

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Antecedents of General Consumer Attitude Towards Religious Advertising in Pakistan

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Abstract. Using positivistic perspective, this paper seeks to investigate the antecedents of general consumer attitude towards religious advertising in Pakistan. We tried to check the impact of various aspects including affection, hedonic pleasure, social image, product information, attitude as an instrument and attitude as an institution on religious advertising. For this purpose a research design based on regression analysis was used as it is an appropriate way to test relationships between six predictor variables and one predicted dependent variable. Online survey was used to investigate the antecedents of the General Attitude towards Religious Advertising (GARA). In total, 576 closed-ended questionnaires were filled from respondents. After analysis, the research shows that Attitude Institution (AI), affection and social image are strong predictors of the GARA. However, other variables like attitude instrument, product information and hedonic pleasure are not significant predictors. Moreover social image and product information have negative relation with GARA. As this study involved students as a sample, not diverse as a group in terms of demographics, the results cannot be generalized to the population. The findings of this study serve as the guiding tool for marketing professionals especially for top management. This study helps in adopting the appropriate appeal to influence customers through religious advertising. This paper fills a gap in the research as there were few studies done on the subject. This paper has presented the ways to improve practices of religious advertising.

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INTRODUCTION

Religion is considered a code of conduct which directs our social behaviour. The way people interact with each other and their surroundings depend on teachings of their religion. Reli-

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gion affects the way people live, choose objects, eat, and interact with others Fam, Waller, and Erdogan (2004). Major religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism emphasise ethical and moral standards and restrict behaviours which are detrimental to society (Bakhle, 1999). Religion guides the way people live their lives. Followers of major religions consume products which are in accordance with their religious beliefs and moral code of conduct.

Religious advertising is widely used to promote products and services in Islamic countries particularly in the month of *Ramaḍān*. Followers of other religions such as Christians, Hindus and Buddhists are also subjected to religious advertising on occasions like Christmas, Easter and Diwali (Rehman & Shabbir, 2010).

The importance of religion in society calls for a thorough study of the determinants and the antecedents of the GARA. According to Fam et al.(2004) religion is a key element of culture which affects every aspect of society and therefore its effects on consumer behaviour must be investigated by the marketers. Attitude towards advertising is an important concept. Lutz (1985) found that attitude towards advertising is a salient determinant of attitude towards specific advertisement. The aim of this study is to find out the factors which affection GARA in Pakistan. It investigates the impact of factors like attitude as an institution, attitude as an instrument, affection, product information, social image and hedonic pleasure on the GARA.

To define the aspects to be discussed: Hedonistic pleasure means internal good feeling that is more important as compare to external happiness; Social image relates to the affiliation of the product or service with social norms and traditions; while product information is based on the characteristic features and functionalities of a product, which is more used in terms of product specification as well.

Connecting religion to advertising has raised questions such as what is the reaction of consumers towards religious images in ads and whether the use of religious theme in advertising affects consumer. There is a shortage of focus on the theoretical development of the characteristics of religious and spiritual advertising messages Marmor-Lavie, Stout, and Lee (2009). Marmor-Lavie et al. (2009) also stated that such constructs have important implication for advertisers and communication researchers.

Research Context

According to Cloud (2000) religion is the habitual expression of an interpretation of life, which deals with ultimate concerns and values. Institutional religion formalizes these into a system which can be adopted by the concerned people. The majority of the population of the world is follower of any religion like Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Marketers are now using these religions to create a favourable attitude towards their offerings using media like electronic and print advertising. Akhter, Abassi, and Umar (2011) found that advertising which is not governed by religious laws may create a negative image of product and company in mind of the customers.

Religious advertising is a way to advertise products, services and ideas using a message based on particular religious faith. Religious advertising associates products and ideas with principles of a particular religion in order to create a positive attitude towards offerings and

advertisements (Percy, 2000). Religious advertising is extensively used by various firms in order to promote their products and services these days. According to the Christian Research Institute (2011) religious movements have been using media for a long time to promote their messages and gain audience's trustworthiness. Firms are using this theme in order to win the loyalty of customers. The boom of religious advertising can be seen in the month of *Ramaḍān* when Muslims fast and seek closeness to Allah conscientiously. Akhter et al. (2011) argued that religion defines the values and attitude towards life which in turn affects how consumer behaves in society. Due to these reasons firms are using religious advertising in order to promote their brands on occasions like *Ramaḍān*, Christmas, Easter, and Diwali. In Muslim countries such as Pakistan, advertisers are required by the Sharī'ah to use only ethical ways to promote products.

Religious advertising differs in its importance to the people of a certain faith as people differ in their identification with religion. Some people consider religion and things related to religion more important in their life, while such people are known as religiously dogmatic. In this way brands which are advertised with a religious theme win the favour of people living in a particular religious culture. Consumers' attitude towards advertising is formed based on these connections of advertising cues with the religion and culture. Association of advertising and brands with particular religious symbol is likely to affect consumer attitude and behaviour towards the object. For example, advertising campaigns based on religious themes attract Muslim consumers and increase awareness about the product (Haque, Khaliq, & Jahan, 2010).

Religious Advertising in Pakistan

Pakistan is an Islamic country where people follow Islamic teachings and codes of conduct. Islam stresses on element of ethics in business and trade. Religion affects the Muslim consumer behaviour. Therefore, consumers in Pakistan usually evaluate products and promotions according to the teachings of Islam. Contemporary advertising practices generally use appeals such as consumer vanity, sex appetite and envy which are against social and cultural norms of Islam (Akhter et al., 2011). That is why, consumer of Pakistan has a pessimistic attitude towards such advertising practices.

Muslim consumer behaviour is governed by the principles of Islam (Sandikci, 2011). Religion affects the way consumer of Pakistan develop an attitude towards religiously sensitive advertising (Run, Butt, Fam, & Jong, 2010). Promotional activities which are based on religious theme help to attract Muslim consumers and increase their awareness (Haque et al., 2011). Therefore, firms tend to exercise religious advertising in order to develop a positive attitude towards their products. These are increasingly using religious advertising in Pakistan. Many advertisements of soft drinks (e.g., Pepsi, Coca Cola, Sprite) show values such as patience, the value of virtue, brotherhood and supporting others in their advertisements during *Ramaḍān*. Moreover, other household items which include 'Laziza Kheer Mix' or 'Roh Afza' also use religious advertisement especially in *Ramaḍān* to show their association with religion. So consumers in Pakistan evaluate religious advertising positively.

Islam restricts behaviour and actions which have a negative impact on society such as the interest based transactions and economy (Akhter et al., 2011). In Pakistan various banks are now using a religious theme in advertising in order to influence perceptions of banking sector in Pakistan. Banks advertise their association with Islamic principles of business which restricts interest in the banking business (Muhammad & Mizerski, 2010). Muslim consumers evaluate any product and promotion positively if it is in accordance with the teachings of Islam. However, it also depends on the extent of affiliation Muslims have with the religion (Haque et al., 2011).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This paper examines the antecedents and determinants of consumers' attitude in general towards religious advertising in Pakistan. It aims to seek various factors which create significant impacts on consumers' mind-set and their buying approach. Hence, this study is:

- To highlight the importance of religious advertisement;
- To find out the relationship between religion and attitude towards advertising;
- To get a comprehensive and clear understanding of determinants of religious advertising;
- To explore different concepts that ultimately affection the religious advertisement in Pakistan and also to check their relationship with one another; and
- To investigate the impact of factors like attitude as an institution, social image, product information, attitude as an instrument, Affective responses and hedonic pleasure on GARA.

This study contributes in adopting the appropriate appeal to influence customers through religious advertising. It helps in anticipating the attitude of customers towards religious advertising by investigating the variables which predict a positive attitude towards religious advertising. Ultimately, the effectiveness of religious advertising would be increased. It will assist advertisers to create a positive attitude towards their ads by using an appropriate religious appeal to sell their product. There may be significance in paying attention to emotions and feelings of customers, and highlighting the purpose and outcome of religious advertising.

RELIGIOUS ADVERTISING PRACTICES

Various companies advertise their products and services using religious advertising in Pakistan. In the month of *Ramaḍān*, all Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) firms advertise their brands with a religious appeal. In Pakistan, firms like Coca Cola, Nokia, Engro Foods, P&G, and Bata frequently use religious advertising to sell their brands.

In *Ramaḍān*, Nokia also uses religious advertising in Pakistan to promote its cellular phones such as Nokia C5, Nokia C3 and Nokia N8. It frequently uses Allah's holy names in its ads. Reference to *ṣalāh* i.e., Muslims' way of prayer 5 times a day, Anecdotes about Muhammad are used in ads to associate Nokia with the religious values of Muslims.

Islamic banks in Pakistan like Meezan Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, Bank Islami, Al Baraka Bank and other Islamic Banking Institutions (IBIs) use religious advertising to promote their products. The association is made with *ḥalāl* profit, interest less banking, religious ways to

make profit, and traditional Islamic values in order to promote Islamic banking in Pakistan (Rehman & Shabbir, 2010).

Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

With the help of research incorporating sample from various countries Durvasula, Andrews, Lysonski, and Netemeyer (1993) proved that beliefs regarding AI are strong predictors of attitude towards advertising in general. Sandikci (2011) examined public attitudes towards advertising within the context of transition in Central and Eastern Europe and came up with a finding similar to various previous research studies according to which AI significantly predicts attitude towards advertising in general. In a research study done in Bulgaria and Romania, Petrovici and Marinov (2007) found that AI has a positive impact on attitude towards advertising in general. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

H1: Attitude towards the institution of advertising has a strong positive effect on the GARA.

According to Durvasula et al. (1993) attitude instrument is a direct antecedent of attitude towards advertising in general. Run et al. (2010) also supported this view and considered execution qualities and shortcomings as a strong predictor of attitude towards advertisement in general. Petrovici and Marinov (2007) also reported a strong effect of attitude instrument on attitude towards advertising in general. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Attitude towards the instrument of advertising has a strong positive effect on the GARA.

Rehman and Shabbir (2010) considered belief about any object as an important determinant of attitude towards that object. Similar findings were stated by (Percy, 2000). Petrovici and Marinov (2007) reported that beliefs about advertising were significantly shaping global or GARA.

Pollay and Mittal (1993) considered three kinds of advertising beliefs i.e., product information, image or social role and hedonic or sensory pleasure as strong predictor of attitude towards general advertising. Advertising has an entertainment value which makes a positive effect on the GARA. Several other researchers also considered beliefs such as product information, image/social role and hedonic/sensory pleasure or entertainment values a significant predictor of the GARA. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H3: Product information in religious advertising has a strong positive effect on the GARA.

H4: Social image has a positive effect on the GARA.

H5: Hedonic or sensory pleasure attached to religious advertising has a strong positive effect on the GARA.

Marmor-Lavie et al. (2009) found that affection or feelings and emotions about an object are strong positive predictors of attitude towards that object. Moreover affective factors play substantial role in attitude formation. This was also supported by Sandikci (2011) who proved that feelings and emotions have a direct impact on attitude towards an object. Sandikci (2011) used an idiographic approach to come up with the findings that affective responses towards an object are central determinant of attitude towards that object. Therefore, hypothesis six is:

H6: Affective responses towards religious advertising have positive effect on the GARA.

METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

This is scientific study that involves well organized and measurable methods, and follows a positivism research strategy. Survey approach has been used to gather responses and a questionnaire developed to collect feed-back. Deductive approach is functional on survey studies and being used when already developed phenomenon is under study.

Based on hypotheses developed above, Figure 1 depicts the theoretical framework showing relationship between all predictors and predicted variable.

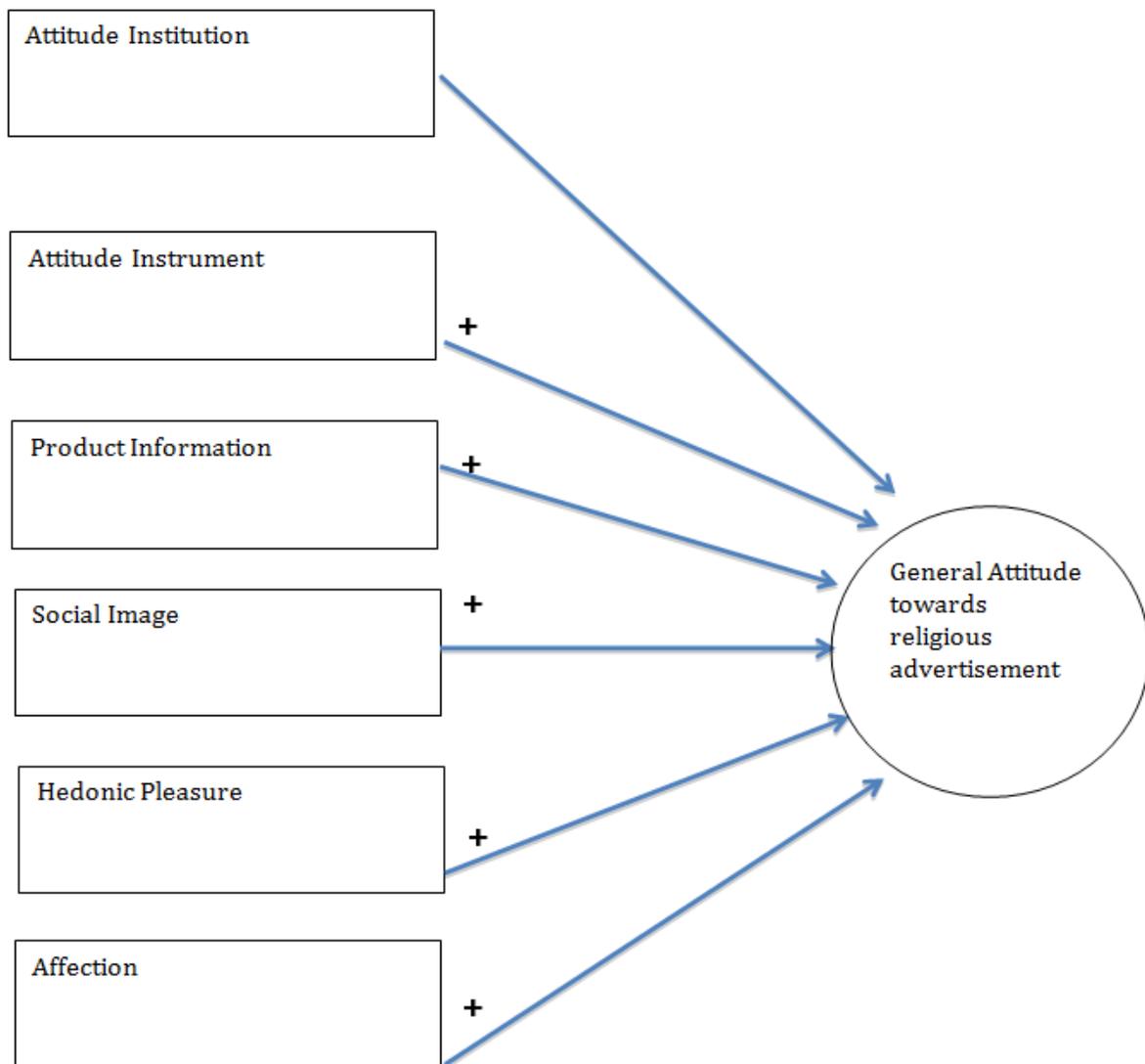


FIGURE 1. Conceptual model of GARA

Test Instrument

To collect responses from respondents a survey questionnaire was administered with a seven point likert scale. The range of likert scale was '1' for Strongly Disagree, '2' for Disagree, '3' for Somewhat Disagree, '4' for Neutral, '5' for Somewhat Agree, '6' for Agree and '7' for Strongly Agree. Structured questionnaire was closed ended split into three sections.

First section gathered demographic information of respondents which included age, gender, religion (Muslim/non-Muslim), qualification (bachelor/masters) and occupation level (student/employed/self-employed).

In second section respondents gave responses about predictors for GARA. These are attitude towards institution, attitude towards instrument, product information, social image, hedonic or sensory pleasure and affective responses.

Third section of test instrument comprised questions related to religious advertising and general attitude towards it. Total 37 questions were included in the research instrument.

Data Collection Method

Online survey strategy was used to collect information. Researcher utilized email, skype, whatsapp, viber and social media to contact potential respondents. The cheapest and the quickest method of gathering the information is the online survey, as it generates a fewer items that don't have response, as compared to the version of paper and pencil (Schaefer & Dillman, 1998).

Population and Sample Size

Data was gathered from a convenience sample of 576 students from public sector universities of Pakistan. The reason behind using students as respondents was that students make an accessible and homogeneous group, thereby reducing the need for very large samples. Students sample is also appropriate when students are affluent consumers (Zhou, Arnold, Pereira, & Yu, 2010) and students make a homogeneous sample in the sense of demographics and socioeconomic background which reduces chances of random error that might occur by using heterogeneous sample. In the sample of 576 students, 573 were Muslim whereas only three non-Muslim respondents. The data gathered from this very small sample will not effect on results due to its small size as compared to target population.

Sampling Technique

Choice of proper sampling technique is very essential as credibility of results depend upon appropriate sampling technique (Chaudhry, 2011). As this study gathered responses from students studying in different universities and did not necessarily possess any certain characteristic, so convenient sampling technique was used.

Pretesting of Questionnaire

Before the questionnaire was used for data gathering, it followed Abdullahs (2006) procedure for pilot testing. A total 25 number of students were pretested who were then questioned about the questionnaire's errors and ambiguities. After a period of one week, the investigator collected the questionnaires from the respondents and examined them carefully in consultation with the study supervisor. Keeping in view of the suggestions made by the students, the researcher amended and refined the questionnaire.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents who took part in this survey. There were more male respondents (51.38%) than female (48.62%). All respondents were studying in universities either for bachelors or master's degree. In terms of age distribution 35.24% were 15-19 years old, 17.71% were 20-24 years old, 19.44% were 25-29 years old, 14.24% were 30-34 years old and only 13.37% were about 35 or more years old. Almost all respondents were Muslim. Only 3 respondents were Non-Muslim which was 0.52% of the sample.

TABLE 1
Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	296	51.38
Female	280	48.62
Educational Level		
Bachelor Degree	345	59.89
Master Degree	231	40.11
Age Group		
15-19	203	35.24
20-24	102	17.71
25-29	112	19.44
30-34	82	14.24
35	77	13.37
Occupation		
Student	512	88.88
Employed	59	10.25
Self Employed	5	0.87
Religion		
Islam	573	99.48
Christianity	3	0.52
Hindu	0	0
Other	0	0

Measures

Following Durvasula et al. (1993), attitude towards advertising was measured using three seven point semantic differential items by inquiring respondents whether their attitude towards advertising in general was good/bad, positive/negative and favourable/unfavourable.

Attitude towards the institution was measured with three seven point semantic differential items including measures like valuable/ worthless, necessary/useless, important/unimportant. These measures and scale were adopted from (Petrovici & Marinov, 2007).

Attitude towards the instruments of advertising was measured with four seven point semantic differential items including measures like clean/dirty, dishonest/honest, danger-

ous/safe and sincere/insincere. These measures were adopted from Petrovici and Marinov, (2007).

By using the seven point likert- like items, the product information was used by using the valuable source of information to explain ‘which brand I have been looking for’; ‘what kind of services and the products are available in the market’; and ‘advertising will help the customer to buy the product sensibly’. These measures were taken from (Muhammad & Mizerski, 2010).

Social image was measured using three Likert type items like ‘religious advertising helps me know which products will or will not reflect the sort of person I am’; ‘religious advertising tells me what people like me are buying or using’ and ‘religious advertising tells me about fashion and what to buy to impress others’. These measures were adopted from (Rehman and Shabbir, 2010).

Following the study of Akhter et al. (2011), hedonic pleasure was measured using three, seven point Likert type items like ‘religious advertising is often amusing and entertaining’; ‘thinking about what I saw, heard or read in religious advertising gives me pleasure’ and ‘religious advertising brings to mind pleasant memories’.

With the seven point likert-scale, affection of the participants was measured like interested, happy, amused, attentive, enthusiastic, pleased, surprised, calm, nervous, bored and annoyed. The mentioned items were taken from Percy (2000).

RESULTS

Reliability Analysis

The reliability analysis was performed to check the stability and the internal consistency of items (Cronbach, 1951). Table 2 is reflecting the reliability analysis of all variables of the study. The Cronbach’s α value of all the constructs are above 0.70, so considered as acceptable (Chaudhry, 2011). According to Table 2, social image has highest Cronbach’s α value which is 0.917 while product information has lowest value which is 0.727 but still it is above the minimum required α value.

TABLE 2
Reliability statistics of the factors

Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach’s α
Affection (Af)	12	0.846
GARA	3	0.911
AI	3	0.882
Attitude Instrument (AIs)	4	0.825
Product Information (PI)	4	0.727
Social Image (SI)	3	0.917
Hedonic Pleasure (HP)	3	0.856

Descriptive Analysis and Pearson’s Correlation Values

The relationship or association among variables is presented with the help of Pearson’s

correlation coefficient. Table 3 depicts Mean, Standard Deviation (*S.D*) and Correlation Coefficient values of all predictors and predicted variables. Maximum average value is 5.73 for GARA which shows that on the average respondents have opinion between SOMEWHAT AGREE to AGREE, whereas least average value is 4.42 for variable ‘SI’ which shows respondents’ overall opinion about social image that is between NEUTRAL to SOMEWHAT AGREE. Standard deviation basically explains the variation level or consistency among response values of different variables. The lower the *S.D* values the more consistent responses from different respondents. Minimum *S.D* value is 0.94 for Affection and maximum *S.D* value is 1.66 for PI.

Correlation analysis of all variables is also reported in Table 3. Maximum correlation exists between Attitude Institution & GARA (0.94), whereas there are also significant high correlations existing between Attitude Institution & AIs (0.81) and between GARA & AIs (0.78). Moreover, lowest correlation is between product information & affection (0.37).

TABLE 3
Mean, standard deviation and Pearson’s correlation coefficients of all variables

Variable	Mean	<i>S.D</i>	GARA	AI	AIs	Af	PI	SI	HP
GARA	5.73	1.46	1.000						
AI	5.74	1.42	0.94	1.000					
AIs	5.63	1.37	0.78	0.81	1.000				
Af	4.73	0.94	0.77	0.73	0.61	1.000			
PI	5.38	1.66	0.54	0.61	0.44	0.37	1.000		
SI	4.42	1.57	0.56	0.62	0.47	0.51	0.71	1.000	
HP	4.57	1.40	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.59	0.45	0.69	1.000

GARA, AI,
 AIs, PI, SI, PI

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis would help in determining the impact of several predictors on the criterion variable (Shiu et al., 2009). Table 4 shows the complete results of regression analysis.

TABLE 4
Result of multiple regression analysis

	β	<i>t</i> -value	Significance	Hypothesis
AI	0.84	27.48	0.000**	H1
AIs	0.21	0.89	0.370	H2
PI	-0.06	-0.34	0.75	H3
SI	-0.08	-3.52	0.000**	H4
HP	0.05	1.34	0.20	H5
Af	0.16	7.51	0.000**	H6

* *p* value < 0.05
 ** *p* value < 0.01
 Note. $R^2 = 0.842$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.810$.
F-value= 866.234, *p* < .001.

The R^2 of the regression model is 0.842 and adjusted R^2 is 0.81 which shows a very good model fit and explains that all predictor variables explicate 81% variation present in predicted variable (GARA). This finding further makes it authentic that religious advertisement is affected by the AI, the social images and the affects. The F -ratio is 866.234 of the model which shows it is highly significant ($p < 0.001$), which shows overall model is significant.

Results reported in Table 4 also show that the main effects of AI, affection and social image on the GARA are significant, confirming H1 ($\beta = 0.84, p < 0.01$), H4 ($\beta = -0.08, p < 0.01$) and H6 ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.01$). However, attitude as instrument, product information and hedonic pleasure are not significantly predicting the GARA, thus rejecting H2 ($\beta = 0.21, p > 0.01$), H3 ($\beta = -0.06, p > 0.01$) and H5 ($\beta = 0.05, p > 0.01$). The β - values in table 5 indicate that the relationship between GARA and all predictors is positive except for social image and product information with which the relationship is negative. It also shows that the effect of AI on the GARA is very high ($\beta = 0.84$) as compared to other predictors. Further, t -values of the AI ($t = 27.48 > 2$), social image ($t = -3.52 > 2$) and affection ($t = 7.51 > 2$) show that they are significant predictors of the GARA whereas attitude instrument ($t = 0.89 < 2$), product information ($t = -0.34$ (absolute value) < 2), and hedonic pleasure ($t = 1.34 < 2$), are not significantly predicting GARA. This also shows that AI is making a significant contribution to the model.

DISCUSSION

This research gives confirms that attitude as institution, affection and social image are significant predictors of the GARA. However, social image negatively predicts the GARA. This study did not find evidence to prove that attitude instrument, product information and hedonic pleasure are significant predictors of the GARA. Hence, H1, H4 and H6 are supported with the help of evidence whereas H2, H3 and H5 are rejected due to the fact that regression coefficients are not statistically significant for these predictor variables.

The findings of this research give an insight into the factors which influence consumers GARA and, therefore, are helpful for marketers who promote products and services with the help of religious advertising. It also helps practitioners as it is filling various gaps in advertising research¹. Consistent with previous research studies of Akhter et al. (2011); Rehman and Shabbir (2010) and Fam et al. (2004) AI is a significant predictor of the GARA. People are positive about religious advertising as an institution; however, there is no evidence of attitude instrument being a predictor of the GARA which is in contrary to previous research studies of Haque et al., (2011) & Durvasula et al. (1993). The difference may be due to cognitive factors i.e., when people experience religious advertising they focus on the purpose and effect of advertising rather than execution and shortcomings of religious advertising. This confirms the fact that consumer's belief about the institution of religious advertising i.e., purpose and outcome of religious advertising affects consumer attitude to-

¹Religious advertising can have a positive impact on norms, values and standards pertaining to Islamic culture. It has been observed that in month of *Ramaḍān* people feel more association with brands who use religious theme in their advertising and consider them a part of their culture. However an empirical investigation is required to prove the cultural impact of religious advertising.

wards religious advertising. Consumers evaluate religious advertising based on outcomes which it wants to achieve, and its effect. If consumers consider the purpose and effect of religious advertising positive then their subsequent evaluation of religious advertising will be positive. The findings of this study indicate that consumers are more conscious about the purpose and effect of religious advertising. They evaluate religious advertising based on its value and its outcome.

Consumer's emotions and feelings are also significant predictors of the GARA and their result was similar to previous research studies of Petrovici and Marinov (2007) & Muhammad and Mizerski (2010). It indicates that before making any purchase decision consumer not only evaluates but also employs emotions and feeling towards religious advertising of the product. It can be said that the GARA is emotionally driven.

Other beliefs like hedonic pleasure and information acquisition are not significant factors influencing GARA. The explanation of such a contrary result can be that when affection plays a central role as a determinant of the GARA, the cognitive factors or beliefs do not play a salient role as a predictor. Consistent with previous studies of (Petrovici & Marinov, 2007; Rehman & Shabbir, 2010), this indicates that consumers' evaluation of religious advertising is not influenced by their beliefs. Moreover, religious advertising is a source of hedonic pleasure and information acquisition. Hedonic pleasure may also be a non-predictor of attitude towards religious advertising due to the fact that Muslims do not place value of sensory pleasure while evaluating something religious.

CONCLUSION

The objective of current study was to give a valuable insight into the determinants of religious advertising by investigating several important constructs which affect religious advertising and their relationship with General Attitude towards Religious Advertising (GARA). Attitude towards institution, attitude towards instrument, product information, social image, hedonic or sensory pleasure and affective responses were taken as predictors for GARA.

The findings indicate that AI and affective responses towards religious promotion were significant and direct antecedents of consumers' GARA, while social image was also a significant antecedent but had negative association with attitudes of consumer towards religious advertising. Attitude instrument, product information and hedonic pleasure were insignificant predictors of GARA. Moreover, inverse relationship was found between GARA and product information.

Finally, it is concluded that attitude of consumers towards religious advertising was significantly influenced by AI, social image and affection size. On the other hand, attitude instrument, product information and hedonic pleasure did not have significant impact on consumers' GARA. Moreover, although SI has a significant effect on GARA, but inverse relationship was observed between them.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study may serve as the guiding tool for marketing professionals especially managers who are responsible for marketing communication. These are:

a) In order to develop positive attitudes toward religious advertising, manager should take into account the relevant factors which determine the attitude towards religious advertising. Consumers are overall positive towards the institution of religious advertising and show positive emotions and feelings towards that. However, they are negative towards the social image factor. Therefore, the practitioners should emphasis the purpose and effect of religious advertising rather than the entertainment effect. They should target the emotions and feelings of consumers as these factors have a strong relationship with the positive attitude towards religious advertising.

b) Managers should strive to produce positive attitudes towards religious advertising. It is emphasized that advertisers should pay more attention towards AI and feelings associated with religious advertising. They can produce a positive attitude in consumers with the help of emotional appeal in religious advertising and by reinforcing credibility of advertising institution.

c) The primary function of religious advertising should be urging consumers to use the brand and developing a positive opinion about it. Religious advertising will serve this purpose by being realistic, honest and just. This will result into brand recognition and acquisition of brand by customers (Petrovici & Marinov, 2007).

d) Mangers can increase the persuasive power of religious advertising by emphasizing emotions and feelings as well as the credibility of the AI in religious advertising.

e) Institution of advertising and affection are the main tools which marketers can use to develop the positive attitude towards religious advertising and increase its social acceptance. Marketers need to pay specific attention to increase the credibility of these factors.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The major limitation of the study is that the data was gathered from followers of one religion i.e., from Muslim community. In future, people belonging to different religions can be included to test the study results.

Researcher may also conduct a similar study with geographically diverse sample size. In addition, female and male point of view about GARA should be taken separately to undertake meaningful survey study.

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