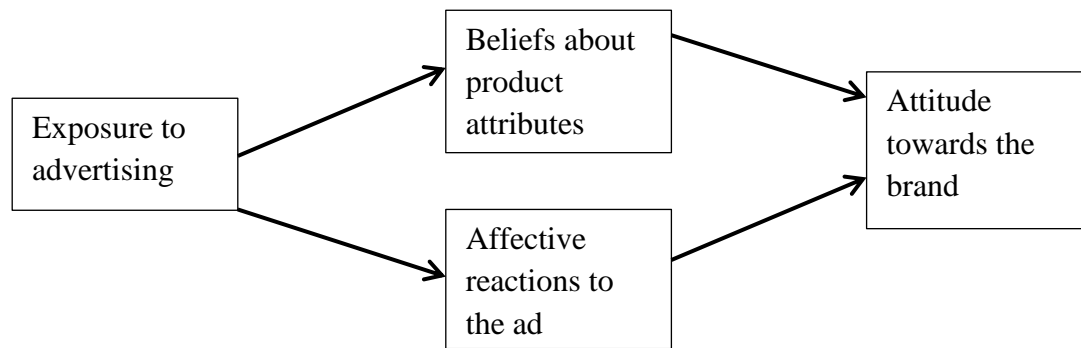
significant positive effect towards the variables analyzed. Thus, the researchers Ilicic and Blakemore (2015) were able to conclude that “advertisements featuring mild indecent language result in more positive advertisement attitudes, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions than when decent language is used.” According to their conclusion, each variable has a direct effect on the next one, and consequently positive attitudes towards the advertisement have a possibility to lead to more positive attitudes of the brand advertised which subsequently may lead to and increased intention to purchase. However, it is important to use this tool appropriately and only on certain consumer groups, as it will be discussed further.

One of the things advertisers and marketers have to keep in mind is that it is better to use only mild indecent language for several reasons. As mentioned earlier, extreme cases of controversial ads may lead to a massive amount of complaints, which will result in the ad being removed and it not being able to create a long lasting impact (Ilicic & Blakemore, 2015). The complaints might not necessarily come from the audience the ad is targeted to, rather from a different demographic which is most likely to complain about controversial ads (Crosier, Erdogan 2001). Thus, using mild indecent language seems to make a lot of sense, especially since several cases, such as the “Pizza Hut” case, the “Toyota pickup” and the research done by Ilicic & Blakemore (2015).

### **1.3. Theoretical analysis of the responses of people after encountering advertising with indecent language**

#### **1.3.1. Positive reaction**

There is strong evidence suggesting that product related perceptions are not the only factors which have an impact on brand attitudes (Lutz, MacKenzie, 1983; Mitchell, Olson, 1981). Moore and Hutchinson (1983) stated that affective reactions to an ad are also believed to have compelling effect on the consumer’s attitudes towards a brand. As Figure 2 given below shows, there are two paths which formulate the beliefs about a given brand. As stated by Moore and Hutchinson (1983), the first one is correlated with the multiattribute model and it states that indeed the beliefs about a product act as mediators between an advertisement and brand attitudes, while the second path suggests that affective reactions to an ad also have a big contribution towards consumer’s attitudes towards a brand.



**Figure 2. Two mediators of advertising effects on attitude towards the brand. Based on: Moore, Hutchinson, 1983.**

It is worth to start the discussion about the kinds of reactions people get after encountering an advertisement which includes indecent language with the possible positive reaction. Ultimately, common sense dictates that this is the kind of reaction advertisers hope induce to the person viewing the ad. As Moore and Hutchinson (1983) stated, people consider products associated with ads which elicit positive affective reactions rather than negative ones. So it is not surprising that advertisers seek to trigger positive reactions and emotions towards their advertisement. Additionally, Shimp (1981) was able to determine that affective reactions to an ad have a direct impact on brand attitudes and that the more positive consumers' reactions are to the ad, the more positive their reactions to the brand. Moore and Hutchinson (1983) also reference Silk and Vavra (1974) as they argued a point that both the positive and negative affections create a better brand awareness and more favorable brand attitudes with the exception of neutral affection. Nevertheless, the positive end of the spectrum still maintains a lead over the negative one and that is why advertisers seek to wake positive affections within the receiver of the ad. Another important thing to consider is that an ad with such content can lead to surprise. However, surprise can both have a positive and a negative outcome. In order to get the positive outcome, the ad has to be accompanied by variables such as warmth, playfulness and ease of resolution. The combination of those things can lead to humor (Alden, Mulherjee, Hoyer, 2000) which, as established earlier by Mortimer (2007), might be one of the things that advertisers and marketers would want to achieve by using indecent language in adverts.

Indecent language, unlike other types of controversial advertisements like sexist imagery, racism or violence, is considered to be only mildly controversial (Waller, 1999b). That

fact makes it easier to elicit a positive reaction from the possible consumer. It is hard to imagine that using some sort of racism or violence in an ad would be appealing to a massive amount of people, let alone cause them to have a positive affection towards it. Extreme cases like those might even be too risky for advertisers to implement because they are usually so offensive, they are removed quite quickly due to a large amount of complaints and thus, do not have a lasting impact (Ilicic & Blakemore, 2015). On the other hand, earlier it was established that indecent language could be used in adverts as a way to make the ad more humorous, help to tell a story, create emphasis, etc. There is no denying that any type of controversial advertising is not appealing to the masses and indecent language is no exception, however, there are a few segments big enough which have a greater acceptance for indecent language in advertising. Bushman and Bonacci (2002) name the young adult consumers to be from the target audience for controversial advertising. Furthermore, several publications indicate that males and younger consumers in general are less likely to be offended by controversial advertising than any other group (Barnes, Dotson, 1990; Grazer, Keesling, 1995; Zimmerman, Dahlberg, 2008). A study by Waller (2004) also confirmed that males and people aged 21 or less are the group least offended by indecent language in advertising. Consequently, all of the factors mentioned previously make it easier to use indecent language in advertising on the target audience with the aim to elicit a positive reaction which results in a more positive ad and brand attitudes, which increases the likelihood to purchase (Ilicic & Blakemore, 2015).

### **1.3.2. Negative reaction**

Even though, as previously mentioned, indecent language in advertising is considered only mildly controversial in nature (Waller, 1999b), it can still offend people to the point that they would have negative affections towards those kinds of ads. Based on statements made by Moore and Hutchinson (1983) and Shimp (1981), that people consider products associated with ads which elicit positive affective reactions rather than negative ones and that affective reactions to an ad have a direct impact on brand attitudes and that the more positive consumers' reactions are to the ad, the more positive their reactions to the brand, we can say that negative affections towards an ad would lead to negative brand associations and might turn away the customer from the product completely. As established earlier, the surprise caused by seeing an advert with indecent language in it, can lead to a positive reaction and thus positive ad attitudes, brand

attitudes and product attitudes. On the contrary, surprise can lead to shock. If the measure of offensiveness is seen to be high within the ad, it will result in the advert to be perceived as offensive and thus create a negative reaction, which leads to negative attitudes of the ad, brand and the product.

In the by Waller (2004) it was identified that the group most likely to be offended by indecent language in advertising are females and people aged 22 or more. That would suggest advertisers that they should avoid using this tool if they were to advertise to those market segments as they are more likely to get offended and consequently have a negative reaction to the ad, thus to the brand and possibly to the product. The fact that women are more likely to get offended by indecent language in adverts is confirmed by another research done by Waller et al. (2013). They suggested that both women and people with strong religious beliefs are more likely to get offended by controversial images, such as violence. However, indecent language could also be applied here because people with strong religious beliefs tend to stay away from profane language and curse words or swearing in general. A few other types of people that would get offended by controversial advertising in general were identified by Crosier & Erdogan (2001). They proposed that well-educated, well-off and older demographics are more likely to get offended by that type of advertising and complain. The reasons as to why those particular demographics get offended more easily will be analyzed further in the research.

Summarizing the kinds of reactions people get after encountering advertising with indecent language, a few key points have to be taken into consideration. If advertisers want to create better brand attitudes in the mind of the consumer's, they have to provide advertisements which will elicit a positive reaction from the receiver of the ad, which is the consumer (Shimp, 1981). In order to achieve that objective, the advertisement has to be received by an audience, which will not get offended by it, and subsequently have a negative reaction towards the ad and the brand advertised. Additionally, in order to get a positive reaction towards the ad with indecent language, the advert has to be accompanied by variables such as warmth, playfulness and ease of resolution because the combination of those things can lead to humor, which is one of the things that advertisers and marketers would want to achieve by using indecent language in adverts (Alden, Mulherjee, Hoyer, 2000; Mortimer, 2007).

## **1.4. Psychographic factors influencing consumer's reaction and attitude towards the advertisement after seeing indecent language in it**

### **1.4.1. Conceptualization of religiosity and its impact on consumer behavior**

In the modern world, where people seem to be more liberal with their views, religion seems to have lost its impact on people's behavior, but despite that, many people still consider themselves religious and act in a way which would not disturb their beliefs (Sabri, 2012). That would mean that their intensity of belief would also influence their consumer behavior. Following that, Ursanu (2012) cites Schiffman (2005), who says: "Consumers are more likely to let religion influence their market choices, if their religious convictions are important in building and maintaining a religious belief, and if this is in their personal interest". In addition, the intensity of people's religious beliefs is different, and even though Mokhlis (2009) states that the definition faces some disagreements and difficulties, it is generally agreed that religiosity is a measure which shows how strong the religious beliefs of someone are. Regarding religion and religious beliefs, Fam, Waller and Erdogan (2004) say that: "Religious beliefs play a significant part in sculpting social behaviour. Differences in religious affiliations tend to influence the way people live, the choices they make, what they eat and whom they associate with". From this statement it would be safe to assume that religiosity of someone would have significant impact on their consumer behavior in general, whether it is their attitudes towards advertisements, products or brands. That was confirmed in a study performed by Mokhlis (2009). The research had a goal of examining the influence of religiosity on consumer shopping orientation. The results revealed that different intensities of religiosity among consumers affect their shopping orientation factors, which were quality consciousness, impulsive shopping and price consciousness. People with a high level of religiosity tend to be concerned with price, therefore they are deal seekers, also they want the product to be of high quality and they are less likely to buy impulsively. The researcher suggested that religiosity should be included as a dimension when exploring consumer behavior models, as it clearly plays a role in the decision making. A recent research conducted by Agarwala, Mishra and Singh (2019) also examined the relationship between religiosity and consumer behavior. They concluded by stating that religiosity influences consumer outcomes like materialism, intolerance, ethics, and risk aversion. More than that, they found out that religiosity directly impacts the consumer attitude toward religious products and

economic shopping behavior. The researches explained the differences in the consumers with different levels of religiosity by proposing antecedents, such as religious rituals, beliefs and values, which impact the consumer behavior. Their explanation was that religious rituals, such as prayer impact people's moods in a positive way and calm them down. The review of previously conducted researches strongly implies that there are differences in consumer behavior between people who consider themselves to have a high level of religiosity and between those who do not. It is not a surprising fact as religion plays a very important part in some people's lives as some of them build their entire lifestyle and behavior in a way that would not disrupt their beliefs.

#### **1.4.2. Religiosity of consumers and its impact on attitude towards controversial advertising**

As it was established, it is important to study religion and religiosity in the context of consumer behavior, however, it has not been widely examined in the area of controversial advertising. As Mokhlis (2009) elaborates on the importance of this dimension, which has direct impact on people's everyday lives: "Religion is an important cultural factor to study because it is one of the most universal and influential social institutions that has significant influence on people's attitudes, values and behaviors at both the individual and societal levels". Despite the decline of authority of religiosity, which is an indicator showing the level of religiousness of someone, in some parts of the world, religion still has an impact on consumer buying behavior, especially in Islamic countries (Sabri, 2012). As Fam et al. (2004) describe: "Religion is an element of culture that pervades every aspect of a society". From that definition it is evident that the everyday lives of people who are religious are affected by those religions. All religions in general tell to stay away from and avoid profane language in general, whether it is Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, etc. Once again common sense dictates that the deeper the religious beliefs of a particular person, particular group of people or even a particular region, the more likely that indecent language in advertising will cause negative reactions and attitudes towards the ad, brand and purchase intention. Upon analyzing the literature and previously conducted researches, the impact religion and religiosity has not been analyzed in the context of advertising with indecent language, however, it has been analyzed in the other types of controversial advertising. Since profanity is also a type of controversial advertising, the previously done researches can assist in

understanding how religion and religiosity affect consumer's perception on the variables. A research done by Sabri (2012) had the objective of finding out the attitudes of consumers in Morocco and France towards advertising which featured taboo imagery. The findings revealed that consumers in Morocco, where people are deeply religious, experience feelings such as shame, guilt and confusion when encountering controversial advertising. On the contrary, such emotions were not seen in French consumers, who are less religious and more liberal towards controversial advertising as a result. The researcher concluded that in order for controversial advertising to work properly, the target audience has to be less religious because more religious people will have negative reactions and attitudes towards such advertising and it will negatively impact their purchasing behavior. In addition, Fam et al. (2004) also found out that people who were more devout to their religion were more likely to find advertising of gender/sex related products, health and care products and addictive products more offensive than people who were not as devout. In addition, the findings of Virvilaite and Matuleviciene (2013) revealed that more religious consumers have negative views towards shocking advertising, than less religious consumers. Following the logic that indecent language and profanity is shamed by religions, the same can be applied to advertisements which include foul language. Even church attendance has impact on consumer attitudes. A study by Barnes and Dotson (1990) found out that people who regularly attend the church found commercials which used a sexual format to be far more offensive, than people who did not attend the church regularly.

#### **1.4.3. Morality of consumers and its role in controversial advertising**

Every individual has a sense of morality and moral principles, and Turiel (1983) describes morality as: "prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other". However, the level and the sense of morality is different in every person and even though, the morality of a particular individual or a group derive from its religion, those two are not the same thing because morality acts as a guide to conduct, while religion has a deeper and bigger role (Gert, Gert, 2002). Moreover, it is elucidated that a person's moral self-image manifests the morality within the person (Jordan, Leliveld, Tenbrunsel, 2015) It is agreed that morality is largely affected by the religiosity of a person (Machova, Serez, Toth, 2015). It is also affected by other factors, such as culture and upbringing, as the personality and mentality of an individual is shaped at an early age mainly by parents and other close people.



Morality in general has to do with right and wrong, good and bad, and from those judgments, individuals form rules and ideals, called moral principles, which they follow (Frankena 1966). According to Nielsen and McGregor (2013), people become aware of their morals and they become important determinants in the marketplace and their consumer decisions. Moral principles are also thought to have an impact on consumer's attitude towards an ad with indecent language. It was proven by Andersson and Pettersson (2004), that moral principles have a negative effect for the attitudes towards controversial advertising in general and also on their buying behavior as well. A research done by Sabri (2012) negative attitudes towards a shocking or controversial ad are a result of the morality of the country. If the morality is high in the country, the inhabitants will have negative attitudes towards such ads and vice versa. The researcher also concluded that those negative attitudes will have a negative impact towards the buying behavior of such consumers. A major contribution towards this topic was done in an empirical study by Virvilaite and Matuleviciene (2013). A questionnaire was distributed to 261 Lithuanian residents and they were shown different shocking ads. Among them was an ad that included profane language. The findings revealed that the respondents aged 35 and older, who indicated to have high moral principles, had negative attitudes towards the shown ads coming through the high moral principles themselves. The respondents indicated that the ads shown were against family values, they could be damaging for children, and also that their peers would have a negative reaction towards such content. Thus, the researchers confirmed their hypothesis that a high level of morality negatively impacts the consumer's attitude towards controversial ads, including those with profane language.

#### **1.4.4. Conceptualization of materialism**

To explain materialism in a simple way, Richins and Dawson (1992) cite the English Oxford Dictionary, which explains that materialism refers to “devotion to material needs and desires, to the neglect of spiritual matters; a way of life, opinion, or tendency based entirely upon material interests”. However, a deeper knowledge of this trait needed to fully understand its impact on people and consumer behavior. Regarding materialism in our society, a major contribution was made in a research done by Larsen, Sirgy and Wright (1999). They begin by explaining the term in a broad way: “a materialistic person is someone who values material objects highly, and shifting from a psychological to a sociological perspective, a materialistic

culture is one in which most people value material objects highly”. According to the researchers, materialism is usually viewed in a negative way, as people who are described as materialistic are held to be concerned only with material possessions and are not paying enough attention to their spiritual and intellectual concerns. Despite that, materialism can also be viewed in a positive way as it creates a desire for comfort within people. The researchers also propose a modified version of a matrix done by Belk (1983), where in total there are 4 types of materialism: innate and good, innate and bad, acquired and good, acquired and bad. People are born with innate types of materialism, and they are viewed as good or bad in two perspectives – Epicurean and religious. The Epicurean perspective relies on hedonism, explaining that material possessions create pleasure for people, while the religious one shames people for being corrupt, fallen and blames materialism for causing sins, such as greed, envy, gluttony or pride. The acquired types of materialism are also viewed in two perspectives – bourgeois and critical. The latter one explains that a false sense of happiness is created from owning possessions and what is more, it can lead to negative consequences, such as psychological illnesses – paranoia and depression (Kasser and Ryan, 1993). Also, studies related with happiness have found a negative relationship between materialism and happiness (Srikant, 2013). On the other hand, the research done by Larsen et al. (1999) also cites spokespeople George Gilder (1981) and George Will (1991) who argue, that bourgeois perspective contributes to the overall fulfillment of a person.

Previously conducted researches have proven that there is a link between materialism and religiosity. Pace (2013) states that religion and religiosity impacts various attitudes and behaviors of consumers and also ethical beliefs and decisions. Religion also tames materialism through its doctrines such as compassion, loving kindness and empathetic joy. The researcher concluded that religiosity directly influences materialism and reduces it through the doctrines. The link between the variables was also proven by Stillman et al. (2012). In their research they stated that: “religion has often conflicted with the desire to possess and display wealth. In both traditional Eastern and Western religious thought, the pursuit of spirituality is viewed as conflicting with the acquisition and of material possessions”. The qualitative study done by the researchers revealed that values such as spirituality and religion are conflicting with materialism and the desire to spend money in a flashy manner.

#### **1.4.5. Impact of materialism on consumer behavior**

Materialism was previously analyzed in the context of controversial advertising by Gineikene et al. 2015, who determined that materialism has no impact on controversial advertising evaluation. However, materialism was not analyzed in the context of advertisements with indecent language. By analyzing the role of materialism in consumer behavior and attitudes towards advertising, there should be an idea of how this factor could mediate toward creating attitudes towards advertising with indecent language. To begin with, according to Srikant (2013) materialism has recently become an important topic in consumer behavior, marketing and advertising as it affects the way consumers act and think. To begin with, a study by Fitzmaurice (2008) analyzed the link between materialism and splurge purchases (something that consumers did not necessarily need but really wanted). The empirical research revealed differences between consumer who had high-materialism and low-materialism. High-materialism consumers were more likely to purchase items that they could wear or display on themselves and even despite having stronger feelings of guilt and irresponsibility about their splurge purchase than low-materialism consumers, they continued their behavior. The researcher suggested that the finding of the study could help marketers understand how consumers feel about their own purchases and it could help to more communicate advertising messages and information to consumers in a more effective way. The relationship between the materialism of an individual and attitudes towards advertising has also been analyzed in previous studies. In a research done by Osmonbekov, Gregory, Brown and Xie (2009) an empirical analysis among consumer was conducted and the results revealed that consumers with higher levels of materialism had more positive attitudes towards advertising. The researchers also stated that personal values, such as materialism have a big impact on consumer attitudes towards advertising in general. Another study done by Goldberg, Gorn, Peracchio and Bamossy (2003) came up with a conclusion that individuals with high levels of materialism were more prone to being interested in advertising messages, promotions and new products than people with a low level of indicated materialism. The review of literature on materialism and its role as a psychographic factor in consumer behavior suggests that it has impact on mediating an individual's attitudes on advertising and what is more, individuals with high levels of materialism are more likely to purchase and spend more and tend to have positive attitudes towards advertisements.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Research model and hypotheses

The relationship between a person's intensity of religious belief and attitudes towards controversial advertising in general has not been widely analyzed. To the author's knowledge, two researches have included religiosity as a mediating factor of creating attitudes towards controversial advertising with consistent results. Fam et al. (2004) were able to prove that people who were more devout to their religion were more likely to find advertising of gender/sex related products, health and care products and addictive products more offensive than people who were not as devout. Being offended by an advertisement means a person will have negative attitudes towards the ad, which is not the scenario advertisers want to be in. The relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards controversial advertising was also explored by Sabri (2012), who was able to come to the same conclusion – deeply religious people will have negative attitudes towards controversial advertising, which in this case included taboo imagery. Even though prior researches have analyzed this relationship, indecent language, which is also a type of controversial advertising and the focus of this paper, was never included in the analysis. However, as profane and indecent language is shamed by all religions, meaning religious people stay away from foul language in general, and the fact that previous researches were able to conclude that the higher the level of a person's religious belief, the higher the chance they will have negative attitudes towards controversial advertising, it could mean that advertisements which incorporate indecent language, would not fare well with people who have a high level of religiosity. Moreover, as Fam et al. established, more devout religious followers will disapprove of advertising which includes a controversial product:

***H<sub>1</sub>:*** *There is a negative relationship between religiosity and attitude towards advertising with indecent language and the relationship is stronger when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>1A</sub>:*** *There is a negative relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language, which advertises a controversial product.*

***H<sub>1B</sub>:*** *There is a negative relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language, which advertises a daily product.*

The impact of morality on consumer's attitude towards controversial advertising has been analyzed to some extent with consistent findings, just like with religiosity. However, unlike

religiosity, in case of morality one research has included controversial advertising in the form of indecent language. It was a research conducted by Virvilaite and Matuleviciene (2013) among Lithuanian residents. Their findings revealed that respondents, who indicated to have high moral principles, had negative attitudes towards the shown ads, among which were ads with indecent language. Other publications also analyzed the relationship between morality of people and their attitudes towards controversial advertising with the same results. Andersson and Pettersson (2004) were able to prove that higher moral principles have a negative effect on the attitudes towards controversial advertising in general. The research done by Sabri (2012) came to a conclusion that negative attitudes towards a shocking or controversial ad are a result of the morality of the country, meaning that if the morality is high in the country, the inhabitants will have negative attitudes towards such ads and vice versa, however, it is important to note that in this case the researcher puts emphasis on the morality of the country, not the individuals, which is not as reliable. However, the last two researches mentioned above did not analyze the relationship between morality and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language, instead they had other types of controversial ads. Since morality is largely affected by the religiosity of a person (Machova, Serez, Toth, 2015), it could mean that people with high morality are not fond of indecent language, just as highly religious people. Paired with the findings of the previous researches, a proposal could be made that people, who think of themselves as having a high morality, would disapprove of advertisements which have indecent language in them. Additionally, since religiosity positively impacts morality (Machova et al, 2015), people with higher morality would not like advertisements, which include controversial products, just like in the case with religiosity:

***H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language and the relationship is stronger when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>2A</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language, which advertises a controversial product.*

***H<sub>2B</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language, which advertises a daily product.*

Much like morality, the level of materialism in an individual is largely affected by religion and religiosity (Pace, 2013; Stillman et al. 2012). Religion has always encouraged

people not to be concerned with materialistic possessions and rather be concerned with spirituality. The link between materialism and on consumer's attitude toward controversial advertising was analyzed by Gineikiene et al. (2015) and no relationship was found between materialism and evaluation of controversial advertisements. Unfortunately, to the author's knowledge the impact of materialism towards advertising with indecent language has not been analyzed. However, as religiosity, morality and materialism are interrelated (Machova, Serez, Toth, 2015; Stillman, Finchman, Vohs, Lambert, Phillips, 2012), it is worth taking this psychographic factor into consideration in the framework of this paper. It was proven by two individual researches that more materialistic people have better attitudes towards advertising in general. For instance, Osmonbekov et al. (2009) uncovered that consumers with higher levels of materialism had more positive attitudes towards advertising than people who indicated a lower level of materialism. Goldberg et al. (2003) had a similar insight after their research in which they stated that individuals who indicated to possess higher levels of materialism were more likely to be interested and involved in advertising messages, promotions and new products than people with a low level of indicated materialism. The findings of the last two mentioned studies and the assertion that people who are more materialistic should be less religious, suggest that people with higher levels of indicated materialism should have better attitudes towards advertising with indecent language. Moreover, since theoretically more materialistic people would not be held back by religious beliefs, the product shown in the ad should not make a difference:

***H<sub>3</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language and there is no difference whether the product advertised is controversial in nature or not.*

***H<sub>3A</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language, which advertises a controversial product.*

***H<sub>3B</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and attitudes towards advertising with indecent language, which advertises a daily product.*

As it will be discussed further, the main variable affecting attitudes towards a brand is the attitude towards the advertisement (Moore, Hutchinson, 1983; Meenaghan, 1995; Weilbacher, 2003). However, even though this relationship has not been analyzed in previous

researches, much like attitudes towards advertisements, attitudes towards brand could also be impacted by psychographic factors in the same manner:

***H<sub>4</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language and the relationship is stronger when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>4A</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language, when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>4B</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language, when the product advertised is a daily product.*

***H<sub>5</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language and the relationship is stronger when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>5A</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language, when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>5B</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language, when the product advertised is a daily product.*

***H<sub>6</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language and there is no difference whether the product advertised is controversial in nature or not.*

***H<sub>6A</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language, when the product advertised is a controversial product.*

***H<sub>6B</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and attitudes towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language, when the product advertised is a daily product.*

The impact of psychographic factors will be analyzed on the dependent variables, which are attitudes towards the advertisement and brand. As it was mentioned, the relationship between the psychographic factors and brand attitudes has not been analyzed previously, just like with purchase intent. The link between two of the psychographic factors (religiosity and materialism)

and consumer behavior was vaguely analyzed previously, however it is not enough and a precise impact of the factors on purchase intent needs to be established:

***H<sub>7</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between religiosity and purchase intent and the relationship is stronger when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>7A</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between religiosity and purchase intent when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>7B</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between religiosity and purchase intent when the product advertised is a daily product.*

***H<sub>8</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and purchase intent and the relationship is stronger when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>8A</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and purchase intent when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>8B</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between morality and purchase intent when the product advertised is a daily product.*

***H<sub>9</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and purchase intent and there is no difference whether the product advertised is controversial in nature or not.*

***H<sub>9A</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and purchase intent when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>9B</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between materialism and purchase intent when the product advertised is a daily product.*

As discussed earlier, one of the functions of advertisement is creating brand attitudes (Moore, Hutchinson, 1983; Meenaghan, 1995; Weilbacher, 2003). To elaborate, Weilbacher (2003) stated that people create the image of a brand in their mind using previous encounters they had with advertisements. Regarding the types of attitudes towards the ad, Moore and Hutchinson (1983) argued that people can 2 types of affective reactions when encountering an ad – positive or negative. Based on that, attitudes towards the advertisement will be formed, which will eventually contribute to forming of the attitude towards the brand. This is also supported by Spears and Singh (2004) who state that attitudes towards the ad will directly influence the attitude toward the brand. In addition, Mitchell (1986) revealed that verbal components in the ad have an impact on advertisement attitudes as well as brand attitudes, meaning indecent language



can play a big role in attitude formation. Based on all of that, whatever opinion people have regarding the advertisement, the same opinion could apply to the brand which is advertised:

***H<sub>10</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards advertising with indecent language and brand attitudes of the brand advertised, regardless whether the product advertised is controversial in nature or not.*

***H<sub>10A</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards advertising with indecent language and brand attitudes of the brand advertised when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>10B</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards advertising with indecent language and brand attitudes of the brand advertised when the product advertised is a daily product.*

It would be logical to assume that advertisements are created for us to see the products and possibly buy them and that is their most important purpose. However, there are discrepancies between theories on the exact impact that advertising has on consumers. On one hand, Spears and Singh (2004) state that advertising cannot have an impact towards purchase intent, only on brand attitudes of the consumers. According to them, brand attitudes are subsequently what actually affect purchase intent, not the advertisement itself. In this case, brand attitudes act as a mediator between the advertisement and the purchase intent. On the other hand, Jovanović et al. (2017) argue that advertisements do have a direct impact on purchase intent with their various appeals. In order to fully determine the exact effect of advertisement, additional analysis between attitudes towards advertising and purchase intent is needed:

***H<sub>11</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards advertising with indecent language and purchase intent, regardless whether the product advertised is controversial in nature or not.*

***H<sub>11A</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards advertising with indecent language and purchase intent when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

***H<sub>11B</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between attitudes towards advertising with indecent language and purchase intent when the product advertised is a daily product.*

Purchase intent of consumers is mainly affected by their attitudes towards the brand. Spears and Singh (2004) proposed that brand attitude directly influences purchase intent, meaning if people like the brand, they will be more likely to buy their products. This seems like a

very valid point, however, additional analysis of the relationship between the variables is needed to prove its credibility:

***H<sub>12</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between brand attitudes formed after viewing advertising with indecent language and purchase intent, regardless whether the product advertised is controversial in nature or not.*

***H<sub>12A</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between brand attitudes formed after viewing advertising with indecent language and purchase intent when the product advertised is controversial in nature.*

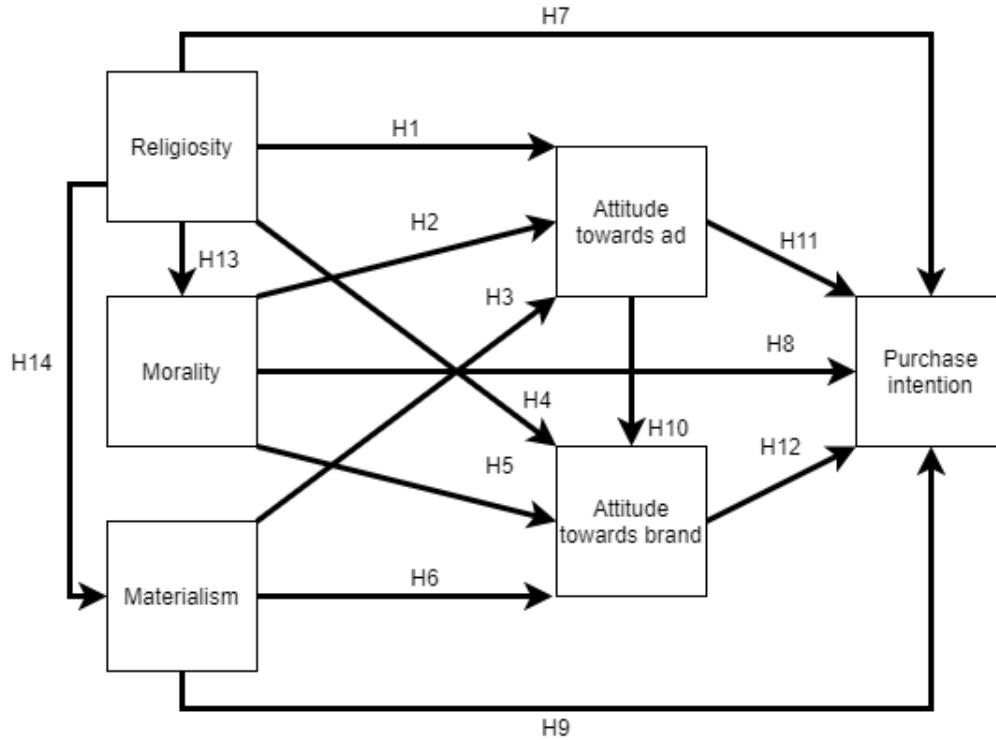
***H<sub>12B</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between brand attitudes formed after viewing advertising with indecent language and purchase intent when the product advertised is a daily product.*

As it was mentioned earlier, the reason for choosing the psychographic factors of this study (religiosity, morality, materialism) is that a few researches have analyzed the relationship between two of the factors (religiosity and morality) and attitudes towards controversial advertising. Furthermore, it was analyzed in separate researches, that the three factors are interrelated mainly by the impact of religiosity. Machova et al. stated in their study that even though morality is affected by other factors such as culture and upbringing, it is largely affected by religiosity, as it encourages people to live a moral life. The link between religiosity and materialism was also analyzed in two separate researches (Stillman et al. 2012; Pace, 2013), both of which came to a conclusion that these two factors conflict with each other, as religion encourages people to pursue spirituality rather than material possessions. Even though this is not the primary aim of this paper, in the context of this research it would be helpful to analyze the relationships again in order to solidify them:

***H<sub>13</sub>:** There is a positive relationship between religiosity and morality.*

***H<sub>14</sub>:** There is a negative relationship between religiosity and materialism.*

The proposed research model based on the hypotheses above is depicted in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. The proposed research model developed by the author.**

## 2.2. Research method and measurements

To answer the main research question (what is the impact of religiosity, morality and materialism on consumer's attitudes towards the advertisement with indecent language, the brand and the purchase intention when the product advertised is controversial in nature or is a daily product) and test the hypotheses, a quantitative online survey was conducted. Online survey was chosen as the data collection method due to its convenience and ability to collect data quickly. The questionnaire was distributed in Lithuanian language; both the Lithuanian and English versions of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. However, there was an additional detail to the research method. There were two identical questionnaires, the only difference in them being the shown product in the advertisement. The styles of the advertisements themselves were identical as well, the background, font, text placement, and even the logo. The only difference was the company name and the product shown. The questionnaire was distributed using an online tool linksplit.io, which generated a new link and the respondents had a 50/50 chance to either open one questionnaire, featuring product 1, or open the other featuring product 2, both of the advertisements can be found in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

Product 1 was a contraceptive tool, while product 2 was a loaf of bread, this was done in order to additionally find out whether the type of product (controversial versus non-controversial) has any impact on the consumer's response towards the ad with indecent language. In total the questionnaire had three sections – the first one contained questions about psychographics, the second one about attitudes towards the ad, brand and purchase intentions and the third one contained demographic questions. In total there were 10 questions.

Question 1 was related with the measurement of materialism. The Consumer Values Orientation for Materialism and Its Measurement Scale to measure materialism was taken from Richins and Dawson (1992) and contained 18 items, the authors were also the developers of the scale, which was also tested empirically (was found reliable with Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.8-0.88$ ).

Question 2 was related with the measurement of morality and moral self-image. The Self-Importance of Moral Identity scale was taken by the original developers of the scale Aquino, Karl and Reed (2002). It contained 13 items and was tested empirically (was found reliable with Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.78$ )

Question 3 was related with the measurement of religiosity. The Validated Intrinsic Religious Motivation Scale was taken from the original developer of the scale Hoge (1972). It contained 10 items and was also tested empirically (was found reliable with Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.8-0.902$ ).

Questions 4, 5 and 6 were related with the measurement of attitudes towards the advertisement, brand attitudes and purchase intention. Before answering the questions, respondents were shown an advertisement which featured mild indecent language and contained either a contraceptive product (which is controversial in its nature) or a loaf of bread. The scales were used by Ilicic and Blakemore (2015), who took them from Dens, Pelsmacker and Janssens (2008) (attitudes towards the advertisement, which contained 5 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.9$ ) and attitudes towards the brand, which contained 3 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.83$ )) and from Li, Daugherty and Biocca (2002) (purchase intentions, which contained 4 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.94$ )). Originally, all the items were measured on a 7-Point bipolar scale; however, for the purposes of this research, they were modified to be measured on a 5-Point Likert-type measurement scale.

All constructs were measured on a 5-Point Likert-type measurement scale.

Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10 were demographic questions, asking about the respondent's age, gender, highest level of education completed and income level.

### **2.3. Sampling and procedure**

The required sample size was calculated by averaging the number of respondents gathered during 8 previous researches, which are comparable in their nature, as they also analyzed controversial advertising. The average came to 181 respondents.

**Table 2. Samples in comparable controversial advertising studies.**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Ilicic and Blakemore (2015)	190 students
Dahl et al. (2003)	105 students
Waller (2004)	150 students
Vézina and Paul (1997)	204 students
Arnaud, Curtis and Waguespack (2018)	234 students
Virvilaite and Matuleviciene (2013)	261 students
Waller (1999)	125 students

The questionnaire was made using the Google Forms program and was distributed to Internet users on social media platforms during the period starting from 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2020 and ending on May 12<sup>th</sup> 2020. As past encounters with controversial advertising were not relevant for the purposes of the study, the questionnaire had no screening questions. Non-probability sampling was the nature of the sampling method, as all researches provided in the table above had used it, as well as only internet users had the ability to fill out the questionnaire.

### 3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### 3.1. Sample description and reliability of the research scales

In total 306 valid responses were collected for quantitative data analysis. While the number of responses was supposed to be equal for Product 1 and Product 2 according to design of the research method and the linksplit.io tool, tool, the final outcome was different. The questionnaire including Product 1 gathered 164 valid responses, while the questionnaire with Product 2 gathered 142 valid responses. The differences between the number of responses likely occurred due to respondents opening one questionnaire, not finishing it or not doing it, and closing it. For example, a respondent opens questionnaire 1, finishes it, then another respondent opens questionnaire 2, does not do it or finish it and closes it and finally a different respondent opens questionnaire 1 again and completes it.

In Questionnaire 1 (Q1), 82.9% of the respondents were female (N=136), and 17.1% were male (N=28), while in Questionnaire 2 (Q2) 80.3% of respondents were female (N=114), and 19.7% were male (N=28). The age distribution in Q1 was between 18 and 70 years old (M=30.24, SD=10.41) and in Q2 the respondents were aged between 17 and 62 (M=30.71, SD=11.2). The majority of respondents in Q1 had a Bachelor's degree (47%, N=77), 27.4% had completed secondary education (N=45), and 23.2% had completed Master's degree (N=38). In Q2 the education distribution was similar; the majority of respondents had a Bachelor's degree (42.3%, N=60), 32.4% had completed secondary education (N=46), and 24.6% had completed Master's degree (N=35). For all of the sample distribution according to demographic questions in Q1 and Q2 (including distribution by income), see Tables 1-8 in Appendix 5. In addition, in order to evaluate whether the demographics from both questionnaires were different, an Independent Samples T-Test was performed for all demographic variables and in all cases  $p > 0.05$ , indicating that there was no difference between the respondents according to their demographics. The results of the test can be found in Table 9 and 10 in Appendix 5.

The measurement scales, which were included in the questionnaire and were supposed to measure religiosity, materialism, the moral self-image, attitudes towards the ad, attitudes towards the brand and purchase intention were all tested for their reliability. All of the scales were found to be reliable both in Q1 and in Q2 as their Cronbach's alpha exceeded 0.6 in all cases. The description of the scales as well as their Cronbach's alphas in Q1 and Q2 are summarized in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Summary of scales used in the research and their reliability.**

<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Scale format</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha (Q1)</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha (Q2)</b>
<b>Materialism</b>	18 items	5-point Likert scale	Taken from Richins and Dawson (1992)	0.863	0.838
<b>Morality</b>	13 items	5-point Likert scale	Taken from Aquino et al. (2002)	0.860	0.845
<b>Religiosity</b>	10 items	5-point Likert scale	Taken from Hoge (1972)	0.804	0.849
<b>Attitude towards the advertisement</b>	5 items	5-point Likert scale	Adapted from Ilicic and Blakemore (2015)	0.932	0.924
<b>Attitude towards the brand</b>	3 items	5-point Likert scale	Adapted from Ilicic and Blakemore (2015)	0.952	0.936
<b>Purchase intent</b>	4 items	5-point Likert scale	Adapted from Ilicic and Blakemore (2015)	0.952	0.913

### 3.2. Hypotheses testing

In order to test all of the hypotheses of this research, and the relationships between the independent and dependent, Pearson's correlation was used in all cases. The analysis of each hypothesis is presented below. In cases through hypotheses 1-12, the sub hypotheses had to be tested first in order to confirm or reject the main hypothesis. Tables 1-3 in Appendix 6 show all the significances and correlation coefficients of all the relationships that are about to be analyzed.

The results for  $H_1$  revealed that in both cases with Product 1 ( $H_{1A}$ ) and Product 2 ( $H_{1B}$ ), religiosity has no effect on attitude towards the advertisement with indecent language, with  $p=0.77$ ,  $r = -0.138$  in case of Product 1 and  $p=0.537$ ,  $r = -0.052$  in case of Product 2 (Table 4),

therefore in both cases no relationship was found. As both sub hypotheses  $H_{1A}$  and  $H_{1B}$  had  $p>0.05$ , both were rejected alongside with the main hypothesis  $H_1$ . To continue, no relationship was found between morality and attitudes towards the advertisement as well in both cases with, as in the case with Product 1 ( $H_{2A}$ )  $p=0.121$ ,  $r= -0.122$  and in case with Product 2 ( $H_{1B}$ )  $p=0.878$  and  $r= -0.013$ , therefore,  $H_2$  was rejected as well since in both sub hypotheses  $p>0.05$ . Materialism was also found not to have any effect on the independent variable, as in case of Product 1 ( $H_{3A}$ )  $p=0.148$ ,  $r=0.114$  and in case of Product 2 ( $H_{3B}$ )  $p=0.393$  and  $r=0.072$  and once again, in both cases  $p>0.05$ , therefore the main hypothesis  $H_3$ . To summarize these relationships, it was found that none of the psychographic factors had any effect on attitude towards the advertisement with indecent language regardless of the product type, unlike suggested by the theory. The possible causes of the rejection of the hypotheses will be discussed later.

**Table 4. Results of the relationship between the psychographic factors and attitude towards the advertisement with indecent language in case of Product 1 and Product 2.**

Variables	Sig. (2-tailed)	Correlation Coefficient	Result
$H_{1A}$ - Religiosity and attitude towards the advertisement (in case of Product 1)	0.77	-0.138	Rejected
$H_{1B}$ - Religiosity and attitude towards the advertisement (in case of Product 2)	0.537	-0.052	Rejected
$H_{2A}$ - Morality and attitude towards the advertisement (in case of Product 1)	0.121	-0.122	Rejected
$H_{2B}$ - Morality and attitude towards the advertisement (in case of Product 2)	0.878	-0.013	Rejected
$H_{3A}$ - Materialism and attitude towards the advertisement (in case of Product 1)	0.148	0.114	Rejected
$H_{3B}$ - Materialism and attitude towards the advertisement (in case of Product 2)	0.393	0.072	Rejected

The relationships and their results between the psychographic factors and attitude towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language are similar to those in the previous case. To begin with, no relationship was found between religiosity and attitude towards



the brand, as in the case with Product 1 ( $H_{4A}$ )  $p=0.718$ ,  $r= -0.028$  and with Product 2 ( $H_{4B}$ )  $p=0.220$ ,  $r=0.104$ . In both cases  $p>0.05$ , therefore there is no relationship and both sub hypotheses  $H_{4A}$  and  $H_{4B}$  were rejected along with the main hypothesis  $H_4$ . No relationship was found between morality and attitudes toward the brand as well, since with Product 1 ( $H_{5A}$ )  $p=0.164$ ,  $r= -0.109$  and with Product 2 ( $H_{5B}$ )  $p=0.676$ ,  $r= -0.035$ . Once again, both hypothesis testing for  $H_{5A}$  and  $H_{5A}$  showed that  $p>0.05$ , therefore both sub hypotheses and the main hypothesis  $H_5$  were also rejected. Materialism was also found to have no relationship with attitude towards the brand, as after conducting the tests, the results showed that with Product 1 ( $H_{6A}$ )  $p=0.108$ ,  $r=0.126$  and with Product 2 ( $H_{6B}$ )  $p=0.330$  and  $r=0.082$ , once again showing that in both cases  $p>0.05$ , meaning both sub hypotheses and the main hypothesis  $H_6$  were rejected. To conclude, the performed correlation analyses showed that none of the psychographic factors have any effect or relationship with attitudes towards the brand which uses indecent language, regardless of the product advertised. All the significances and correlation coefficients of the hypotheses mentioned above are summarized in Table 5 below.

**Table 5. Results of the relationship between the psychographic factors and attitude towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language in case of Product 1 and Product 2.**

Variables	Sig. (2-tailed)	Correlation Coefficient	Result
$H_{4A}$ - Religiosity and attitude towards the brand (in case of Product 1)	0.718	-0.028	Rejected
$H_{4B}$ - Religiosity and attitude towards the brand (in case of Product 2)	0.220	0.104	Rejected
$H_{5A}$ - Morality and attitude towards the brand (in case of Product 1)	0.164	-0.109	Rejected
$H_{5B}$ - Morality and attitude towards the brand (in case of Product 2)	0.676	-0.035	Rejected
$H_{6A}$ - Materialism and attitude towards the brand (in case of	0.108	0.126	Rejected

Product 1)			
<b><math>H_{6B}</math></b> - Materialism and attitude towards the brand (in case of Product 2)	0.330	0.082	Rejected

The effect and relationship between the psychographic factors and purchase intention will be revealed next. To begin with, religiosity once again was found to have no relationship with purchase intention in either case, as with Product 1 ( $H_{7A}$ )  $p=0.303$ ,  $r=0.081$  and with Product 2 ( $H_{7B}$ )  $p=0.073$ ,  $r=0.151$ , showing that with both products  $p>0.05$ , meaning there is no relationship. Therefore, the sub hypotheses ( $H_{7A}$  and  $H_{7B}$ ) were rejected along with the main hypothesis  $H_7$ . The effect of morality on purchase intention had the same outcome, as the test showed that with Product 1 ( $H_{8A}$ )  $p=0.206$ ,  $r=-0.099$  and with Product 2 ( $H_{8B}$ )  $p=0.865$ ,  $r=0.014$ , showing once again that with both products  $p>0.05$  and revealing that there is no relationship between morality and purchase intention, therefore the sub hypotheses ( $H_{8A}$  and  $H_{8B}$ ) and the main hypothesis  $H_8$  itself were rejected. The relationship between materialism was different, as the conducted correlation test revealed that there is a positive relationship between materialism and purchase intention ( $H_{9A}$  -  $p=0.01$ ,  $r=0.218$ ), when the advertised product is controversial in nature, therefore  $H_{9A}$  was confirmed, however, the relationship is weak due to the correlation coefficient. On the other hand, materialism did not have an effect on purchase intention when the advertised product was a daily product, as the results of  $H_{9B}$  were  $p=0.211$  and  $r=0.106$ , showing there is no relationship at all. Nevertheless,  $H_9$  still has to be rejected as only one of the sub hypotheses was confirmed. All of the significances and correlation coefficient of the relationships are summarized in Table 6.

**Table 6. Results of the relationship between the psychographic factors and purchase intention in case of Product 1 and Product 2.**

Variables	Sig. (2-tailed)	Correlation Coefficient	Result
$H_{7A}$ - Religiosity and purchase intention (in case of Product 1)	0.303	0.081	Rejected
$H_{7B}$ - Religiosity and purchase	0.073	0.151	Rejected

intention (in case of Product 2)			
$H_{8A}$ - Morality and purchase intention (in case of Product 1)	0.206	-0.099	Rejected
$H_{8B}$ – Morality and purchase intention (in case of Product 2)	0.865	0.014	Rejected
$H_{9A}$ - Materialism and purchase intention (in case of Product 1)	0.005	0.218	Confirmed
$H_{9B}$ - Materialism and purchase intention (in case of Product 2)	0.211	0.106	Rejected

Moving onto the next hypotheses, attitude towards the advertisement with indecent was found to have a positive relationship with the brand attitude of the brand advertised both with Product 1 and Product 2. In case of Product 1 ( $H_{10A}$ )  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.665$  and with Product 2 ( $H_{10B}$ )  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.645$ . The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient in both cases led to believe that the relationship is strong, as it was between 0.6 and 0.8. As with both products and tests  $p < 0.05$ , both sub hypotheses were confirmed along with the main hypothesis  $H_{10}$ . Attitude towards the advertisement with indecent language were also found to have a positive relationship with the purchase intention of the product advertised, as with Product 1 ( $H_{11A}$ )  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.647$  and with Product 2 ( $H_{11B}$ )  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.640$ . The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient in both cases showed that the relationship is strong, as it was between 0.6 and 0.8. Due to  $p < 0.05$  with both products, the sub hypotheses  $H_{11A}$  and  $H_{11B}$  were confirmed along with the main hypothesis  $H_{11}$ . Lastly, attitude towards the brand advertised was found to have a positive relationship with the purchase intention of the product advertised, as with Product 1 ( $H_{12A}$ )  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.664$  and with Product 2 ( $H_{12B}$ )  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = 0.696$ . Once again, the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient in both cases led to believe that the relationship is strong and with  $p < 0.05$ , the sub hypotheses ( $H_{12A}$  and  $H_{12B}$ ) were confirmed alongside the main hypothesis  $H_{12}$ . To summarize, the conducted tests led to believe that attitude towards the advertisement with indecent language has a positive relationship with attitude towards the brand advertised and purchase intention of the product advertised, and attitude towards the brand advertised has a positive relationship with the purchase intention of

the product advertised, all regardless whether the advertised product is controversial in nature or is a daily product.

**Table 7. Results of the relationship between attitude towards the advertisement, brand attitude and purchase intention in case of Product 1 and Product 2.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>Result</b>
<i>H<sub>10A</sub></i> – Attitude towards the advertisement and brand attitudes (in case of Product 1)	0.000	0.665	Confirmed
<i>H<sub>10B</sub></i> - Attitude towards the advertisement and brand attitudes (in case of Product 2)	0.000	0.645	Confirmed
<i>H<sub>11A</sub></i> - Attitude towards the advertisement and purchase intention (in case of Product 1)	0.000	0.647	Confirmed
<i>H<sub>11B</sub></i> - Attitude towards the advertisement and purchase intention (in case of Product 2)	0.000	0.640	Confirmed
<i>H<sub>12A</sub></i> - Attitude towards the brand and purchase intention (in case of Product 1)	0.000	0.664	Confirmed
<i>H<sub>12B</sub></i> - Attitude towards the brand and purchase intention (in case of Product 2)	0.000	0.696	Confirmed

Even though the following and last hypotheses are not directly related with the research goal and aim, it is still worth to test them as the beginning of the paper an assumption was made according to the theory, that the psychographic factors in this paper are interrelated, mainly through the influence of religiosity. As *H<sub>13</sub>* hypothesized, there is a positive relationship between religiosity and morality, the conducted correlation test proved that to be true, as with *H<sub>13</sub>*  $p=0.05$

and  $r=0.232$ . The correlation significance indicated that there is a relationship between the variables, however, due to the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, the relationship seems to be weak. Nevertheless,  $H_{13}$  was confirmed. Moving onto  $H_{14}$ , it was hypothesized, that there is a negative relationship between religiosity and materialism, the results of the correlation test also showed that to be true, as  $p=0.034$  and  $r= -0.122$ . Once again, the correlation significance suggests that there is a relationship, however the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient suggests that the relationship is very weak, but nevertheless, it exists and is negative as well, as it was hypothesized. Therefore,  $H_{14}$  was confirmed as well.

**Table 8. Results of the relationship between the psychographic factors**

Variables	Sig. (2-tailed)	Correlation Coefficient	Result
$H_{13}$ – Religiosity and morality	0.000	0.232	Confirmed
$H_{14}$ – Religiosity and materialism	0.034	-0.122	Confirmed

### 3.3. Explanation of results

The empirical analysis done in this research revealed some results that were surprising and unexpected based on the theoretical analysis done prior to the empirical analysis and as a result, 9 out the 14 main hypotheses were rejected. The main aim of this paper was to determine the impact of religiosity, morality and materialism on consumer's attitudes towards the advertisement with indecent language, the brand and the purchase intention when the product advertised is controversial in nature or is a daily product ( $H_1$ -  $H_9$ ). The conducted empirical analysis showed that none of the analyzed psychographic factors have any impact on dependent variables, which were attitude towards the advertisement with indecent language, attitude towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language and purchase intention. In one case, a sub hypothesis was confirmed which stated that there is a positive relationship between materialism and purchase intention, when the advertised product is controversial in nature. However, as only one sub hypothesis was confirmed, the main one had to be rejected. One of the reasons for those hypotheses to be rejected, could be the advertisements used in the research, as they incorporated slight indecent language, as opposed to stronger indecent language which may

use some curse words, meaning the language used in the advertisements could have been not enough to trigger any emotions for the respondents. A thorough explanation of the results will be discussed further.

Starting with the relationship between the psychographic factors and attitude towards advertising with indecent language, some reasoning can be found. To begin with, religiosity had been previously analyzed in the context of other types of controversial advertising, not including indecent language. The findings of two researches by Fam et al. (2004) and Sabri (2012) showed consistent findings which showed the more religious people disapprove of controversial advertising. It led to believe that the same would apply with advertising with indecent language, however it was not the case as no relationship was found. The case with morality is slightly different, as one research did include indecent language, among other types of controversial advertising and the results also led to believe that higher morality would also negatively affect attitudes towards such advertisements (Virvilaite and Matuleviciene, 2013). The research done by Sabri (2012) also analyzed the relationship between morality and attitudes towards controversial advertising, however once again indecent language was not included. The results of both these researches also led to believe that with indecent language, especially since one research did include it, morality would negatively affect the attitudes towards advertising with indecent language, unfortunately it turned out not to be true. With materialism, only one prior research by Ginekiene et al. (2013) had analyzed materialism in the context of controversial advertising (not including indecent language) and found no relationship between materialism and evaluation of controversial advertisements. However, other findings such as that materialism has a negative relationship with religiosity (Stillman et al. 2012) and that more materialistic people have better attitudes towards advertising in general (Osmonbekov et al. 2009, Goldberg. et al 2003) suggested that more materialistic people would have better attitudes towards advertising with indecent language. Unfortunately, this also came out not to be true.

As with the relationship between the psychographic factors and attitudes towards a brand which used advertising with indecent language and purchase intention, to the author's knowledge, no prior researches had analyzed the relationship. Thus the hypotheses were made on the assumptions based on the researches done with attitudes towards advertisements. It was assumed that if there is a relationship between the psychographic factors and attitude towards the advertisement, there will also be a relationship between the psychographic factors and the other

variables (attitudes towards a brand which used advertising with indecent language and purchase intention, as a prior research by Spears and Singh (2004) stated that attitude toward the advertisement affects attitude toward the brand, which in turn affects purchase intention. For that reason, it was hypothesized that if attitude towards the advertisement can be affected by the psychographic factors, the other variables should be as well, as the relationship goes through the attitude towards the advertisement first (see Figure 1), therefore the other factors should be affected by the psychographic variables as well. The empirical analysis proved that not to be true, as no relationship was found between the psychographic factors and attitude towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language and purchase intention.

According to several researches, advertisements and attitudes towards them play a role of creating brand attitudes (Moore, Hutchinson, 1983; Meenaghan, 1995; Weilbacher, 2003, Spears and Singh, 2004). What is more, Mitchell (1986) stated that verbal components of the advertisement can impact attitudes towards the advertisement as well as brand attitudes, meaning indecent language can play a pivotal role in this relationship. Therefore, it was hypothesized, that there is a relationship between attitude towards an advertisement with indecent language and attitude towards a brand which uses advertisement with indecent language, regardless of the product advertised. The empirical analysis proved that to be true, therefore confirming the statements of the previous researches. There were some discrepancies between theories regarding the impact on purchase intention, as the researches which argued that attitudes towards the advertisement can impact brand attitudes, stated that advertising attitudes cannot affect purchase intention. On the other hand, Jovanović et al. (2017) stated that advertisement do directly impact purchase intention as well. This relationship was proven to be true according to the empirical analysis as there was a positive relationship between attitude towards advertising with indecent language and purchase intention, regardless of the product advertised. In addition, Spears and Singh (2004) stated that brand attitude directly influences purchase intention. This finding was also supported according to the empirical analysis, which showed that there is a positive relationship between attitude towards the brand which uses advertising with indecent language and purchase intention, regardless of the product advertised.

As the reasoning for choosing the psychographic factors in this research was that they are interrelated, additional analysis was done using the information gathered from the questionnaires. The empirical analysis showed that morality is positively affected by religiosity,

thus supporting the findings of Machova et al. Furthermore, two separate researches (Stillman et al. 2012; Pace, 2013) stated that religiosity negatively impacts materialism, as religion encourages people to pursue spirituality and not be concerned with material possessions. This statement was also confirmed by the empirical analysis which showed that in fact religiosity does have a negative relationship with materialism.



## CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

With the obscene amount of advertisements nowadays, it seems that advertising has lost its role of attracting attention to itself, as well as the brand and the product advertised. This has put pressure on companies, advertising agencies and marketers to come up with new different, creative, extraordinary, uncommon sometimes controversial advertisements. In the past, shock/controversial advertising has proven to be effective in creating brand awareness and increase sales. One of the types of controversial advertising which seems to be easily applicable and is less frequently analyzed is usage of indecent language. However, different types of people might have different reactions towards such advertisements and it is important to distinguish who the advertisement should be directed to. After conducting a theoretical as well as an empirical analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The theoretical analysis suggested that the psychographic factors chosen for this study, which were religiosity, morality and materialism, are interrelated, mainly through the role of religiosity. It was established by the theory, that religiosity has a positive impact on morality, as religion encourages people to live morally and stay out of harm's way. Moreover, the theoretical findings suggested that religiosity negatively impacts materialism, as religion encourages people to live a spiritual life and not to be concerned with material possessions. As the main framework and most of the hypotheses were relying on these findings, an additional empirical analysis was performed to confirm the theory. The results of the analysis were consistent with the theory as a significant positive relationship was found between religiosity and morality, and a significant negative relationship was found between religiosity and materialism.

2. The case of attitude towards controversial advertising was the only one, in which the relationship between all the psychographic factors in this study (religiosity, morality and materialism) and attitude towards such advertising was analyzed previously. Past studies examined the relationship between the psychographic factors and other types of controversial advertising, not including indecent language. The literature review, including previous empirical analyses of the relationships as well as the elucidation of the psychographic factors, suggested that religiosity and morality would have a negative relationship towards advertising with indecent language, while materialism would have a negative one. The empirical analysis in this research proved that not to be true, as no relationship was found between any of the

psychographic factors and the attitude towards advertising with indecent language, regardless whether the product in the advertisement was controversial in nature or was a daily product.

3. Although the relationship between all of the psychographic factors of this study and controversial advertising was analyzed previously, that was not the case with attitude towards the brand advertised and purchase intention of the product advertised. Based on the theory related with controversial advertising, influence of advertising, brand attitude, purchase intention and the role of the psychographic factors in consumer behavior, an assumption was made and it was hypothesized that the psychographic factors would have the same relationship with the attitude towards the brand which uses advertising with indecent language and the purchase intention of the product that was advertised, as with attitude towards advertising with indecent language. According to the conducted empirical analysis in this paper, no relationship was found between the psychographic factors and the brand attitudes as well as the purchase intention, in case of advertising with indecent language.

4. According to the literature analysis, the main role of advertising is to create brand attitudes, which ultimately lead to the purchase intention of the customers. There were some discrepancies between the theory, as one publication argued that advertisements also have an impact on purchase intention, not only brand attitudes. Moreover, the theoretical analysis also revealed that verbal components of the advertisement can impact attitudes towards the advertisement as well as brand attitudes, meaning indecent language can play an important role in this relationship. After conducting an empirical analysis, the results showed that indeed attitude towards the advertisement with indecent language has a positive relationship with attitude towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language, as well the purchase intention of the product advertised. To continue, the empirical analysis also revealed that attitude towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language also has a positive relationship with the purchase intention of the product advertised. It is important to note as well, that in all the cases, there was a relationship with a product that was controversial in nature, as well as with a daily product.

5. The fact that no relationship was found between the psychographic factors and the dependent variables does not discredit advertising with indecent language. The fact that the empirical analysis revealed that there is a positive relationship between the dependent variables, shows that advertising with indecent language can be utilized as a tool to increase brand

awareness and purchase intention as well. However, for that to work, only an audience which would not get offended by such advertisements should be targeted. This will be further discussed in the proposals section of this paper.

Before discussing the practical implications and proposals from the research, the limitations of this study should be addressed. First of all, the respondents were only people living in Lithuania, whose views on this topic could be different from other regions and countries, due to differences in culture and in the environment. What is more, the kind of indecent language used in this research was only mild and more research has to be done to distinguish the difference between mild and strong indecent language, as well as do further research with both types in order to see whether that would evoke different results.

The findings of this study allow to provide the following proposals and recommendations for marketers and researchers:

1. Marketers and advertisers who are looking for a cheap and inexpensive tool to incorporate in their advertisements (regardless whether they advertise a product that is controversial in nature or not), can use indecent language in their advertisements as the empirical research of this study showed that attitude toward advertising with indecent language has a positive relationship with the attitude towards the brand advertised as well as the purchase intention of the product advertised. What is more, brand attitudes formed after viewing advertisements with indecent language also have a positive relationship with purchase intention of the product advertised. This means that if a person like the advertisement, their attitude towards the brand advertised will be positive and the purchase intention of the product advertised will be higher as well, and vice versa. This means, that the advertisement should be targeted to people, who will not get offended by such an advertisements and can be expected to have positive attitudes towards them, which leads to the next proposal.

2. Even though the theory analysis suggested that the independent variables - religiosity, morality and materialism will have relationships with dependent variables - attitudes towards the advertisement, the brand and also the purchase intention, the empirical analysis conducted in this paper showed otherwise. Therefore, there is still a gap in the theory as to what influences the dependent variables. The discrepancies between the theory and practical analysis could have happened due to the cultural differences between the countries, where the previous researches were done and where the data was collected for this study. Previous researches

strongly suggested that apart from psychographic factors, demographic factors also influence the dependent variables. For that reason, marketers and researchers who would want to find out what kind of people would approve or disapprove of advertisements with indecent language, should put additional analyses into factors which could influence the dependent variables analyzed in this paper.

3. Lastly, even though this was not the main aim of this paper, it was once again confirmed that religiosity positively impacts morality and negatively impacts materialism. Considering that all of those psychographic factors can have a certain impact on consumer behavior, which was discussed in the paper, depending whether companies know the psychographic characteristics of their clientele, marketers can know what to expect from consumers, who show signs of possessing certain psychographics.

## **SUMMARY**

Valerijus Davtian

### **THE IMPACT OF RELIGIOSITY, MATERIALISM AND MORAL-SELF IMAGE ON THE RESPONSE TO THE INDECENT LANGUAGE USAGE IN ADVERTISING**

Bachelor's Thesis

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Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

Study Programme: Management and Business Administration

Specialization: Marketing and Global business

Vilnius, 2020

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With the seemingly never stopping growth of advertisements seen by people every day, the influence of advertising, as a mediator for creating a brand image and increasing purchase intention, is not as strong as it used to be. This is forcing companies, advertising agencies and marketers to implement a different approach when developing advertisements. One of the possibilities is to implement a certain type of controversial advertisement, which includes indecent language. However, these kinds of advertisements have to be targeted at an audience which would not get offended by them and would have a positive attitude towards them. The Bachelor's Thesis examined the impact of independent variables, which were psychographic factors (religiosity, morality and materialism) on the dependent, which were attitude towards an advertisement with indecent language, attitude towards the brand which uses advertising with indecent language and the purchase intention of the product advertised. In addition, two types of products (controversial product and a non-controversial product) were tested to find out, whether there is a difference between the attitudes towards their advertisements, when indecent language is used to promote them. Based on the literature analysis and review, a research model of psychographic factors influencing the attitude towards advertising with indecent language, the

attitude towards the brand which uses advertising with indecent language and the purchase intention of the product advertised was proposed and tested in a quantitative research, by conducting an online survey and by using correlation analysis. The independent variables were found to have no impact and correlation with the independent variables. However, additional analysis revealed that attitude towards the advertisement with indecent language has a positive relationship with attitude towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language, as well the purchase intention of the product advertised. Moreover, the empirical analysis also revealed that attitude towards a brand which uses advertising with indecent language also has a positive relationship with the purchase intention of the product advertised (the relationships were all positive regardless of the type of the product). That means that if discovered what factors influence those dependent variables and used appropriately (i.e. targeted at audience which would not get offended and would have positive attitudes), indecent language in advertising can be an inexpensive and viable way to elicit positive attitudes towards the advertisement, which can help to create a better brand image in the consumer's mind, which subsequently may lead to positive purchase intent. Based on the findings, recommendations for marketers and researchers were proposed.

## SUMMARY IN LITHUANIAN (SANTRAUKA)

Valerijus Davtian

### RELIGINGUMO, MATERIALIZMO IR MORALINIO SAVĖS ĮVAIZDŽIO ĮTAKA REAKCJAI Į NEPADORIOS KALBOS VARTOJIMĄ REKLAMOJE

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Iš pažiūros niekada nesustojantis reklamų, kurias žmonės mato kiekvieną dieną, augimas, reklamos įtaka, kaip tarpininko kuriant prekės ženklo įvaizdį ir didinant ketinimą pirkti, nėra tokia stipri, kokia buvo anksčiau. Tai verčia įmones, reklamos agentūras ir rinkodaros specialistus ieškoti naujų metodų kuriant reklamą. Viena iš galimybių yra naudoti tam tikrą rūšį prieštaringai vertinamos reklamos, kurioje naudojama nepadori kalba. Tačiau, tokios rūšies reklamos turi būti skirtos auditorijai, kuri jų neįžeistų ir turėtų teigiamą požiūrį į juos. Bakalauro darbas nagrinėjo nepriklausomų kintamųjų įtaką (psichografiniai veiksniai - religingumas, moralė ir materializmas), priklausomiems kintamiesiems, kurie yra požiūris į reklamą, kurioje naudojama nepadori kalba, požiūris į prekės ženklą, kuris naudojo reklamą su nepadoria kalba, ir reklamuojamo produkto pirkimo ketinimą. Papildomai buvo tiriami dviejų tipų produktai (kontroversiškas produktas ir nekontroversiškas produktas), siekiant išsiaiškinti, ar skiriasi požiūris į jų reklamą, kai reklamuojant vartojama nepadori kalba. Remiantis literatūros analize ir apžvalga, kiekybiniame tyrime buvo pasiūlytas tyrimo modelis psichografinių veiksnių, turinčių įtakos požiūriui į reklamą, kurioje naudojama nepadori kalba, požiūriui į prekės ženklą, kuris naudojo reklamą su nepadoria kalba, ir reklamuojamo produkto pirkimo ketinimui. Tyrimo

modelis buvo patikrintas surinkus empirinius duomenis (internetines apklausos būdu) ir testuojant duomenis pasitelkus koreliacijos analizę. Buvo nustatyta, kad nepriklausomi kintamieji neturi įtakos ir koreliacijos su nepriklausomais kintamaisiais. Tačiau papildoma analizė atskleidė, kad požiūris į reklamą, kurioje naudojama nepadori kalba turi teigiamą ryšį su požiūriu į prekės ženklą, kuris naudoja reklamą su nepadoria kalba, taip pat su reklamuojamo produkto pirkimo ketinimu. Be to, empirinė analizė taip pat atskleidė, kad požiūris į prekės ženklą, kuris naudoja reklamą su nepadoria kalba, taip pat turi teigiamą ryšį su reklamuojamo produkto pirkimo ketinimu (visi ryšiai buvo teigiami, nepaisant produkto tipo). Tai reiškia, išsiaiškinus, kokie veiksniai daro įtaką priklausomiems kintamiesiems, tinkamai panaudojus (t.y. nukreipus į auditoriją, kuri neįsisižestų ir turėtų teigiamą požiūrį), nepadori kalba reklamoje gali būti nebrangus ir perspektyvus būdas iššaukti teigiamą požiūrį į reklamą, kas gali padėti sukurti geresnį prekės ženklo įvaizdį vartotojo galvoje, o tai vėliau gali sukelti teigiamą ketinimą pirkti. Remiantis išvadomis, buvo pasiūlytos rekomendacijos rinkodaros specialistams bei tyrėjams.



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Q\_bUwO93hW7lZgfH9Cw&hl=lt&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiwx\_C4yqbpAhVh1qYKHU8tCzgQ6AEwAHo  
 ECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=profanity%20is%20blasphemous%20or%20indecent%20language%20oxford  
 &f=false

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Questionnaire in Lithuanian

\* Visi klausimai buvo privalomi atsakyti.

Ižanga: Sveiki, esu Vilniaus Universiteto Ekonomikos ir verslo administravimo fakulteto IV kurso studentas. Norėčiau padėkoti, jog dalyvaujate mano tyrime, kurio tikslas yra išsiaiškinti religingumo, moralumo ir materializmo įtaką į vartotojų požiūrį į reklamą, prekės ženklą ir ketinimą pirkti, kai reklamoje yra vartojama nepadori kalba. Paprastai šios apklausos užpildymas turėtų trukti apie 10 minučių. Apklausa yra anoniminė ir savanoriška. Apklausos metu surinkti duomenys bus saugomi, nesidalijami su asmenimis, nesusijusiais su tyrimu bei naudojami tik šio tyrimo tikslais.

1. Nurodykite, kiek sutinkate su šiais teiginiais (1 – Visiškai nesutinku; 5 – Visiškai sutinku):
  - Aš žaviuosi žmonėmis, kurie turi brangius namus, automobilius bei drabužius.
  - Vienas svarbiausių gyvenimo pasiekimų yra materialių dalykų įsigijimas.
  - Nekreipiu daug dėmesio į tai, kiek materialių dalykų, parodančių jų sėkmę, turi žmonės.
  - Dalykai, kurie man priklauso, sako daug apie tai, kaip man sekasi gyvenime.
  - Man patinka turėti daiktų, kurie padaro įspūdį žmonėms.
  - Aš nekreipiu daug dėmesio į materialius daiktus, kuriuos turi kiti žmonės.
  - Aš dažniausiai perku tik tuos daiktus, kurių man reikia.
  - Kas liečia materialinius dalykus, bandau laikyti savo gyvenimą paprastą.
  - Daiktai, kuriuos turiu, nėra man labai svarbūs.
  - Man patinka leisti pinigus ant daiktų, kurie nėra praktiški.
  - Daiktų pirkimas duoda man daug malonumo.
  - Man patinka turėti daug prabangos gyvenime.
  - Kreipiu mažiau dėmesio į materialinius dalykus nei dauguma žmonių, kuriuos žinau.

- Turiu visus dalykus, kurių man iš tikrųjų reikia, kad galėčiau mėgautis gyvenimu.
  - Mano gyvenimas būtų geresnis, jei turėčiau tam tikrus daiktus, kurių neturiu.
  - Aš nebūčiau laimingesnis/-ė, jei turėčiau geresnius daiktus.
  - Būčiau laimingesnis/-ė jei galėčiau įsigyti daugiau daiktų.
  - Kartais mane šiek tiek trikdo, kad aš negaliu sau leisti nusipirkti visų dalykų, kurių norėčiau.
2. Štai keletas bruožų, apibūdinančių žmogų: rūpestingas, užjaučiantis, sąžiningas, draugiškas, dosnus, darbštus, paslaugus, nuoširdus, malonus. Žmogus su šiais bruožais galite būti jūs arba kažkas kitas. Akimirksniui įsivaizduokite žmogų, turintį šiuos bruožus. Įsivaizduokite, kaip šis žmogus galvotų, jaustųsi ir elgtųsi. Kai turėsite aiškų vaizdą, koks šis žmogus būtų, nurodykite, kiek sutinkate su šiais teiginiais (1 – Visiškai nesutinku; 5 – Visiškai sutinku):
- Man būtų gera jaustis žmogumi, turinčiu šias savybes.
  - Būti kuo nors, kas turi šias savybes, yra svarbi to, kas esu, dalis.
  - Didelė mano emocinės gerovės dalis yra susijusi su šiomis savybėmis.
  - Man būtų gėda būti žmogumi, turinčiu šias savybes.
  - Turėti šias savybes man nelabai svarbu.
  - Šių savybių turėjimas yra svarbi mano savijautos dalis.
  - Aš labai noriu turėti šias savybes.
  - Aš dažnai perku produktus, kurie parodo tai, kad turiu šias savybes.
  - Aš dažnai dėviu drabužius, kurie atspindi, jog turiu šias savybes.
  - Dalykai, kuriuos darau laisvalaikiu, rūšys (pvz., pomėgiai) aiškiai parodo, jog turiu šias savybes.
  - Knygos ir žurnalai, kuriuos skaitau, rodo, kad turiu šias savybes.
  - Apie tai, kad turiu šias savybes, kitiems rodo mano narystė tam tikrose organizacijose.
  - Aktyviai dalyvauju veikloje, kuri rodo, kad turiu šias savybes.
3. Nurodykite, kiek sutinkate su šiais teiginiais (1 – Visiškai nesutinku; 5 – Visiškai sutinku):
- Mano tikėjimas apima visą mano gyvenimą.

- Priimant kiekvieną svarbų sprendimą, reikia ieškoti Dievo nurodymų.
- Gyvenime patiriu Dievo buvimą.
- Mano tikėjimas kartais suvaržo mano veiksmus.
- Man nėra nieko svarbiau, nei tarnauti Dievui kuo įmanoma geriau.
- Aš labai stengiuosi perkelti savo religiją į visus kitus savo gyvenimo reikalus.
- Mano religiniai įsitikinimai yra tai, kas iš tikrųjų slypi už mano požiūrio į gyvenimą.
- Nesvarbu, kuo tikiu, kol gyvenu moralų gyvenimą.
- Nors esu religingas žmogus, aš atsisakau leisti, kad religiniai sumetimai darytų įtaką mano kasdieniams reikalams.
- Nors tikiu savo religija, jaučiu, kad gyvenime yra daug svarbesnių dalykų.

4. Apibūdinkite savo požiūrį į rodomą reklamą (1 – Visiškai nesutinku; 5 – Visiškai sutinku):  
(respondent was shown the advertisement in Appendix 3 or Appendix 4)

- Manau, kad ši reklama yra gera.
- Manau, kad ši reklama yra įdomi.
- Man patinka ši reklama.
- Manau, jog ši reklama yra efektyvi.
- Manau, kad reklama yra patraukli.

5. Apibūdinkite savo požiūrį į prekės ženklą, kuris naudojo šią reklamą (1 – Visiškai nesutinku; 5 – Visiškai sutinku):

- Manau, jog tai yra geras prekės ženklas.
- Aš turiu palankų požiūrį į šį prekės ženklą.
- Man patinka šis prekės ženklas.

6. Apibūdinkite savo ketinimą pirkti reklamuojamą produktą, po to, kai pamatėte reklamą (1 – Visiškai nesutinku; 5 – Visiškai sutinku):

- Tikėtina, kad pirkčiau reklamuojamą produktą.
- Galimai pirkčiau reklamuojamą produktą.
- Tikrai pirkčiau reklamuojamą produktą.
- Be abejo pirkčiau reklamuojamą produktą.

7. Nurodykite jūsų amžių:



8. Nurodykite jūsų lytį:

- Moteris
- Vyras

9. Nurodykite aukšiausią įgytą išsilavinimą

- Vidurinis išsilavinimas
- Bakalauro laipsnis
- Magistro laipsnis
- Daktaro laipsnis

10. Pažymėkite kategoriją, kuri geriausiai apibūdina jūsų mėnesines pajamas

- Mažiau nei 400 Eur
- 400-699 Eur
- 700-1000 Eur
- 1000 Eur ir daugiau

## **Appendix 2. Questionnaire in English**

\* All questions were mandatory.

Introduction: Hello, I am a student at Vilnius University and I study Marketing and Global Business. First of all, I would like to thank you for participating in my research, the goal of which is to determine the impact of religiosity, morality and materialism on consumer's attitudes towards the advertisement, the brand and the purchase intent when advertising with indecent language is used. It should take you approximately 10 minutes to fill out this survey. Please note, that the survey is anonymous and voluntary and the data gathered will not be shared and will only be used for the purposes of this research.

1. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree):

- I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes.
- Some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions.
- I don't place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success.
- The things I own say a lot about how well I'm doing in life.
- I like to own things that impress people.
- I don't pay much attention to the material objects other people own.
- I usually buy only the things I need.
- I try to keep my life simple, as far as possessions are concerned.
- The things I own aren't all that important to me.
- I enjoy spending money on things that aren't practical.
- Buying things gives me a lot of pleasure.
- I like a lot of luxury in my life.

- I put less emphasis on material things than most people I know.
- I have all the things I really need to enjoy life.
- My life would be better if I owned certain things I don't have.
- I wouldn't be any happier if I owned nicer things.
- I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.
- It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I'd like.

2. Here are some characteristics that may describe a person: caring, compassionate, fair friendly, generous, hardworking, helpful, honest, kind. The person with these characteristics could be you or it could be someone else. For a moment, visualize in your mind the kind of person who has these characteristics. Imagine how that person would think, feel, and act. When you have a clear image of what this person would be like, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree):

- It would make me feel good to be a person who has these characteristics.
- Being someone who has these characteristics is an important part of who I am.
- A big part of my emotional well-being is tied up in having these characteristics.
- I would be ashamed to be a person who has these characteristics.
- Having these characteristics is not really important to me.
- Having these characteristics is an important part of my sense of self.
- I strongly desire to have these characteristics.
- I often buy products that communicate the fact that I have these characteristics.
- I often wear clothes that identify me as having these characteristics.
- The types of things I do in my spare time (e.g., hobbies) clearly identify me as having these characteristics.
- The kinds of books and magazines that I read identify me as having these characteristics.
- The fact that I have these characteristics is communicated to others by my membership in certain organizations.
- I am actively involved in activities that communicate to others that I have these characteristics.

3. The questions provided below are designed to determine your religiosity (intensity of religious belief). Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree):

- My faith involves all of my life.
- One should seek God's guidance when making every important decision.
- In my life I experience the presence of God.
- My faith sometimes restricts my actions.
- Nothing is as important to me as serving God as best I know how.
- I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings of life.
- My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.
- It doesn't matter so much what I believe as long as I lead a moral life.
- Although I am a religious person, I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs.
- Although I believe in my religion, I feel there are many more important things in life.

4. Please describe your attitudes toward the shown ad (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree):

- I think that the advertisement was good.
- I think that the advertisement was interesting.
- I liked the advertisement.
- I think that the advertisement was effective.
- I think that the advertisement was appealing.

5. Please describe your attitudes toward the brand that used this ad (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree):

- I think that this is a good brand.
- I have favorable attitudes towards this brand.
- I like this brand.

6. Please describe your intention to purchase the advertised product after seeing the ad (1 – Strongly disagree; 5 – Strongly agree):

- It is likely that I would purchase the advertised product.
- It is probable that I would purchase the advertised product.
- It is certain that I would purchase the advertised product.
- I would definitely purchase the advertised product.

7. Please indicate your age:

8. Please indicate your gender:

- Female
- Male

9. Please indicate your highest level of education completed:

- Secondary education
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

10. Please check the category that best describes your monthly income:

- Less than 400 Eur
- 400-699 Eur
- 700-1000 Eur
- 1000 Eur and more

Appendix 4. Advertisement featuring a controversial product (Product 1) used in  
Questionnaire 1

**Pyst ir atpigo,  
Prezervatyvai “Prezex”  
- 1.49 EUR.**



**Pyst ir atpigo,  
"Duonos pasaulio" pusryčių  
duona - 1.49 EUR.**



The advertisement features a dark background. On the left, there is a blue circular logo with a geometric pattern and the text "Duonos Pasaulis" in white. To the right of the logo is a loaf of bread with a thick layer of white flour on top, resting on a black wire cooling rack. A wooden-handled knife is visible behind the bread. The background is dark and textured, with some crumbs scattered on the surface.

## Appendix 5. Sample structure

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents by gender in Questionnaire 1.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moteris	136	82.9	82.9	82.9
	Vyras	28	17.1	17.1	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	

**Table 2. Distribution of respondents by gender in Questionnaire 2.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Moteris	114	80.3	80.3	80.3
	Vyras	28	19.7	19.7	100.0
	Total	142	100.0	100.0	

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents by age in Questionnaire 1.**

N	Valid	164
	Missing	0
Mean		30.24
Median		26.50
Std. Deviation		10.407
Minimum		18
Maximum		70

**Table 4. Distribution of respondents by age in Questionnaire 2.**

N	Valid	142
	Missing	0
Mean		30.71
Median		26.50
Std. Deviation		11.201
Minimum		17
Maximum		62

**Table 5. Distribution of respondents by education in Questionnaire 1.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bakalauro laipsnis	77	47.0	47.0	47.0
	Daktaro laipsnis	4	2.4	2.4	49.4
	Magistro laipsnis	38	23.2	23.2	72.6
	Vidurinis išsilavinimas	45	27.4	27.4	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	



**Table 6. Distribution of respondents by education in Questionnaire 2.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bakalauro laipsnis	60	42.3	42.3	42.3
	Daktaro laipsnis	1	.7	.7	43.0
	Magistro laipsnis	35	24.6	24.6	67.6
	Vidurinis išsilavinimas	46	32.4	32.4	100.0
	Total	142	100.0	100.0	

**Table 7. Distribution of respondents by income in Questionnaire 1.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1000 Eur ir daugiau	44	26.8	26.8	26.8
	400-699 Eur	33	20.1	20.1	47.0
	700-1000 Eur	48	29.3	29.3	76.2
	Mažiau nei 400 Eur	39	23.8	23.8	100.0
	Total	164	100.0	100.0	

**Table 8. Distribution of respondents by income in Questionnaire 2.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1000 Eur ir daugiau	40	28.2	28.2	28.2
	400-699 Eur	24	16.9	16.9	45.1
	700-1000 Eur	38	26.8	26.8	71.8
	Mažiau nei 400 Eur	40	28.2	28.2	100.0
	Total	142	100.0	100.0	

**Table 9. Group Statistics for demographics.**

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Age	1	164	30.24	10.407	.813
	2	142	30.71	11.201	.940
Gender	1	164	1.17	.377	.029
	2	142	1.20	.399	.034
Education	1	164	2.01	.779	.061
	2	142	1.94	.774	.065

Income	1	164	2.59	1.123	.088
	2	142	2.55	1.176	.099

**Table 10. Independent Samples T-Test results for demographics.**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Age	Equal variances assumed	1.432	.232	- .378	304	.706	-.467	1.236	-2.900	1.965
	Equal variances not assumed			- .376	290.278	.707	-.467	1.243	-2.913	1.978
Gender	Equal variances assumed	1.413	.236	- .595	304	.552	-.026	.044	-.114	.061
	Equal variances not assumed			- .593	292.251	.554	-.026	.045	-.114	.061
Education	Equal variances assumed	.693	.406	.780	304	.436	.069	.089	-.106	.245
	Equal variances not assumed			.781	298.352	.436	.069	.089	-.106	.245
Income	Equal variances assumed	1.179	.278	.320	304	.749	.042	.132	-.217	.301
	Equal variances not assumed			.319	293.333	.750	.042	.132	-.218	.302

**Appendix 6. Significances and correlations between the dependant and independant variables analyzed in the paper.**

**Table 1. Significances and correlations between the dependant and independant variables from Questionnaire 1, featuring Product 1.**

		Religiosity	Morality	Materialism	AtAd	AtB	IntP
Religiosity	Pearson Correlation	1	.171*	-.225**	-.138	-.028	.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028	.004	.077	.718	.303
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
Morality	Pearson Correlation	.171*	1	-.140	-.122	-.109	-.099
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028		.075	.121	.164	.206
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
Materialism	Pearson Correlation	-.225**	-.140	1	.114	.126	.218**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.075		.148	.108	.005
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
AtAd	Pearson Correlation	-.138	-.122	.114	1	.665**	.647**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.077	.121	.148		.000	.000
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
AtB	Pearson Correlation	-.028	-.109	.126	.665**	1	.664**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.718	.164	.108	.000		.000
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
IntP	Pearson Correlation	.081	-.099	.218**	.647**	.664**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.303	.206	.005	.000	.000	
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 2. Significances and correlations between the dependant and independant variables from Questionnaire 2, featuring Product 2.**

		Religiosity	Morality	Materialism	AtAd	AtB	IntP
Religiosity	Pearson Correlation	1	.284**	-.022	-.052	.104	.151
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.796	.537	.220	.073
	N	142	142	142	142	142	142
Morality	Pearson Correlation	.284**	1	-.120	-.013	-.035	.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.154	.878	.676	.865
	N	142	142	142	142	142	142
Materialism	Pearson Correlation	-.022	-.120	1	.072	.082	.106
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.796	.154		.393	.330	.211

	N	142	142	142	142	142	142
AtAd	Pearson Correlation	-.052	-.013	.072	1	.645**	.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.537	.878	.393		.000	.000
	N	142	142	142	142	142	142
AtB	Pearson Correlation	.104	-.035	.082	.645**	1	.696**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.220	.676	.330	.000		.000
	N	142	142	142	142	142	142
IntP	Pearson Correlation	.151	.014	.106	.640**	.696**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073	.865	.211	.000	.000	
	N	142	142	142	142	142	142

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 3. Significances and correlations between the psychographic factors, combined from Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2.**

		Religiosity	Morality	Materialism
Religiosity	Pearson Correlation	1	.232**	-.122*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.034
	N	306	306	306
Morality	Pearson Correlation	.232**	1	-.128*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.025
	N	306	306	306
Materialism	Pearson Correlation	-.122*	-.128*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.025	
	N	306	306	306

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).