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# **Consumers' Perceptions of and Responses to Creative Advertising**

**Pinar Demir**

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Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

This study examined the way consumers perceive and respond to creative advertising, advertising that is judged by experts (usually senior practitioners) to be creative, to see if consumers reacted in the way that could reasonably be expected of them. It offers a conceptualisation of creative ads, from the perspective of consumers, with their perceptions as antecedents and responses as outcomes.

It starts with a review of the literature on creativity and advertising, the various definitions and dimensions of advertising creativity, and the approaches to measuring it. Consumer responses to advertising are discussed with definitions, importance, and measurements of each response. A research framework is developed, using a structural model that specifies the hypothesised relationships between the advertising creativity dimensions and responses. A quantitative research methodology was employed with an online survey of approximately 300 consumers, to explore whether practitioners' perceptions of creative ads were congruent with those of consumers.

Structural equation modelling was employed for data analysis and it was found that there was incongruency between the perceptions of practitioners and those of consumers. The results showed that ads that were judged to be creative by practitioners were not perceived as such by consumers. Consumers did, however, perceive particular individual dimensions of advertising creativity. Through their perceptions of these dimensions consumers responded to this creative advertising by paying attention to, liking, and, ultimately, engaging with the ads, even though they did not recognise them as creative. The results indicated that creativity as judged by practitioners is of no significance in consumers' creativity perceptions - it is the particular dimensions of advertising creativity that consumers perceived that gave rise to their responses and engaged them.

Unlike practitioners who praise creativity, consumers are neutral towards it whilst at the same time being able to perceive divergent and clever advertisement elements. Practitioners should emphasise these elements in their designs rather than concentrate on what they think might be 'creative'.

# Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	i
List of Tables .....	ii
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Research Aims .....	4
1.3 Outline of the Thesis.....	5
1.4 Summary.....	5
<b>2. Advertising Creativity.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	7
2.2 Overview.....	7
2.2.1 Creativity .....	9
2.3 Definitions of Advertising Creativity .....	12
2.4 Dimensions of Advertising Creativity .....	18
2.4.1 Divergence.....	19
2.4.2 Relevance .....	25
2.4.3 Cleverness.....	28
2.5 Importance of Investigating Advertising Creativity.....	38
2.5.1 Differences in the Perceptions of Advertising Creativity .....	39
2.6 Measurement of Advertising Creativity .....	50
2.6.1 Introduction to Advertising Creativity Measurement .....	50
2.6.2 Measurement of Divergence Factors .....	50
2.6.3 Measurement of Relevance Factors.....	54
<b>3. Consumer Responses to Advertising Creativity .....</b>	<b>57</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	57
3.2 Hierarchy of Effects Model.....	59
3.2.1 A Critique of the HOE Model .....	61
3.3 Attention.....	62
3.3.1 Introduction.....	62
3.3.2 Definition of Attention .....	63
3.3.3 Importance of Attention.....	65
3.3.4 Measurement of Attention .....	66
3.4 Likeability.....	70
3.4.1 Introduction.....	70
3.4.2 Definition of Likeability.....	71
3.4.3 Importance of Likeability.....	73
3.4.4 Measurement of Likeability.....	75
3.5 Engagement .....	79
3.5.1 Introduction.....	79
3.5.2 Definition of Engagement.....	79
3.5.3 Importance of Engagement.....	88
3.5.4 Measurement of Engagement.....	90
3.6 Summary of Literature Review .....	92
<b>4. Research Framework.....</b>	<b>95</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	95
4.2 Research Problem and Questions .....	95
4.3 Research Objectives.....	96
4.3.1 Conceptual Framework .....	97

4.4	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>100</b>
4.4.1	Advertising Creativity Perception Hypotheses	100
4.4.2	Creativity Response Hypotheses	101
4.4.3	Second Level Response Hypotheses	102
4.5	<b>Summary</b>	<b>103</b>
5.	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>104</b>
5.1	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>104</b>
5.2	<b>Research Philosophy and Approach</b>	<b>104</b>
5.3	<b>Research Design and Strategy</b>	<b>105</b>
5.4	<b>Methodological Approach</b>	<b>105</b>
5.4.1	Alternative Research Design	106
5.4.2	Criticism of Survey Method	108
5.4.3	Internet-Mediated Research	109
5.5	<b>Data Collection</b>	<b>111</b>
5.5.1	Questionnaire Design	111
5.5.2	Creative Stimuli Selection	113
5.5.3	Measurement Items	117
5.5.4	Survey Pre-test	125
5.5.5	Data Analysis	126
5.6	<b>Sampling</b>	<b>128</b>
5.7	<b>Ethical Considerations</b>	<b>130</b>
5.8	<b>Summary</b>	<b>131</b>
6.	<b>Research Analysis and Findings</b>	<b>132</b>
6.1	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>132</b>
6.2	<b>Sample Characteristics</b>	<b>133</b>
6.3	<b>Preliminary Analysis</b>	<b>134</b>
6.3.1	Outliers and Normality	135
6.4	<b>Main Analysis</b>	<b>137</b>
6.4.1	Reliability Analysis	137
6.4.2	Exploratory Factor Analysis	138
6.4.3	Confirmatory Factor Analysis/Measurement Model	147
6.4.4	SEM Model and Testing of Hypotheses	156
6.5	<b>Summary</b>	<b>164</b>
7.	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>166</b>
7.1	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>166</b>
7.2	<b>Conceptualisation of Advertising Creativity and Discussion of Hypotheses</b>	<b>166</b>
7.2.1	Antecedents of Advertising Creativity	166
7.2.2	Responses to Advertising Creativity	169
7.3	<b>Final Structural Model</b>	<b>172</b>
7.4	<b>Research Contribution</b>	<b>173</b>
7.5	<b>Summary</b>	<b>174</b>
8.	<b>Conclusion, Managerial Recommendations, Limitations and Future Research ...</b>	<b>176</b>
8.1	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>176</b>
8.2	<b>Summary of Thesis</b>	<b>176</b>
8.3	<b>Meeting Research Objectives</b>	<b>177</b>
8.3.1	<i>Consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity and relationships between advertising creativity dimensions</i>	177

8.3.2	<i>Consumers' responses to advertising creativity and the relationships between them</i>	178
8.4	<b>Summary of Research Findings</b>	<b>178</b>
8.5	<b>Managerial Recommendations</b>	<b>179</b>
8.6	<b>Limitations</b>	<b>181</b>
8.6.1	Sample Related Limitations	181
8.6.2	Length of Questionnaire	182
8.6.3	Measurement of Advertising Creativity	182
8.7	<b>Future Research</b>	<b>183</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>184</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>203</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Research Process and Structure .....	6
Figure 2 Advertising Creativity Dimensions .....	50
Figure 3 Divergence Dimension Factors and Measurement Items .....	53
Figure 4 Relevance Dimension Measurement Items ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Figure 5 Proposed Research Framework & HOE Stages .....	99
Figure 6 Overall Measurement Model.....	153
Figure 7 Structural Model.....	157
Figure 8 Additional mediation paths .....	161
Figure 9 Final Research Framework .....	173

## List of Tables

Table 2.1 Advertising Creativity Definitions .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 2.2 Studies of Advertising Creativity Dimensions .....	19
Table 2.3 Selected Research on Advertising Creativity .....	19
Table 5.1 Advertising Creativity Measurement Items.....	121
Table 5.2 Response Measurement Items .....	125
Table 6.1 Demographic Characteristics.....	134
Table 6.2 Standardised Scores .....	135
Table 6.3 Normality Assessment.....	136
Table 6.4 Reliability of Measures.....	137
Table 6.5 Reliability of Dimensions .....	138
Table 6.6 KMO and Bartlett's test of Sphericity .....	140
Table 6.7 Factor Loadings for Divergence .....	142
Table 6.8 Factor Loadings for Relevance Dimension .....	143
Table 6.9 Factor Loadings for Cleverness Dimension .....	144
Table 6.10 Factor Loadings for Attention Response .....	145
Table 6.11 Factor Loadings for Likeability Response.....	146
Table 6.12 Factor Loadings for Engagement Response .....	146
Table 6.13 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Divergence .....	148
Table 6.14 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Relevance .....	149
Table 6.15 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Cleverness .....	149
Table 6.16 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Attention .....	150
Table 6.17 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Likeability .....	150
Table 6.18 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Engagement .....	151
Table 6.19 Goodness of Fit Indices Criteria .....	152
Table 6.20 Goodness of Fit Indices for the Measurement Model .....	153
Table 6.21 Convergent Validity Assessment .....	154
Table 6.22 Discriminant Validity Assessment .....	155
Table 6.23 Goodness of Fit Indices for the Structural Model .....	158
Table 6.24 Direct Effects .....	160
Table 6.25 Indirect Effects .....	161
Table 6.26 Total Mediation Effects of Likeability and Advertising Creativity .....	162
Table 6.27 Moderation Effects .....	163



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## **Author's Declaration**

“I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Westminster or any other institution”

Pinar Demir

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

It is rational to infer that consumers are one of the important considerations in advertising research (Rosengren *et al.*, 2013) since the purpose of advertising designs is to reach to the public and generate consumer responses (West *et al.*, 2013; Mai and Schoeller, 2009). However, in advertising research, it is a generally accepted argument by some that the “in-depth assessment and insight into the art of advertising creativity” can only be provided by experts (West *et al.*, 2013, p.33). The assessment of the general public is perceived to be less significant. In fact, it is stated that neither clients nor consumers should be taken into account, other than peers in advertising (Hackley and Kover, 2007; Stuhlfaut and Yoo, 2013).

Perceptions of so called experts and non-experts are one of the major problems in advertising. This is due to the fact that experts, advertising practitioners, design advertising for non-experts, consumers. Thus, the critical audience of any advertising is the consumer viewers. It is also emphasised that important outcomes of advertising can be predicted by consumer attitudes (Shavitt *et al.*, 2004). The fundamental step of understanding creative advertising is primarily understanding how it works on the consumer (Koslow, 2015). Therefore, it is vital to understand consumer perceptions of advertising creativity. This understanding can improve the communication process between advertisers and viewers by revealing the target audience’s perceptions of and responses to advertising (Belch and Belch, 2009). Kover (2016) supports this by concluding that viewing advertising is a human process in which meanings are given to advertisements.

When the viewer side of advertising is considered consumers are faced with “an increasing amount of advertising” (Elliott and Speck, 1998, p.29) and “various and proliferating forms of advertising media” (Cotte and Ritchie, 2005, p. 260) in everyday life. This is due to the “multi-media age” that provide advertisers more options to communicate with consumers who in the end become “overexposed to audio and visual marketing messages, information, texts and graphics” (Mai and Schoeller, 2009, p.55).

This 'clutter' is defined as "the level of advertising (or promotion) in a medium" that can damage the ad effectiveness (Elliott and Speck, 1998, p.29). As consumers look for relevant messages in media, the ads that do not provide this are usually perceived as clutter that is described as "one's belief that the amount of advertising in a medium is excessive" (Speck and Elliott, 1997a, p.40).

When the viewers perceive the existing clutter of advertising it also affects their responses to advertising. One impact of this perceived clutter is the ad avoidance of consumers that is all actions by media users that differentially reduce their exposure to ad content (Speck and Elliott, 1997b). It is becoming easier for the consumers to avoid advertisements and the theoretical solution found by marketers to this problem is to increase the number of advertisements (Rotfeld, 2006). However, since the ad avoidance is a result of advertisement clutter this theoretical approach does not work in practise.

An effective solution to the ad avoidance problem is advertising creativity that can break through the clutter (Pieters *et al.* 2002; Rotfeld, 2006; Nyilasy and Reid, 2009). Since advertising works in low levels of attention by nature, and "many ads do not succeed in attracting attention at all" (Cook, 1992, p.178), creative ads are achievements of higher attention levels (Du Plessis, 2008). Because of these facts practitioners "manage one thing above all else: creativity" (Hackley, 2010, p.97) and it "remains a central aspect of marketing even amidst a rapidly changing media environment" (Nyilasy *et al.*, 2013, p.1692).

Nevertheless, due to the fact that "what is and is not creative in advertising will always be subjectively determined" (Stuhlfaut and Yoo, 2013, p.93) the investigation of advertising creativity is limited by its nature that is dependent on subjectivity. This encourages the advertising literature move towards a new direction and search for more effective ways of understanding creative advertising.

An interesting point of view suggested the advertising process is communicating with consumers as storytellers and this leads story receivers to develop attitudes and form responses (Laer *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, it is acknowledged that the advertising

messages are actively received and turned into meanings by consumers (Cotte and Ritchie, 2005).

Marketers and researchers should make the most of this storytelling process by understanding the story receiver. Regarding the literature, it is stated that the research of advertising has been concerned with the effects that advertisements have on products and how consumers think about certain advertisements (Rosengren *et al.*, 2013). However, consumers' perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity have not been modelled with their ultimate engagement with these creative ads as a potential area of research.

Engagement can be achieved when practitioners expose creative advertising to the right consumers, at the right time and place (Spielmann and Richard, 2013) and one way to ensure this is revealing consumers' perceptions. This becomes even more important to advertising practitioners with the potential to generate a successful and enduring communication process with the consumer. When marketers know how consumers perceive their messages and respond in return, there will be more opportunities to improve relationships that can last longer as a consequence of their engagement.

Furthermore, a better understanding of the advertising creativity is possible through a structural model that provides explanations to the related contributing elements (Ang, 2000). The hierarchical models of advertising, regardless how simple or complicated they are, state advertising should "move people through a series of processing steps" (Thorson *et al.*, 1992, p.366). These steps constitute the viewers' responses to advertising as an outcome of their perceptions.

In this context, the perceivers and their perceptions cannot be detached from the construct they evaluate because perceptions "differ depending on whose perspective they represent" (Rossiter, 2002, p.318). As advertising viewers' "needs and states of mind" change and lives become more complex the search for consumer attention soars (Zaltman and Coulter, 1995, p.36). By understanding consumer perceptions, the advertising industry will be able to offer a "richer foundation for building creative communication strategies and executions" (Zaltman and Coulter, 1995, p.36) and have

an enhanced “guidance for capturing consumers’ attention and further engaging their thought processes” (p.35).

*“It is a common lament by advertising agencies that research kills creativity. This is simply not true. What the advertising agencies mean is that research sometimes kills ideas the agencies hoped to get past their clients. In any case, the statement implies that ‘creativity is king’, when we all know that ‘the consumer is king’. What does creativity count, if the advertisement does not work with consumers?”* (Du Plessis, 2008, p.108).

## **1.2 Research Aims**

Advertising research can be theorised from various “intellectual perspectives” (Hackley, 2010, p.89). There are two main purposes in the theorisation of advertising creativity in this research. The first purpose is to understand consumer perceptions of print advertising judged by practitioners to be creative. The second purpose is to reveal how consumers’ perceptions act as antecedents to their responses towards advertising creativity.

This research aims to make an original contribution to knowledge by its demonstration of the degree to which consumers’ and advertising practitioners’ perceptions of advertising creativity are incongruent. This challenges the advertising literature by investigating whether there is more to creativity than the value it has received from the practitioners with a modelling of advertising creativity. This model demonstrates how consumers’ responses to creative print advertising are influenced by their perceptions of creativity. Therefore, this study, aims not only to investigate the unexplored potential in consumers’ perceptions but also to analyse empirical data regarding how consumers respond to those advertisements as an outcome of creativity, to contribute to the knowledge of advertising creativity.

Consequently, this study has research findings on consumer perceptions of, and responses towards, advertising creativity judged by practitioners. This investigation of creativity perceptions takes advertising research further by “incrementally adding to it or extending it” and “providing an alternative explanation or understanding” of it (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013, p.12).

### **1.3 Outline of the Thesis**

This section outlines the structure of this thesis. This first chapter (*Introduction*) has presented an introduction with the background and research aims. The second and third chapters consist of advertising creativity literature review. In the second chapter (*Advertising Creativity*) the definition and various dimensions of advertising creativity are introduced and followed by a discussion of its importance and measurement. Third chapter (*Consumer Responses to Advertising Creativity*) discusses the Hierarchy of Effects model and presents consumer responses to advertising creativity. This includes the definitions, importance, and measurements in the literature of each suggested response.

Next, Chapter 4 (*Research Framework*) presents the conceptual research framework and proposes research hypotheses. In Chapter 5 (*Methodology*) research design and methodological approach are discussed with details of the data collection process. Chapter 6 (*Research Analysis and Findings*) presents the research findings based on the data analysis. Chapter 7 (*Discussion*) provides the discussion of advertising creativity conceptualisation and presents the final structural research model and theoretical contributions. Following the discussion, Chapter 8 (Conclusion, Managerial Recommendations, Limitations and Future Research) draws conclusion with a summary of research findings, outlines recommendations for managers and lists limitations and future research considerations. A visual representation of the research process and structure can be seen below (Figure 1). ,

### **1.4 Summary**

This introductory chapter has presented the background to the investigation of advertising creativity, research aims and the structure of the thesis. Investigating a phenomenon relies on understanding the subject under investigation. In academic research one way to achieve understanding is exploring the literature. Developing a beginner's mind is crucial to identify entities and literature may "stymie identification by inclining us to understand something in terms of established ideas" (MacInnis, 2011, p.152). Thus, a beginner's mind should be pursued and supported. In this research a beginner's mind was adopted in order to investigate consumers' perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity. In the next chapter advertising literature is reviewed and definitions of advertising creativity are examined.

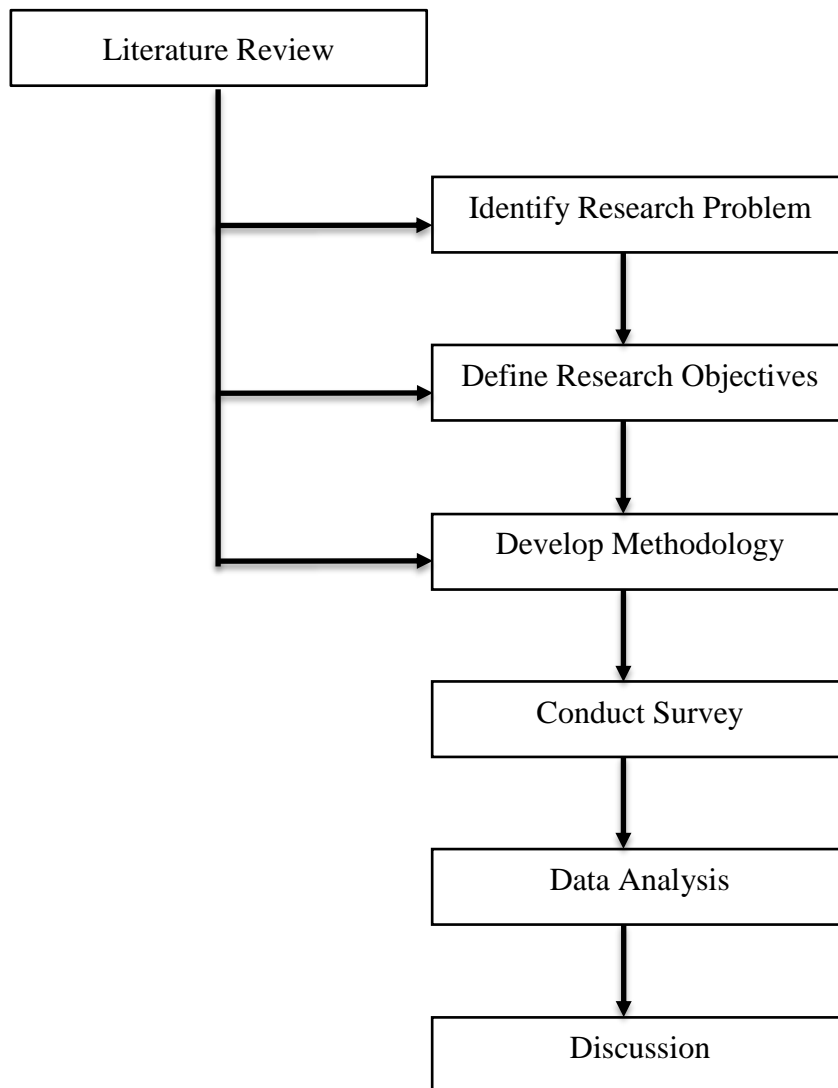


Figure 1 Research Process and Structure



## 2. Advertising Creativity

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a literature review on the concept of advertising creativity. It starts with an overview and then introduces creativity as a psychological trait. Next, definitions of advertising creativity and its various dimensions are presented. This is followed by a discussion of its importance and measurement approaches.

### 2.2 Overview

As the advertising industry has grown over the years the emphasis has been drawn to a specific aspect of advertising: i.e. creativity. This is supported by advertising textbooks and academic articles as well as the advertising practitioners who have ‘long understood the importance of ad creativity in a competitive marketplace’ (Smith *et al.*, 2008, p.47). This is explained by the power of the “creative spark, which drives much of advertising” (Zinkhan, 1993, p.3).

Many reasons to investigate the creative spark of advertising are emphasised by various researchers. The importance of advertising creativity is emphasised by referring to it as “a means for overcoming consumers' perceptual barrier to gain their attention”, a “unique selling proposition”, and the “big idea” in the advertisement clutter (Ang and Low, 2000, p.835).

It has been suggested that creativity should not simply be considered as beauty contests and that it can foster brand value (Till and Baack, 2005). Recently, Belch and Belch (2013) stated it is believed in the advertising industry that highly creative advertisements lead to success by “positive effects and striking a responsive chord with the consumer” (p.397). Whereas Koslow *et al.* (2003) had a more holistic point of view and considered creativity as “a mission of the entire advertising industry, its *raison d’être*” (p.96),

Kover and James (1993) claimed that the magic in advertising is “the unexplainable flash of creativity” (p.38). Although it is said to be unexplainable, creativity in advertising has different definitions for individuals and one of these definitions, which may also be the most generic one, is “the process of producing and developing

advertising ideas” (El-Murad and West, 2004, p.188). In the same research El-Murad and West (op. cit.) acknowledged that when defining creativity, terms such as “creative thinking”, “ability”, “problem solving”, “imagination” and “innovation” are often used (p.189). These definitions indicate the correlation between the ability of creative thinking and how it leads to idea generation in advertising.

Such statements used by various researchers have explained the role of creativity and its essential influence on communicating with the viewers in order to generate interest. Communicating with consumers is the main goal of advertising and this draws the emphasis to consumers as advertisement viewers. Bernardin and Kemp-Robertson (2008) agreed to this by stating, “if the 1980s were the “brand era” and the 1990s were the “idea era,” then today, we’re in the People Era” (p.132). If this claim is accepted that today is the People Era, consumers should be given more importance and consideration in the process of advertising. In this context, although creativity in advertising is important for research literature, it has been included mostly in humanities rather than advertising studies and there is still a paucity of research in the subject (Zinkhan, 1993; Yang and Smith, 2009).

It is advised that researchers investigating creativity in advertising need to be creative “in the way that they think about and imagine advertising creativity” (Zinkhan, 1993, p.3). Considering this, creativity can aid research and offer better approaches to researchers. However, there is a common concern that “the output of creativity ends up being subpar” (Nyilasy and Reid, 2009, p.3). Similarly, Goldenberg *et al.* (1999) accounted for the first time that randomness in creativity research is not always reliable since the research “might be harmful at worst, or inefficient at best” (p.1). In order to improve advertising research these concerns should be reflected on. Creativity, one of the most important imperatives in advertising, should be managed cautiously in advertising research.

With respect to the purposes of this study randomness in investigation of creativity cannot be relied on. Therefore, it is useful to follow a systematic approach to understand the relationship between idea generation in advertising and creativity before reviewing the various definitions of advertising creativity in greater depth. In order to do this one shall start with looking at how creativity research was formed since the early studies as

a leading influence of advertising creativity research.

### **2.2.1 Creativity**

This sub-section presents a review of psychological creativity literature.

In 1950, Guilford asked why more research on creativity is not in practice in relation to the importance of the concept. His main inference was that other researchers perceived creativity as a different process than “a matter of intelligence and IQ” and neglected investigating it (Guilford, 1950, p.445). While Guilford (op. cit) did not provide a definition for creativity (Runco and Jaeger, 2012), he did call for more research and creativity studies started to emerge.

In fact, according to Becker (1995) creativity is a modern term and has “a fairly short history” (Runco and Jaeger, 2012, p.93) that started to occur in discussions during 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is worth noting that these are concerned with the subject mostly on a social psychological level as human behaviour. There are also cognitive studies concerned with “understanding of the mental representations and process underlying creative thought” (Sternberg and Lubart, 1996, p.681).

Although these 20<sup>th</sup> century studies provide a range of definitions of creative behaviour, it is claimed that providing a definition of the observed behaviour is not enough to understand it (Mellou, 1996). A definition of creative behaviour might not be enough, nor is it the ultimate way to understand it, nevertheless it is the starting point to comprehend the core meaning. As stated by Runco and Jaeger (2012) “no topic is more central to research on creativity” than the definition of it (p.92).

#### **2.2.1.1 Creativity in Psychology**

As creativity is “the ability to produce original ideas or thoughts”, creative work is built with novelty, originality, and imagination (Moriarty, 1991, p.103). When defining creativity of an idea original, new, fresh, and novel are the significant words often used and these kinds of ideas are considered as having a “one-of-a-kind” approach (Moriarty, op. cit., p.103).

In another study investigating creativity, two criteria for an original act to take place were recommended. These are having originality and being adaptive to reality (Barron, 1955). The first criterion refers to original or unusual manners and “uncommonness”, while the second criterion is having correct and far from “ignorance and delusion” responses (Barron, op. cit., p.479). These criteria are interconnected with each other and the omission of one changes the circumstances for the creative product to take place. In other words, failing to possess both of the criteria will result in failure to obtain a creative product. While the Barron (1955) research objective was to “disembody creative act and the creative process”, it is argued that the research focused mostly on originality and discarded creativity (Runco and Jaeger, 2012). It is noteworthy to state that while citing Guilford (1950) and Barron (1955) for early creativity studies is common, neither provided operational definitions of the term.

Another similar definition of creativity is “the ability to produce work that is novel (i.e., original or unexpected)” (Sternberg and Lubart, 1996, p.677) and “task-appropriate” as well as “high in quality” (Sternberg, 2001, p.360). Thus, it is suggested that one’s creativity is dependent on the ability to assess ideas that possess quality and are original.

On the contrary, with respect to originality, Mednick (1962) pointed out that original thinking differs from creative thinking in that the requirements of creativeness call also for usefulness as well as originality. Thus, the literature suggests that creative thinking is an associative process that is caused by creative thought and is producing creative solutions that are facilitated by “any ability or tendency which serves to bring otherwise mutually remote ideas into contiguity” (Mednick, op. cit., p.222). Only when acts are novel, original, and appropriate or useful, can they be termed as creative and can become creative solutions.

Similarly, Kilgour and Koslow (2009) stated that creativity studies usually “encourage divergent, or original thinking rather than convergent, or appropriate, thinking” (p.298). Therefore, the authors then investigated the divergent and convergent thinking techniques’ effects on creative idea process. In this research, using uncommon memory to create ideas is identified as divergent thinking, and restructuring ideas within a current domain is defined as convergent thinking. Their study showed evidence that despite the common belief in the literature that divergent thinking feeds creative

ideation process, some level of specific domain is required in order to use divergent thinking so that appropriateness and originality can work together (Kilgour and Koslow, op. cit.). This is in accordance with the previous cited studies, in that creativity cannot be reduced to just one element; rather it is composed of various elements.

Another different perspective to creativity is provided by Amabile (1982). The author explained “A product or response is creative to the extent that appropriate observers independently agree it is creative. Appropriate observers are those familiar with the domain in which the product was created or the response articulated” (Amabile, *ibid*, p. 1001). However, it might be problematic trying to have a consensus, even with appropriate observers, because one of the obstacles to creativity research is the subjectivity of it. As recognised by Koslow *et al.* (2003) there is a need for understanding of creativity; however, the limitation to the research objectives is that “perceptions of creativity differ depending on whom one asks” (p.96).

On a broader spectrum of definitions, Sternberg and Lubart (1996) suggested that creativity is the way people handle challenges in “novel and appropriate ways” on an everyday life basis (p.678). While this view anticipates that creativity is dependent on the individual, there might be more to this view. Mumford and Gustafson (1988) introduced the environment factor to the literature and this might be considered as a major and final inference of creativity definitions. It is stated that “a complex interaction between the attributes of the individual and the attributes of the environment” is needed for creative behaviour to take place (p.28). Subsequently this demonstrates that creativity is not only originality but rather a combination of both divergent thinking and margins of convergence that is defined by the individuals and their environment.

To sum up creativity definitions, it is specifically suggested by Runco and Jaeger (2012) that one definition, belonging to Stein (1953), should be referred to when defining creativity, and that is the “first clear use of the standard definition of creativity” (p.95). Stein (op. cit.) stated “the creative work is a novel work that is accepted as tenable or useful or satisfying by a group in some point in time” (p.311). Among the discussions of creativity, the most accepted view is that there is more than enough empirical data suggesting creativity is multifaceted (Runco and Charles, 1993).

Following the general information about creativity as a cognitive behaviour in social psychology it is easier to understand how this concept appears in advertising literature.

### **2.3 Definitions of Advertising Creativity**

This sub-section offers an understanding of advertising creativity. The following discussion reviews various descriptions of the concept and presents an overview of the literature.

Creativity, the “heart” of advertising (Rossiter, 2008, p.139), a “key success factor” (Wang *et al.*, 2013, p.42) or the “big difference” in advertising has received many definitions and is believed to be operating “in the most complex manner” within the advertising field (Rossiter, *ibid*, p.144). On a broader advertising context, this complex notion’s goal is defined as to “differentiate goods and services from those of the competition, to capture and hold the attention of audiences, and, ultimately, to persuade people to respond or to alter their buying behaviour” (Stuhlfaut and Yoo, 2013, p.81).

Fundamentally, advertising creativity is the “process of producing and developing advertising ideas” (El-Murad and West, 2004, p.188). White (1972) explains that “market opportunities and product functions” are the two factors that built advertisements (p.29). In relation to these factors, according to El-Murad and West (*op. cit.*), ideas that develop advertisements need to be “new, unique, and relevant” and to produce “impact, quality, style, and relevance” so that the creative communication process can take its appropriate place (p.188). Thus, successful communication of advertising with audience is the ability to combine “uncommon creativity and commonplace experiences” (Kover, James, Sonner, 1997, p.41).

Similarly, Belch and Belch (2009) shared that communication is central to advertising and advertising creativity is “the ability to generate fresh, unique, and appropriate ideas that can be used as solutions to communication problems” (p.255). White (1972) indicated that communication is a way of exposing creativity in advertising by the achievement of being “interesting and informative without being obscure or dull” (p.32). Accordingly, it is important to note that creative skills may not mean much if an

advertisement does not communicate to the audience. Therefore, it is crucial to combine creative and communication skills to reach to, and communicate with, consumers.

With respect to the communication process and advertising creativity similar views have been shared in the literature. These common viewpoints indicate the importance of the communication between advertisers and consumers. Since advertising is a means to communicate with consumers, it can be drawn from these views that it is important to make the most of this communication process by presenting unique, relevant, and appropriate offers to consumers that can be turned into solutions. The consumers, message receivers in this communication process, cannot be communicated with successfully and efficiently unless the communication process itself possesses these creativity elements.

An alternative definition of advertising creativity is provided by Reid *et al.* (1998) which is the “original and imaginative thought designed to produce goal-directed and problem-solving advertisements and commercials” (p.3). Although the elements in this definition might seem similar to each other at a first glance, it is explained how they differ from each other.

According to the authors, the first two elements are explained by way of descriptions wherein “a novel approach that is regarded as new, improved, and highly distinctive” represents originality while, on the other hand, imaginative thought is “indicated by how images and concepts are formed and associated” (Reid *et al.*, 1998, p.3). From the latter two elements of this advertising definition goal direction is explained as “the fact that ads are created to accomplish specific marketing communication objectives” and problem solving is presented by “how well ad creations communicate brand-related problem solutions to targeted consumers” (Reid *et al.*, op. cit., p.3).

The four elements in this definition represent a synthesis for creativity in advertising. The authors stated that although the first two elements, originality and imaginative thought, are common in most creativity definitions, the latter two are different in that original and imaginative thought should be endorsed by goal-directed and problem-solving elements (Reid *et al.*, op. cit.). According to this, possession of unique, relevant, and appropriate attributes is not enough unless they are accompanied with an offering

towards a solution with specific goals. In fact, this supports earlier research. For example, it has been remarked that advertising creativity should not be considered without a problem solving approach and a copywriter should be aware of the fact that “the more he knows about the consumer’s perception of a problem and how he goes about solving it, the better will be his chances of creating advertisements or commercials which elicit the desired consumer response” (Reid and Rotfeld, 1976, p.25).

Haberland and Dacin (1992) had a different approach to investigate advertising creativity rather than the generally accepted way of providing a definition for the term. The authors were interested in developing a measure for advertising creativity. They conceptualised creativity with a set of four requirements that advertisements should possess in order to communicate with and generate attitudes in viewers. These are originality and unexpectedness, appropriateness and meaningfulness, reformulation, and lastly condensation. Originality and unexpectedness elements lead to surprise and are defined as “the degree that an advertisement deviates from” the viewer’s expectations that are formed by the lifetime experiences from advertising (Haberland and Dacin, *ibid*, p.819). The next set of elements lead to satisfaction with the advert’s message and are achieved when the advertisements “convey meaning about the advertised product” (Haberland and Dacin, *ibid*, p.819). Their third dimension reformulation is based on the “necessity of the viewer/listener to (re)formulate or modify their attitude towards an advertised product or service” (Haberland and Dacin, *ibid*, p.819). The last dimension Haberland and Dacin (1992) employed, condensation is said to be leading to “deeper thinking about the ad” and defined as the richness of the information in the ad (p.819).

On the other hand, with a similar approach to Haberland and Dacin (*op. cit.*) Ang and Low (2000) employed a different set of creativity elements. The authors investigated what dimensions underlie advertising creativity in search for a deeper understanding of the concept. Broadly, they defined creativity in advertising as “a means for overcoming consumers’ perceptual barrier to gain their attention” (p.835). The dimensions tested by the authors are novelty, meaningfulness, and emotional content. The first two are the most referred dimensions in advertising literature by other researchers, for example,



Ang, Lee, and Leong, 2007; Sheinin, Varki, and Ashley, 2011; Ang *et al.*, 2012; Lehnert, Till, and Carlson, 2013.

Later studies of Ang, Lee, Leong (2007) and Ang *et al.* (2012) conceptualised advertising creativity with three dimensions, which are novelty, meaningfulness, and connectedness and named these as the Ad Creativity Cube because they represent a continuum of three dimensions. While the earlier emotional content dimension was later referred to as the “emotional consequences of ad novelty” that determines “whether or not the ad will be accepted or resisted”, it was reformed as connectedness of the ads to the viewers (Ang and Low, 2000, p.837). It is possible to say that the difference between emotional content and connectedness is just that, while emotional content is a more constricted and less inclusive concept; connectedness might lead to emotional content as a more holistic and integral dimension. Thus, the reformulation of the dimensions might be carried out because of the more comprehensive representation of connectedness dimension.

Following the footsteps of these former studies, often the literature reports a number of common elements that represent advertising creativity. For instance, it is indicated that there are two determinants of advertising creativity, namely, divergence and relevance (Smith and Yang, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2008). While divergence is “different, novel, unusual, original, and unique” element of the ads, relevance is referred to as “meaningful, useful, or valuable” ad element for the viewers (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.820). These two determinants of advertising creativity derived from the literature in psychology and it is remarked that creative advertisements should comprise both divergence and relevance (Smith and Yang, 2004). Another commonly agreed view in the literature is that researchers point out that it is key to comprise all elements whether there are two, three or more. For example, Kover and James (1993) pointed out that being only fresh in the ad content is not sufficient enough for creativity.

Dahlen *et al.* (2008) provided a different perspective and deemed advertising creativity as a “marketing signal” in which the authors assumed greater creativity would lead to greater perceived efforts with more communication efforts and higher appropriateness for consumers (p.393). Another study suggests that the waste in advertising, which is the portion that is not perceived to be a part of the ad, can lead to positive perception

of the ad as a driver of perceived quality and persuasion (Ambler and Hollier, 2004). This is in accordance with other research, in that it associates advertising creativity with better communication and advertisement qualifications. This is a rare comprehended view in the literature that suggests the viewer appreciates the surplus of creativity more than the advertising expense. Although advertising expense is not related to this research and it is noted that there is need for more research regarding the perceptions of consumers on advertising expense, it is still valuable for the purposes of this research to know that consumers appreciate some level of creativity and associate it with the brand's abilities.

Similar to these views about possible advantages, Till and Baack (2005) suggested that the creativity in advertising might be adding value to the advertised brand. However, these points do not mean that creativity should course in an uncontrolled and unmanaged manner in advertising. It is suggested that “creativity for the sake of creativity does not work” and for creative ideas not to fail they should be managed and controlled (Stewart *et al.*, 2008, p.136).

Having these characteristics, creativity is considered as a “driver of competitive advantage” (Fillis, 2002, p.379) and advertising creativity is credited by some advertising icons for its importance by being “the last legal means to get an unfair advantage over the competition” (Stuhlfaut and Windels, 2012, p.795). This quotation articulates how important creativity in advertising can be by emphasising its ability to gain advantages in the market. It can be followed from varieties of definitions that there is a common concord at a fundamental level that creative outputs should comprise characteristics, such as, uniqueness, newness, freshness, and originality (see Table 2.1 for a summary of various definitions).

According to Haberland and Dacin (1992) a dimensional study of advertising creativity is needed to understand and evaluate creativity. Besides explanations and definitions of advertising creativity in general, the understanding of the concept should be in greater depth, so that all the possible interactions and links between advertising creativity and how it works should be available to researchers. Kilgour and Koslow (2009) shared the importance of dimensions and stated that it is essential to understand creativity with its different dimensions as, otherwise, some effects of these dimensions might be

neglected in relevant studies. When advertising creativity is considered with a dimensional respect it becomes easier to uncover its importance and capability of differentiating a product (Mercanti-Guérin, 2008).

As it can be followed from the literature, the various definitions of advertising creativity have similar approaches that overlap with commonly referred dimensions. A discussion of these dimensions and considerations of the interrelationships between different dimensions are discussed in greater depth in the next section.

Table 2.1 Advertising Creativity Definitions

Author	Definition
White, 1972	Being “interesting and informative without being obscure or dull”
Haberland and Dacin 1992	Four requirements for creativity in advertising, which are originality and unexpectedness, appropriateness and meaningfulness, formulating observer’s attitudes, and communicating with meaning and explaining
Reid et al, 1998	“Original and imaginative thought designed to produce goal-directed and problem-solving advertisements and commercials”
Ang and Low, 2000	“A means for overcoming consumers’ perceptual barrier to gain their attention”
Koslow, Sasser, Riordan, 2003	“A mission of the entire advertising industry, its raison d’être”
El-Murad and West, 2004	"Process of producing and developing advertising ideas"
Smith and Yang, 2004; Smith et al, 2007; Smith et al, 2008	Ads that are creative should involve both divergence and relevance
Dahlen et al 2008	“Marketing signal” with more communication efforts and higher appropriateness for consumers
Belch and Belch, 2009	"The ability to generate fresh, unique, and appropriate ideas that can be used as solutions to communication problems"
Stuhlfaut and Windels, 2012	“The last legal means to get an unfair advantage over the competition”

## 2.4 Dimensions of Advertising Creativity

Following the review of the definitions of advertising creativity definitions in the previous section this section focuses on its dimensions. A dimensional study of advertising creativity is crucial because of firstly the importance of various dimensions and secondly its potential to uncover the hidden. In most cases creativity is defined as “multifaceted with at least two dimensions” (Schuster *et al.*, 2014, p.3). The literature provides several dimensional studies in which dimensions are chosen according to the research objectives and the researchers’ choice of interest. These various dimensions can be studied under a group of major determinants of advertising creativity that includes other authors’ dimensions, as well in a more comprehensive way.

Considering this, the dimensions of advertising creativity are discussed mainly according to the dimensional studies in the literature with regards to the similarities to, and the differences from, other dimensional studies (see Table 2.2 for various dimensions proposed in the literature). The logic behind this approach is to avoid overlooking some dimensions and to have a wider range of dimensions relevant to advertising creativity that otherwise may be neglected or studied with one-dimensional definitions.

Smith and Yang (2004) conceptualised the two dimensions of advertising creativity as divergence and relevance. Later, Smith *et al.* (2007) investigated different indicators that compose the divergence and relevance dimensions and developed a scale for measurement. Smith *et al.* (2008) explored the effects of these dimensions on consumer processing and responses. This research takes the dimensions from the earlier Smith and Yang (2004) study as the most comprehensive representation of advertising creativity dimensions in the literature and discusses them with comparisons to other dimensional advertising creativity studies.

The two over-arching dimensions of advertising creativity are found to be divergence and relevance (Smith and Yang, 2004; Ang *et al.*, 2007; Sheinin, Varki, and Ashley, 2011; Ang *et al.*, 2012; Lehnert, Till, and Carlson, 2013; Wang *et al.*, 2013). Considering the discussion about overlapping definitions of advertising creativity in the literature such as new, novel, fresh, unique, original, divergent, appropriate, useful, and

relevant, it is possible to group these dimensions according to their definitions in the light of a more recent study by Smith *et al.* (2007).

Table 2.2 Studies of Advertising Creativity Dimensions

<b>Author</b>	<b>Divergence Dimension(s)</b>	<b>Relevance Dimension(s)</b>	<b>Other(s)</b>
Besemer and O'Quin, 1986	Novelty: i. Original ii. Surprising iii. Germinal	Resolution: i. Valuable ii. Logical iii. Useful	Elaboration and Synthesis: i. Organic ii. Elegant iii. Complex iv. Understandable v. Well-crafted
Haberland and Dacin, 1992	Originality	Meaningfulness	Reformulation, Condensation
Ang and Low, 2000	Novelty	Meaningfulness	Emotional Content
White and Smith, 2001; White <i>et al.</i> , 2002	Novelty (Original subscale)	Resolutions (Logical Subscale)	Elaboration and Synthesis (Well-crafted subscale)
Smith and Yang, 2004; Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2008	Divergence: i. Flexibility ii. Originality iii. Elaboration iv. Synthesis v. Artistic Value	Relevance: i. Ad-to-Consumer Relevance ii. Brand-to-Consumer Relevance iii. Ad-to Brand Relevance	
Ang <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Ang <i>et al.</i> , 2012	Novelty	Meaningfulness, Connectedness	
Sheinin et al., 2011	Novelty	Message Usefulness	

#### 2.4.1 Divergence

It is widely agreed that the most important dimension of advertising creativity is divergence, often referred to as originality or novelty (Runco and Jaeger, 2012;

Haberland and Dacin, 1992; Ang *et al.*, 2012; Smith and Yang 2004; Smith *et al.* 2007; Smith *et al.* 2008; Wang *et al.*, 2013). Divergence is “the extent to which an ad contains brand or execution elements that are different, novel, unusual, original, unique, etc.” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.820). It refers to the ad elements that, considered as a group, is “novel, different, or unusual in some way” and “plays a major role and is a complex construct” and should not be represented with only one dimension, such as, originality or novelty (Smith *et al.*, 2004, p.36). The divergence or the novelty is considered as “the heart of definitions” and “the primary component” of creativity (Stuhlfaut and Yoo, 2013, p.82). In fact, “if something is not unusual, novel, or unique, it is commonplace, mundane, or conventional. It is not original, and therefore not creative” (Runco and Jaeger, 2012, p.92).

It can be observed that divergence is a way through which the primary construct of advertising creativity can be summarised (Stuhlfaut and Yoo, 2013) since its definition represents a comprehensive sum of advertising creativity definitions discussed by other researchers in the literature. It has been suggested that divergence comprises seven different factors that are derived from psychological studies of Guilford (1950, 1956) and Torrance (1972). These are flexibility, fluency, originality, elaboration, synthesis, artistic value, and imagination (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821). However, fluency and imagination were eliminated due to further examination and tests, which leaves the five factors for divergence as flexibility, originality, elaboration, synthesis, and artistic value (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.822).

In order to understand what divergence dimension represents these factors will be explained and discussed in relation to different dimensions studied by other researchers.

#### **2.4.1.1 Flexibility**

Flexibility factor is achieved when the advertisements “contain different ideas or switch from one perspective to another” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821). Advertisements that have divergence should allow for the diversity of ideas developed from the ads. This will not only increase the chances of reaching to a wider range of viewers with the variability of ideas and perspectives but also, as different and more novel ideas and perspectives

develop, it can improve “breaking out from pre-existing schema” of the viewers (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p.221).

It can be suggested that according to the definition of flexibility, it is parallel to the third advertising creativity dimension of Haberland and Dacin (1992), which is reformulation. The different ideas and the ability to switch perspectives are similar to the ads that have “new or contrasting information the consumer did not know or did not consider” (Haberland and Dacin, 1992, p.819).

The flexibility factor is also similar to the novelty dimension employed by the White and Smith (2001) study that assessed consumer perceptions of advertising creativity for the first time. This scale was adapted from Besemer and O’Quin (1986) which was the first research attempt to understand non-experts’ views of creativity. The researchers developed Creative Product Semantic Scale (CPSS) based on Creative Product Analysis Matrix (CPAM) from an earlier study of Besemer and Treffinger (1981) that was developed to learn about experts or non-experts’ evaluation of creativity. Novelty was described for the creative products as “the extent of newness of the product: in terms of number and extent of new processes, new techniques, new materials, new concepts included; in terms of the newness of the product both in and out of the field; in terms of the effects of the product on future creative products” (Besemer and Treffinger, 1981, p.163).

Following the literature, the relationship between Flexibility and Divergence is expected to be positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H1a: Flexibility is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

#### **2.4.1.2 Originality**

Originality occurs when ad elements “are rare, surprising, or move away from the obvious and commonplace” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821) or ideas are different from the “accepted norm” (Sasser *et al.*, 2013, p.299). As an indicator of divergence, originality is mentioned in other studies and often referred to as originality or novelty (Reid, King, and DeLorme 1998; Young 2000, White and Smith 2001; Koslow, Sasser, and Riordan 2003, 2006; West, Kover, and Caruana 2008). For example, Ang and Low (2000)

identified their first dimension of advertising creativity as novelty and described it as being original or unique, unexpected, and divergent from the norm.

This indicator of divergence shows similarities with other researchers' definitions of advertising creativity as well such as "new and unique ideas" (El-Murad and West, 2004, p.188), "fresh and unique ideas" (Belch and Belch, 2009, p.255), "original and novel thoughts" (Haberland and Dacin, 1992, p.819). In fact, Haberland and Dacin (1992) identified "unexpectedness and originality" as their first dimension of advertising creativity and defined it as the dimension that "leads to surprise" (p.818).

The indication of divergence by originality can be further observed in Hirschman and Wallendorf (1982) where the authors stated that consumers are already willing to "seek out novel information or experiences" in their processing of ads which is called "novelty seeking" (p.26). This can be explained by the fact that when advertisements are exposed to viewers the originality in the ads is expected to "diminish gradually as the repetition leads to boredom and tedium" (Goldenberg and Mazursky, 2008, p.21). Therefore, consumers continually seek for novel information. Sheinin *et al.* (2011) also acknowledged this and employed novelty as one of their advertising creativity dimensions.

Following the literature, the relationship between Originality and Divergence is expected to be positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H1b: Originality is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

#### **2.4.1.3 Elaboration**

Elaboration factor is achieved when ads "contain unexpected details, or finish and extend basic ideas so they become more intricate, complicated, or sophisticated" (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821). This factor is similar to one of Haberland and Dacin (1992) dimensions of advertising creativity, which is condensation, the richness of the ad information. In relation to the definition of elaboration it is clear that expected and simple offers in the ad information are making the ads alienate from divergence. Similar to this view, Heckler and Childers (1992) stated that benefiting from advertising creativity is possible when the ad information is incongruent, which means "relevant



and unexpected behaviours” in social cognition research. Deriving from this definition “relevant and unexpected” (p.477) ad elements are incongruent in advertising context, with “previously developed schemata or expectations” of consumers (Heckler and Childers, *ibid*, p.475).

In order to understand elaboration as one of the indicators of divergence the relation between divergence and incongruence can be further analysed by looking at the meaning of expectancy, which is “the degree to which an item or piece of information falls into some predetermined pattern or structure evoked by the theme” (Heckler and Childers, *op. cit.*, p.477). In that case incongruent ad information is what is above or beyond the expected.

Furthermore, White and Smith (2001) emphasised the importance of advertisers’ ability to predict consumers’ expectations in order to offer more unexpected advertising information to the public. The elaboration factor and the related unexpected and sophisticated details are also similar to what Dahlen *et al.* (2008) suggested by remarking how advertising creativity is a form of promise of what the brand is capable of as the ability to “think outside the box” (p.394).

Following the literature, the relationship between Elaboration and Divergence is expected to be positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H1c: Elaboration is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

#### **2.4.1.4 Synthesis**

Synthesis occurs when ads “combine, connect, or blend normally unrelated objects or ideas” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821). This is in accordance with how Ang *et al.* (2012) suggested the ad elements should be in form of connectedness, which is their third dimension of ad creativity cube. The authors described connectedness as the “extent to which an ad is relevant to its target audience, that is, the viewers are able to relate the ad information with their past experience, values, goals, needs, and information”, so that they can form synthesis with these normally unrelated elements (p.2).

Expectations and experiences are important factors to understand divergence as these concepts shape public perception about advertising. Within these perceptions viewers decide which ad information is relevant to them and they develop expectations. Unexpectedness is conceptualised as one dimension of advertising creativity and referred to as the degree to which “an advertisement deviates from the viewer’s expectations” that have been “based on their lifetime experiences with advertising” (Haberland and Dacin, 1992, p.819).

In relation to experiences, consumers become familiar with ads over time and they develop a filtering system, or avoidance, with their increased cynicism towards advertising (West *et al.*, 2008). Kim *et al.* (2010) also touched on this point and stated it to be a well-known and accepted fact that “consumers are (unconsciously) aware of the persuasive nature of advertising” (p.94).

In other words, increased synthesis of normally unrelated information might go beyond public expectations for advertising and, depending on their experiences, break public’s desire to avoid advertisement processing.

The motive to include synthesis factor as one of divergence indicators can be acknowledged to a recent study by Kim *et al.* (2010) explaining that the lack of the usual structure, and the combining and blending of ideas in ads will make the target audience feel incomplete and it will “fail to generate an “aha” moment” in information processing (p.94). Following the literature, the relationship between Synthesis and Divergence is expected to be positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H1d: Synthesis is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

#### **2.4.1.5 Artistic Value**

The artistic value of advertisements is determined when ads “contain artistic verbal impressions or attractive colours or shapes” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821). This last indicator of divergence, according to Smith *et al.* (ibid) used to be referred as “richness and colourfulness of imagery” and derived from an earlier study of Smith and Yang (2004), in which additional views regarding advertising creativity dimensions of an advertising practitioner were sought. The practitioner commented, “I would consider

another factor called ‘artistic expression’. There are many ways an ad can be artistic other than through ‘richness and colourful imagery’. Photography, lighting, design and layout, editing and the other elements of the ad can achieve a level of artistry when done effectively” by his words (p.49).

These factors are the indicators of divergence that are referred to as having “different, novel, unusual, original, unique, etc.” ad elements (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.820). Although divergence is “the leading component” in advertising creativity (Smith *et al.*, 2008, p.60) and novelty “has been traditionally considered as essential for ad creativity” (Ang *et al.*, 2012, p.2), divergence is not sufficient alone as a dimension in describing advertising creativity, and that is why there is a second dimension.

Following the literature, the relationship between Artistic Value and Divergence is expected to be positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H1e: Artistic Value is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

#### **2.4.2 Relevance**

After reviewing various definitions of divergence by its indicator factors and their similarities to the dimensions studied in other researches, a second main dimension will also be examined.

Relevance is considered to be the second dimension of advertising creativity by researchers (Smith and Yang, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2008; Sheinin, Varki, and Ashley, 2011; Ang *et al.*, 2012; Sasser *et al.*, 2013). It is described as the ad elements “that are meaningful, appropriate, useful, or valuable to the audience in some way” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.820).

Considering the literature review on different dimensional studies of advertising creativity, it can be argued that relevance is also included in other research as meaningfulness, usefulness, or appropriateness (for example, Haberland and Dacin, 1992; Ang and Low, 2000; Ang *et al.*, 2007; Ang *et al.*, 2012; Runco and Jaeger, 2012). Some might argue that relevance is usually interpreted from the client strategy perspective. This research is concerned with relevance to the consumers. Relevance can

be understood in greater depth when the various definitions in other studies are considered.

Heckler and Childers (1992) described relevant elements as “material pertaining directly to the meaning of the theme and reflects how information contained in the stimulus contributes to or detracts from the clear identification of the theme or primary message being communicated” (p.477). The authors emphasised the need for relevance by stating that unexpectedness, when accompanied with relevance, generates the most benefit for advertising creativity, compared to unexpected and irrelevant ads.

The relevance dimension is in accordance with the connectedness dimension of Ang *et al.* (2012), which suggested the ad elements should be “relevant to its target audience, that is, the viewers are able to relate the ad information with their past experience, values, goals, needs, and information” (p.2).

The Haberland and Dacin’s (1992) study of advertising creativity employed “appropriateness and meaningfulness” as one of the creativity dimensions and expressed that advertisements cannot be perceived creative even when they are novel, unexpected or out of the ordinary unless they are meaningful. According to the authors, this dimension leads to satisfaction with the ad message (Haberland and Dacin, 1992). Appropriateness is also defined as being “on-strategy or the relation to the brand objectives and target market perceptions” (Sasser *et al.*, 2013, p.299).

With a more extensive view Ang and Low (2000) stated that advertising creativity is the added value to marketing abilities, and meaningfulness is the value added by the relevance and appropriateness aspects. In accordance with this, meaningfulness is described as the extent to which “ad elements are relevant to the message conveyed” and, unless the novel advertisement conveys meaning and relevance to the advertised product, novelty does not necessarily represent creativity (Ang and Low, *ibid*, p.836). Similarly, it is stated that meaningfulness “relates to the relevance of the ad content” and is needed also for consistent interpretation of ad messages in relation to the ad elements’ coherence in organization and execution (Ang *et al.*, 2012, p.14).

While appropriateness is used to describe relevance, Miniard *et al.* (1991) set the distinction between these two elements by stating, “judgments of relevance should depend on whether a stimulus conveys issue-pertinent information, whereas judgments of appropriateness may be guided by perceptions of what is deemed proper” (p.105). Kübler and Proppe (2012) added that relevance might be harmed in the absence of appropriateness, since inappropriateness would hinder the positive connections between the ad and the target audience.

It is acknowledged that there are three specific types of relevance (Smith and Yang, 2004) or three ways to achieve relevance through (Smith *et al.*, 2007), namely, Ad-to-Consumer Relevance, Brand or Product-to Consumer Relevance, and Ad-to Product Relevance. The next section explains these three types of relevance with a discussion of pertinent literature.

#### **2.4.2.1 Ad-to-Consumer relevance**

Ad-to-consumer relevance is achieved when “the ad contains execution elements that are meaningful to consumers. This type of relevance is achieved when stimulus properties of the ad create a meaningful link to potential buyers” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.820). Meaningfulness is sometimes referred to as message usefulness or relevance referring to the extent to which the marketing information is valuable to the target audience (Andrews and Smith, 1996). Similarly, Sheinin *et al.* (2011) stated that meaningfulness or relevancy might also be achieved through providing useful information to the target audience. Ang *et al.* (2012) referred to ad-to-consumer relevance as connectedness and described it as the appropriateness of the ad content to the target audience and “the extent to which the target audience is able to relate to and identify with the ad” (p.8).

Following the literature, the relationship between Ad-to-Consumer Relevance and Relevance dimension is expected to be positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H2a: Ad to Consumer Relevance is positively related to the Relevance dimension.*

#### **2.4.2.2 Brand-to-Consumer Relevance**

The second type of relevance, or the way to achieve relevance, is product-to-consumer relevance and it refers to “situations where the advertised brand (or product category)

is relevant to potential buyers. This type of relevance occurs when an ad establishes a meaningful link between the brand and the consumer” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.820).

Following the literature, the relationship between Product-to-Consumer Relevance and Relevance dimension is expected to be positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H2b: Product to Consumer Relevance is positively related to the Relevance dimension.*

#### **2.4.2.3 Ad-to-Brand Relevance**

The last type of relevance refers to “how well the ad relates to the brand” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821). Although the authors suggested this last type to be less effective or even not predictive of consumer perception of relevance, for this research’s purposes it is believed to reflect relevance with two other types.

With regards to the two overarching dimensions, ads should embrace both in order to represent creativity. Besides divergence, “the most fundamental characteristic of ad creativity” (Smith *et al.*, 2004, p.36), they must also “incorporate the perspectives of the audience” (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p.220) by relevance. Following the literature, the relationship between Ad-to-Product Relevance and Relevance dimension is expected to be positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H2c: Ad to Product Relevance is positively related to the Relevance dimension.*

#### **2.4.3 Cleverness**

After reviewing the two overarching dimensions of advertising creativity this subsection introduces a third dimension to creativity. Cleverness is examined with its definition and relation to advertising creativity. Next, a discussion of cleverness’s importance as a research variable and how it has been measured is presented.

While advertising creativity is a concept that has attracted many researchers over the years, it is still a matter of debate as to which other underlying facets of creativity are perceived by the consumers. This is mainly a result of the fact that “underlying dimensions in creativity assessment of real-world productions, such as advertisements, is not well known” (Caroff and Besançon, 2008, p.367).

One effective factor for this is the measurement choices that neglect the possible perceptions of the viewers and test only academically validated variables. A common problem with creativity research and its measurement relates to the limitations of qualitative methods. The intelligence or as more commonly referred, cleverness aspect of creativity was uncovered more than once through qualitative research (e.g. West *et al.*, 2008; Mercanti-Guérin, 2008). However, the limitations of qualitative methods may cause some important variables to be overlooked. This is due to the nature of data analysis and coding processes in qualitative research. Some of the qualitative research findings may have to be overlooked in order to draw theory from the data set. Perceived cleverness has been disregarded in advertising creativity research because of this limitation. Although it emerged in the data gathered it was not included in the final frameworks and theories of creativity dimensions.

Perhaps considering this problem, Rosengren *et al.* (2013) investigated whether advertising creativity had “unintended effects”. Similarly, this current research questions whether advertising creativity can have unintentional facets perceived by consumers. Uncovering these facets of advertising creativity will reveal the potential of the concept.

By including cleverness as another characteristic of advertising creativity this research will be expanding on the notion of consumers’ perceptions of creativity in advertising. Although the concept of cleverness has appeared in different studies, both qualitative and quantitative (e.g. West *et al.*, 2008; Long, 2014), there is still a paucity of research with regards to its relation to advertising creativity in the literature. As a potential facet of advertising creativity, ‘cleverness’ with its definition, importance and measurement in the literature is discussed in this section.

#### **2.4.3.1 Definition of Cleverness**

This section discusses the definition of cleverness in relation to advertising creativity. The subjectivity of advertising creativity has already been stated previously. According to Amabile (1982) this subjectivity is a result of the lack of criteria used when assessing creativity. She stated, “the criterion problem in creativity research has arisen in large part because most definitions do not include conceptualizations that are readily

translated into useful assessment criteria, let alone ultimate criteria” (p.999). Therefore, creativity should be conceptualised with criteria in order to have efficient assessments. This means dimensions that reflect creativity should also be clearly defined.

The definition of cleverness is “showing intelligence or skill, for example in the design of an object, in an idea” (Oxford Learner Dictionary of Academic English). From this point of view advertising creativity, which is the “process of producing and developing advertising ideas” (El-Murad and West, 2004, p.188) can be suggested to have common elements with cleverness.

#### 2.4.3.1.1 Cleverness and Advertising Creativity

A report published by World Advertising Research Center (WARC), “Monitoring Public Opinion of Advertising” (2011), states “good advertising from the public point of view has to give something back to the viewer over and above what it is selling” (p.8) and “‘clever’ is a word often used to describe good advertisements” (p.9). According to this report, the advertising viewers want to be treated as if they are being offered greater value than what is being sold to them in physical terms. This can be achieved by originality. Since originality is going beyond the expectations of consumers (Haberland and Dacin, 1992) advertisers can give back viewers the greater value they seek by providing originality.

Moreover, according to the same report by WARC (ibid) viewers demand this value in a rather clever, or at least not a predictable, form. These expectations of advertisement viewers are similar to Gossage’s approach to advertising as a practitioner. His perspective of advertising in relation to its audience emphasises “the importance of a single advertising message delivered with respect for the intelligence and values of its audience” (cited in Rotfeld, 2006, p.181). Similarly, the consumer perspective of good advertising requires the ads to have some intellectual level or cleverness that stimulates processing in their minds.

When advertisements are creative they are both divergent and relevant and these characteristics are expected to be perceived by the viewers (e.g. Smith *et al.*, 2008; Ang *et al.*, 2012; Wang *et al.*, 2013). On one hand, divergent ad elements such as originality



(Smith *et al.*, 2007) can provide the viewers greater value as suggested before. On the other hand, these divergent ad elements should be reinforced by the relevant ad elements in order to achieve creative advertising. This bridging between divergence and relevance will require a certain level of cleverness or intelligence to provide consumers the greater value with advertising creativity. Since it is expected that the viewers will perceive the characteristics of advertising creativity, cleverness will also be perceived as another characteristic of advertising creativity.

The report also suggests there are facets to “cleverness” perceived by viewers such as originality and subtlety (WARC, op. cit., p.8). The relationship between originality and cleverness originates from Guilford’s studies about creativity in 1950s. He describes originality as indicated by “unusual or uncommon responses, remote associations or connections, or clever responses” (Guilford, 1957, p.115). Most recently, Long (2014) investigated which criteria judges use when assessing creative products and found that cleverness is a criterion used to evaluate creativity. However there are important implications to be considered regarding the potential correlation between the advertising creativity dimension ‘divergence’ and ‘cleverness’.

The report by WARC (2011) generalises that since originality is a sub-factor of cleverness original ideas are clever. There might be circumstances this is not the case. It is important to make the distinction between these constructs clear. For example, as original ideas “move away from the obvious and commonplace” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821) and are different from the “accepted norm” (Sasser *et al.*, 2013, p.299) they may not always be perceived as clever. An original, unique idea can as well be peculiar or meaningless and show no evidence of intelligence or cleverness.

By comparison, if the early studies are considered such as Guilford’s (1957) it is suggested cleverness is a part of originality and that clever ideas are original. This suggestion is problematic as well since a repeated clever idea cannot be original any longer. Accordingly, neither cleverness nor originality is a sub-factor of each other. Hence cleverness is a separate characteristic of creativity.

It is accepted that since the earliest studies of creativity researchers have struggled with the problem that is the relationship between creativity and intelligence (Silvia, 2008b).

This “challenging and controversial” problem results from the “absence of a unified definition of creativity” (Squalli and Wilson, 2014, p.250). Its origin goes back to the “threshold hypothesis” that states, “high creativity requires high or at least above-average intelligence” (Jauk *et al.*, 2013, p.213).

The threshold hypothesis was developed in psychology research concerned with creativity. Although intelligence and creativity research were mostly psychological studies, the relationship between them can be applied to advertising creativity as well. After all, advertising creativity literature evolved from creativity research in psychology. Accordingly, the relationship between intelligence and advertising creativity can follow the same approach and progress from the psychology literature. Adopting the threshold hypothesis from psychology (e.g. Jauk *et al.*, 2013) current research suggests that a certain threshold of cleverness is necessary to achieve advertising creativity. Thus, any conceptualisation of advertising creativity should include cleverness as well.

Accordingly, the threshold of cleverness required for advertising creativity supports the correlation between cleverness and advertising creativity. This suggests conceptualising advertising creativity with only divergence and relevance will display limited research. Despite its importance cleverness has been overlooked in advertising creativity literature. Cleverness is essential for advertising creativity since it is necessary to bridge divergence and relevance to produce a significant outcome, but it is not on its own sufficient. Therefore, cleverness is expected to operate as the third dimension of advertising creativity besides divergence and relevance.

Having considered the perception of cleverness it is reasonable to consider the responses to perceived cleverness as well. The same report, investigating public opinion of advertising acknowledges that the public considers that the role of advertising is to capture their attention and, so, they engage with forms of cleverness, for example, humour (WARC, 2011). It is evident that the public sees their engagement with the ads as possible when their attention is captured. They believe this is how advertising is supposed to be working as a communication process. They expect to perceive value in order to provide their engagement in the advertising viewing process. According to this, one can assume that the public is aware of their perception schemas and expectations

of advertising. However, it is not clear how much of this is known, appreciated, and applied by advertising practitioners.

Clever ideas are what strike viewers “as insightful, ironic, humorous, fitting, or smart” (Silvia *et al.*, 2008, p.85) and “thought-provoking and interesting” (Long, 2014, p.189). While it is proposed that advertising creativity is capable of capturing consumers’ attention, currently within the literature this is not linked to perceived cleverness of the ads in relation to advertising creativity perceptions of the viewers and their responses. Although the literature is somewhat limited concerning perceived cleverness of advertisements, it is still worth considering cleverness as another characteristic of advertising creativity. Therefore, it is aimed to conceptualise consumers’ perceptions of, and responses to, advertising creativity with cleverness along with divergence and relevance.

This research proposes that cleverness is the third dimension of advertising creativity. Consequently, advertising creativity viewers are expected to perceive cleverness as well as divergence and relevance. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H3a: Cleverness is positively related to Advertising Creativity.*

#### **2.4.3.2 Importance of Cleverness**

It is suggested that creative individuals can produce creativity and the only profession in which the centre figure is referred to as creative is the advertising industry (Till and Baack, 2005). In advertising agencies, creative departments shape the strategy of the ads (McStay, 2010). Whereas advertising agencies produce creative work, perhaps what the audience perceives is “a spark” of cleverness that attracts their intellect. By way of contrast, Kover, Goldberg and James (1995) suggest no positive relationship exists between cleverness and creativity arguing that advertisements that include “insight and empathy”, as in personal enhancement, would also be creative (p. 36). The need to focus on how viewers interpret the concept, before disregarding the potential value of perceived cleverness, is discussed in this section.

In the absence of empirical research, it is debatable whether perceived cleverness has major importance, or not. If the report providing details about public opinions of

advertising (WARC, 2011) were considered, it would not be correct to state that cleverness has no effect on consumer perception of advertising. In most general terms, intelligence is count upon for facilitating the creativity contributions (Mumford and Gustafson, 1988). It enables creativity to be perceived, by delivering the creativity designed by experts to the consumers thus, makes it perceived.

Another reason to consider cleverness in creativity research is consumers' expectations. Consumers expect to see cleverness and they would appreciate it (WARC, 2011), it is therefore obviously important to include this variable in research investigating consumer perceptions. The perceived cleverness in creative advertisements might have effects on consumer responses to creative ads as well as influencing their perceptions.

If consumers genuinely want ads to have cleverness as it was revealed in WARC's (2011) study, this might increase creative advertising processing. Once their attention is captured with cleverness in creative ads it might also result in positive attitudes. While these circumstances would enhance consumers' perceptions that they are being provided with 'good advertising' it might improve their engagement with creative ads.

Stormer and Lubart (2012) acknowledged that the 'definition' has been central in creativity research. However, this 'definition' has been evidently controversial. In lacking of confirmed criteria for creativity Amabile (1982) stated, "it seems unreasonable to expect that universal and enduring criteria-even subjective criteria-could ever be agreed upon" (p.1011). Despite Amabile's expectation for hopeless creativity criteria more research can reveal the commonly accepted criteria of advertising creativity. It is highly recognised that creativity "whatever its range of application, is by no means a unity but is rather a collection of different component abilities or traits" (Guilford, 1957, p.110). Taking potential elements in consideration can help in discovering these various forms of dimensions that represent creativity.

#### ***2.4.3.3 Measurement of Cleverness***

This study conceptualises advertising creativity with cleverness as its third dimension. The advertising literature review revealed a lack of cleverness investigation. Therefore, there are no advertising creativity measures of cleverness that can be directly adopted

or adapted. Instead, a different approach is applied to measure perceived cleverness. Similar to the origins of advertising creativity research, measurement of cleverness can be adopted from the psychology literature on creativity. This section provides a review of previous attempts at the measurement of cleverness. Primarily, advertising research and then psychology research that has investigated cleverness will be reviewed.

When developing measures for advertising effects some researchers used adjectives that they assumed to be related to creative ads, or that were provided by the respondents employed in their research (e.g. Biel and Bridgwater, 1990; Edell and Burke, 1987; West *et al.*, 2008; White and Smith, 2001). Evidently cleverness and intelligence were stated amongst the adjectives in these studies. These adjectives can expand the narrow meaning of cleverness by further investigations while also providing additional perspectives from consumers.

For example, Biel and Bridgwater (1990) indicated that when respondents use the adjective ‘clever’ they tend to use other adjectives such as ‘imaginative, amusing, original, silly, and dull’. The researchers measured a “total ingenuity” score with these six items that were stated by the respondents as the descriptor adjectives of the ads. Their study found that consumer perceptions of commercial ingenuity “differed a great deal from each other” (p.43).

Another study, by West *et al.* (2008), investigating the difference of perceptions between advertising practitioners and the viewing public, let respondents declare their insights and then categorised these adjectives provided by the viewers into six groups. Within these groups “intellect(ual)”, “intelligence(gent)”, and “smart” are under relevance, “clever” is under originality, and lastly “witty” is under the humour group (p.40). In accordance with the previously stated limitation of qualitative studies the researchers acknowledged that “there will always be some controversy over the inclusion or exclusion of certain words from particular codes (headings)” (West *et al.*, 2008, p.39). It is clear that the advertising viewing public can perceive the attributes that work for their cognitive processing activities and are able to identify these aspects with different adjectives.

Another example is a study by Mercanti-Guérin (2008) investigating consumer

perspectives of creative advertising and its measurement that combined two other studies (Haberland and Dacin, 1992; Besemer and O'Quin, 1986) with its own qualitative data gathered from participants. In order to create a measurement scale, 74 items were developed and "intelligence", "ingenious", and "smart" items were considered as "product's utilitarian and functional aspect" (Mercanti-Guérin, 2008, p.99) under resolution and ingenuity factors within the complexity dimension (p.108).

In another study investigating advertising creativity, creative ads were defined as those that are "clever, imaginative, original, humorous" (Ang, 2000, p.32). However, the research neither shed light on the relationship between cleverness and creativity in advertisements nor revealed the possible effects of perceived cleverness with regard to other variables in the research. One shortcoming of this study is that the researcher focused much more on the remoteness and the unusualness in the advertisements, although he defined creative ads with a combination that included other dimensions as well. Therefore, the potential effect of cleverness as perceived by consumers is neglected and remained not fully researched although it was included in the research variable definitions.

In addition to advertising literature, when creativity in psychology literature is considered it can be observed that although measurement scales were taken from the literature they were "seldom confirmed in empirical research" (Long, 2014, p.184). The same applies to research about creativity and intelligence, "empirical studies have generally reported little to no correlation between" these two constructs (Squalli and Wilson, 2014, p.250). This results in the "inevitably subjective" nature of creativity (Piffer, 2012, p.258). Consequently, this increases the need to investigate advertising creativity with better and applicable criteria in order to understand the underlying dimensions.

An analytical approach to building measurement items for research variables can both eliminate the criteria problem and improve advertising creativity literature. This can be achieved in the light of a discussion in a Sternberg (1985) study investigating implicit theories of creativity and intelligence.

The literatures of creativity and intelligence have been dominated mostly by research that employs explicit theories that are derived from the literature (Sternberg, 1985). However, the data gathered in research do not always end up in the discussion of the results. This is due to the previously stated limitation of data analysis that may cause researchers to overlook meaningful data. Examples of this condition are the cases in which advertising creativity research had intelligence or cleverness in the data sets that were not effective in the discussions of creativity conceptualisations.

Sternberg (1985) offered an alternative to explicit theories and suggested “understanding implicit theories can also help us understand or provide bases for explicit theories, because explicit theories derive, in part, from scientists’ implicit theories of the construct under investigation” (p. 608). He continued by explaining implicit theories, which are “constructions by people (whether psychologists or laypersons) that reside in the minds of these individuals” (p.608).

According to the Sternberg approach creativity research that has uncovered cleverness but has not derived theories from the data can be accepted as implicit theories. These implicit theories can provide frameworks to draw explicit theories and may enlighten the measurement of subjective and complex constructs such as creativity and intelligence.

Once researchers benefit from the implicit theories that assist in developing and understanding explicit theories, they should consider another aspect of creativity measurement. This is the applicability of previously employed statistical tests. It is stated that the relationship between creativity and intelligence should be modelled with higher order factors (Silvia, 2008b). In fact, Silvia (2008a) revisited a study by Wallach and Kogan (1965) in which the researchers concluded that intelligence and creativity were unrelated. Silvia’s (2008a) criticism was mostly around the identification of the variables, which should have been higher order variables so that a latent factor analysis could have been conducted. However, the researcher accepts that during the time the research was led sophisticated statistical tests were unavailable to researchers (Silvia, 2008a). Thus, Silvia (*ibid*) revisited Wallach and Kogan’s (1965) data and found out that creativity and intelligence were more highly correlated than originally suggested by Wallach and Kogan.

It still remains a question whether advertising researchers use single item measurements or multiple item measurements (Bergkvist and Langner, 2017). The measurement approach with multiple items is employed to investigate latent constructs. Latent constructs are not measured directly with a single item but are hypothesised to be represented by measurable variables (indicators) (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Field 2009). Accordingly, those multiple items “come together mathematically to represent the latent construct” (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.592). Considering the fact that cleverness is another subjective construct in this research it is measured as a latent variable with more than one measurement item. This can be supported by the fact that multiple indicators capture more information about a construct and produce more reliable data (Geuens and Pelsmacker, 2017). Further considerations and discussions of cleverness measurement are explained in the Methodology chapter. The next section discusses the importance of investigating advertising creativity as a highly subjective concept.

## **2.5 Importance of Investigating Advertising Creativity**

This section specifies the main reasons to study advertising creativity. Both practitioners’ and consumers’ perspectives are reviewed and various factors are presented.

As the advertising industry changed, the agencies were forced to think and act differently with the additional pressure of a “more cynical audience that is harder to reach” (Ashley and Oliver, 2010, p.125). This, inevitably, increased the attractiveness of creative advertising. Creativity studies have been concern of researchers for decades, in which the researchers “tried to fit the ever-rounding pegs that are creativity into the neatly squared boxes” and there is still a lack of the “perfect match” (Precourt, 2013, p.238).

The importance of investigating advertising creativity is highly affected by the perception differences. The concept of advertising communications is what practitioners are well experienced in, and sometimes educated for, thus, the communication process is done “in their first language (so to speak)” (Du Plessis, 2008, p.110). However, the recipients in this communication process may not be familiar with



this advertising language. The job of advertisers to ensure what they communicate is indeed what the recipients perceive “require true creativity” (Du Plessis, 2008, p.110).

The next section discusses perception differences and the twofold approach to understand different perspectives.

### **2.5.1 Differences in the Perceptions of Advertising Creativity**

There are many similar viewpoints in the literature that confirm the ‘perception diversity’. It is acknowledged “the assessment of others’ creative work might depend on individual perception processes” (Schuster *et al.*, 2014, p.3). Although researchers develop and test explanations of how advertising creativity works and appreciate the importance of advertising creativity, it is still not explained from which point of view the creative form should be considered. It can either be from the perspective of practitioners, or consumers. This makes a remarkable difference to the significance of the argument.

There are different perspectives on “what constitutes creativity in advertising” (Belch and Belch, 2009, p.258). The reason behind this is that “what is considered creative advertising usually depends on the judgments of creatives themselves” and “consumers receive and deconstruct advertising according to their needs, and what they think is creative can well differ from the “hunches” of creatives” (West *et al.*, 2008, p. 35). This explains the perception differences on advertising creativity.

It is remarked that advertising creativity research has mostly focused on professionals’ perspective rather than any other perspectives (White and Smith, 2001). The definitions provided for advertising creativity belong to academics and “little is known about how advertising creativity is viewed by the public” (West *et al.*, 2008, p.35). Advertising communications target consumers and it is important to understand their views. Since the worlds of consumers and marketers change, the way the communication is developed between these two sides “needs to be adjusted accordingly” (Ashley and Oliver, 2010, p.117).

In accordance with the aims of this current research, the importance of investigating advertising creativity is explained with a two-fold approach. First, practitioner perspectives are discussed. Secondly, consumer perspectives are focused on with details of the need to conduct more research in order to understand their perspectives. The following section discusses advertising practitioners' perspective of creativity in detail.

#### **2.5.1.1 Practitioner Perspective**

“Creative practitioners, commonly called ‘creatives’” (Stuhlfaut and Yoo, 2013, p.81) are “art directors, copywriters and creative directors” (Stuhlfaut and Windels, 2012, p.795), similarly defined by Young (2000) as “copywriters, art directors, producers, and even, in the age of the internet-computer programmers” (p.19). The practitioners design advertising tactics based on “their understanding of the effects of these tactics are likely to produce” and “the beliefs” held by them (Cotte and Ritchie, 2005, p.24). Thus, they perceive advertising creativity within an industry context that is distinctively isolated, while on the other hand, consumers perceive it individually (West, *et al.*, 2008). Isolation from the audience is a “hindrance” for creatives in communicating with their audience (Kover *et al.*, 1997, p.50). Since the needs and processes are different in these two groups, the observed creativity that “gets through” to consumers may be dissimilar, which causes the groups to be “talking past each other” (West, *et al.*, 2008, p.36).

##### **2.5.1.1.1 Industry Context**

The industry context is a constraint for practitioners not only because it alienates them from consumers but also due to the professional concerns. As stated by West *et al.* (2008) creativity in advertising sometimes can be a “hit-or-miss affair” for practitioners, as they think it is important to combine creativity with meaningful business objectives (p.43). Furthermore, agencies and their clients “use different mechanisms to measure the achievement” of these objectives (Sasser *et al.*, 2013, p.302). Alternatively, consumers' expectations and perceptions of creativity might not translate to a common standing point with this (West *et al.*, *ibid*). On one hand, they are not bounded by these business objectives. This is due to the fact that consumers are “bystanders” in this process and they are not limited by any boundaries unlike

practitioners (West *et al.*, *ibid.*, p.43). On the other hand, advertising creatives' perceptions are limited by organisational values. In fact, West *et al.* (op. cit.) acknowledged that professionals, conscious of their careers, prefer not to take risks in order to comply with the boundaries of acceptability.

The pressure of gaining supervisors' and colleagues' approval is the "first filter to judge advertisements before any evaluation by others" who are outside the agency (Stuhlfaut and Yoo, 2013, p.81). This is mentioned as "organizational politics" in the literature and it is stated that "the application (or misapplication) of power in an organization" could affect creativity (Sasser *et al.*, 2013, p.302). The impact of organizational politics depends on the creative code of agencies operating between practitioners. As defined by Stuhlfaut and Windels (2012), creative code is "the first filter of the creative process and product" within which creatives observe and critique their own and others' work (p.811).

Another factor to add under organisational politics for practitioners is the need to satisfy two diverse groups. Practitioners need to please both "the profit-conscious client and the indifferent public" (White, 1972, p.29), or the "advertisers who value the medium more the more consumers it reaches and consumers who have a (dis-)taste for advertising" (Kaiser and Song, 2009, p.292). As practitioners are limited by organisational values and business objectives with the need to satisfy their environment the industry context becomes a constraint for advertising creativity.

Kover (1995) considered "the theoretical viewpoint of advertising practitioners in their day-to-day work" to be still less studied and believed it was different from "the view posed by an outside party" (p.597). Considering these aspects, it is important to take practitioners and their creative world into account so that research can reveal possible explanations of how agency dynamics impact perception differences (Young, 2000).

More specifically, Young's (2000) agency dynamics reported that the two sub-parts of creatives, namely, writers and art directors, have their unique ways of information processing, and, as a result, observe the external environment individually. This is similar to consumers, who also possess unique and individual perspectives in which they observe the environment, and through which their perceptions are formed. These

individual processes cause a discord between the information advertisers want to communicate and the information customers want to be receiving.

#### 2.5.1.1.2 Perspective Gaps

Creatives have to process numerous ideas in order to find a “simple, realistic, and surprising” way that will “convert what the advertiser wants to say into what the customer wants to hear” and also overcome viewers’ barriers (Oliver and Ashley, 2012, p.335). Consequently, the discord in the communication process becomes a gap. The gap between marketers and consumers, which is caused by the difference in “what the client wants to say and what the client’s customers want to hear” (Oliver and Ashley, *ibid*, p.338), is expected to be bridged by advertising practitioners’ creative spark and by strengthening the communication (Ashley and Oliver, 2010). In contrast to this, Young (2000) believed that it is advertising researchers’ role to bring professionals’ and consumers’ perceptions closer together. Either way research would contribute to the communication process and would help better understand both perspectives.

According to Nyilasy and Reid (2007), there is another gap that is between practitioners and academics, which is known to be accepted within the advertising literature. For example, this gap is referred to as the “mismatch between the verbo-centric data collection and reporting language researchers commonly use and the nonverbal, multisensory languages” that advertisers use (Zaltman and Coulter, 1995, p.36). The most common causes for this gap are addressed as “information dissemination, knowledge content and form, academic organisational structures, philosophy of science, and practitioner users” (Nyilasy and Reid, *ibid*, p.427). These gaps between advertisers and consumers, and researchers and advertisers, are similar to each other in that they are both caused by the lack of “seeing things from the point of view of their audiences” (Young, 2000, p.19).

The existence of any gap between practitioners and consumers or researchers can be based on the urge of practitioners to defend their work. In the Kover (1995) research, he stated practitioners defend “their work and its integrity” (p.604). It should be noted that it is harmful for creatives to become far removed from their audiences since they

also become far removed from what the audience wants to hear too. As a result, gaps emerge.

The Kover (op. cit.) study revealed what implicit theories practitioners have for advertising and Nyilasy and Reid (2009) followed a similar path to Kover with their research. The authors explored practitioners' theories of how advertising works so that the academic/practitioner gap can be understood more explicitly. The authors aimed to overcome causes of this gap and stated that unless the practitioners' theories and "knowledge autonomy" were studied the gap between practitioners and academics could not be fully comprehended (Nyilasy and Reid, *ibid*, p.81).

Helgesen (1994) suggested that the problem of becoming detached from the audiences might be solved by conducting more research. However, it was also questioned as to who is responsible to invest in more research. Is it agencies' responsibility or clients', so that they can have more control over the outcome? Either way they consider research as "the other person's problem" (Helgesen, *ibid*, p.51). Although it is important for "people within the social system- such as peers, creative directors, account managers, clients" to perceive creativity, it is not creative until "ultimately, the greater society" have judgement upon the ads (Stuhlfaut and Windels, 2012, p.797). Similarly, to the motive in the Nyilasy and Reid research, it is not possible to understand the perception differences between practitioners and consumers without revealing consumers' views about advertising creativity.

#### **2.5.1.2 Consumer Perspective**

Advertising practitioners and researchers praise the reputation of creativity; it is not explained from which point of view the creative form should be considered. After reviewing how advertising practitioners' perspectives are formed, this section focuses on consumer perspectives in order to understand the variation between these two groups. If it is argued that practitioners are limited in their perceptions and evaluations of advertising creativity by the environment in which they create, then there is a question for researchers to answer. How do viewers, in this case, consumers, perceive and evaluate advertising creativity?

It is a well-known fact that marketers do not have the opportunity to communicate explicitly with the target audience in mass communications (Belch and Belch, 2009). This becomes even more critical with advertising creativity since creativity can have complexity, such as its association with risk (for example, El-Murad and West, 2004). In order to become less risk averse and prevent miscommunication, practitioners need to consider consumers' views as well. It is stated the research into advertising creativity reflects only agency perspectives (Kover *et al.*, 1995) and consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity have not been modelled thoroughly to guide researchers and practitioners (Mercanti-Guérin, 2008).

To date, there has been insufficient research on consumer perceptions of creativity and non-experts, in other words, the "common man", have been less studied (Storme, Lubart, 2012, p.138). Campbell (2011) suggested that "the greatness" of the advertisements is defined by consumers unlike the common practise of peers to "judge and award" ads (p.222). This understanding of the target audience perceptions is more beneficial for practitioners.

The most fundamental reasons to reveal and understand consumers' perceptions rest in the inquiry of why it matters for them to perceive creativity in advertising. This can be answered with three key arguments. First is the changing nature of consumers and the fact that they become more interested, cynical, savvy, and demanding (for example, Light, 1990; Shavitt *et al.*, 1998; Stone *et al.*, 2000; Cotte and Ritchie, 2005; Ashley and Oliver, 2010). Secondly, if consumers do not notice or perceive creativity, agencies and their clients would be wasting their efforts and money with focusing on creativity and also the awards. And thirdly, the potential of creativity that can bring opportunities and advantages for marketers that can be invested in and enjoyed more.

Perceptions of consumers are of major importance for the marketing industry as it seeks to understand "how consumers sense external information, how they select and attend to various sources of information and how this information is interpreted and given meaning" (Belch and Belch, 2009, p.119). This importance continues to grow in an era where consumers have become "more informed and critical than in the past, having developed strong expertise" (Gambetti *et al.*, 2012, p.671). This was foreseen before it became a fact for marketers. Light (1990) remarked that the "smarter generation" is

one of the fundamental changes that shape the advertising industry. He stated that the sophistication of consumers started the “age of the smarter generation” in which consumers are “more selective, more demanding, more educated, more informed, and more sceptical than before” (p.30).

Consumers’ perception process is described as “the viewer receives messages through the various senses, interprets the messages, and files them away in memory” (Moriarty, 1991, p.32). This should lead researchers to think about how the smarter generation perceive creative advertising. When assessing advertising creativity, consumers develop different filters while creatives’ measurements can only be professional (Kover, James, Sonner, 1997).

#### 2.5.1.2.1 Differentiation of Consumer Perspective

West *et al.* (2008) suggest that, compared with practitioners, consumers care more about the execution of the ads as well as the relevance of the offers made to suit their needs. The same study suggests that when consumers perceive the major impact of creativity in advertisements, it is “big-C” creativity and when ads only fit into everyday situations it is referred to as “little-c” (p.42). Advertising creativity is expected to have the big-C effect on consumers so that they could perceive it to the same extent as practitioners who create or evaluate it.

The same research investigating advertising creativity perception differences by West *et al.* (op. cit.) revealed the dissimilarities of creativity definitions made by agency practitioners and television-viewing public. It was established that agency creatives used four times more words and sentences in their descriptions of creativity (West *et al., ibid*). When defining advertising creativity, professionals tend to use “richer and more elaborate” descriptions in comparison to more “focused and concise” consumer descriptions (West *et al., ibid*, p.42). The variety in perceptions is not unexpected considering the situational diversities, and recognising the difference in backgrounds of consumers and industry executives (Koslow *et al.*, 2003). This means that creativity takes all kinds of different forms depending on the point from which it is viewed.

Advertising practitioners turn this limitation to their advantage by rewarding outstanding advertisements as highly creative. Every year there are creativity award shows and festivals held by national and global associations. The process followed in these shows is a “peer-review process” where “there are no guidelines as to how winners should be chosen” (West *et al.*, 2013, p.329). Yet the committees who judge the entrants are advertising professionals and experts who have similar points of view and industry backgrounds.

Although advertising awards are appreciated by many within the advertising industry, attention must be paid to the critical issue of creative considerations or, otherwise, even the awarded advertisements can “lead to commercial setbacks” (Schuster *et al.*, 2014). High appreciation of creativity awards in the industry leads to ads that are creative “only for the sake of being creative” which lack the communication message (Belch and Belch, 2009, p.259). This, in fact, becomes a disadvantage for practitioners occasionally as it might harm the communication between them and message observers (Kover, 1995).

It is claimed that the appropriate observers assess a product’s creativity (Amabile, 1982). The nature of award shows, in which “heuristics dominate” with respect to processes and practices of people whose views depend on similar perspectives (West *et al.*, 2013, p.334) is highly associated with the subjective nature of creativity. This raises a question about the viewers of the advertisements, that is, the consumers, whose views and perceptions are less likely to be similar. Considering this, it is possible to question whether the ‘attempted creativity’ itself builds the effect of creative advertising, or is it the ‘perceived creativity’ that results in the desired outcomes of advertising. From this standpoint, attempted creativity is what is intended by practitioners to be perceived by the viewers, and perceived creativity is the individual perceptions of viewers regardless of practitioners’ expectations. In the same way, it was highlighted that not all the time are the advertisers’ intended responses the same as the consumers’ original responses (Cotte and Ritchie, 2005).

Following Amabile’s approach, White and Smith (2001) suggested that creative professionals are the appropriate observers. Similarly, Kover *et al.* (1997) stated that the defining audience for advertising is other creatives. However, even when creatives



within the same environment are producing and evaluating advertisements, it is still not easy to sell a creative campaign because of the “conceptual vagueness” of creativity (Mercanti-Guérin, 2008, p.116). This suggests that a group of viewers with similar backgrounds and professions judge creativity, yet it is still possible not to have a consensus about the product’s creativity. Storme and Lubart (2012) supported this by stating that the way observers process different information affects the variability of the assessment.

Dahlen *et al.* (2008) raised the question of what is needed to be a good judge of advertising creativity and agreed with Kover *et al.* (1997) that professionalism in creative judgment is harmful as it is far removed from consumer perception. This is in contrast to the beliefs that creatives are the appropriate observers. Although some claim “rules establish useful, broad boundaries that help balance creativity” (Stewart *et al.*, 2008, p.139), according to Goldenberg and Mazursky (2008), creativity is “concealed in the rather vague notion of rule transcending rather than the rule following” (p.31). Thus, perhaps, what is suggested is that the common view that creatives assessing other creatives’ works is not beneficial to understand consumers, since the assessments are different.

Ideally, the best way advertisements would work is when the audience, including both practitioners and consumers, perceive ads as creative (West *et al.*, 2008). In order to provide advertisements that are satisfactory from both the consumer and the agency perspective, the consumer expectations should be well understood (White, Smith, 2001) so that the agencies could turn these valuable insights into “highly creative work” (Koslow *et al.*, 2006, p.99). If practitioners acknowledge the importance of consumer expectations of their creative works, then they can start filling the gap between consumer perceptions and theirs. Considering this fact, it is important to understand consumer perceptions of advertising creativity.

If the advertising industry believes that the importance of creativity is growing, perhaps as a result of aggressive competition, it is important to ask how consumers perceive and respond to creative advertisements. Consumers might lack the professional eye of practitioners. However, they possess the professionalism in observing and scanning through advertising, which can provide valuable insights about creative advertising.

Thus, it could be argued that there is more to creativity, and it is not the way practitioners believe it to be.

Do consumers really feel the same way as industry people in their appreciation of the creative? Is there any difference between “practitioners’ idealistic mind-sets on creativity and the actual creative output” (Nyilasy, and Reid, 2009, p. 93)? Is there a disconnect between this and the way the creative product is received by the target audience? These questions are important and, it could be argued that research regarding consumer perceptions of creative advertisements should be undertaken in more detail, and perhaps more often, to provide answers.

Within the advertising industry the need for more research could be explained by the fact that, because of the characteristics of the industry, change is inevitable. As stated by Light (1990), “The rules are changing. The competitive environment is changing. Retailing is changing. Above all, the consumer is changing. Marketing, media, and advertising must change” (p.33). Table 2.3 provides a summary of selected studies discussed in this research.

Table 2.3 Selected Research on Advertising Creativity

Year	Authors	Area/Focus	Aim
1957	Guilford	Creative abilities	To link previous creativity studies with art
1986	Besemer and O'Quin	Creative thinking	To investigate creativity judgments
1992	Haberland and Dacin	Creativity in TV advertising	To develop a measure for viewers' reaction to creativity in TV advertising
1998	Reid, King, DeLorme	Creativity in advertising	To explore agency creatives' views of advertising creativity and its progress
2000	Ang and Low	Creativity in advertising	To explore the dimensions of advertising creativity with an experiment
2001	White and Smith	Creativity in advertising	To investigate creativity perceptions of practitioners and public using the Creative Product Semantic Scale
2002	White, Shen, Smith	Creativity in advertising	To investigate advertising creativity using the Creative Product Semantic Scale
2003	Koslow, Sasser, Riordan	Creativity in advertising	To investigate originality and strategy perceptions of creatives and non-creatives
2004	El-Murad and West	Creativity in advertising	Provides a review of advertising creativity with underpinning theories and measurement approaches
2004	Smith and Yang	Creativity in advertising	To examine the way advertising creativity relates to effectiveness
2007	Smith, MacKenzie, Yang, Bucholz, Darley	Creativity in TV advertising	To develop and validate an advertising creativity measurement scale
2008	West, Kover, Caruana	Creativity in TV advertising	To investigate evaluations of creativity in TV advertising from both practitioner and customer perspectives
2011	Sheinin, Varki, Ashley	Creativity in advertising	To investigate creativity dimensions' influence on brand judgments
2012	Runco and Jaeger	Creativity studies in general	Focuses on issues surrounding creativity definitions
2012	Ang, Leong, Lee, Lou	Creativity in advertising	To investigate the relationship between the 'ad creativity cube' dimensions with an experiment
2013	Stuhlfaut and Yoo	Creativity in advertising	Examination of advertising creativity from the practitioner perspective
2013	Sasser, Koslow, Kilgour	Creativity in advertising	Investigates client effects on advertising creativity from the agency perspective
2014	Long	Creative thinking	To examine the criteria used by judges in assessing creative products
2016	O'Connor, Koslow, Kilgour, Sasser	Creativity in advertising	To explore the role of clients in the creativity process from the practitioner perspective

## 2.6 Measurement of Advertising Creativity

### 2.6.1 Introduction to Advertising Creativity Measurement

The previous sections have reviewed definitions of advertising creativity and its underlying dimensions. This section discusses the measurement of creativity in advertising literature. Creativity can be measured with its major dimensions and these can still be compared and contrasted with different measurement attempts in the literature. This would provide the researchers the opportunity to measure advertising creativity in a more systematically, comprehensive way. Following the literature, it is suggested that;

*H3b: Divergence is positively related to Advertising Creativity.*

*H3c: Relevance is positively related to Advertising Creativity.*

Following the same order of dimensions, Divergence measurement is followed by Relevance measurement (See Figure 2 for Advertising Creativity Dimensions). Various measurements from different studies are also discussed in relation to their similarities and differences under each dimension's measurement.

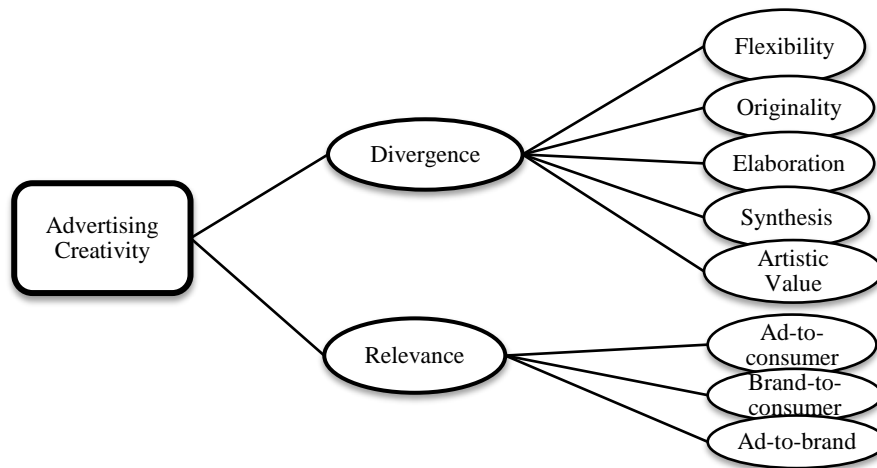


Figure 2 Advertising Creativity Dimensions

Source: Smith *et al.*, 2007

### 2.6.2 Measurement of Divergence Factors

The first dimension of advertising creativity has five determinants (Smith *et al.*, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2008). The first of these determinants is ‘flexibility’ and it was measured with three items “The ad contained ideas that moved from one

subject to another”, “The ad contained different ideas”, and “The ad shifted from one idea to another” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.830). The second determinant, ‘originality’ was measured with three items “The ad was out of the ordinary”, “The ad broke away from habit-bound and stereotypical thinking”, and “The ad was unique” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.830). ‘Elaboration’ factor was measured with “The ad contained numerous details”, “The ad finished basic ideas so that they become more intricate”, and “The ad contained more details than expected” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.830). ‘Synthesis’ was measured with “The ad connected objects that are usually unrelated”, “The ad contained unusual connections”, and “The ad brought unusual items together” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.830). The last determinant of divergence, ‘artistic value’ was measured with three items “The ad was visually/verbally distinctive”, “The ad made ideas come to life graphically/verbally”, and “The ad was artistically produced” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.830). Smith *et al.* (*ibid*) also measured the overall divergence according to the definition of divergence with three items “The ad was different”, “The ad was common”, and “The ad was unusual” (p.831) (see Figure 3 for measurement items).

As has been discussed in the advertising creativity dimensions section, there are similarities between different studies of advertising creativity with respect to the dimensions employed, their definitions, and measurements. If the other studies are considered these similarities can also be observed within the measurement scales, since they are dependent on how the researcher defines the dimensions. For example, while investigating the effects of advertising creativity dimensions Ang and Low (2000) measured novelty with four ‘7-point Likert scale’ items. These items were “predictable/novel, ordinary/unique, expected/unexpected, and routine/fresh” and adopted from Andrews and Smith (1996). Similarly, Ang *et al.* (2007) and Ang *et al.*, (2012) measured novelty with two items: ordinary (1=out of the ordinary, 6=very ordinary) and original (1=out of the original, 6=very original) (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p.226; Ang *et al.*, 2012, p.9).

Haberland and Dacin (1992) measured the “unexpectedness and originality” dimension with five items, similar to the literature, which were “Unique, Routine/Imaginative, Out of the ordinary, Intriguing, Commonplace/Surprising” (p.820). By way of contrast, Sheinin *et al.* (2011) followed a different path to measure novelty. Six items were used

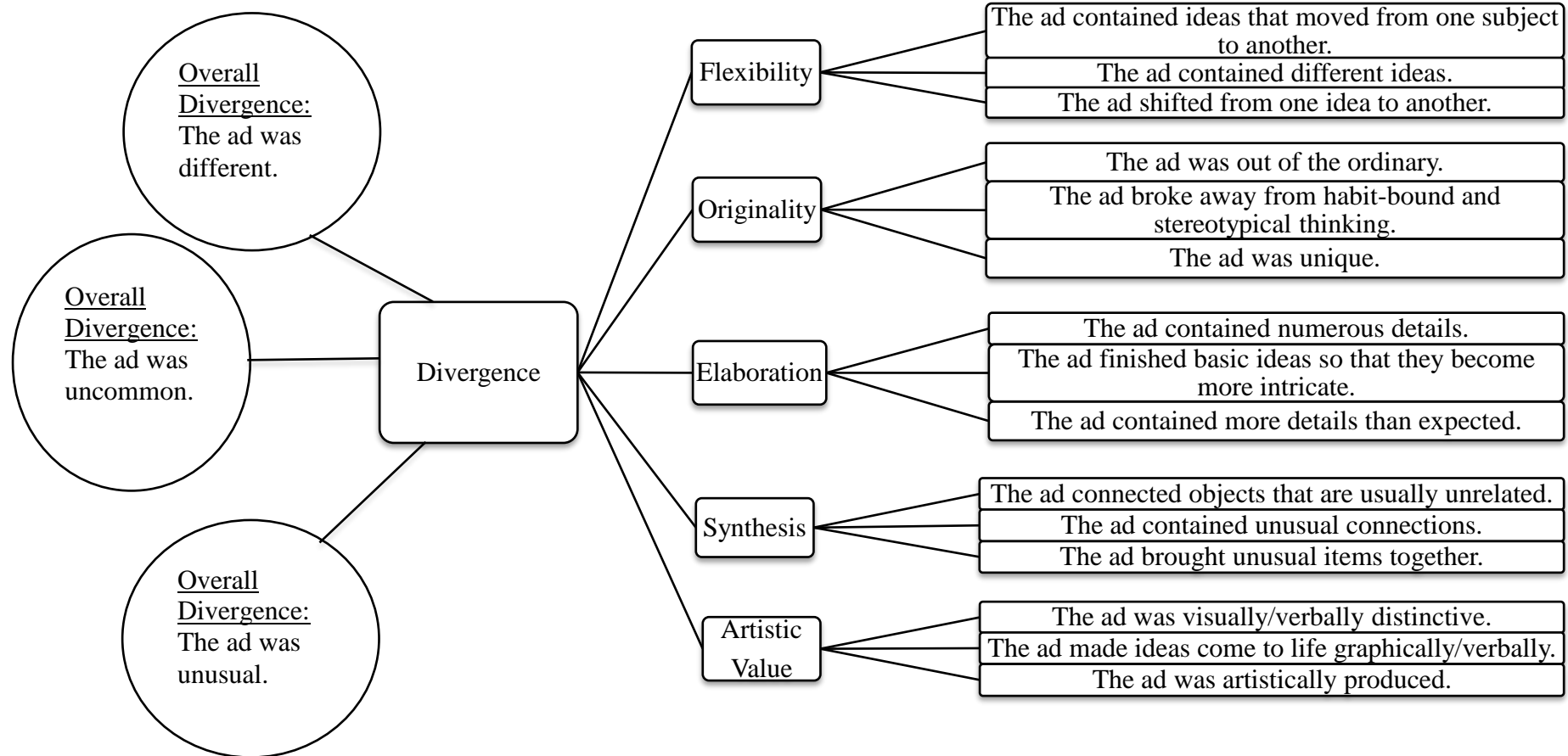
with 7-point Likert-type scales anchored by agree/disagree (original, different from expectations, memorable, visually interesting, interesting, and believable).

An alternative measurement scale employed by White and Smith (2001), which is named as Creative Product Semantic Scale (CPSS) for the assessment of creative products, was adapted from a study of Besemer and O'Quin (1986). The CPSS is originally a revised version of Creative Product Analysis Matrix (CPAM), an earlier work of Besemer and Treffinger (1981) to assess creative products. White and Smith used CPSS measurement to assess creative advertisements. While CPSS has three dimensions, eleven subscales under these dimensions and 70 individual measurement items, White and Smith employed only three subscales with 15 measurement items according to their research objectives and literature review. The first dimension adapted is 'novelty' and has the original subscale with five bipolar adjectives, namely, Over used-Fresh, Predictable-Novel, Usual/Unusual, Unique/Ordinary, Original/Conventional (White and Smith, 2001, p.30).

It can be observed, since the definitions in different studies overlap with some of the factors, for example, original, unexpected, or unique, that their measurements are also similar. However, the measurement of divergence dimension with five determinants and three different measurement items for each of those represent a more comprehensive measurement scale compared to dimensional studies that employed one or two items usually, such as, novelty or originality. The five indicators of divergence allow researchers to investigate more aspects of advertising creativity and provide the potential to learn more about consumer perceptions of it.

Figure 3 Divergence Dimension Factors and Measurement Items

Source: Smith *et al.*, 2007



### 2.6.3 Measurement of Relevance Factors

The second dimension of advertising creativity, 'relevance' has three types (Smith *et al.*, 2007). The first of these is 'ad-to-consumer relevance' and it was measured with four items "The ad was very meaningful to me", "The ad was appropriate to me", "The ad was useful to me", and "The ad was valuable to me" (Smith *et al.*, *ibid*, p.830). The second type, 'brand or product-to-consumer relevance' was measured with five items "The product or brand was meaningful to me", "The product or brand was appropriate to me", "The product or brand was useful to me", and "The product or brand was valuable to me" and with an additional item "I do NOT care about this product/service (R)" (Smith *et al.*, *ibid*, p.831). Thirdly, ad-to-brand relevance was measured with five items "The product or brand was the primary focus of the ad", "The product or brand was NOT a central character in the ad, it was more a background component", "The heart of this ad was what it said about the product or brand", "The product or brand did NOT seem to be related to what went on in the ad", "The ad presented useful information about the product or brand" (Smith *et al.*, *ibid*, p.831). The overall relevance was measured with "The viewing experience was relevant to me", "The viewing experience was useful to me", and "Overall, the ad and the brand were NOT really applicable to me (R)" (Smith *et al.*, *ibid*, p.831) (see Figure 4 for measurement items).

When the various measurements of advertising creativity dimensions are considered, the similarities observed in divergence dimension can also be observed in relevance. For example, Ang and Low (2000) measured relevance with two items, "relevance of the copy to the pictures" and "the relationship between the copy and the pictures in the ads" with 7-point Likert-type scales (p.843). Other research by Ang *et al.* (2007, 2012) posited the relationship between the advertising creativity dimensions by measuring meaningfulness with 6-point scales (1=does not help to convey benefits, 6=helps to convey benefits, 1=not related to the main message, 6= highly related to the main message) for "the pictures' relation to benefits of the ads and the main message" (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p.226; Ang *et al.*, 2012, p.9).

One dimension that was not included in Smith *et al.* study is 'connectedness'. However, it is similar to the relevance dimension and was measured with "how well the ad



connected with their past experience” and “the extent to which the ad was identified with the audience” (1=not at all connected, 6=very well connected, 1=not at all identified, 6=very much identified) (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p.226). In a more recent research ‘connectedness’ of ads was measured with a 7-point scale rating of the “extent to which the ads connected with consumers’ needs” (not connected-highly connected, relevant to my needs-not relevant to my needs, matters to me-does not matter to me, of no concern to me-of concern to me) (Ang *et al.*, 2012, p.9).

Haberland and Dacin (1992) used several different measures for their ‘meaningfulness’ dimension, for instance, “Hardly know what is advertised, Satisfying/Unsatisfying, Useful/Useless, Good/Bad, Meaningful” (p.820). In the Sheinin *et al.* study (2011), five items were used to measure ‘message usefulness’ with 7-point Likert-type scale (believable, provides relevant information, presents the product’s benefits, building the product’s image, provide practical information). Both these studies found that the dimensions of advertising creativity enhance each other. This is expected considering the conceptualised relationship between divergence and the relevance, in which together they reflect the creativeness of advertisements.

Besides the measurement of dimensions, there is another important factor to consider in assessment of advertising creativity. That is the common approach, which provides consumers with the advertisements that they can evaluate and on which they can make assessments during the procedure. While this exposure process might be useful to stimulate thinking in consumers, there are other constraints, such as, product categories, naturalness of exposures, and different ad elements that might create unexpected problems for the research. When informants are exposed to ads they could be influenced by any ad elements such as the design, the layout, or even the colours in the ad. When it is intended to measure the effects of ads as a whole, researchers might face difficulties in eliminating or controlling other factors’ effects. However, this is not different from the way in which public is exposed to advertisements in a daily manner. Some of these factors are further discussed in the *Methodology* (5) chapter.

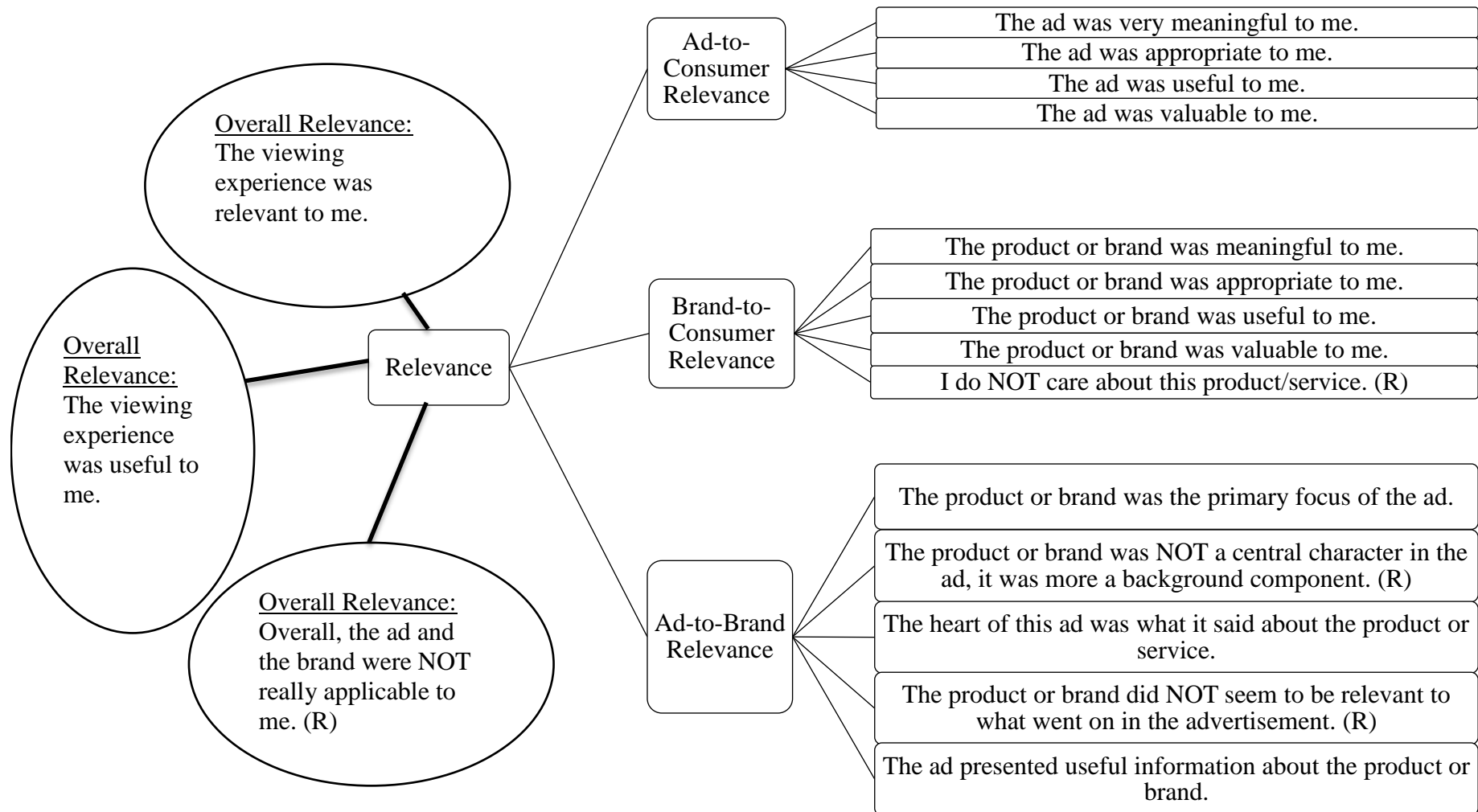


Figure 4 Relevance Dimension Measurement Items

Source: Smith *et al.*, 2007

### **3. Consumer Responses to Advertising Creativity**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter reviewed how advertising creativity has been defined and conceptualised in the literature by focusing on two overarching dimensions and their definitions with unique sub-factors. This chapter discusses the potential consumer responses towards creative advertisements by explaining the various effects of advertising creativity as outcomes of consumers' perceptions.

It is stated "consumers and clients respond to creativity while creative professionals and artists understand it. Therefore, the approval of the latter is seen as more intrinsically important" (Hackley and Kover, 2007, p.71). Although this may sound like putting an end to the discussions on who should be judging advertising creativity, it can be considered in a different way. If the response to creativity in advertising is received from consumers then consumers' perceptions of, and also responses to advertising creativity should be of concern to researchers. Furthermore, if consumers respond to creativity then it can be assumed that, when responses are given by them, they also understand it.

It is essential for creative advertisements to capture the attention of viewers to start an interaction with them. While this can open doors for communication, next steps can be stimulating positive attitudes and feelings in consumers and, eventually, initiating engagement with them as effects of advertising creativity. At this point it is important to distinguish the difference between the effects of a creative advertisement and the perceived characteristics of creative advertisements by explaining the difference (Mercanti-Guérin, 2008). It can be argued that the perceived characteristics of the creative ads are the dimensions, which form the effects of creative ads. In other words, when the viewers perceive the advertising creativity dimensions, outcomes are expected to occur as consumer responses to these perceptions of advertising creativity dimensions.

The history of advertising research has been guided mostly with epistemology and ontology until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when more scientific advertising studies started to

emerge with the help of other perspectives, such as, sociology and social psychology (Hackley, 2010). Both the improvement in advertising and consequently the development of advertising industry have led advertising practitioners and researchers to investigate and understand consumer behaviours. Despite the fact that research on advertising creativity has expanded over the last decade there is still more to understand and reflect about the concept when considering the importance of advertising creativity's effects on consumers.

Advertising creativity increases the intentions to view the ads (Yang and Smith, 2009). Viewers are expected to bond emotionally with the ads when they are outstanding within the clutter (Bernardin and Kemp-Robertson, 2008). When consumers perceive ads as outstanding or original, and because they are exposed to a level of divergence and relevance that can attract their attention, they can create connections with them. This connection between the viewers and the advertisements can be a form of engagement in which viewers break out of their perception barriers and become mentally and emotionally open to advertisements as a result of their perceptions of the ads. This way, they become engaged with the ads and have an open mindedness towards the ads that generate similar perceptions. While literature provides academically accepted definitions of creative advertising, the various effects of it as outcomes, including attention and attitudes toward the ad in relation to consumers' engagement, needs to be investigated in order to understand fully the consumers' perceptions of creativity in advertising.

Amongst the research investigating advertising effects "the most often cited hierarchy model" is the hierarchy of effects model (Barry and Howard, 1990, p.3). The Hierarchy of Effects model (HOE) assumes that advertising, as a force of communication, moves people through different stages that consisted of three components, namely, the cognitive component, affective component, and the conative component (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961). It is considered attractive because it offers simplicity and intuitiveness by being logical (Barry, 2002; Zinkhan and Fornell, 1989).

Using HOE as a guide, a greater depth of understanding for consumer perceptions of advertising creativity, and, thus, a better representation of their responses to creative advertising can be achieved. Therefore, if sequential modelling is considered for

consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity, the perceived advertising creativity dimensions form the first layer, whilst the next layers can be the outcomes of these perceived dimensions. Furthermore, this second layer, in which outcomes of advertising creativity develop, might be considered as a two-phase flow. It is expected that consumers' engagement to the creative ads as an ultimate outcome of the attention drawn to, and the attitudes formed towards the advertising creativity dimensions will be observed. These consumer responses, their definitions, and measurements are discussed in detail following the HOE section.

The HOE model has also received some criticism regarding its operationalisation. However, it is also acknowledged that "no comprehensive alternative model of how advertising works has ever gained general acceptance in the marketing community" (Weilbacher, 2001, p.21). Further examination and a critique of this model can be found in the following section.

### **3.2 Hierarchy of Effects Model**

The HOE theory is one of the first sequential models that explains consumers' responses to the advertisements in a step-by-step orientation (Fill *et al.*, 2013). Originally developed by Lavidge and Steiner (1961) to measure advertising effectiveness, the model states consumers act in a sequence, step by step, when they are exposed to ads. These steps are "awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase" (Lavidge and Steiner, *ibid*, p.59). Further these steps are grouped in three main stages that are adopted from a behaviour model in psychology, starting from consumers' cognitive activities to their initial actions, or motivations, to take actions. These are cognitive stage, affective stage, and lastly conative stage. The model suggests that advertisements function to create responses, firstly, related to the observer's "information or ideas" of the object in assessment, secondly, as "favourable attitudes or feelings" towards the object, and lastly as "purchase action-the acquisition" of the object (Lavidge and Steiner, *ibid*, p.60).

Although HOE model has received some criticism this did not prevent marketing researchers to employ HOE in various studies. Factually, criticism has led to attempts to improve the model by modifying the steps consumers are assumed to go through

according to the different research objectives. While altered steps can be observed in the literature, the three main stages remain basically the same, except that some research hypothesises different orders of these stages within the sequential representation. This is mainly because of the criticism the model received in relation to its aims of theorising advertising effects under one context for each type of advertisements, and each person who is exposed to the advertising. These criticisms state that, for example, a certain type of advertisement's exposure can start the model with action stage instead of the cognition stage of consumers. In fact, the authors admitted the fact that "actions that need to be taken" may as well be different under specific circumstances (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961, p.60). Therefore, it is essential to consider the fitness of the research objectives to employ the HOE model. To summarise, Barry and Howard (1990) pointed out that how the HOE model conceptualises consumer responses "depends, of course, on how one wishes to define the various components and other characteristics of a study one considers desirable" (p.11).

Another important aspect to note is the variance of the steps taken by consumers in different hierarchical models, such as AIDA or DAGMAR. While these models aim to measure advertising effectiveness focusing on ways to increase sales, they identify different series of steps for consumers to go through to achieve this aim. It has been indicated by the developers of the HOE model that it can provide useful information to the marketers to distinguish which groups of consumers are in which stage, or help them to understand how to improve advertising effects in certain stages according to the advertised brands or products (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961).

The HOE model can be employed heuristically in order to investigate advertising creativity effects on consumer perceptions and responses. This would require contemplating the advertising effects' steps according to the creativity literature and adjusting the stages in line with consumer responses towards the creative advertisements particularly, instead of the advertised brands or products. Considering the research purpose to understand consumer perceptions of, and responses to, creative advertisements, the HOE model endorses that consumers should perceive the characteristics of and then form responses towards creative advertisements. The specific stages of the model and how they fall within this research are further discussed in the Research Framework chapter.

### **3.2.1 A Critique of the HOE Model**

A critique of the model should be considered in order to examine the fitness of it to current research's objectives. A major criticism has been developed around the reasoning of this model. HOE has received criticism mainly for theorising the ultimate step as the consumers' buyer behaviour and purchase intentions or the sales of the advertised products.

For example, it is stated that the HOE model "assumes that the single desired end of any advertisement is a purchase" (Hackley, 2010, p.92) and that various marketing factors combined can cause sales with "an effective total program of marketing communications including, but not limited to, advertising" (Weilbacher, 2001, p.21). While purchase intentions of consumers have been a concern in both academic and industry perspectives in order to define the effectiveness of advertisements, it is confirmed that in this current research, investigation of advertised products' or services' sales is not one of the objectives. This is because the sales can be affected by many other factors depending on the advertisement types, or other consumer related factors, and even on the creative briefs themselves. Instead, the overall perceptions of creative advertisement viewers are investigated as a whole, exclusive of any concepts that are directly related to brands.

In fact, it is acknowledged that, "advertising is not, should not, and cannot be designed to produce immediate purchases on the part of all who are exposed to it" (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961, p.59). In relation to buying behaviour it is remarked, "advertising does not work immediately, because in most cases consumer does not make the purchase decision immediately" (Du Plessis, 2008, p.168). Therefore, the HOE model in this current research theorises motivations to observe the object as positive or negative in the last stage, rather than simply focusing on sales and as should other researchers, unless they are mainly interested in measurements of sales or purchase intentions.

Another criticism is related to the HOE model's approach to standardise advertising effects. Despite the specific goals of advertising it may have different effects on consumers (Johar, 2016). It is commented that since "consumers are not machines but individuals" (Hackley, 2010, p.94) and "the concept of segmentation tells us that audiences are indeed different" (Barry, 2002, p.45), the advertising effects should be

operating within different cognitive mechanisms. Weilbacher (2001) raised the same concern by inquiring how it can be assumed that “all advertisements have identical specific effects” (p.23) when “at any one time, not all people are equal” (p.19).

Although different advertisement types and the diversity of the viewing public of these advertisements can be dominant factors in investigating advertisement effects, it should also be remarked that these can be turned into advantages by focusing on specific ad types and segments. Besides, even if there is no “direct line of consumer questioning that can ever tap into exactly what happens in a person’s mind” (Weilbacher, 2001, p.24), this should not prevent researchers investigating advertising effects, so that various models can be confirmed or disproved (Barry and Howard, 1990).

Taking into consideration the critique of the theory, it is believed that the modification of the HOE model according to the advertising creativity literature can provide a consistent understanding of consumers’ perceptions of, and responses to, creativity in advertising. The specific consumer responses that occur in HOE stages are discussed in detail in the following section.

### **3.3 Attention**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

This sub-section focuses on attention as the first advertising creativity response. It starts with an introduction of attention with descriptions and continues discussing its importance in relation to advertising creativity. Lastly, previous measurement attempts of attention are reviewed and discussed.

In advertising, it is important to be able to “generate effective ads that break through the clutter and motivate people to pay attention and respond” (Oliver and Ashley, 2012, p.335). Although Nyilasy and Reid (2009) stated that any advertising could generate attention this is not usually the case for all advertisements. A common belief in the literature is that a few of the advertising messages can truly gather consumers’ attention (Haan and Moraga-González, 2011) and it is achieved through the use of creative ads (for example, Smith *et al.*, 2008; Smith and Yang, 2004).



For instance, Sheinin *et al.* (2011) noted that the importance of ad creativity increases due to its impact on generating attention. The use of creative advertisements attracts consumers' attention and motivates them to process the information in the ad (Baack *et al.*, 2008). In other words, attention is the breaking through of advertisements and, therefore, it is the element that starts the dialogue between the ad and the consumer (Kover, 1995). The definition, importance and measurement of attention as a consumer response to advertising creativity are discussed in the next sections.

### **3.3.2 Definition of Attention**

Attention as an outcome of creative advertising can be understood in more detail by exploring different definitions in the light of literature. Gathering attention of consumers is appreciated for providing advantages among rivals within the marketing industry (Haan and Moraga-González, 2011). On a more general basis, attention is the reflection of focus on “mental activity” and its “duration” (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989, p.5) and Heath (2009) defined attention towards advertising, the cognitive processing as “conscious thinking directed at an advertisement at any particular moment” (p.63).

The varying attention levels may be dependent on advertisements employed in research. Nielsen *et al.* (2010) stated the control of consumer attention could result in better communications and that the “tremendous ad clutter” in advertising had impact on attention (p.1147). In this context, Heath *et al.* (2009) stated that attention paid towards advertisements is different from the state of consumers' awareness of ads surrounding them. The authors suggested when the content is more emotive consumers can be encouraged to become open-minded towards ads rather than becoming aware, which in turn can attract their attention. The authors remarked this contrasts Kover (1995) whose research findings implied that emotive creativity encourages attention (Heath *et al.*, *ibid*). Furthermore, on this notion, Pieters *et al.* (2004) emphasised the importance of attention for print advertising and acknowledged that communications could be harmed when attention capturing failed. However, it is also acknowledged that attention levels have faced declines recently, perhaps due to the problematic nature of attention gathering (Rossiter, 2008).

### **3.3.2.1 Attention and Advertising Creativity**

Consumer attention paid to print ads has been accepted to depend on the “perceptual interruptions” that “allow distinctive features in an advertisement” (Nielsen *et al.*, 2012, p.1138). Considering this, it would be useful to understand how much effect advertising creativity has on attention to print ads. West *et al.* (2008) stated that attention is not limited to be gained in only conventional ways but also in an “entertaining or challenging way” with advertising creativity (p.35). It is acknowledged that when the consumers perceive ads as creative, these are also able to attract attention and, thus, to be processed by consumers instead of being ignored (West *et al.*, *ibid*). Accordingly, this research suggests that there is a positive relationship between Advertising Creativity and Attention. Therefore, it is proposed that;

*H4: Advertising creativity has a positive effect on Attention.*

While the effect of advertising creativity on attention should be clearly defined, it is also important to uncover this relationship with regards to the dimensions of creativity. If there is a relationship between advertising creativity and attention, it can be argued that this linkage would also be developed between the dimensions of creativity, since they generate creativity. If the research on advertising creativity is improved, then new linkages to attention can be expected to emerge in relation to how attention is gathered.

Another factor to consider in attention is whether, or not, it is related to engagement of consumers. In advertising, attention is believed to be a perception related concept and has been considered as the “tuned in mind” of consumers that causes engagement in their perceptions (Moriarty, 1991, p.32). Heath (2009) suggested attention and engagement not to be dependent on each other but with “new and interesting message supported by strong creative values” they can be achieved collectively (p.71). Similarly, Sasser and Koslow (2008) advised if the necessary consideration is given to attention, interactions with engagement could be revealed. It is stated that creative advertising brings out attention and once the attention is drawn, then attitudes are generated consecutively (Nyilasy and Reid, 2009). There might be situations in which this is not always true; it is possible that different advertising stimuli require different perception approaches. Nevertheless, these views imply that attention gathering is a kind of precondition to reach consumers and it triggers processing as well as forming attitudes.

Consumers' attention towards advertisements can be conceptualised in many ways (Thorson *et al.*, 1992) and this affects how the attention variable is measured in different research. For example, in order to determine how much attention advertisements capture, while some researchers focused on the time spent on looking at the ads, or the eye movements of respondents when exposed to various stimuli in studies, some employed attention as a self-reported variable that can be testified by respondents in order to investigate their attention levels. In the next section the importance of capturing attention in advertising is discussed.

### **3.3.3 Importance of Attention**

In order to understand the importance of attention in advertising, the industry should be considered as a whole. Surrounded by the advertising clutter and competition between advertisers, consumers have to face advertisements on a daily basis with or without desire, or even being unaware that they are exposed to advertisements. Attention could be the first step towards survival in the competition for advertisers as a means to attract consumers. In such an environment, it is important for an ad to be perceived as “unique and entertaining” in order to get noticed in the clutter (Belch and Belch, 2009, p.255).

The clutter of advertising raises difficulties for marketers in gaining consumer attention which is already scarce. The reason for this is “consumers' attentional resources are limited” (Pieters *and* Wedel, 2004, p.36) and “a person's mental capacity to deal with information is limited, people adjust to this situation by scanning their media environment and by paying less and less attention to content” (Smit *et al.*, 2006, p.73). Besides, it is an acknowledged fact that consumers “are often sceptical when processing information from a vested-interest source” (Yang and Smith, 2009, p.945) and “often do not deliberately pay attention to advertisements” (Haan and Moraga-González, 2011, p.556). Consumers may avoid advertising also due to the fact that “too many advertisements for the same product category fighting for consumers' attention” (Wang, 2006, p.365).

In order to overcome this problem, marketers need to know how to draw attention to advertising (Pieters *et al.*, 2002). It can be suggested that practitioners turn to advertising

creativity in order to generate attention as a solution to this problem. It is aimed to break the consumer tendency of avoiding or ignoring advertising. Importance of attention is a significant factor for advertising since it is believed to be associated with noticeability. In fact, the effectiveness of print ads is harmed by the failure in capturing consumer attention and lack of noticeability (Pieters and Wedel, 2004).

Yang and Smith (2009) stated “any strategy that can reduce resistance to persuasion and make consumers more open-minded can have a significant impact on consumer ad viewing intentions” (p.945). Considering the importance of attention, as stated by Pieters *et al.* (2002), it should be investigated in detail and more frequently to have an understanding of how it is influenced by advertising creativity and its dimensions, as well as the connection in relation to engagement of consumers. The following section reviews measurement attempt of attention in advertising.

### **3.3.4 Measurement of Attention**

In a study Pieters and Wedel (2004) investigated consumer attention, measured by eye-tracking methodology. They found that attention levels vary for different elements of the ads. According to the eye-tracking data and analysis, the text component of ad elements has the most direct effect on attention when the surface size is increased. This suggests that, once consumer attention is captured, they are ready to process information. The authors also raised the question of “how much attention is required for communication effects such as brand awareness and attitudes?” (p.48). If a certain level of attention translates to attitudes, it is valuable for advertisers to take into account the factors that generate attention. This question calls for a potential investigation direction of consumer attention and attitudes that can positively capture consumers and engage with them.

In a more recent research Nielsen *et al.* (2010) investigated both the attention shifts to advertisements and the link between semantic onsets and consumer attention. In order to measure attention shifts the authors used “videotaping and coding procedure”, which has been employed in the literature as “eyes-on-screen method to document the location of visual attention” (p.1146). This research demonstrated that emotional content in ads can draw consumers’ attention in an advertising clutter and suggested that ‘stimulus

emotionality' has a direct effect on attention, which has the strength to change the perceptual processes of consumers (Nielsen *et al.*, *ibid*). In this case, what is called emotional content is similar to advertising creativity. Emotive content is described as "anything in advertising that is capable of stimulating the feelings of the viewer" (Heath *et al.*, 2009, p.452; Heath, 2009, p.64). Advertising creativity stimulates consumer feelings by surprising them, offering relevance and appropriateness to their needs. Thus, it can be argued that advertising creativity evokes feelings in consumer minds, gains their attention, and possibly also takes them one step closer to engagement.

In contrast to the Nielsen study (Nielsen *et al.*, 2010) another research aiming to establish the link between emotive creative advertising and attention levels used an eye-fixation measurement experiment. It suggests that the feelings evoked in consumers do not directly increase attention levels yet engages a different way of communication by stimulating open minds (Heath *et al.*, 2009). It is acknowledged that this effect of emotive creativity on attention is even encouraging consumers to "let their guard down" to process ads (Heath *et al.*, *ibid*, p.460). This suggests that attention leads to information processing. However, these findings regarding the attention levels that increase by emotive content are contradictory. In the same research it is also confirmed that marketers face some dilemma in this context as a result of varying study results. Some suggest emotional content has impact on consumer attention while others disagree (for example, Yang and Smith, 2009; Heath *et al.*, *op. cit.*; Nielsen *et al.*, 2010). That is perhaps because not all the situations with high attention levels might be caused by emotive content. This shows that there is a need for more research regarding the attention of consumers in relation to advertising creativity.

Although some research examples, as presented here, employed the eye-tracking, eyes-on-screen, or eye-fixation methodologies, there can be scepticism about how comfortable and free consumers can feel during these measurement techniques, not necessarily because of any discomfort or difficulty they would face, but in relation to concerns about the representativeness of the data. Eye movement and tracking studies, as forced viewings, are debatable because of the environment in which they are conducted. The participants feel that they are obliged to attend the process and to pay attention. Thus, data gathered in isolation become questionable (Matukin *et al.*, 2016). However, using more conventional survey techniques when participants are asked to

attend the procedure with the same forced viewing they might feel freer to report their real attentional responses. Although marketers and researchers may feel comfortable with the use of laboratories and high technology equipment, it is not necessarily more convenient for the consumer. For consumers, it might be unusual even to step out from their world of viewing, ignoring or processing ads to be involved in research in which they answer questions about their perceptions, feelings or attitudes.

With increased studies involving consumers as respondents, they may be familiar with traditional data gathering as in paper-pen or online methodologies but probably not with laboratory settings and high tech equipment. This is one reason why more traditional methodologies should be employed to study consumer perceptions. Kover (1995) summarised four reasons for advertising research about consumer perceptions to fail; “(1) presenting advertising (2) to a viewer (3) in an environment that resembles the real viewing situation and (4) measuring results in a meaningful way” (p.605). If the first and the third reasons are being considered it is suggested that research is different than the real life in that “advertising stimulus is isolated and examined” (Kover, *ibid*, p.605).

Another important view about the representativeness of the research is shared by Wells (1993). According to him the laboratory research provides control to the researcher that is not available in real life and this is an obstacle for generalizable results by being misrepresenting beyond “manipulation checks” (Wells, *ibid*, p.492). It is a common concern of researchers to gather data that has high representativeness and generalisability. These reasons should be given greater consideration if the aim is to understand the factors that shape consumer perceptions about advertising and to achieve data close to real life perceptions of consumers.

New or concise techniques may be in favour of certain research objectives. Focusing on few variables and few relationships to be investigated are such examples. Furthermore, more specific requirements of researchers as exemplified by Pieters and Wedel (2004) investigating three different type of ad elements: text, brand, and pictorial can require similar techniques. However, these techniques should be employed with caution in order to prevent misleading data, for example, for researches dealing with many variables and their correlations.

First of all, these techniques might affect informants and their responses to the investigation by confusing them and causing inaccuracies in their initial insights. This is due to the knowledge of the participants that they “must do something as part of the experiment” which causes them to pay “unrealistic attention and importance” to the stimulus (Kover, 1995, p.605). Another important factor to consider might be how attention is specifically defined within the research and what the researchers want to measure. Perceptions, although they develop and occur as senses in the brain without awareness, can also be measured with simple and succinct methodological techniques.

The attention literature also suggests examples of simpler and more explicit measures of attention other than sophisticated or technological techniques. For example, Smith *et al.* (2007) measured the attention levels of consumers to address the effect of advertising creativity on purchase intentions. The scale for attention measurement included “The ad demanded my attention”, “I examined the main elements of the ad very carefully”, “I tried to carefully evaluate the brand information provided in the ad”, and “I spent considerable time analysing the ad’s message” and these were based on the MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) study (p.831).

Another research measured attention with three similar scales, also adapted from MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) (Smith *et al.*, 2008). The items were “I paid close attention to the ad”, “The ad demanded my attention”, and “The ad would stand out in a group of ads” (Agree/Disagree) with seven point scales (p.55). Heath (2009) disagreed with these types of attention measurements because they are equivalent to asking respondents “how much thinking they are doing” suggesting these measurements would produce “garbage data” as it increases the thinking and attention attempts (p.68). On the contrary to Heath’s claim, it is important to note that these measurement questions can be presented to respondents after the exposure of ads. By this way, respondents can reveal what their attention levels were, instead of being forced to pay higher attention to ads, or engaging in more thinking about the stimuli.

It should be noted that if examining respondents for their thinking patterns or thoughts produce no valuable data, it is questionable whether, or not, researchers are able to conduct studies for understanding consumer perceptions, which can only be expressed by consumers themselves and their own explanations of the factors

underlying their perceptions. Therefore, depending on the research objects, it might be a better approach to use simpler measurement scales for understanding the levels of consumer attention paid to creative advertisements and these levels' relation to other variables, such as engagement.

Within the forced viewing of the creative stimuli by respondents, it is not expected to obtain realistic, initial attention responses to various stimuli. Rather, this current research is investigating the voluntarily provided attention to the creative stimuli, as an interest of the respondents following their perceptions of creativity. Therefore, instead of alternative methods such as eye movements or the time spent looking at the stimuli, advertising creativity is focused as a whole by self-reported attention levels paid to the stimuli. This is more achievable for this research compared to other conceptualisations of attention because advertising creativity is investigated through consumers' perceptions.

### **3.4 Likeability**

#### **3.4.1 Introduction**

This sub-section focuses on advertisement likeability as another advertising creativity response. An introduction to likeability is presented with its definition. Then, likeability's importance is reviewed in relation to advertising creativity. Lastly, a discussion of advertisement likeability is presented.

Consumer attitudes are associated with consumer behaviour, thus, they are major research concerns for consumer behaviour researchers (Belch and Belch, 2009). According to Moriarty (1991), attitudes as states of mind can be positive, neutral, or negative. Since advertising's ultimate use is to generate favourable attitudes from consumers (Belch and Belch, *ibid*), likeability can be of value for researchers to understand consumer perceptions of advertising creativity. With respect to attitudes, Rossiter and Percy (1980) distinguished two different advertising styles, retail advertising, persuading consumers to buy, and consumer advertising, persuading consumers by creating a favourable attitude before forming a behaviour. While the current research is not concerned with purchase behaviours of consumers, it can still be suggested that the attitude towards advertising is prior to buying behaviour.



As suggested earlier in this study, advertising creativity can eliminate consumers' perceptual barriers and negative feelings towards particular ads, or even towards advertising industry. Advertising creativity triggers positive emotions such as likeability (Yang and Smith, 2009). Hence, creativity in advertising, combined with likeability, can have more impact on consumers' perceptions. Although likeability of advertisements has been recognised as important it has become more appreciated since the study of Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) in 1990 (Smit *et al.*, 2006). In the following sections, the definition, importance and measurement of likeability as a consumer response to advertising creativity are discussed in the light of previous literature.

### **3.4.2 Definition of Likeability**

Attitude towards the advertisement, usually conceptualised as the “overall liking” (p.85) by practitioners, is assumed to be a concern that initiated the most interest and confusion in research due to the complexity in its meaning (Percy and Rossiter, 1992). As a positive attitude, likeability is important for ads to generate positive feelings towards the ad, brand or the product itself (Moriarty, 1991). While a part of advertising industry chose to disregard likeability and the consumer entertainment, some others “rewarded creative efforts that charm and entertain the consumer” (Biel and Bridgwater, 1990, p.38). However, it is emphasised that advertisement likeability is a “complex concept” that is more than just entertainment of the viewers (Haley and Baldinger, 1991, p.30).

Supportive of this approach, Green (1992) suggested that likeability is not only entertainment value; rather it is a communication value. In fact, entertaining aspect of ads are claimed to be the “entertaining froth”, which can be any ad “that is beautifully produced or very clever” (Klein, 1991, p.3). Therefore, entertainment does not provide a comprehensive understanding of likeability.

Furthermore, it has been observed that the viewing public like commercials more than practitioners would expect (Biel and Bridgwater, 1990). Therefore, it is questioned if likeability is in anyway related to entertainment, and if it is not exactly entertainment,

then what makes commercials likeable. More importantly, as Biel and Bridgwater (op. cit.) ask, “what role does creativity play?” (p.38).

Biel (1990) reviewed the two studies of The Centre for Research & Development, and concluded that commercials that are best liked are “those that have something to say, that are worth remembering, that they view as effective, true-to-life and convincing” and confirmed that consumers look for “personally meaningful” messages in order to like commercials (p.7). Thus, meaningfulness was the factor “that drove liking” (p.8) even when the consumers considered different factors for different categories of products.

It is a common approach of the viewers to appreciate and like mostly the meaningfulness of the ads (Biel and Bridgwater, 1990). Similarly, it is indicated that ads with “important attributes, persuasive arguments and relevant information” are expected to result in higher liking (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989, p.12). Ehrenberg *et al.* (2002) suggested an additional opinion about viewing ads and stated that liked ads might also be the ads that are “looked at more often or longer” (p.10).

The impact of likeability is shown to be greater at “interrupting the scanning phase of consumers-also referred to as the ‘stopping power of advertisements’- improving processing, and producing more positive judgments of the message” (Smit *et al.*, 2006, p.73). Similarly, Fam (2008) compared likeability to a “gatekeeper” arguing it will make viewers pay attention to and generate further processing of the ads (p.419).

#### ***3.4.2.1 Likeability and Attention***

As it can be followed likeability literature is similar to the literature for attention, since attention too is assumed to attract consumers and improve processing (see *Attention* section 4.3.2 for a discussion). However, these two responses are different. In order to be liked, ads need first to be noticed. The literature suggests that when viewers like advertisements those should also be noticed and paid attention formerly so that ads can result in more positive feelings (Stone *et al.*, 2000). If noticeability is the attention gathered, likeability can only be achieved through attention. However, it does not mean that attention always leads to likeability, not all ads that are noticed are liked. This

implies that attention is captured before the ads are liked. Heath *et al.* (2009) shared an additional confirming view to this stating the fact that viewers paid the same level of attention to both liked and disliked ads in their study. This indicates that attention could be gained independently of the likeability of the ads.

Considering the lack of clarity in the relationship of attention and likeability of ads in these particular studies, this concept needs to be fully investigated so that it could be understood whether, or not, as effects of advertising creativity, attention and likeability enhance each other in a sequence.

The influence of ad likeability is also beneficial for the transfer of positive feelings from ads to brands (Smit *et al.*, 2006; Bjerke *et al.*, 2005). When ads are liked there is potential also for brands to be liked because of the positive conditioning that comes from the ‘love the advertisement buy the product’ view (Smit *et al.*, *ibid*, p.74). However, according to literature, this does not guarantee the persuasion of consumers (Biel and Bridgwater, 1990). This effect of likeability also suggests a form of consumer engagement through ad likeability; ads and brands liked by consumers can lead to consumer engagement. Alwitt (1987) has already established that advertisement likeability is “attributable to response factors reflecting engagement with advertising” (cited in Fam, 2008, p.419).

It is important to note here that this current research is not about brands: it is to understand consumer perceptions of, and responses to, creative advertising. This research is interested in attitudes, such as, particularly, likeability and not in physical behaviours, such as purchase intentions and buying behaviour. This is due to the positive outcomes expected of advertising creativity and also the fact that physical attitudes might depend on other factors, such as the advertising type, that is, advertisements to create awareness or behavioural response, effectiveness and other factors related to consumer behaviour concerns.

### **3.4.3 Importance of Likeability**

The aim in advertising should be to make the viewers like all components of an ad; “the visuals, the people (in ad-presenters), the settings, the words, the music, or whatever

components are included in the advertisement” (Bjerke *et al.*, 2005, p.102). According to Stapel (1994) likeability, “a major ad quality to be achieved” is useful at indicating creative efforts (p.79). The association between likeability and creativity has attracted advertising researchers.

#### **3.4.3.1 Likeability and Advertising Creativity**

Creativity is accounted to “allow the brands to be noticed and to influence customer decisions” (West *et al.*, 2008, p.36). When the relation of advertising creativity to likeability is considered, while some researches have linked ad likeability to the ads’ perceived meaningfulness by consumers (for example, Biel and Bridgwater, 1990) others have concluded that relevance is a component of ad likeability that is taken into account by the consumers (for example, Smit *et al.*, 2006). According to this, in order for consumers to like the ads their meaningfulness and relevance to consumers should be high. Similarly, it is reported that advertising creativity, when combined with personal enhancement, receives more positive feelings from consumers (Kover *et al.*, 1995).

When investigating how consumers describe their likings of the commercials, Biel and Bridgwater (1990) acknowledged that originality factor in the commercials does not have high impact on consumer likeability. However, ads that have originality can still be liked. Another study by Smith *et al.* (2008) contradicts this and states that the divergence in the ads is an effective factor for consumers to like the ads. According to the literature, meaningfulness or relevance and originality investigated in these studies, are also highly related to advertising creativity, since the two overarching dimensions of advertising creativity are divergence and relevance (for example, Smith and Yang, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 2008; Sheinin *et al.*, 2011). It is expected that there is a positive relationship between Advertising Creativity and Likeability. This research suggests that;

*H5: Advertising Creativity has a positive effect on Likeability.*

If creativity draws attention and generates positive attitudes it would be worthwhile to study these variables’ relationship with each other and also to engagement. As Stone *et*

*al.* (2000) mentioned in an earlier research investigation of likeability, creativity of ads is a “probable direction for future research” (p.9). The authors furthermore implied that the essence in advertising is to combine likeability and memorability of the ads with creativity “as a prelude to selling products and services” (Stone *et al.*, *ibid*, p.7). Memory and recall are delayed aspects of response compared to attention and likeability, which are more immediate and therefore recall is not one of the concerns of this current study. Accordingly, this research’s direction is to investigate the attention paid to and likeability of ads as outcomes of advertising creativity perceptions, as well as consumer engagement instead of sales. As concluded earlier advertising aims for much more than simply affection of consumers (Klein, 1991).

Biel and Bridgwater (1990) suggested it is worth investing in likeability research with respect to two different factors. First of all, likeability is associated with persuasion of consumers as ways of emotional attitudes. Likable ads can be effective on consumer persuasions much more than the less likable ads (Biel and Bridgwater, *ibid*). Although persuasion is not focused on this current study, its importance should still be accepted with regards to likeability. Secondly, likeability might lead to a positive conditioning process in consumer minds for the advertised brands. Smit *et al.* (2006) agreed to this fact and commented that, when the first impression of an ad is favourable, it is expected to generate more comprehension process in consumer minds, thus, more positive attitude towards the ads are generated.

#### **3.4.4 Measurement of Likeability**

Following the definition and the importance of creative advertisement likeability, likeability measurements from various studies are considered in this section. In certain advertising campaigns, advertisers choose to copy-test ads for likeability. In order to pre-test an ad’s potential success, advertisement likeability is most often employed as a copy-test measure to understand whether consumers like or dislike an ad (Bergkvist and Rossiter, 2008).

Academics on the other hand prefer ‘attitude towards the ad’ to judge an advertisement’s success (Bergkvist and Rossiter, *ibid*). In an overview study of ad likeability since the early studies, to understand the change in the concept, Smit *et al.*

(2006) acknowledged that there are two traditional ways to investigate likeability. These are determining consumers' feelings and thoughts about ads in relation to likeability (for example, Biel and Bridgwater, 1990) and measuring attitude toward the ad (for example, Smit *et al.*, 2006) and these are significantly related to each other.

It can be claimed that these two ways to measure likeability are employed in research in a way that is transformational and intertwined. That is, while feelings and thoughts of the viewers can include numerous factors, as well as the attitude to the ad, measuring only attitude towards the ad might be neglecting some of those factors. Therefore, measuring likeability with only attitude toward the ad could be problematic for researchers and it might be beneficial to use these two traditional ways in a transformational way together.

Walker and Dubitsky (1994) stated that the single-item measurement of ad likeability is common in research to support the practice (e.g. Walker and Dubitsky, 1994; Biel and Bridgwater, 1990; Bergkvist and Rossiter, 2008). In a study by Biel and Bridgwater (1990) investigating likeability of television commercials, for six different product types, likeability was measured by single-item scale, namely, liked a lot, liked somewhat, felt neutral, disliked somewhat and disliked a lot. Researchers also included "descripted adjectives in the form of a checklist" derived from "extensive review of the copy research literature" (p.5) from another study by Biel (1990) to understand how consumers describe commercials that they liked. These adjectives were then grouped into five factors that were used by viewers to describe their liking fact: Ingenuity, Meaningful, Energy, Rubs the wrong way, and Warmth (Biel and Bridgwater, 1990, p.41).

'Ingenuity' was described with "clever, imaginative, amusing, original, silly and (not) dull", 'Meaningful' was described with "worth remembering, effective, (not) easy-to-forget, (not) pointless, true-to-life, believable, convincing, informative", 'Energy' was described with "lively, fast moving, appealing, well done", 'Rubs the wrong way' was described with "seen a lot, worn out, irritating, familiar, phony", and the last factor 'Warmth' was described with "gentle, warm, and sensitive" adjectives (p.41). It was found that commercial liking depends on the meaningfulness and the relevancy of the ads perceived by the consumers. This shows that these two elements that are part of

advertising creativity dimensions, enhance consumer likeability.

Smit *et al.* (2006) employed a different approach, 13 advertising likeability items were employed with a 3-point scale (“yes, certainly”, “yes, maybe”, “no”). The items were “amusing, ordinary, outstanding, boring or tedious, interesting, convincing, personally relevant, product is clearly shown, messy or unclear, stimulates buying behaviour, pleasant music, exaggerated and sympathetic” (Smit *et al.*, *ibid*, p.75). As a result of this research, while four likeability components were established, which are entertainment, relevance, clearness, and pleasantness, a fuller analysis of these components suggested that consumers linked ad likeability mostly with relevance and clearness of the ads (Smit *et al.*, *ibid*).

Smith *et al.* (2008) on the other hand measured ad likeability with entertainment value, ad attitude, and brand attitude. Entertainment had three measures with 7-points (agree/disagree), which are “The ad was humorous”, “The ad was entertaining”, and “The ad made me laugh” (p.56). Ad and Brand Attitudes were measured with single-item of overall evaluation of the ad and the brand with “-3 to +3” range (Bad/Good, Pleasant/Unpleasant, Unfavourable/Favourable) (Smith *et al.*, 2008, p.56). The study revealed that divergence of the ads is directly effective on likeability (Smith *et al.*, *ibid*). Jones (1998) questioned how likeability takes form in the consumer perspectives, whether it is entertainment, trustworthiness or cleverness or any other potential forms. As understood from previous research there is more to ad likeability than pure entertainment, suggested by the Jones statement and, consumers tend to like the ads better when they perceive some form of relevancy.

Another research, investigating the best copy tests, individual measures, and how predictive they can be for commercials in the recall and persuasion context, measured ad likeability with single-item 5 points scale using “I liked it very much”, “I liked it”, “I neither liked it nor disliked it”, “I disliked it”, and “I disliked it very much” and found that there is a strong relationship between ad likeability and sales (Haley and Baldinger, 1991). The potential impact on sales might be associated with the ad likeability and consumer engagement relationship. As likeability and positive attitudes toward the ad increases, sales might be positively affected through engagement. Although, as stated previously, neither sales nor ad recall are included in this study these findings suggest

more justifications to investigate likeability and its relation to other advertisement creativity outcomes.

Shavitt *et al.* (1998) remarked that although previous researchers have found that public has negative attitudes toward advertising in general, their study, which investigates public's perception and attitudes toward advertisements, revealed that the general public feel entertained by advertisements and have more favourable attitudes. Authors assumed this was because public found advertisements to be informative and useful. In this research likeability of the ads were measured with single-item 5-point Likert-type scale (strongly agree/disagree) as overall attitude towards the ads (Shavitt *et al.*, *ibid*). This research changed the recent, common belief that public does not have positive evaluations for advertising. Another similar point was indicated by Kaiser and Song (2009) that although it is commonly assumed that consumers do not like advertising “there is little evidence for readers disliking advertising” in magazines and, in fact, their study showed that magazine advertising is mostly appreciated by consumers (p.293).

In relation to public views of advertising, it is found that the effort put in to advertisements can be beneficial as consumers “make positive inferences” and view the effort positively (Modig *et al.*, 2014, p.149). According to the literature that has been discussed so far, when ads are meaningful and relevant consumers have positive attitudes towards them. When those ads are also novel they capture consumer attention, as well as scoring highly for likeability. Thus, the literature suggests that advertising creativity can be a factor enhancing both the attention and the positive feelings of consumers.

Stone *et al.* (2000) concluded the debate for likeability by stating that, although it is much of a general measure when ads are liked, they are more likely to be noticed and remembered. Likeability is worth further research in order to have a better understanding of consumer perceptions. Caution must be taken as it is observed that it is risky for research agenda to rely solely on likeability as it might be misinforming (Jones, 1998) since likeability represents only one part of attitude towards the ad (Klein, 1991). In order to overcome this risk, ad likeability should be measured as a sum of different sub-factors adopted from the literature. Further information regarding the likeability measurement items are discussed in the Methodology chapter.



### **3.5 Engagement**

#### **3.5.1 Introduction**

This sub-section focuses on engagement as an ultimate response to advertising creativity. An introduction explains the meaning of engagement response. Secondly, engagement and its types are reviewed in relation to advertising creativity and the previously discussed consumer responses. The discussion of engagement's importance is followed by a review of previous measurements of the response.

There has been continuing endeavour to define and measure consumer engagement by the Advertising Research Foundation, the American Association of Advertising Agencies, and the Association of National Advertisers (Brodie *et al.*, 2011). That is, perhaps, related to its importance since “the advertising needs to break through and be engaged by the viewer” (Kover, 1995, p.605). However, according to Calder *et al.* (2009) “many practitioners and academics do not agree on what engagement is” (p.321). There is also deficiency and a lack of agreement in explaining the work of engagement and its effects (Woodard, 2006; Vivek *et al.*, 2012).

What causes engagement to lack “clarity and consensus regarding the appropriate definition, forms, dimensionality, and thus operationalization” is the scarcity of exploratory studies (Hollebeek, 2011, p.790). Perhaps this is caused by the various definitions of engagement provided by advertisers and researchers (Spielmann and Richard, 2013). Even if there is no consensus about what constitutes engagement it is still possible to have an understanding of the term by looking at various definitions in the existing literature. A discussion of the authors' definition of engagement is followed by the importance and measurement of engagement as a consumer response to advertising creativity.

#### **3.5.2 Definition of Engagement**

Even though different advertisers and authors cite engagement “as a crucial variable in the success of ad campaigns” (Gluck, 2012, p.2), it still lacks a common and standard definition within the marketing industry (Nyilasy *et al.*, 2011; Vivek *et al.*, 2012; Hollebeek, 2011). Calder *et al.* (2009) states it is difficult to go beyond the existing

“loose descriptions” of engagement (p.322). One of those loose descriptions could be that of Rappoport (2007): “Engagement is more than ‘I know you’. In its ideal form it is about bonding, shared meaning, and identification” (p.138). This section reviews various definitions of engagement and other related terms and then describes the concept of consumer engagement in relation to the objectives of this current research.

Academic studies investigating engagement are “only emerging in the marketing literature (Hollebeek, 2011, p.789). The term started to develop mostly after 2005 (Brodie *et al.*, 2013) and “empirically, engagement is rarely operationalized” (Spielmann and Richard, 2013, p.500). Since that time, engagement has replaced the terms “involvement” and “participation” in explaining the consumer related interactions (Brodie *et al.*, 2011, p.254). However, although engagement has been increasingly used in the literature recently, it is still less studied, and less known how this term differs from other similar terms such as “participation and involvement” (Brodie *et al.*, 2013, p.105). As a result of the interchangeable use of these different terms the distinction among their meanings remains generally unrevealed as they are considered as “more synonyms than distinct constructs” (Spielmann and Richard, 2013, p.500).

One way in which engagement may differ from participation and involvement is suggested to be caused by the “existence of focal interactive customer experiences with specific engagement objects (e.g., a brand)” (Brodie *et al.*, 2011, p.257). An alternative explanation for the difference between involvement and engagement is made in an investigation of the effects of commitment, involvement, and trust on engaged and loyal customer relationships (Bowden, 2009). In this study, it is argued that there is a distinction between involvement and engagement because commitment and trust together with involvement are the processes that form engagement. However, the conceptualisation of engagement with these processes in Bowden’s study is more of a description of how to retain existing customers, as well as acquiring new ones, through those processes rather than a framework for a more comprehensive understanding of engagement. In fact, Bowden (*ibid*), herself, stated that the conceptual framework “traces the temporal development of loyalty as customers progress from being new to a service brand to becoming repeat purchasers” (p.71). Therefore, this investigation of

engagement is explained through the loyalty of customers, rather than focusing on through which effects, and how, customers become engaged.

Engagement and involvement might be interrelated concepts. For example, Zaichkowsky (1994) considered involvement as an antecedent of engagement and described personal involvement as “a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests” (p.342). Similarly, Andrews *et al.* (1990) considered involvement as “an individual, internal state of arousal with intensity, direction, and persistence properties” of the individual consumer determining how consumers respond to the stimuli for example, advertisements, products (p.28). A more recent study described customer engagement with participation as “the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an organization's offerings or organizational activities” (Vivek *et al.*, 2012, p.133). For the purpose of this study, we can adapt Vivek's description of customer engagement and define *advertising engagement* as “*the intensity of an individual's participation in and connection with an advertisement*”.

Another recent study reviewing the literature of engagement defined customer brand engagement as “the level of an individual customer's motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterised by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct brand interactions” (Hollebeek, 2011, p.790). While consumers become engaged with brands, as suggested, they could also engage with advertisements as a result of the communication process between consumers and the brand or companies. In this communication process, when consumers are exposed to advertisements, they are not only exposed to the “media formats” they are also exposed to the “visual and artistic aspects of the ads” and, in fact, they become involved with the advertising creative (Spielmann and Richard, 2013, p.501). Thus, the Spielmann and Richard (op. cit.) study conceptualised overall advertising involvement as “a second order construct composed of message involvement, media involvement, and creative involvement” (p.501).

Advertising continuously aims to engage actively and enjoyably with consumers (Wang and Calder, 2006). In fact, the relation of engagement to advertising depends on two factors. The first reason is engagement's impact on communication effectiveness, and

the second reason is the need of advertisers to receive accountability by increasing the engagement of consumers (Wang, 2006). The following discussion reviews these factors in detail.

If engagement with consumers is not achieved, it means that communication process has not been effective and the work of advertisers is not successful. In an advertising context, Wang (*ibid*) stated that engagement is “not a direct indicator of advertising results”, rather it is the purpose of advertising (p.366). Advertisers aim for effective communications and, therefore, they look for ways to engage consumers with advertisements. This is in accordance with the Bernardin and Kemp-Robertson (2008) study in which they claim that consumers, or as they prefer to refer to them “people”, should come “first, front, and center” in marketing and be more engaged with, instead of being ignored in exchange for business driven results (p.135). This is similar to what has been discussed regarding the perception differences of consumers and advertisers. Advertising practitioners’ motives are dependent on business objectives and, as a result, this might be preventing ads from communicating and engaging with consumers.

In a recent study by Gambetti *et al.* (2012) investigating consumer-brand engagement, one of the informants stated that engagement is the “participation to the brand which means the consumer somehow manipulates, possesses, and acts the brand; so the brand is transformed, it’s not passive anymore, it’s acted by the consumer” (p.669). In order to achieve engagement with consumers, marketers need to “get into the lives of their consumers, activating them emotionally and especially physically, and establishing with them a deep and authentic relationship” (Gambetti *et al.*, *ibid*, p.683).

Young (2000) stressed the importance of engaging with the consumers as “active participants” and “leaving something to the viewers’ imagination” instead of considering consumers as “passive viewers” (p.21). According to this view, one can assume creativity in advertising might engage consumers with the divergence and relevance dimensions, which could activate consumers to process the ad information and engage them with new and meaningful information offering. In fact, it is suggested that engagement is one of the factors to which “many of the effects on consumer responses to creative advertising relate” (Sasser and Koslow, 2008, p.15). Although not all of the literature on advertising creativity has been related to engagement, researchers

have proposed the possible relationship by suggesting the interaction between different advertising creativity dimensions and engagement.

### ***3.5.2.1 Engagement and Advertising Creativity***

It is common to expect engagement to be emotionally driven. However, when the emotions are evoked, what drives these to engagement and how this happens has been associated with different aspects by researchers. Specifically, Sasser and Koslow (2008) stated creativity with “originality and appropriateness” could generate engagement through evoking emotions, whereas Wang (2006) associated engagement with relevance (p.14). Likewise, Rappoport (2007) claimed that engagement is a new model in advertising that has focus on two significant ideas, which are the relevance to, and the emotional connection between, consumers and brands.

In relation to emotions and engagement, an additional creativity dimension is assumed to be related to engagement. Woodard (2006) associated emotions to the other dimension of advertising creativity, which is the divergence, and suggested that, if emotions evoke engagement, it has a higher possibility with divergence. Wang (2006) also suggested engagement to be achieved with “surprises or novelty in advertisements” (p.357) because they are unexpected and unpredictable they will engage consumers. This is supported by Ang and Low (2000), who stated consumers engage in more information processing with “unexpected information” (p.839). Accordingly, it is expected that the relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement is positive. Therefore, this research suggests that;

H6: Advertising Creativity has a positive effect on Engagement.

On a fairly new concept that has not received much attention in academic marketing studies on advertising, unlike creativity, it might be more valuable to agree that engagement “hinges on emotions and relationships” (Rappoport, 2007, p.138). However, how these emotions and relationships are leading to engagement of consumers should be examined with empirical studies that can reveal the association between creativity and engagement. The majority of studies concerning engagement are based “in practise rather than in theory or empirical research” (Bowden, 2009, p.65).

Therefore, empirical studies should be called for in order to study the relationships between these factors and to have a better understanding of the conceptualisation of engagement.

### **3.5.2.2 *Engagement and Other Responses***

Following the literature, the relationship between engagement and related creativity factors has been discussed. Sasser and Koslow (2008) furthermore advised that although the power of creativity may “grant consumers license to deeply engage”, creative incentives still might be ignored by consumers since they have control over with what to engage (p.15). One obstacle in achieving engagement is the consumers who are “unwilling to engage in excessive mental activities” (Lai and Huang, 2011, p.370). Therefore, one can question whether creativity would generate engagement each and every time.

With respect to creativity, Heath (2009) suggested that it could provide emotive encouragement and attention for engagement to take place in the same advertisement processing. Advertising is expected to elicit both attention and engagement by most marketers and their expectation could be fulfilled by creativity with “new and interesting message” (Heath, *ibid*, p.71).

Further on this point, Heath (op. cit.) quoted the *Longman Dictionary of the English Language* for a definition of engagement, which is “to hold the attention of; engross” (p.62) and raised the question of “might attention still be an important component of engagement” (p.67). His main inference considering the attention and engagement relationship was the “dominance of attention” in engagement definition (p.62). His investigation led him to define attention as “the amount of conscious thinking going on when an advertisement is being processed”, and engagement as “subconscious feeling going on when an advertisement is being processed” independently of attention (p.70).

After defining attention and engagement for his research purposes, he answered his question. He stated that these two concepts do not overlap, meaning that it is not necessary for ads to generate high attention when they are engaged with and/or to engage when the attention is high (Heath, 2009). In this study, Heath (op. cit.) suggested

that engagement and attention are independent of each other in TV ads. While his study was conducted for TV ads, it would be interesting to see how these variables affect each other in creative print ads.

By way of contrast, according to Garland (2013) engagement is achieved through sustained attention. In relation to capturing consumer attention, it is noted “the ability to breakthrough and drive an attitudinal change” is concealed in engagement (Gluck, 2012, p.4). Another conflicting view with respect to how attention and engagement are related to each other and on the contrary to the claims that attention is achieved before the engagement is shared by Wang (2006). He stated that when consumers are highly engaged, and when this engagement is reinforced by connectedness, it has the potential to attract consumers’ attention. According to this, whether attention leads to engagement, or engaged consumers pay attention to ads, is one subject to be further researched in order to finalise the discussion.

According to this discussion, besides the suggested positive relationship between advertising creativity and engagement (H6), attention is also expected to be positively related to engagement. Attention’s impact on Engagement caused by this relationship can only be partial as there is already a relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement. In this case, Attention becomes a mediator between Advertising Creativity and Engagement which contributes to the impact of Advertising Creativity on Engagement. Therefore, this research suggests that;

*H7: Attention positively and partially mediates the positive relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement.*

Engagement might also be associated with the positive attitude of consumers towards ads, the consumer likeability, considering the relation of emotions to engagement. If emotions evoke engagement, the likeability that is the expected outcome of creativity might be leading to engagement and, in fact, as consumers’ likeability increases they can become more engaged. In other words, likeability has a positive impact on the relationship between advertising creativity and engagement. This impact can only be partial as there is already a positive relationship between Advertising Creativity and

Engagement. Therefore, as a mediator, Likeability contributes to the impact of Advertising Creativity on Engagement. This research suggests that;

*H8: Likeability positively and partially mediates the positive relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement.*

This section reviewed engagement in relation to potential other responses. Consequently, it can be concluded that advertising creativity and the responses to it, such as, attention, likeability, and engagement, might be operating collectively in forming consumer perceptions.

### **3.5.2.3 Types of Engagement**

Previous sections reviewed various definitions and discussed different expectations of engagement in relation to other communication elements. Besides these, there have also been opinions about the types of engagement. According to the literature review, multi-dimensionality of engagement is observed to be dependent on the context of the studies conducted, as stated also by Brodie *et al.* (2011). The most commonly stated types are cognitive, affective (emotional), and behavioural engagement (Bowden, 2009; Mollen and Wilson, 2009; MarketingNPV, 2008; Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek *et al.*, 2012; Brodie *et al.*, 2013).

Cognitive involvement is described as “the individual’s informational processing activities and the achievement of idealization states” (Zaichkowsky, 1994, p.60). Emotional engagement is when consumers make connections with the stimulus consciously or unconsciously, and behavioural engagement is when there are tangible benefits and “behavioural relations between consumer and the company” (MarketingNPV, 2008, p.2). On one hand cognitive and emotional engagement are related to individual’s experiences and feelings (Vivek *et al.*, 2012). On the other hand, it was also reported that “emotional engagement is more popular and behavioural engagement is more important” (MarketingNPV, *ibid*, p.1).

In a research investigating the practitioners’ beliefs about how advertising works, it is stated that engagement, whether emotionally or rationally, is formed after the drawn



attention creates awareness (Nyilasy and Reid, 2009). Accordingly, the cognitive and emotional types of engagement could be achieved in the same way, although they are quoted as different types. Whereas the behavioural engagement could be purchase intention of consumers, which in many cases effectiveness varies accordingly.

Although effectiveness has been mentioned with engagement to put emphasis on the importance of engagement in communications, the effectiveness is dependent on the objectives and types of the advertisements, and also the creative brief. Together with purchase interest, effectiveness might be focusing more on numbers as sales. However, engagement is thought to be more than simply numbers or purchasing, it is more of a state of mind according to the literature. It is stated that a more popular trend nowadays is to reflect on engagement in media exposure related concerns, instead of focusing on only effectiveness (Calder and Malthouse, 2005). The main aims of this current study concern consumer perceptions and responses, rather than how they behave with regards to purchase intentions.

According to the review of engagement literature it is observed that there are different names and definitions of engagement. This research conceptualises engagement as the consumers' positive state of minds that result from their perceptions of, and attention to, and likeability for, creativity, when they are exposed to creative advertisements. One aspect that has impact on consumer engagement is the avoidance behaviour. As discussed previously, viewers' avoidance of advertising has been a problem for marketers (see 1.1 *Background* for a discussion). Ideally, advertising messages are expected to be delivered when advertisements meet the viewers. Ad avoidance not only causes the messages to be missed by the viewers but also hinders engagement. Although creativity is considered as a solution to avoidance behaviour viewers find a way to avoid advertising when they wish to (Prendergast *et al.*, 2010). Thus, viewers' ad avoidance is an independent factor in their processing of advertising. Therefore, it is expected that ad avoidance acts as a negative moderator in the relationship of attention and likeability to engagement. This research suggests that;

H9: Ad avoidance negatively moderates the relationship between Attention and Engagement.

H10: Ad avoidance negatively moderates the relationship between Likeability and Engagement.

### 3.5.3 Importance of Engagement

Although engagement may be “a construct not yet fully developed in marketing” (Vivek *et al.*, 2012, p.127) and definitions vary with the context and methodological approaches, the importance of engagement is widely acknowledged (MarketingNPV, 2008). Wang (2006) found that engagement was crucial for different aspects of advertising, such as, effectiveness. Similarly, Calder *et al.* (2009) believed engagement might help advertisers to differentiate themselves in the clutter and that it is related with advertising effectiveness. Consumers who highly engage are more open to ad exposures and, this creates the chance for more effectiveness (Calder *et al.*, *ibid*).

In fact, it is suggested that instead of employing engagement as only a tool, brands can also enjoy potential benefits of “positioning their marketing strategies around the concept of engagement” (MarketingNPV, 2008). Similarly, it is claimed that a better understanding of engagement would prevent marketers from focusing on short term market opportunities and seeing engagement only as a “trick” (Gambetti *et al.*, 2012, p.663). This means that engagement can be defined and measured as a comprehensive concept in marketing campaigns in order to achieve success.

Despite the comment by Gambetti *et al.* (*ibid*) it is suggested that engagement could also create short term opportunities with the influence on consumers to receive communications from the brands that offer “compelling experiences” (Rappoport, 2007, p.138). In relation to this point, Rossiter and Percy (1991) stated the importance of the advertising agencies’ ability to follow a “more compelling (informational) or engaging (transformational) way” in developing advertisements (p.100).

While these points of view indicate the benefits of engagement, the lack of it may cause challenges. For example, Dunay (2013) pointed out that the lack of engagement means that brands are missing out on opportunities to connect with consumers and, when the communication process is enhanced by engagement of consumers, it results in more effectiveness. Moreover, Smith *et al.* (2007) claimed that when ads fail to engage, they

also fail to be effective. This suggests that while effective employment of engagement provides additional benefits to brands, the lack of it becomes problematic because of the positive relationship between engagement and communication process.

The lack of engagement might be caused by the increased consumer experience as advertising viewers. Due to their “lifetime experience with advertising” (Haberland and Dacin, 1992, p.819) consumers become aware of the intrusive nature of advertising (Kim *et al.*, 2010). Also, they become more selective in what they attend to and like, which increases “novelty seeking” (Hirschman and Wallendorf, 1982, p.26) in their experiences. Consequently, they develop filters to avoid advertisements by paying less attention and establish less positive feelings. Therefore, it is suggested that as consumers get more experienced as viewers of creative advertising they develop higher expectations, and, thus, become unwilling to engage unless expectations are met. This research suggests that;

*H11: Consumer Experience moderates the relationship between Attention and Engagement.*

*H12: Consumer Experience moderates the relationship between Likeability and Engagement.*

Another importance factor of engagement is reported to be associated with recall. Higher engagement develops higher recall (Wang, 2006) and this leads to advertisement effectiveness (Heath *et al.*, 2006). Recall has also been associated with some creativity studies in advertising with regards to creativity’s effect on better, or higher, recall as an indicator of effectiveness (for example, Sheinin *et al.*, 2011; Till and Baack, 2005; Du Plessis, 2008; Baack, Wilson, Till, 2008; Stone *et al.*, 2000). However, as purchase intention and effectiveness are not included in this current study’s concerns, recall also is not considered as one of the variables. This is due to the nature of recall, which is a memory-based effect while this current study aims to investigate consumers’ immediate perceptions of, and responses to, advertisements at the time of the exposure. Therefore, although engagement has been related to recall previously, it is not included in this research.

More broadly it is stated that engagement is “the quintessence of what we ultimately

want from advertising metrics, including those used in copy testing, as well as those used in media measurement” (Woodard, 2006, p.353). While advertising creativity is referred to as being the ultimate task in advertising, it is no doubt critical to understand whether or how creativity is impactful on consumer engagement, which is expected to be the eventual outcome of consumers’ responses to advertising creativity (for example, Woodard 2006; Sasser and Koslow, 2008; Wang, 2006).

#### **3.5.4 Measurement of Engagement**

The engagement literature provides a variety of definitions and conceptualisations. Without doubt the way engagement is described in these studies affects its model and measurement. It is emphasised that when there are various scales and different outcomes of these scales, it is important for the researchers to find the most suitable and applicable scale for their research (Zaichkowsky, 1994). Considering the literature review, engagement in this study is regarded as a connected feeling of consumers towards the advertisements to which they are exposed, and a state of mind that operates both cognitively and affectively. Therefore, the measurement scale for engagement should be simple but still let cognition and affection be measured collectively (Zaichkowsky, *ibid*).

Spielmann and Richard (2013) stated that “there is no scale to empirically test the level of advertising engagement” (p.501). However, Wang (2006) alternatively investigated advertising engagement and its impact on message effects and measured engagement with two seven-point scale items. One of these ratings of engagement level is the perceived engagement level when exposed to the advertisement and was adopted from Lacznia, Kempf, and Muehling (1999). The second is the relevance of the context in the ads. Both of these were measured using a 1= “not engaged at all/not at all” and 7= “extremely engaged/a lot” scale (p.361).

A different measurement was adopted by Spielmann and Richard (2013) based on their seeking of an empirical advertisement engagement measurement. The authors conceptualised overall advertising involvement as a “combination of the three types of involvement” (message, media, and creative involvement) that they believed to be a better representation, especially with the “necessity to study them together when testing

consumer involvement with ads” (p.503). The measurement scales in this study were adopted from the literature, namely ten items to measure message involvement adopted from Zaichkowsky (1994) and Baker and Lutz (2000). These were ‘Important’, ‘Of concern to you’, ‘Relevant’, ‘Meaning a lot to you’, ‘Valuable’, ‘Beneficial’, ‘Mattering to you’, ‘Essential’, ‘Significant to you’, and ‘Motivating’. Six items to measure media involvement were adopted from Lee (2000) and Brunel and Nelson (2001) and these were: ‘Paying attention to the content’, ‘Concentrating on the content’, ‘Thinking about the content’, ‘Focusing on the content’, ‘Spending effort looking at the content’, ‘Carefully reading the content’. There were four items to measure creative involvement adopted from Petty and Cacioppo (1986) and Lacznia *et al.*, (1989), namely, ‘Taking note of the visual aspects of the ad’, ‘Focusing on the colours and/or images of the ad’, ‘Noting some specific colours or images in the ad’, ‘Paying close attention to the ad as a piece of art’.

It is stated that such matters as “brand recognition and recall studies, association techniques, customer satisfaction surveys, and the like all help marketers determine how consumers feel about a product, service, or brand” and are the ways in which marketers measure emotional engagement (MarketingNPV, 2008, p.1). However, it is also remarked that, especially in advertising, these measures do not provide valuable insight (MarketingNPV, *ibid*).

For instance, for behavioural engagement, all of the pre-or-post sale activities can be measures such as “calling customer service or recommending a product” (MarketingNPV, 2008, p.2). However, not all measures are operative for each study. Because of the “non-linear activities” with consumers, it is “impossible to adopt a one-size-fits-all formula” (MarketingNPV, *ibid*, p.2). Since “the object of involvement ranges from activities and issues to advertisements and purchases, no single scale can measure all kinds of involvement” (Day *et al.*, 1995, p.72). Therefore, it is advisable that, before measuring engagement, one needs to clearly define their expectations of the term engagement.

Zaichkowsky (1985) investigated personal involvement that is described as “a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests” and then developed a semantic, differential measurement scale, Personal Involvement

Inventory (PII), consisting of bipolar adjectives to evaluate the involvement for products (p.342). In 1994, Zaichkowsky revisited PII with the aim of improving the scale and proving that it is applicable, valid, and reliable for use in advertising research. While the former research measurement was employed with 20 items in the scale, due to the criticism and concerns, items were reduced to ten in the latter scale “without significantly reducing reliability” (p.60). These items were “important/unimportant, boring/interesting, relevant/irrelevant, exciting/unexciting, means nothing/means a lot to me, appealing/unappealing, fascinating/mundane, worthless/valuable, involving/uninvolving, and not needed/needed” and were measured with seven-point rating scales (Zaichkowsky, 1994, p.70). These items were divided into two subscales according to their ‘cognitive’ (important, relevant, valuable, means a lot to me, and needed) and ‘affective’ (interesting, appealing, fascinating, exciting, and involving) aspects (Zaichkowsky, *ibid*, p.62).

Zaichkowsky (1994) remarked that PII is a useful tool for academic researchers that they could benefit (p.68). “If involvement is perceived as the harmonization of an ad within a context and with a consumer, then advertising involvement may be an effective method of measuring the occurrence of engagement” (Spielmann and Richard, 2013, p.504). It can be suggested that since engagement operates within both cognitive and affective domains, the employment of Personal Involvement Inventory is suitable for the current study with respect to research objectives and the engagement definition.

### **3.6 Summary of Literature Review**

This section provides a summary of the literature review chapters. The first literature chapter (*Advertising Creativity*) has presented an overview of advertising creativity. It started with general descriptions of creativity in psychology and advertising context. Then, various advertising creativity dimensions were reviewed. The significance of creativity in advertising was discussed with respects to practitioner and consumer perspectives. Lastly, different approaches to measure advertising creativity were presented.

The second literature chapter (*Consumer Responses to Advertising Creativity*) started with a review of the Hierarchy of Effects model. It presented consumer responses to

creative advertising in relation to the Hierarchy of Effects model in order to understand advertising creativity. The literature review revealed three specific consumer responses, namely, attention, likeability and engagement. These were discussed with regards to each response's definition, importance and measurement in the light of the literature.

Advertising creativity is the “process of producing and developing advertising ideas” (El-Murad and West, 2004, p.188). Creative advertising is appreciated for the opportunity to offer unusualness to the viewers and to stand out in the advertising world. In fact, it is described as being a “key success factor” (Wang *et al.*, 2013). The “truly creative advertising” is believed to have high originality and appropriateness (Sasser *et al.*, 2013, p.309). The majority of advertising creativity definitions took newness, freshness and originality as central factors and added appropriateness, relevance or meaningfulness as another necessary component, for example, Haberland and Dacin, 1992; Ang and Low, 2000; Smith and Yang, 2004; Sheinin *et al.*, 2011.

It is suggested that advertising creativity is “multifaceted” (Wang *et al.*, 2013, p.52) and the literature indicates two main dimensions to help to understand advertising creativity. These are divergence, a crucial component and, since it is not sufficient alone, relevance as the second (Runco and Jaeger, 2012). The first dimension is determined by five factors, flexibility, originality, elaboration, synthesis, and artistic value. Relevance has three types, ad-to-consumer relevance and brand-to-consumer relevance and ad-to-brand relevance (Smith *et al.*, 2007).

Creativity is in the “eye-of-the-beholder” and this raises a variety of views in understanding and judging creativity (Reid *et al.*, 1998, p.3; Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.820; Goldenberg *et al.*, 1999, p.1496; White and Smith, 2001, p.33). While academics investigated theoretical explanations of creativity in psychological studies and how advertising practitioners define creativity, advertising creatives produced creativity in the advertising agencies with limitations of business objectives and organisational values. It is noted that the advertising viewers' perceptions, free from boundaries of industry context, are rarely focused on.

Since advertising aids marketing as a means of communication with consumers, it is necessary to understand consumers' perceptions. In order to understand the

communication effects of advertising creativity, the way in which creativity operates should be understood (Moriarty, 1983). As advertising creativity is highly valued by advertising practitioners, this current study explores it, to see if the general public appreciates, or even notices it, and how they perceive and respond to creative ads. The importance of advertising creativity research depends on different perceptions of the concept as well as the need to reach to and understand consumers. Besides common measurements of advertising creativity by practitioners and experts, it would be valuable to have a measurement for consumer perceptions of advertising creativity.

If the advertising creativity is perceived and also appreciated by consumers the literature suggests that they should pay more attention to, and have positive attitudes towards it. These responses are expected ultimately to lead the viewers to engage with the creative advertisements. Although “there is no accepted theory of how advertising works” (Moriarty, 1983, p.45), extant models and theories can guide researchers for more and possibly better investigations of advertising effects. This research is conducted through the guidance of the HOE model as to understand how responses are formed when exposed to creative advertisements. By investigating these creative advertising effects, the perceived advertising creativity and its potential value for consumers can be studied so that advertising practitioners and academics become closer to consumers and gain a better understanding of their perceptions. As acknowledged by Zinkhan and Fornell (1985) “to understand how advertising works” the responses of the viewers should be investigated (p.447).

Advertising creativity studies are important for practitioners as well as the academics because the needs and expectations of the viewers should be taken into account when designing advertising. Given that there are perception differences in how practitioners and consumers perceive advertising creativity, it affects the performance of the ads in terms of the unmet potential in reaching consumers. Once viewers’ perceptions of advertising creativity are understood, this may improve advertising creativity and can result in more desired outcomes in advertising both on practitioners’ and academics’ side.



## **4. Research Framework**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapters presented a review of the literature on advertising creativity, its definitions, various dimensions and importance on advertising effects, followed by a review of previous measurements of advertising creativity. After that, consumer responses to advertising creativity were reviewed with regards to their definitions, importance, and measurements. This chapter elaborates on the research objectives, literature underpinning and the conceptual research framework.

Drawing from the literature, it is clear that there is a paucity of research about the consumer perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity. This study makes an original contribution to that knowledge with a deeper understanding of consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity in terms of attention, liking and, ultimately, their levels of engagement towards it. The relationship between consumers' perceptions of creativity and their responses to creative advertising is conceptualised with a framework in this section.

This chapter, first, addresses the research problem that should be resolved and then states the research objectives in order to investigate the problem. After the presentation of the research objectives, the theoretical framework is presented and discussed with reference to research variables. Lastly, a summary of the hypotheses that were introduced in the previous chapters is demonstrated in the light of the research framework.

### **4.2 Research Problem and Questions**

Advertising industry regards creativity as a 'must'. In order to understand if advertising creativity deserves its reputation it is important for academic researchers to investigate how consumers perceive advertising creativity. Marketers will be able to interpret how consumers respond to creative ads in terms of consumer perceptions by understanding the attention, likeability and the engagement they develop for the advertisements.

Although it is not easy to uncover peoples' real perceptions good research questions can enhance perception investigations and sound measurement items and appropriate scales can improve the accuracy of the data with the appropriate methodological choices. The research questions should be formed carefully so that they represent researchable and precise investigations that will “generate knowledge that matters” and “has the potential to make a significant theoretical contribution” (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2013, p.12).

The research questions are:

- Do consumers perceive advertising creativity in the same way as expected by the practitioners?
- If not, how do they perceive advertising creativity?
- How do they respond to advertising creativity?
- Are consumers' responses to advertising creative advertising affected by their perceptions of advertising creativity?

### **4.3 Research Objectives**

This research investigates creativity in print advertising. It aims to reveal the perceptions of consumers with regard to creative print advertising, their responses to it, and the factors that influence them with regard to creative advertising and its dimensions.

The research objectives are:

- To analyse how consumers perceive creative advertising and its various dimensions;
- To examine the relationships/interrelationships between the dimensions/factors as perceived by consumers;
- To examine how consumers respond to creative advertising and its various dimensions; and
- To investigate the relationships and interrelationships between the different types of consumer responses to creative advertising.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Figure 5 for details

#### **4.3.1 Conceptual Framework**

Conceptualising a subject matter is the “abstract thinking involving the mental representation of an idea” (MacInnis, 2011, p.140). In order to understand consumer perceptions of and responses to creative advertising one needs to conceptualise the related elements.

It is stated that a clearly described conceptual framework is “a characteristic of a good quantitative survey” (Punch, 2003, p.5). The process of developing a conceptual framework involves “understanding a situation or problem abstractly by identifying patterns or connections and key underlying properties” (MacInnis, *ibid*, p.140).

Based on the review of the literature, the conceptual framework was developed to illustrate the hypothesised relationships between advertising creativity dimensions and their expected outcomes. The discussion of the conceptual framework can be best presented using the Hierarchy of Effects (HOE) model. The following sub-sections review research variables under the HOE stages that have been previously discussed. There are three stages and these are represented by advertising creativity dimensions and responses.

##### ***4.3.1.1 Cognitive Stage***

The first HOE stage is the cognitive stage. The cognitive stage comprises “the intellectual, mental, or ‘rational’ states” (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961, p.60). In this stage, consumers are assumed to think about the stimulus to which they are exposed. The “mental activity” of the consumers occurs in this first stage (Barry and Howard, 1990, p.8).

Cognition here represents “what the receiver knows or perceives about the particular” object exposed (Belch and Belch, 2009, p.160). Consistent with the creative advertising literature, it is expected at this stage for consumers to perceive the creativity dimensions, divergence, relevance, and cleverness with the associated factors.

#### ***4.3.1.2 Affective Stage***

The second stage in the HOE model is the affective stage. The affective stage comprises the “‘emotional’ or ‘feeling’ states” of consumers (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961, p.60). Consumers generate their emotional variables and feelings at this stage (Barry and Howard, 1990). It should be noted that a person’s cognitive and affective system can be “closely interwoven” and the difference between these two may depend on the operationalisation of the variables (Barry and Howard, 1990, p.9). Specifically, for this research, it is conceptualised that perceived dimensions of advertising creativity in the cognitive stage will form affective stage responses.

Jansson-Boyd (2010) claimed that “advertising relies upon capturing consumers’ attention” (p.97), and creative advertisements are no exceptions. When consumers perceive creativity in the advertisements to which they are exposed, it is expected that they will allocate their attention on the stimuli as a way of showing their interest. They are also expected to have “feelings or affect level (like or dislike)” for the stimuli (Belch and Belch, 2009, p.161).

#### ***4.3.1.3 Conative Stage***

The last stage in the HOE model is the conative stage. The conative stage comprises the “‘striving’ states, relating to the tendency to treat objects as positive or negative goals” (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961, p.60). These also include intentions that can be related to consumption (Barry and Howard, 1990).

In this final stage, consumers are expected to have conative actions towards the object such as “adoption, or rejection” (Belch and Belch, 2009, p.161). Once consumers perceive particular advertisements creative, they are expected to pay more attention to, and have positive feelings towards, the stimuli with which they can engage as viewers. Thus, the engagement of consumers is the last stage in which they respond to the creative advertisements.

The proposed conceptual framework (Figure 5) shows hypothesised relationships among the consumer perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity dimensions.

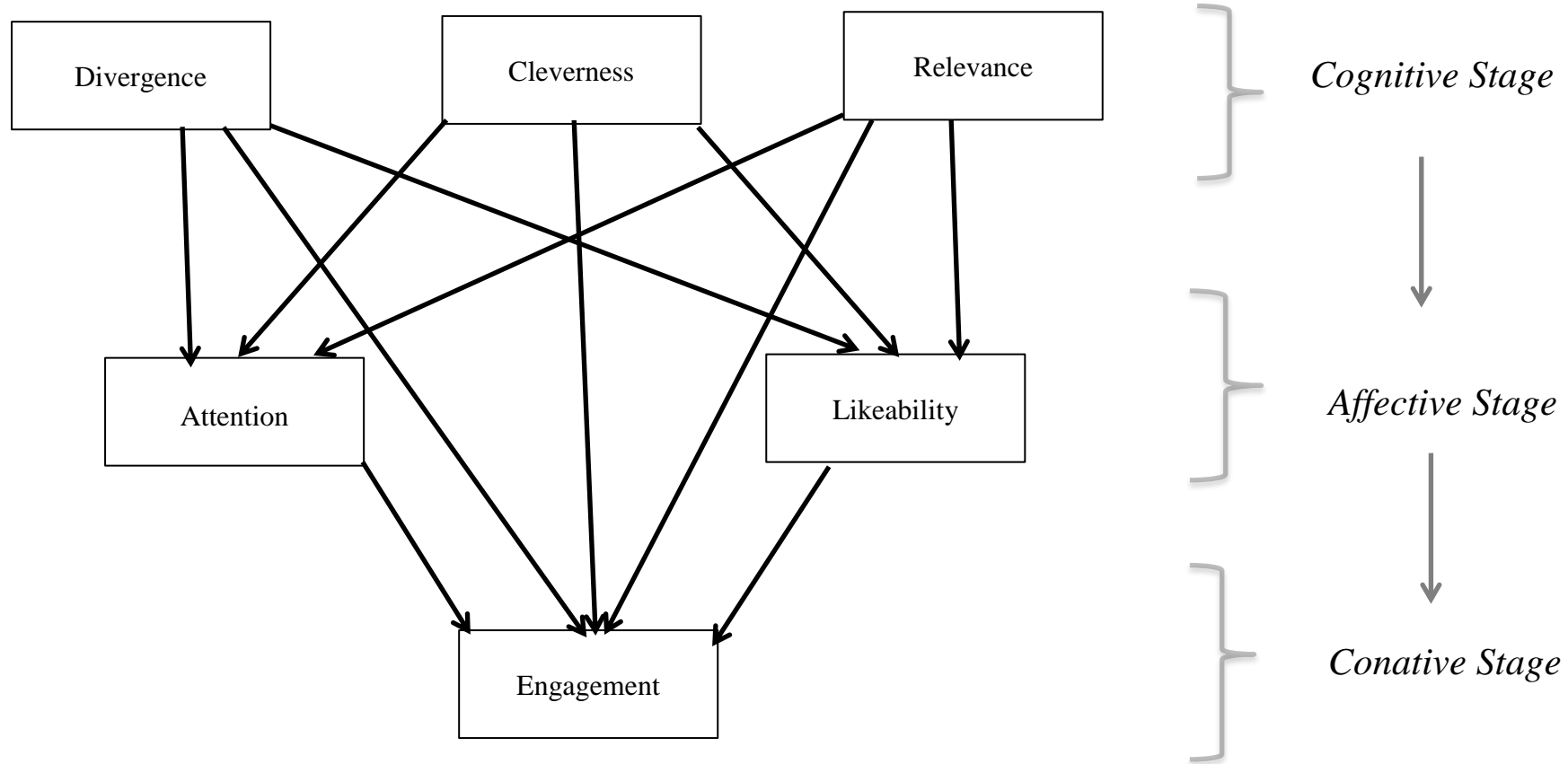


Figure 4 Proposed Research Framework & HOE Stages

#### **4.4 Hypotheses**

The research hypotheses, which are “central to a research design” (Nardi, 2006, p.44) were introduced in the *Advertising Creativity* (2) and *Consumer Responses to Advertising Creativity* (3) chapters. This section re-presents the full set of hypotheses to explain the proposed research framework in relation to the HOE model. Once tested, these help to provide answers to the research questions listed previously.

The first sub-section presents hypotheses for the first conceptual framework and HOE level, the cognitive stage. Secondly, consumer responses to advertising creativity in the second conceptual framework and HOE level are hypothesised as the affective stage. Lastly, second level consumer responses are hypothesised as the conative stage.

##### **4.4.1 Advertising Creativity Perception Hypotheses**

In order to fully understand the consumer perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity it should first be tested whether or not the creativity dimensions are perceived by the viewing public. This is the cognitive stage of the conceptual framework and the HOE model in which the respondents report on their mental activities when exposed to the advertisements.

First, it should be tested whether the dimensions of advertising creativity are measured with sub-factors adopted from the literature.

Initial hypotheses for Divergence and Relevance measurement are:

*H1a: Flexibility is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

*H1b: Originality is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

*H1c: Elaboration is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

*H1d: Synthesis is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

*H1e: Artistic Value is positively related to the Divergence dimension.*

*H2a: Ad to Consumer Relevance is positively related to the Relevance dimension.*

*H2b: Product to Consumer Relevance is positively related to the Relevance dimension.*

*H2c: Ad to Product Relevance is positively related to the Relevance dimension.*

It would be reasonable to expect that advertising that has been judged by professionals to be creative would have the two overarching creativity dimensions, that is, ‘Divergence’, ‘Relevance’. Moreover, it is suggested that since creativity operationalises divergence and relevance together, it additionally requires ‘Cleverness’ to combine and represent these two as one concept thus, creativity is expected to have cleverness as an additional contributing dimension. The initial aim is to test if divergence and relevance operates together with cleverness in order to form advertising creativity. If the proposed creativity dimensions reflect advertising creativity, this might provide further research directions to model advertising creativity with cleverness as another dimension.

The hypotheses for advertising creativity measurement are:

*H3a: Cleverness is positively related to Advertising Creativity.*

*H3b: Divergence is positively related to Advertising Creativity.*

*H3c: Relevance is positively related to Advertising Creativity.*

#### **4.4.2 Creativity Response Hypotheses**

As discussed in the literature review advertising creativity is expected to generate responses from the viewers. There are several directional hypotheses for outcomes of the perceived characteristics of creative advertisements. These outcomes form the second stage of the research framework in which the affective responses are developed.

Consumers’ perception of the information they attend to cognitively will affect their attention (Jansson-Boyd, 2010). Therefore, the higher the creativity scores, the higher will their attention be (Fill *et al.*, 2013). Since cognitive and affective constructs are “closely interwoven” (Barry and Howard, 1990, p.9), perceived characteristics of creative advertisements are also expected to result in higher likeability as an affective construct (Fill, 2013).

Hypotheses 4 and 5 are:

*H4: Advertising creativity has a positive effect on Attention.*

*H5: Advertising creativity has a positive effect on Likeability.*

#### **4.4.3 Second Level Response Hypotheses**

The affective responses formed in stage two of the conceptual framework and the HOE model are expected to result in the ultimate goal of advertising creativity, which is the engagement of consumers with creative advertisements. According to Fill (2013) advertising works to the extent messages create engagement and this is mediated by the viewers' information processing.

The hypotheses for engagement assume that when the viewers perceive advertising creativity dimensions it will draw higher attention and likeability that will engage them as the third and the last stage in the research framework by way of a conative response.

The first engagement hypothesis is directional:

*H6: Advertising creativity has a positive effect on Engagement.*

The next hypotheses state the mediating effects of the affective stage variables Attention and Likeability on the relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement as discussed in section 3.5.2.2 *Engagement and Other Responses*.

Hypotheses 7 and 8 are:

*H7: Attention positively and partially mediates the positive relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement.*

*H8: Likeability positively and partially mediates the positive relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement.*

The following set of hypotheses state the moderator effect of viewers' advertising avoidance. Consumers' tendency to avoid advertisements is expected to weaken the effect of Attention and Likeability on Engagement.

Hypotheses 9 and 10 are:



*H9: Ad Avoidance negatively moderates the relationship between Attention and Engagement.*

*H10: Ad Avoidance negatively moderates the relationship between Likeability and Engagement.*

The last set of hypotheses state the moderator effect of viewers' experience with advertising. Consumers' experience in advertising is expected to weaken the effect of Attention and Likeability on Engagement.

Hypotheses 11 and 12 are:

*H11: Consumer Experience moderates the relationship between Attention and Engagement.*

*H12: Consumer Experience moderates the relationship between Likeability and Engagement.*

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter has introduced the research problem and questions and, then, presented the research objectives. According to the literature review and the research objectives, a theoretical framework has been presented in order to examine the relationships between the research variables. These relationships were represented with hypotheses.

Firstly, measurement hypotheses were proposed regarding the advertising creativity dimensions of *Divergence* and *Relevance*. Next, consumer perception hypotheses were proposed in order to test if advertising creativity is a function of three unique dimensions including *Cleverness*.

In the first response hypotheses, affective response hypotheses were proposed for *Attention* and *Likeability*. Following that, second level response hypotheses of *Engagement* were proposed in order to test if advertising creativity has conative response outcome. Then, the hypotheses for the mediating effects of affective responses on Engagement were introduced. Lastly, the moderating effects of Advertising Avoidance and Experience in advertising were proposed. These hypotheses are expected to explain the relationship between creativity perceptions and responses.

The next chapter presents methodology and research design.

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This research is investigating consumers' perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity. Consistent with the literature, it is acknowledged that when advertisements are deemed to be creative, they are expected to represent the creativity dimensions that will generate responses from the viewers. This chapter presents the methodology with details of research design and strategy.

Research questions and methods should have a good fit (Punch, 2005) and the methods to be used should be specified once the research questions have been formulated (Punch, 2003). The research questions and the hypotheses were explained in the previous chapter; this chapter explains the research philosophy, design, and the methodological approaches that were undertaken in order to fulfil the research objectives. Furthermore, explanations and justifications for undertaking certain approaches are provided.

Next, details of the data collection instrument and research variables with measurement items and scales are presented. Following this, the sampling plan and a brief description of data analysis methods are provided. This is followed by ethical issues considered with respect to the research design.

### **5.2 Research Philosophy and Approach**

The epistemological position of positivism, by the use of existing literature, enables the researcher to develop and test hypotheses with a structured methodological design (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). This design involves mainly “quantitative approaches that use statistics” (Blaxter *et al.*, 2006, p.60). With a positivist philosophy, this research investigates the consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity as a reality that can be observed in a “value-free” way (Saunders *et al.*, 2012, p.114). As an important characteristic of positivist research measurement procedures should be detached from researcher influence in order to achieve an objective identification of causes of behaviour (Solomon *et al.*, 2010).

The positivist research philosophy requires a critical review of the literature in a deductive way that helps to develop a theoretical framework so that the hypotheses can be tested in order to “explain causal relationships” (Saunders *et al.*, 2012, p.125). Therefore, the literature of advertising creativity is reviewed deductively to determine the most appropriate research design that can reveal the relationships between the research variables.

### **5.3 Research Design and Strategy**

The nature of the research objectives for this study is in accordance with the objectives of conclusive research design, namely, “to describe specific phenomena, to test specific hypotheses and to examine specific relationships” (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.72). Based on the required information, research objectives, and the hypotheses that have been previously defined (Malhotra and Birks, 2007), the conclusive research design objectives additionally seek to describe or establish significant relationships, or confirm the existence of these associations with structured questions (Shiu *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, a descriptive research design was adopted through a structured data collection method that involves “question/answer process” (p.233) in order to collect “numeric data to answer research question” (p.51) and test the research hypotheses (Hair *et al.*, 2009).

Besides the research objectives there are other factors that can affect research strategy. These are classified in three groups, which are situational factors, task factors, and respondent factors (Shiu *et al.*, 2009). The situational factors that concern researchers are the resources available at the time of their research, such as the budget and time frame. Some of the factors related to this task are discussed in the *Questionnaire Design* section (5.5.2), while the respondent factors are examined in the *Sampling* section (5.6).

### **5.4 Methodological Approach**

This research is concerned with the problem that there is a paucity of research on consumers’ perceptions of advertising creativity. This is because it is important to gain insights about their views. Although a qualitative approach is suitable when “a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it”,

quantitative methods are more useful when “the problem calls for (a) the identification of factors that influence an outcome, (b) the utility of an intervention, or (c) understanding the best predictors of outcomes” (Creswell, 2009, p.18).

Quantitative methods are valuable when the researcher needs to have precise interpretations about the researched subject. That is because a quantitative approach enables the researcher to “understand and resolve” the research problem by a correctly designed survey (Shiu, *et al.*, 2009, p.64). Surveys are often conducted with representative respondent samples that can yield “relatively large-scale and representative sets of data”, mostly in order to test theories (Blaxter *et al.*, 2006, p.64).

Surveys aim to “get consistent answers to consistent questions” by underpinning standardisation (Blaxter *et al.*, 2006, p.76). More specifically for this study, the survey method is widely accepted in “the context of subjects’ responses to researcher-generated questions” in academic research for assessing attitudes towards the advertisements (Coulter *et al.*, 2001, p.2). In the present study, employment of the survey approach revealed the consumer perceptions of and responses towards advertising creativity that enabled the construction of a structural equation model with identification of causal paths for different variables (Creswell, 2009).

#### **5.4.1 Alternative Research Design**

It is important for researchers to employ the most suitable research methods so that insightful research can be conducted with valid data gathered from respondents (Koslow, Sasser, and Riordan, 2003). It is stated that instead of reflecting methodological concerns in terms of the best option, they should be considered as more related to the “matter of appropriateness” because after all, “no single approach is always or necessarily superior; it all depends on what we need to find out and on the type of question to which we seek an answer” (Oppenheim, 1992, p.12). In order to investigate the research questions rigorously, several research approaches have been examined following a thorough review of relevant key publications, such as research textbooks and methodology guides. This sub-section discusses experiments as the alternative research design and strategy method and provides justifications as to why this research is not an experiment.

Experiments, concerned with ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, investigate the link between two research variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Laboratory experiments are one of the most common method in advertising research (Bergkvist and Rossiter, 2006) yet remain rare in the industry (Johnson *et al.*, 2016). There has been an ongoing debate regarding the practise of experiments. Some argue that “the best tool researchers have for determining causal relationships is experimental research” (Vargas *et al.*, 2017, p101) while others acknowledge that causal research designs are not the only way to investigate cause-and-effect relationships and that descriptive design with surveys can “provide evidence of causal relationships” (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.323).

Experiments require the research stimuli to be manipulated with a control group in order to investigate the independent variable’s effect (Reips and Krantz, 2010). This raises some concerns about the practical application of experiments. These issues are presented in the following discussion.

Two major concerns related to experiments in advertising research are that they provide artificial instructions to the participants and employ unrealistic adverts (Rossiter, 2008). The research stimuli employed in experiments can either be advertisements that are real-world examples or designed by the researchers for the purposes of their research. The ads designed by the researchers are known to lack in realism and be amateurish and, thus, differ in the way they are processed by the viewers in comparison to real-world ads (Bergkvist and Rossiter, 2006). Another disadvantage of experiments is that due to the unrealistic control researchers have in experiment design and during the experiment settings the value of “understanding and explaining real-world advertising phenomena” becomes limited (Bergkvist and Rossiter, *op. cit.*). Moreover, relying too much on experiments has “constrained consumers’ freedom to communicate how they experience, relate to and make sense of ads” (O’Donohoe and Tynan, 1997, p.220). These issues raise concern about experiments and need to be taken into account with other methodological concerns.

As discussed previously, advertising creativity research has mostly focused on professionals’ perspective (White and Smith, 2001) and how consumers view creativity is less known (West *et al.*, 2008). This research aims to conceptualise advertising

creativity from the perspective of consumers by investigating consumers' perceptions of and responses to creative advertising. Unlike the commonly investigated practitioner perceptions and experimental studies in which creativity is manipulated with creative and non-creative advertisements the focus is on how consumers perceive and respond to creative advertising. Therefore, considering the research aim and limitations of experiments the chosen methodological strategy for this research is survey, not experiments.

Conducting surveys is expected to generate a well-represented and generalised set of data that can be gathered quickly (Blaxter *et al.*, 2006). However, this method still has some disadvantages compared to others. These disadvantages are discussed in the following sub-section according to the research objectives so that they may be avoided, or even eliminated altogether.

#### **5.4.2 Criticism of Survey Method**

One disadvantage of surveys, for example, is the concern of survey design appropriateness. By using the literature review as a guideline for the survey design, specifically for measurement items and scales, this concern can be minimised.

Self-administered surveys, in which “the researcher does not actually meet the respondents face to face” (Punch, 2003, p.40) are criticised for preventing further probing of the respondents. In fact, probing is not a concern when the survey contains structured, closed-ended, one answer questions, as it does in this study. Conversely it is alleged that survey responses might not be representing the truth all the time. However, quantitative methods with a positivist approach assume that “reality is conceptualised as variables” (Punch, 2003, p.2) and that it is possible to capture reality and “mirror, as near as possible, those of the natural sciences” through research procedures (Blaxter *et al.*, 2006, p.60). After all, it is emphasised that the researchers should rely on the goodwill (Bell, 2010) and willingness (Nardi, 2006) of the respondents.

Other disadvantages include concerns about the lack of in-depth data and the potential low response rate (Shiu, *et al.*, 2009, p.227). These disadvantages are evaluated in the following discussion.

When addressing the lack of in-depth data, the nature of the research objectives should be considered, as they guide the researcher to the survey design. If it is aimed to investigate the subject and answer the research questions in a more detailed manner, a qualitative approach might be better than a quantitative approach. This is because quantitative approaches focus on collecting data from a large sample of respondents 'to make inferences', rather than gathering a substantial amount of detailed information. Therefore, if quantitative methods are chosen carefully and in accordance with the research objectives lack of in-depth data need not be a research concern.

Another criticism of surveys is the potential low response rates. When the response rate is remarkably low, it affects the accuracy and generalizability of the research (Nardi, 2006). A low response rate can decrease the representativeness of the sample regardless of its size. In response to this, it is noted that increasing the response rate is possible by the selection of different survey types, such as, web-based surveys instead of person administrated or mail surveys (Shiu *et al.*, 2009).

Considering these various factors, the survey technique was employed, with an online questionnaire placed on a survey website.

### **5.4.3 Internet-Mediated Research**

Internet-mediated research (IMR) enables researcher to administer a survey "by placing it on the web (as a web form, written using HTML: Hyper Text Mark-up Language) so that it may be accessed by respondents with an active Internet connection via a web browser, by visiting the survey page URL (Uniform Resource Locator), and completed and submitted online" (Hewson and Laurent, 2008, p.62).

Advantages of IMR can be elaborated with two elements. Firstly, it provides the researcher benefits in terms of practicality when collecting data. These are "cost and time efficiency" and a "potentially vast and geographically diverse participant pool" of

respondents (Hewson and Laurent, 2008, p.60). It can also yield “faster data acquisition” (Shiu *et al.*, 2009, 250). Secondly, it offers a better platform for the survey design. For example, it can eliminate potential coding errors (Nardi, 2006) as well as interviewer bias since it is self-administered (Malhotra and Birks, 2007).

Furthermore, IMR design has potential to “tightly constrain both the presentation format and the way participants can respond” (Hewson and Laurent, 2008, p.62). It is useful to note that despite the stated advantages IMR has received criticism that should be carefully considered.

#### **5.4.3.1 Criticism of IMR**

Besides the criticism of surveys, there are further considerations with regards to the appropriateness of online surveys. These can be addressed altogether. One major concern is the inconvenience of achieving probability sampling “due to the lack of a central register of all Internet users” (Hewson and Laurent, 2008, p.65). Therefore, IMR employs non probability sampling and this is addressed in *Sampling* (5.6) section.

While the potential low response rate (LozarManfreda, 2008, Hewson and Laurent, 2008) can often be an important concern for researchers, this can be overcome by the fast data collection in online surveys compared to other methods. An initial low response rate can be increased with multiple, follow-up requests to respondents to participate in the survey (Malhotra and Birks, 2007).

The length of the questionnaire is an important factor, however the use of closed questions is a compensating aspect that can achieve responses easily and quickly (Oppenheim, 1992) with minimum writing (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). The use of online surveys can provide flexibility to the researchers in pilot studies by the ability to modify the questionnaire according to early responses in case of any wording or other problems. Also, it offers the opportunity to use longer or more comprehensive questionnaires since “short questionnaires do not necessarily generate higher response rates than long ones” (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p279).



## **5.5 Data Collection**

This section explains step-by-step the data collection protocol in accordance with the research design. A survey was conducted using an online questionnaire to measure consumers' perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity (Section 5.5.1 *Questionnaire Design*). Two adverts were selected from a pool of adverts awarded for creativity in order to avoid researcher bias (Section 5.5.2 *Creative Stimuli*). All measurement items were adapted from literature (Section 5.5.3 *Measurement Items*).

Firstly, information for the questionnaire design can be found in the next sub-section. Then, the selection of the creative stimuli that were exposed to the respondents of the research is explained. Lastly, the details of the research variables' measurement items and their scales are presented.

### **5.5.1 Questionnaire Design**

The data collection tool is dependent on the variables about which the research questions seek information (Punch, 2003, p.30). In this section, the questionnaire design, with regards to the development and the details of the measurement instruments, is discussed.

The structured data collection was conducted by “use of a formal questionnaire that presents questions in a prearranged order” (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.266). A self-administrated questionnaire is designed in order to investigate consumers' “attitudes and opinions that are not usually observable” (Nardi, 2006, p.67) about advertising creativity. The questionnaire is adapted from the literature, “beyond superficial appeal”, since the development of the questions should rely on the literature review and the hypotheses that are driven from it (Youngman, 1978, p.4).

Punch (2003) reported the lack of “one form or set of guidelines” (p.32) and Malhotra and Birks (2007) added that “there are no scientific principles that guarantee an optimal or ideal questionnaire” (p.372). Therefore, the adaptation of “already existing instruments” is advised through, for example, wording, mixture or development of existing and new scales since measurement, with its own literature and techniques, is core to quantitative studies (Punch, *ibid*, p.32).

There are three main objectives of any questionnaire that affect the design process (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). These objectives are directly related to the respondents of the research. The first two are the need to have questions “that the respondents can and will answer” and that “uplift, motivate and encourage the respondent to become involved, to cooperate, and to complete the task” (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.371). Considering these objectives, it is believed that the employed creative advertising stimuli made the questionnaire more interesting for the respondents to complete, compared to simply providing statements to agree or disagree that depend on their long term memory. The third objective is to “minimise response error” (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.372). This objective is achieved by avoiding poorly designed instruments and lack of uniformity in instrument design (Best and Krueger, 2008).

Considering these objectives some additional steps were taken and the questionnaire was carefully designed by reflecting on the pre-tests and the pilot test. These steps are taken in the light of Best and Krueger’s (2008) suggestions. In order to make the questionnaire more user-friendly and less time consuming for respondents, similar measurement items were grouped together and presented in one page. Radio buttons were preferred for responses except for one instrument, which requires the respondents to rank the creativity of the stimuli out of 20. The potential no response to the pull down instrument was avoided by requesting an answer to the question. Lastly, considering the potential needs of respondents when completing a survey, they were provided with the progress indicator during the survey, as well as the statement of approximate completion time of 15 minutes in the cover letter (Best and Krueger, 2008).

The correlational, multi-variable survey (Punch, 2005) questionnaire gathered information about respondents’ perceptions of advertisements in terms of creativity dimensions, as well as their attention, advertisement likability, and engagement with the advertisements, so that the relationship between these variables could be investigated. The individual measurement items adapted from the literature and their scales are explained further in the Measurement Items section.

### **5.5.2 Creative Stimuli Selection**

One criticism of advertising creativity research is the way informants are exposed to ads in the research. When viewing ads in real life, the number of exposures is not controlled, while in the research environment this number is controlled by the researcher and the participants can be exposed to the ads many times. This limitation can be disregarded by the fact that consumers are exposed to same ads more than once in real life. Additionally, it has been pointed out that “a minimum (threshold) number of exposures is necessary for the advertisement to have an effect on the consumer” (Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999, p.31).

Consumers can choose whether to attend to and process the advertisements or not depending on the medium used and this can affect their responses to the ads (Shavitt *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, from a research perspective, advertising studies might yield more valid results when the investigations are “limited to a specific advertising medium” (Alwitt and Prabhaker, 1992, p.32).

Within the competition between various media, print advertising has continued to evolve (Hampel *et al.*, 2012) and remains important, despite the shift towards others, such as broadcast and interactive media (Belch and Belch, 2012). This study is interested in print advertisements’ creativity and consumers’ perceptions of and responses to it.

#### **5.5.2.1 Print Media**

Print advertising is different from other media formats because it can be reader paced (Rosengren *et al.*, 2013, Prendergast *et al.*, 2010). While the broadcast media has “fixed exposure durations” (Abernethy and Franke, 1996, p.3) reader paced print media exposures can be controlled by the consumer, “simply by turning the page” (Belch and Belch, 2012, p.415). Therefore, since the consumers can control the duration of the exposures perceived disruption is less likely to happen (Elliott and Speck, 1998). This suggests that consumers do not consider it as much of a disruption to their main action unlike, for example, TV commercials. This can be explained by the fact that print advertisement viewers do not completely ignore ads but they do pay less attention (Prendergast *et al.*, 2010).

Although print media is “not intrusive” (p.403) and consumers “tend to be more receptive and tolerant of print media” it still requires the message receiver to show some effort in order to attend to and process the advertisements (Belch and Belch, 2012, p.415). For that reason, it would be useful to understand how consumers perceive and respond to creativity in print advertisements.

Consequently, print advertising that was considered to be creative and had therefore received awards for this purpose was the starting stage of this investigation. This is a commonly accepted approach in academic studies (Kover *et al.*, 1995; Till and Baack, 2005; West *et al.*, 2008). There are two main research motives behind this decision. Firstly, this helped in maintaining the reliability of research stimuli and secondly, it eliminated researcher bias.

In order to model consumers’ perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity real ads were employed instead of designing the research stimuli. According to Horne and Johnson (1986) due to consumers’ lifelong observations of advertisements “unrealistic ads stand out” (p.8). Employing award-winning ads was believed to increase the stability of research data. Additionally, considering the subjectivity of advertising creativity purposefully designed creative stimuli would represent the perceptions of the researcher regardless of the professionalism of the designs.

In order to eliminate researcher bias, the advertising examples were selected in a randomised manner from a selection of advertisements that had already been deemed creative by a recognised authority with a reputation for its independent and devoted work in the field. Many researchers have supported the view that expert panels are reliable methods of judging creativity, for example, El-Murad and West, 2004; Kover, *et al.*, 1995; Haberland and Dacin, 1992. Recognition of advertising creativity is done by means of evaluation by expert panels, thus, advertising that has received such awards was accepted as creative for the purpose of this research.

An important requirement for the selection of creative stimuli is that they need to be awarded within a specific creativity category. In order to have meaningful advertising research the stimuli should match the theory being tested (Vargas *et al.*, 2017).

Therefore, award shows that reward excellence in creativity, rather than effectiveness, are preferred. The creative stimuli employed in this research were exposed successfully to the respondents by use of the online survey method since web-based surveys allow the researchers to manage the employed stimuli easily (Malhotra and Birks, 2007).

The following sub-section describes the process of creative stimuli selection with regards to certain concerns and approaches.

#### **5.5.2.2 *Creative Stimuli***

Since creativity is subjective, culture may be a factor affecting it; therefore, only UK based award ceremonies are reviewed in the selection process. This approach is a result of the research design which involves respondents based in the UK. According to the Gunn Report 2015 and 2016, UK is the second most awarded country for creative excellence in the world. The One Show awards were chosen for creative stimuli considering its respected and regarded reputation in advertising creativity (Kover et al., 1995, West et al., 2008). One Show award winning advertisements have been the choice of many other researchers as well (e.g. Goldenberg et al., 1999; Baack et al., 2008).

The One Show rewards the best creative work in advertising, judged by top industry professionals and awards Gold Pencil as the ultimate creative excellence symbol (One Show, 2017). It is decided to focus on only the last session of the award show that has been completed before the data collection process. This was a deliberate choice so that, the most recent independent variable group can be employed for exposure to the respondents.

The most recent One Show was held in 2015. From various categories print and outdoor is chosen for research purposes, which is described as “Print & Outdoor recognizes creativity in ads that appeared in newspapers, magazines and trade publications, other print collateral as well as ambient work like billboards and transit posters” (One Show, 2015). The gold pencil award for print and outdoor category had a total of 13 winners. From these ads four had to be withdrawn from the creative ad pool due to sub-categories such as electronic and installations and ambience categories as this current study is interested only in reader paced print ads rather than outdoor and electronic installations.

The remaining nine ads were five clients/brands that had won gold pencil awards. These were World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Harvey Nichols, Shanghai General Motors, Zwilling J. A. Henckels/Miyabi and Perfetti Van Melle/Big Babol. At this stage, there were further considerations regarding the type of advertisements. These are presented in the following discussion.

#### **5.5.2.3 Further Considerations**

Within the nine creative advertisements in the pool WWF and Shanghai General Motors advertisements are social cause or public sector ads. The difference of these is that there is no concern of economic gain compared to others (Sciulli and Bebko, 2005). This type of advertisements can be designed with shock tactics and used by not-for profit (NFP) organisations (West and Sargeant, 2004).

The two NFP ads (World Wildlife Fund and Shanghai General Motors) in the creative ad pool are considered as shock advertising. Shock advertisements are those that attempt to "surprise an audience by deliberately violating norms for societal values and personal ideas" (Dahl et al., 2003). More specifically, the WWF advertisement displays hunted and decomposed wild animals in the hands of hunters. Shanghai General Motors advertisements display various people with missing body parts such as arms and legs who had been involved in traffic accidents.

On one hand, it can be claimed that consumer responses to NFP ads might be positively biased since they are designed for public good. Furthermore, viewers of the public who have more sympathy towards the social issue might have stronger attitudes towards those types of advertisements (O'Cass and Griffin, 2006). However, it is not always possible to distinguish the effect between the ad's design and the emotional appeal presented in the advertisement. This means the positive responses to such NFP ads can as well be a result of the creative design without potential bias.

On the other hand, NFP advertisements can cause negatively biased responses as well. The spectrum of risk when using shock tactics is broader in NFP advertising (West and Sargeant, 2004). This is due to the potential in risks to offend the public (Gray,

2002). On this context Bennett (1998) noted that public sector ads evoke guilt and shame as negative responses. Therefore, viewers of the public can become negatively biased towards these types of advertisements.

A key feature of NFP ads is that advertisers expect them to be perceived differently from other advertising messages due to the highly emotional appeals employed that aim for behavioural change (Sciulli and Bebeko, 2005). Therefore, these ads have different and more persuasive effects on the viewing public. Considering these factors, the two ads in the NFP category were excluded from the creative ad pool. Remaining three brands' advertisements established the creative advertisement pool.

Researchers should control and limit the multimedia elements employed in order to avoid affecting responses (LozarManfreda, 2008, p.183). Accordingly, only two creative ads are selected from the award winning advert pool. This is chosen in order to have a variety of creative options but also considering the attention span of viewers. This enabled the questionnaire to be at a certain length thus, not making it too long or time demanding. The randomly selected creative ads are for Zwilling J. A. Henckels/Miyabi and Harvey Nichols.

Creative stimuli were provided with HTML links rather than JPEG formats so that the highest quality of creative stimuli could be provided to respondents at the easiest way. No action from the respondents was required as HTML links automatically load the ads on the questionnaire. The stimuli were visible to the respondents throughout the survey in order to provide them with convenience.

### **5.5.3 Measurement Items**

The quality of measurement of a construct depends on the construct's specified domain (Andrews *et al.*, 1990), varies with the methodological strategy (Punch, 2003, Coleman and Briggs, 2002) and the quality of the individual questions (Youngman, 1978). Consequently, the definitions of the variables and the use of the right questionnaire instruments affect the value of the research data. Therefore, the individual measurement items of the research variables should be described in more detail.

A variable is the “property (or characteristic) of some entity” (Punch, 2003, p.5). These unobservable concepts are unmeasurable since they “are abstractions by which we select and order our impressions of the world” (Rose and Sullivan, 1996, p.12). Accordingly, the researcher needs indicators of these concepts in order to “link the language of theory (concepts) to the language of research (indicators)”, which is referred to as “operationalization” (Rose and Sullivan, 1996, p.13).

The variables in this study were presented in the conceptual research framework and are represented and measured by various items. The independent variables are the advertising creativity dimensions, which enabled the researcher to measure viewers’ perceptions with individual items. The consumers’ responses are the dependent variables, since they develop from those perceptions of advertising creativity. When designing questions to measure research variables, the principle is that the questions should be written in such a way that “people find it easy and straightforward to respond, which don’t require them to analyse and ponder at great length, and which don’t get into an ‘it depends’ style of thinking” (Punch, 2003, p.60).

It is common in quantitative studies to review the literature with discussions of the major independent and dependent variables (Creswell, 2009), as was done in the previous chapters of the literature review. Following this order, the research variables’ measurements are presented in the same way, the independent variables are discussed first, and dependent variables are discussed later. The relationship between independent and dependent variables is caused by the temporal order, in which some of the variables cause the others (Creswell, 2009). Details concerning these relationships are presented in the following sections of Advertising Creativity Dimension Variables and Response Variables.

#### ***5.5.3.1 Advertising Creativity Variables***

Since perceptions are complex and multi-faceted they need to be investigated with different underlying components (Oppenheim, 1992). Consumers’ perceptions of advertising creativity were measured indirectly, by means of the two principal dimensions of advertising creativity, *Divergence* and *Relevance*. Additionally, as this research proposes, cleverness is a third dimension to advertising creativity as another independent variable. This research defines Cleverness dimension as “thought-provoking and interesting” elements (Long, 2014, p.189) that bridge divergence and



relevance to produce a significant outcome. The creative stimuli provided the “naturally occurring variation” of the independent variables, in which “they are not artificially manipulated” (Punch, 2003, p.12).

Youngman (1978) stated that opinion questions should be distinguished from factual questions in that the former are “usually a matter of degree, making it unlikely that a simple YES/NO response will be satisfactory” (p.5). He added that the Likert-type scale is needed “when the starkness of a YES/NO response becomes too restrictive”, thus “some gradation of response is necessary” (p.10).

If a survey is well designed incorporating the previously mentioned considerations, Likert-type scales can be useful (Bell, 2010) as long as clear instructions are provided (Coleman and Briggs, 2002). Accordingly, respondents were expected to perceive and report divergence, relevance and cleverness in various degrees, rather than only with yes or no responses. Throughout the questionnaire five-point Likert scales are employed for the questionnaire responses. These are Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Although Coleman and Briggs (2002) stated that Likert-type scales are often preferred with “an even number of items, mainly to avoid the neutral central point” (p.165) this is not the case for the current research in order to avoid forcing the respondents to a certain statement.

Likert-type scales are employed in order to “discover strength of feeling or attitude towards a given statement” in which “the higher the category chosen, greater the strength of agreement” (Bell, 2010, p.146). This type of scale, mostly used in questionnaires (Punch, 2005) and commonly used in soliciting consumer responses (Nardi, 2006), enabled respondents to “indicate the extent to which they either agree or disagree with a series of belief statements” (Shiu *et al.*, 2009, p.421). However, it should be noted that these scales indicate only order and “the intervals between each may not be the same” (Bell, 2010, p.146).

The *Divergence* variable is measured with five unique factors, each of which has three measurement items. The *Relevance* variable is measured with three types. The items were revised according to some specifications of the research. The original measurement statements were written in the past tense in various studies. In this current research, since the respondents were able to see creative stimuli during the survey

process statements were re-written in the present tense rather than in the past tense. For example, instead of using the original statement ‘The ad was out of the ordinary’ it was re-written to ‘The ad is out of the ordinary’ as the stimuli were visible to the respondents during the questionnaire. This approach was followed throughout the questionnaire, each statement was revised in the present tense. Additionally, items that require statements for “the brand” were edited to state information about only the advertisement, in accordance with the research aims. These include the Ad-To-Brand (Product) Relevance items which were re-written to state only the product. For example, rather than ‘The brand or the product is the primary focus of the ad’ ‘The product is the primary focus of the ad’ was used.

The *Cleverness* variable, without the prevalent definitions and measurements from the literature, is subjective. Moreover “the long-standing criterion problem in the field of creativity” (Long, 2014, p.183) is applicable for cleverness as well. Therefore, it should be modelled as a latent variable, represented by a sum of various measurable items. As stated by Steenkamp and Baumgartner (2000) measurement approaches should employ multiple indicators to fully capture the meaning of theoretical constructs and single indicators should be avoided. The items, derived from the limited literature of creativity and cleverness (see 2.4.3.3 Measurement of cleverness for a discussion), are adapted to represent cleverness. The adapted measurement items of advertising creativity dimensions are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Advertising Creativity Measurement Items

Variables	Measurement Items
<b>Divergence Factors</b> (adapted from Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	
<i>Originality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement is out of the ordinary.</li> <li>○ The advertisement breaks away from habit- bound and stereotypical thinking.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is unique.</li> </ul>
<i>Flexibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement contains ideas that move from one subject to another.</li> <li>○ The advertisement contains different ideas.</li> <li>○ The advertisement shifts from one idea to another.</li> </ul>
<i>Synthesis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement connects objects that are usually unrelated.</li> <li>○ The advertisement contains unusual connections.</li> <li>○ The advertisement brings unusual items together.</li> </ul>
<i>Elaboration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement contains numerous details.</li> <li>○ The advertisement takes basic ideas and make them more intricate.</li> <li>○ The advertisement contains more details than expected.</li> </ul>
<i>Artistic Value</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement is visually/verbally distinctive.</li> <li>○ The advertisement makes ideas come to life graphically/verbally.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is artistically produced.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevance Factors</b> (adapted from Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2007)	
<i>Ad-to-Consumer Relevance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement is meaningful to me.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is appropriate to me.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is useful to me.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is valuable to me.</li> </ul>
<i>Product-to-Consumer Relevance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The product is meaningful to me.</li> <li>○ The product is appropriate to me.</li> <li>○ The product is useful to me.</li> <li>○ The product is valuable to me.</li> <li>○ I do NOT care about this good/service (R).</li> </ul>
<i>Ad-to-Product Relevance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The product is the primary focus of the advertisement.</li> <li>○ The product is NOT a central character in the advertisement; it is more a background component.</li> <li>○ The heart of this advertisement is what it says about the product.</li> <li>○ The product does NOT seem to be relevant to what goes on in the advertisement.</li> <li>○ The advertisement presents useful information about the product.</li> </ul>
<b>Cleverness</b> (adapted from West <i>et al.</i> , 2008, Mercanti-Guerin, 2008, Biel and Bridgwater, 1990, Silvia, 2008)	
<i>Cleverness Items</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Intellectual</li> <li>○ Intelligent</li> <li>○ Smart</li> <li>○ Clever</li> <li>○ Ingenious</li> <li>○ Witty</li> <li>○ Imaginative</li> <li>○ Insightful</li> <li>○ Ironic</li> <li>○ Fitting</li> </ul>

adapted from Smith *et al.*, 2007, West *et al.*, 2008, Mercanti-Guerin, 2008, Biel and Bridgwater, 1990, Silvia, 2008

### 5.5.3.2 *Response Variables*

The dependent variables in this research are the viewers' responses to advertising creativity dimensions, which are conceptualised as their attention drawn to, likeability of, and engagement with the creative advertising stimuli.

Various researchers have cited a study by MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) of investigations of attention paid to advertisements. Although MacInnis and Jaworski never developed measurements, 'they never aimed to' (op. cit.), their model can be adopted to develop a measurement for attention gained from creative advertisements. They had attempted to develop a model for information processing of viewers of advertising. They proposed three levels of information processing, namely, processing antecedents, processing itself, and the consequences. It is stated that attention and capacity are two elements of processing, while motivation is an antecedent of those (MacInnis and Jaworski, op. cit.).

While their research and model was developed for an end goal of assessing brand attitudes, the proposed model of information processing can be adopted in this current study with regards to the conceptualisation of attention with its antecedents and consequences. Similarly, the proposed framework in this research suggests that attention together with likeability will be drawn as a result of consumers' creativity perceptions that will lead to consumer engagement.

It should be taken into account that "to treat an ad as something at the centre of attention transforms it" in terms of its nature and perception (Cook, 1992, p.178). Accordingly, the measurement of attention capacity cannot be independent of the methodological design since the capacity and the depth of attention would be high during the viewing of the creative stimuli. Due to this fact the attention paid to creative stimuli was measured with two sub-factors, which are *Motivation to Process the Ad* and *Amount of Attention* adopted from Smith *et al.* (2008). Besides the factors that are discussed in the *Attention* section (3.3) there is another consideration in choosing the measurement items for the attention variable. Since the research objectives involve uncovering consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity the response measurements should be in the same form of as self-reported perceptions. Therefore, attention as a response

variable was measured with self-reported attention levels paid to the stimuli by the respondents.

Considering the advertising likeability literature, on the one hand Bergkvist and Rossiter (2007) revealed that the single-item measurement of attitude towards the ad, as a concrete construct rather than an abstract one, can establish the “equally high predictive validity as the multiple-item measure” (p.182). On the other hand, academics rely heavily on the validity of multiple-item measures with the expectation of acquiring more and better information in research with regards to statistical analyses (for example, Oppenheim, 1992, Punch, 2005). Since the research conceptualisation of the likeability variable identifies likeability with “several different, unique subdimensions” rather than as the “only one attribute” (Hair *et al.*, 2009, p.384), it was measured with sub-items. Since entertainment is a part of consumers’ ad likeability the first sub-factor is *Entertainment*. However, it is accepted that likeability is more than pure entertainment (Green, 1992). Likeability is affected also by the other elements in ads, which are the *Energy* and *Warmth* (Biel and Bridgwater, 1990). Lastly, an overall ad likeability sub-factor is necessary.

The individual measurement items of attention and likeability are designed with five-point Likert scales in order to have the same style throughout the questionnaire. This is expected to provide ease to the respondents when they are stating their levels of agreement with the measurement item statements. The same Likert-type scales were employed in order to have the same structure within the whole questionnaire. This created an easy on the eye design for the respondents as well as providing them straightforwardness to complete the survey.

In order to investigate consumers’ engagement with creative advertisements ten bipolar adjectives were adopted from the Zaichkowsky (1994) study with seven-point semantic differential scales. Semantic differential statements are “a useful and efficient way to collect affective information” (Punch, 2005) that have agreement levels “elaborated even further in that even more gradations are offered” (Youngman, 1978, p.10).

According to Best and Krueger (2008) lack of instrument uniformity causes the quality of the data to suffer. Therefore, although Zaichkowsky (1994) used seven-point scales

for her measurement the items were scaled in accordance with the rest of the questionnaire, which is a five-point scale, to make it easier for respondents and thereby encourage completion. However, there were no further identifications of the five-point semantic scales as descriptions or numbers other than the ten bipolar adjectives (Proctor, 2005; Wilson, 2012; Brace, 2013).

The bipolar adjectives to measure engagement were distributed to both sides of the continuum so that a biased answer by the respondent can be eliminated (Malhotra and Birks, 2007; Proctor, 2005). The placement of positive and negative adjectives on both sides is believed to avoid the responses given habitually on one particular side.

It is believed that the approach to place positive and negative items on both sides decreased the response error as well. The adopted measurement items of responses to advertising creativity are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Response Measurement Items

Variables	Measurement																				
<b>Items</b>																					
<b>Attention</b> (Smith <i>et al.</i> , 2008)																					
<i>Amount of Attention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement demanded my attention.</li> <li>○ I examined the main elements of the advertisement very carefully.</li> <li>○ I tried to carefully evaluate the information provided in the ad.</li> <li>○ I spent considerable time analysing the ad's message.</li> </ul>																				
<i>Motivation to Process the Ad</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I had a strong desire to examine the ad.</li> <li>○ I was highly motivated to read the ad.</li> <li>○ I really wanted to understand the ad.</li> <li>○ I was very interested in the ad.</li> </ul>																				
<b>Likeability</b> (Biel and Bridgwater, 1990)																					
<i>Entertainment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement is entertaining.</li> </ul>																				
<i>Energy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement is lively.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is appealing.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is well done.</li> </ul>																				
<i>Warmth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The advertisement is gentle.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is warm.</li> <li>○ The advertisement is sensitive.</li> <li>○ Overall, I liked the advertisement.</li> </ul>																				
<b>Engagement</b> (Zaichkowsky, 1994)																					
<i>Engagement Semantics</i>	<table> <tr> <td>○ Important</td><td>Unimportant</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Boring</td><td>Interesting</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Relevant</td><td>Irrelevant</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Exciting</td><td>Unexciting</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Means Nothing</td><td>Means a lot</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Appealing</td><td>Unappealing</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Fascinating</td><td>Mundane</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Worthless</td><td>Valuable</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Involving</td><td>Uninvolving</td></tr> <tr> <td>○ Not Needed</td><td>Needed</td></tr> </table>	○ Important	Unimportant	○ Boring	Interesting	○ Relevant	Irrelevant	○ Exciting	Unexciting	○ Means Nothing	Means a lot	○ Appealing	Unappealing	○ Fascinating	Mundane	○ Worthless	Valuable	○ Involving	Uninvolving	○ Not Needed	Needed
○ Important	Unimportant																				
○ Boring	Interesting																				
○ Relevant	Irrelevant																				
○ Exciting	Unexciting																				
○ Means Nothing	Means a lot																				
○ Appealing	Unappealing																				
○ Fascinating	Mundane																				
○ Worthless	Valuable																				
○ Involving	Uninvolving																				
○ Not Needed	Needed																				

adapted from Smith *et al.*, 2008, Biel and Bridgwater, 1990, Zaichkowsky, 1994

#### 5.5.4 Survey Pre-test

The scales employed in this research are largely taken from American studies. In order to have clear and understandable questions for the respondents it was decided to conduct a pre-test. This was aimed to finalise the questionnaire with regards to its adaptation for understanding and readability. Pre-tests and pilot studies assist the researchers to observe how well the research has been carried out (Blaxter *et al.*, 2006)

and to make sure that “similar results under constant conditions” (Bell, 2010, p.119) are gathered.

Before the data collection period, a pre-test was conducted with 15 respondents who were randomly approached in relaxed environments such as café settings to complete the questionnaire. This has assisted the researcher to observe and test the measurement instruments with regards to “how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear”, as well as the “wording and the format of questions” (Bell, 2010, p.151). This test purpose enabled the researcher to have questionnaire items that would yield meaningful data (Bell, 2010), to test “the coding and analytical procedures to be performed later” (Youngman, 1978, p.26) and “administrative procedures” (Coleman and Briggs, 2002, p.97) and check for further possible improvements.

### **5.5.5 Data Analysis**

Oppenheim (1992) called for “more appropriate analytic designs” that can improve causality research stating that causality between variables was used to be a more of speculation in research history (p.18). Although there is still not a statistical technique that can reveal causality without experiments (Kline, 2011) it is possible to investigate not causal but predictable relationships. Similarly, Silvia (2008a) remarked that modern-day statistical methods can help researchers to analyse data more effectively.

An online survey is used to reach to the sample and a statistical software is used in data analysis. The next sub-section presents elaboration and justification of the data analysis method employed in this study.

#### **5.5.5.1 Structural Equation Modelling**

The research objectives acknowledging inference relationships between the variables imply the use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), therefore, the collected data from the online survey is analysed through Structural Equation Modelling. SEM is recognised for contributions in conceptual, empirical, methodological approaches in advertising research (Hair *et al.*, 2017). The use of SEM is appropriate for this study as it “empirically investigates relationships between theoretical constructs of advertising



research” (Henseler, 2017, p.178) and more specifically can “estimate a series of separate, but interdependent, multiple regression equations simultaneously by specifying the corresponding structural model” (Shiu et al, 2009, p.650). This section briefly explains the need for the SEM. Further details of the data analysis can be found in the *Research Analysis and Findings* (6) chapter.

SEM is a “statistical methodology that takes a confirmatory (i.e. hypotheses-testing) approach to the analysis of a structural theory bearing on some phenomenon” (Bryne, 2010). It is a comprehensive mean for researchers who need to assess and modify theoretical models to advance the development of theories (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). In the early days when it was introduced it was referred to as causal modelling (Kline, 2011) because it offers “advantages in providing evidence for causality” (Hair *et al.*, 2017, p.164). However, since the word ‘causal’ should be used with caution (Blunch, 2008) this is not the case anymore. As anticipated by Fornell and Larcker (1981) SEM has become commonly employed, especially marketing research in which the constructs are unobservable. SEM is useful as an analytical tool for empirical and behavioural (Henseler, 2017) research as it provides measures that are valid and reliable (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 2000). It assumes the model to be reflective in which the latent constructs reflect the measured variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010). These variables are highly correlated since they are reflected by the same latent construct. The reflective measurement model of advertising creativity was specified with research hypotheses in the *Research Framework* (4) chapter.

The application of SEM requires the development of two sub-models; the measurement model that “specifies the relationships between constructs and their indicators” and the structural model that presents “the relationships between constructs” (Henseler, 2017, p.179). The structural model in this study that is used to test and develop theories is a tool for explaining inferential relationships between the research constructs (Markus, 2010). Specifically, this study aims to understand the relationship between advertising creativity perceptions and responses. Since SEM procedure represents both unobserved variables and the measurement errors (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) it is applicable to model advertising creativity perceptions and responses. The SEM software employed in this research is Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) and it provides analysis of mean and covariance structures (Byrne, 2010). According to Hair *et al.* (2017) AMOS

is the second most applied software for SEM, for example, in Journal of Advertising. It provides graphical interface to present the hypothesised relationships and is an addable function of SPSS. Therefore, IBM SPSS AMOS 23 software is employed for analysis purposes.

SEM must be assessed as an analytic tool with its limitations and strengths. The first limitation is that SEM “cannot capture all the subtleties” of the relationships between research constructs (Markus, 2010). Therefore, models should be developed with critical consideration of the relevant theories in the literature. Secondly, SEM analysis is sensitive to the sample size and very large samples need to be evaluated carefully. Lastly, and most importantly, SEM has been criticised because it offers prediction of temporal order rather than explanation of causality (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

SEM also has strengths that compensate for its limitations. The fundamental strength is that SEM has superior beneficial feature compared to regression, which can only examine multiple independent variables and a single dependent variable at one time (Hair *et al.*, 2010). SEM, on the other hand, offers a more rigorous analysis with “the modeling of interactions, nonlinearities, correlated independents, measurement error, correlated error terms, multiple latent independents each measured by multiple indicators, and one or more latent dependents also each with multiple indicators’ (Ivancevic and Ivancevic, 2007, p.55). Moreover, SEM accounts for the residual error terms in the measurement of constructs that is not offered by other multivariate techniques (Bryne, 2010). Therefore, it has a unique strength of a realistic analysis quality (Kline, 2011).

## **5.6 Sampling**

Many quantitative studies require the research sample to be representative, as much as possible, of the population (Bell, 2010), so that generalisations can be made confidently (Coleman and Briggs, 2002). However, there might be situations in which the researcher needs to avoid some of the factors that affect the research process.

Oppenheim (1992) stated that often the sample population does not have certain sampling frames of individuals, such as demographics or size. Also, research in which the possible relationships between variables are investigated might require a sampling

plan that is purposeful (Punch, 2003). Similarly, with a purpose to be able to reach as many respondents as possible from the population sampling of this research is not limited by the need for certain characteristics or demographic factors. Since the individual sampling units cannot be determined non-probability sampling is employed (Fricker, 2008). It is a common challenge in advertising research to draw a representative sample (Chang, 2017) and non-probability sampling is generally used for online surveys (Tuten, 2010). The challenge is caused by factors such as a population that is not well defined, lack of sampling frame of the population or the difficulty in drawing a random sample (Geuens and Pelsmacker, 2017). The consequences of non-probability sampling approach are presented in the *Limitations* (8.5) section.

This investigation of consumers' perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity has no profile restrictions on demographics, psychographics, or behaviours except the geographic factor; the research is UK based. Data collection started in the UK and due to concerns for unequally distributed responses across various countries the research is only UK based. Although probability sampling is preferable for generalization purposes it is worthwhile to state, "there are often barriers to obtaining true probability sampling" (Hewson and Laurent, 2008, p.65). Thus, a different approach was employed.

In order to minimise the effects of non-probability sampling a two-stage sampling process was adopted, using a seeding approach. This method was chosen because it has benefits that can compensate for the disadvantages of the nonprobability sampling used. The recruitment of respondents started with seeding in order to employ respondents with different sampling parameters (i.e. age groups). This initial sampling stage had 225 respondents that were generally evenly distributed in the age groups from 18 years old to over 61 years old. However, it was expected to have fewer responses in some age groups such as 51 to 60 years old and over 61 years old due to the questionnaire's online availability. This seeding group returned 153 completed responses. Since respondents' participation was completely voluntary only two reminder emails were sent to the seeding respondents to either complete or start the survey. Details of completed and uncompleted responses are presented in the *Research Findings and Analysis* (6) chapter.

After this initial seeding stage, the respondents were contacted for snowballing purposes in the second stage of sampling. This second stage reached to 219 respondents and returned 128 completed responses. During the data collection process data were monitored and benchmarked with UK population and internet access household data from Office for National Statistics (ONS). At one point, it became apparent that respondents over the age of 50 were fewer than expected. At this stage judgment sampling was adopted in order to employ respondents over the age of 50 so that the age groups can better represent the UK population. This attempt to increase the number of respondents over the age of 50 returned only 24 respondents.

All respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire online. The online survey enabled the researcher to reach respondents more effectively with the visual stimuli without time and geographical restrictions. Details of the sample profile are presented in the *Research Findings and Analysis* (6) chapter.

## **5.7 Ethical Considerations**

One goal of considering ethical factors in research is to “ensure that respondents have been approached professionally and, within limits, fully informed about the purpose and context of the research, about confidentiality and anonymity, and about what use will be made, and by whom, of the information they provide” (Punch, 2005, p.100).

Besides these factors there were other ethical issues considered. For example, truthful reporting was a key concern in discussion of literature review and presentation of data analysis and research findings. Moreover, the arguments presented in this research are based on the literature. The data collection process was unbiased and the respondents were not influenced in the way the questionnaire was designed. These factors have contributed to the objectivity of the research. These considerations have contributed to the objectivity of the research.

Although there are no ethical issues about the involvement of human subjects in this research further consideration was given to anonymity and confidentiality as well as the issues about research results, such as reliability and validity. Respondents of the research were given full information regarding the purpose of the research and the

researcher's role as well as the factors related to anonymity and confidentiality in the cover letter. Their consent was gained at the beginning of the survey and they were informed about their right to refuse to participate in the research at any stage (Greener, 2008).

Another factor that needs consideration is the reliability and validity of the data. Measurement item reliability is the “purity and consistency of a measure, to repeatability, to the probability of obtaining the same results again if the measure were to be duplicated” (Oppenheim, 1992, p.144). Details of measurement item reliability is further reviewed in the Research Findings chapter.

Furthermore, the validity should also be considered with respect to the “extent to which an instrument measures what it is claimed to measure” (Punch, 2005, p.97). Additional considerations given thoroughly to the survey, such as, “well-written and manageable questions” enables the researcher to have more reliable and valid data (Nardi, 2006, p.67).

## **5.8 Summary**

In empirical research a good fit should be achieved between the research questions and the methods (Punch, 2005). This chapter has provided a detailed explanation of the methodological choices made for the research. With a quantitative method that inquires “about the relationship among variables that the investigator seeks to know” (Creswell, 2009, p.132) the data collection method and the individual measurement items of the variables are explained with justifications. Lastly, the sampling plan and ethical considerations are addressed.

The real world of advertising deals with many variables at one particular time, which makes measurement attempts somewhat difficult (Du Plessis, 2008). Considering these relevant limitations and reflecting on the research objectives researchers need to be careful in their methodological approaches and investigations of advertising creativity.

## **6. Research Analysis and Findings**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research analysis and findings. After the data collection by means of an online survey the results of the questionnaire are analysed using IBM SPSS 23 and IBM SPSS AMOS 23 software. The main analysis of structural equation model is presented in three parts. The first part is the exploratory factor analysis, the second part the confirmatory factor analysis, and lastly path analysis is presented as the third part.

The chapter starts with an overview of the sample characteristics. Next, the steps of preliminary analysis are explained with regards to data cleaning, outliers and normality. Following the preliminary analysis, the main data analysis is presented in three parts.

The main analysis starts with a reliability analysis in order to test internal consistency of reliability of the measurement items. An exploratory factor analysis is then conducted. This is the first step of the structural equation modelling. The statistical technique of factor analysis develops “linear combinations of variables that summarize the original variables based on their underlying patterns” (Hair *et al.*, 2015, p.412). IBM SPSS 23 is used for the descriptive statistics, preliminary analysis of data, and factor analysis.

Next, the measurement model is introduced. After the exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis is conducted as the second step of the structural equation modelling. Confirmatory factor analysis reports the final measurement items of each individual construct. Then, the overall measurement model and its goodness of fit indices are presented. Following the overall model, validity and reliability are assessed and reported.

Lastly, structural equation model (SEM) is presented. Structural equation modelling “estimates the unknown coefficients in a set of linear structural equations” between the research variables (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.604). This is conducted by the path analysis. The path analysis tests each hypothesis that was introduced in Chapter 4

(*Research Framework*). IBM SPSS AMOS 23 is used for confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis in order to the conduct the structural equation modelling.

## **6.2 Sample Characteristics**

The online questionnaire was available to respondents for an approximately five months' period from October 2015 to February 2016. When the survey was closed a total of 498 responses were collected. However only 306 responses out of 498 were usable for the research purposes. This was due to the uncompleted questionnaires by some of the respondents. One reason for non-completion might be that participants were prevented from doing so, or got interrupted (Buchanan and Williams, 2010). Some respondents may have chosen not to complete the survey due to the difficulty in reading text on screen; it is known that Internet respondents are more easily distracted and reach their thresholds of attention and perceived burden more quickly than in traditional surveys (Reips, 2010).

In order to conduct the analysis in SEM only completed responses can be used. Uncompleted responses were therefore removed, leaving 306 of which 160 (52.2%) were female and 146 (47.7%) were male. The preliminary analysis for data cleaning is detailed in the following section of *Preliminary Analysis*.

The largest age group was 18 to 30 (nearly 37%), followed by those aged 31 to 40 (nearly 29%). 65% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 40, with 32% above 40 and 2% below 18. For the purposes of this study, which is concerned about consumer responses to advertising, it is appropriate to study the opinions of the more economically active.

70% of respondents had a university degree; more than half of these had a masters or above. The complete set of demographic characteristics for the sample are set out in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Demographic Characteristics

		n=306	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	146	47.7
	Female	160	52.2
Age	Younger than 18	6	1.9
	18 to 30	113	36.9
	31 to 40	88	28.7
	41 to 50	39	12.7
	51 to 60	38	12.4
	61 and above	22	7.1
Education	Primary School Degree	1	0.3
	Secondary School Degree	27	8.8
	Further Education	63	20.5
	University First Degree	91	29.7
	Master's Degree	93	30.3
	Doctorate Degree	31	10

### 6.3 Preliminary Analysis

The initial data sample of 498 responses was examined for missing values and after this process 318 complete responses remain available. Although this represented a decrease in sample size and loss of data it was chosen to eliminate the incomplete responses for analysis purposes.

It was explained in the *Sampling* section (5.6) that the data collection started in the UK and due to the concerns for unequally distributed responses across various countries the research was only UK based. Consequently, the survey had a filtering question and asked the respondents if they currently live in the UK (see Appendix 1). This filtering question enabled the researcher to eliminate responses from outside of the UK. From the 318 complete responses, 12 are from respondents who stated they lived outside of UK. Due to research concerns to reach only respondents who currently live in the UK 12 non-UK responses are excluded from the sample. Consequently, the final sample size is 306. According to Comrey and Lee (1992) a sample size of 300 is a good adequacy for factor analysis. Moreover, Hair *et al.* (2010) notes that with sample sizes over 400 the analysis becomes sensitive and models report poor fit.



The next step of the preliminary analysis is the normality assessment of the data set presented below.

### 6.3.1 Outliers and Normality

Hair *et al.* (2015) defines an outlier as “a respondent (observation) that has one or more values that are distinctly different from the values of other respondents” (p.337). Dancey and Reidy (2014) define outliers or extreme scores as those “that are a considerable distance either higher or lower than the majority of the other scores in the sample” (p.62). As part of the preliminary analysis the data set was visually checked for extreme scores and then examined with z-scores for outliers.

In order to detect outliers a z-score for each construct was computed. Z-scores are standardised scores which are transformed from the scores in the sample (Dancey and Reidy, 2014). In a normally distributed sample, 99.9% of z-scores should be between -3.29 and +3.29 (Field, 2009). Accordingly, the z-scores are assessed for outliers outside the  $\pm 3.29$  range. There are only 2 outliers in the sample, 1 in *Divergence* z-score and 1 in *Relevance* z-score. Table 6.2 presents the minimum and maximum z-scores for each construct.

Table 3.2 Standardised Scores

	Minimum z-scores	Maximum z-scores
Divergence	-2.78	3.34
Relevance	-3.44	2.74
Cleverness	-2.90	2.71
Attention	-2.96	2.73
Likeability	-2.87	2.84
Engagement	-2.52	2.62

After detecting outliers, the data were assessed one more time for normality. A large sample of more than 200 should be considered for Skewness and Kurtosis (Field, 2009). Skewness relates to symmetry or balance in the distribution of data (Hair *et al.*, 2015) whereas Kurtosis relates to flatness or peakedness of data (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). A general rule of thumb for Skewness and Kurtosis values is that they should be within the range of  $\pm 1$  (Hair *et al.*, 2015), although, some sources state this value can go up to

3 or 4 with larger sample sizes (i.e. Hair *et al.*, 2010). A second rule of thumb in a normal distribution is that 99.7% of all values should fall between the  $\pm 3$  standard deviations of the mean (George and Mallery, 2014). Accordingly, it is expected that the absolute values of Skewness and Kurtosis are less than three times the standard error values of Skewness and Kurtosis.

Skewness and Kurtosis statistics values are within the acceptable range of  $\pm 1$  and meet both ‘rules of thumb’ for this research. Table 6.3 presents the Skewness and Kurtosis Values for each construct.

Table 6.3 Normality Assessment

	Divergence	Relevance	Cleverness	Attention	Likeability	Engage ment
Skewness	.084	-.294	-.261	-.326	-.390	-.223
Std. Error of Skewness	.139	.139	.139	.139	.139	.139
Kurtosis	.548	.110	.177	.227	.303	.099
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.278	.278	.278	.278	.278	.278

Due to concerns that outliers affect data analysis these are often eliminated or removed once detected (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, Hair *et al.*, 2015). On the other hand, it is not always necessary to do so “simply because they are outliers” (Dancey and Reidy, 2014, p.405). Similarly, Hair *et al.* (2015) concludes that it is the researcher who should decide whether to retain or eliminate such outliers.

Considering these, and reflecting on the conclusion of Hair *et al.* (*ibid*) regarding the elimination of outliers, the 2 respondents were not excluded from the analysis. This decision was made with consideration of the nature of Likert scales employed in the research. The respondents reported their perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity on a 5-point Likert scale. Responses on either end (1 or 5) are believed to represent statements of true opinions within the nature of the survey. However, further consideration was taken to assess whether these were unengaged cases who responded in a repeating manner, and this was not found to be the case. Moreover, Skewness and

Kurtosis values confirm that the data-set has a normal distribution. Therefore, 2 cases of outliers are not excluded from the data set.

## 6.4 Main Analysis

The previous sections identified issues related to data cleaning, assessing outliers and normality of the data set. Following that preliminary analysis, this section focuses on the main analysis of the data.

The main analysis starts with a reliability assessment for the measurement constructs. This is followed by the exploratory factor analysis. Exploratory factor analysis is presented with individual steps which include the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value, Bartlett's test of sphericity and the factor extraction with individual factor loadings.

### 6.4.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability is related to consistency (Hair *et al.*, 2015). The internal consistency reliability of measures in this research is reported with Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), and this is the most common method to report reliability in academic research (Field, 2009). Cronbach's alpha represents the coefficient values between measures, and it varies from 0 to 1 (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). For an acceptable reliability level, the coefficient alpha values should generally exceed the threshold level of .7 (Hair *et al.*, 2009).

All constructs employed in this research report reliability values well above the threshold level of .7. Table 6.4 presents the coefficient alpha values for each research construct.

Table 6.4 Reliability of Measures

	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Number of Items
Divergence	.919	15
Relevance	.897	14
Cleverness	.954	10
Attention	.925	8
Likeability	.929	7
Engagement	.937	10

The Cronbach's alpha can reveal potential improvements of reliability. This is assessed by the software SPSS with the value ( $\alpha$ ) if item deleted. Three of the *Relevance* construct's measurement items reported higher alpha values than the construct's reliability alpha if they were deleted. These are, specifically, Product-to-Consumer Relevance item 5 (.903), Ad-to-Product Relevance item 2 (.904), Ad-to-Product Relevance item 4 (.901). Although the alpha values are not extremely higher than *Relevance*'s alpha (.897) this means that these items should be carefully investigated in the next steps of the analysis.

Moreover, according to Malhotra and Birks (op. cit.) when a construct is conceptualised as a multidimensional variable, these dimensions' coefficient alpha values should be assessed separately. The dimensions report reliability values well above the threshold level of .7. Table 6.5 presents the coefficient alpha values for dimensions of *Divergence* and *Relevance* constructs.

Table 6.5 Reliability of Dimensions

	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Number of Measurement Items
Divergence Dimensions		15
Originality (O)	.855	3
Flexibility (F)	.900	3
Synthesis (S)	.901	3
Elaboration (EL)	.817	3
Artistic Value (AV)	.823	3
Relevance Dimensions		14
Ad to Consumer (ACR)	.940	4
Product to Consumer (PCR)	.873	5
Ad to Product (APR)	.721	5

#### 6.4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) aims to reveal the underlying structure of research variables by a multivariate statistical technique (Hair *et al.*, 2009). This research, specifically, aims to reveal consumer perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity. Advertising creativity is measured with three dimensions as a latent variable. Each dimension is measured with various items which form the factors in EFA. A factor

is ‘a linear combination of the original variable’ (Hair *et al.*, 2015, p.412). Specifically, *Divergence* is represented by 5 factors and a total of 15 items, *Relevance* is represented by 3 factors and a total of 14 items, and *Cleverness* is represented by 10 items. *Attention* response is represented by 8 items, *Likeability* is represented by 7 items, and the last response *Engagement* is represented by 10 items.

The EFA has two main purposes in this study. The first is to identify underlying dimensions and factors of advertising creativity perception and response research variables (Malhotra and Birks, 2007); the second was to conceptualise *Cleverness* as an additional underlying dimension of advertising creativity (Field, 2009). These purposes have an exploratory perspective when analysing what dimensions and factors represent advertising creativity and confirmatory perspective when testing the hypotheses that are formed according to the literature. Therefore, exploratory factor analysis is a preceding step of the confirmatory factor analysis for hypothesis testing.

The EFA procedure is conducted using IBM SPSS 23 that has several steps to be followed. These steps and their applications to the data set are presented in the following sub-sections.

#### **6.4.2.1 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity**

In order to examine the adequacy of factor analysis as a data analysis method, there are two main statistical tests available. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value assesses the adequacy of the sample for a factor analysis (George and Mallery, 2014). A second test of assessing appropriateness of factor analysis is Bartlett’s test of sphericity which assesses the significance of correlations among the research variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

KMO values vary between 0 and 1, and values above .90 are accepted to be excellent whilst any value above .50 is acceptable (Field, 2009). Bartlett’s test of sphericity values below .05 indicate multivariate normality and appropriateness for factor analysis (George and Mallery, 2014). Both values of KMO and Bartlett’s test for the research model are satisfactory and indicate that factor analysis is appropriate for data analysis. Table 6.6 presents the KMO and Bartlett’s test of sphericity values.

Table 6.6 KMO and Bartlett's test of Sphericity

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy	.955
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	18155.324
df	2016
Sig.	.000

#### 6.4.2.2 Factor Extraction

This sub-section explains the further steps of exploratory factor analysis. Once the sample and the data set are assessed for factor analysis adequacy, the next steps are to apply the criteria of factor analysis.

The first step is to determine the number of factors to represent a construct. In order to extract factors, maximum likelihood method (MLM) is chosen since this is the default method in confirmatory factor analysis in IBM SPSS AMOS. This way, both exploratory and confirmatory analysis employs the same method for a comprehensive investigation of advertising creativity. MLM is useful for confirmatory factor analysis and conducts a significance test for factors (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). This method uses Kaiser's criterion in order to determine the factors. This technique extracts factors with eigenvalue of 1 or higher that represents the "amount of the total variance explained by that factor" (Pallant, 2016, p.185). This ensures that the extracted factors explain an amount of variance and 60 percent variance is satisfactory for factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2009).

Next, a rotation tool is selected for factor extraction. Factor analysis in SPSS does not draw the factors of a construct, rather the factors that "clump together" are presented (Pallant, 2016, p.186). The rotation tool improves the interpretation of factors by a "theoretically more meaningful factor pattern" (Hair *et al.*, 2009, p.136). Rotation improves the interpretability of the produced factor solution and different techniques produce similar results (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). They help to interpret the underlying solution easily when presenting the pattern loadings (Pallant, 2016). Overall, oblique rotation approach allows the factors to correlate which is always

expected for naturalistic data that has psychological constructs (Field, 2009). This approach is chosen since the measurement items are adapted from the literature and thus, literature supports the expected correlation between factors of constructs. It is an approved approach in multivariate statistics to use oblique rotation when the constructs are correlated (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). This research employs an oblique rotation approach in SPSS with promax technique as it is expected that perceptions of and responses to creative advertising are correlated. Promax is a faster technique to be used with large data sets (Field, 2009).

After these steps, the last step in exploratory factor analysis is the examination and interpretation of factors. The oblique rotation approach produces pattern matrices that present the factor loadings of each construct. Factor loadings are correlation of each construct and their factors represented by regression coefficients (Hair *et al.*, 2009, Field, 2009). A general rule of thumb for factor loading assessment is that loadings of .7 or more are excellent to represent the variable (Comrey and Lee, 1992).

These criteria are applied for each construct in order to conduct an exploratory factor analysis. Maximum likelihood extraction with promax rotation is performed through SPSS version 23.

The 15 items of the *Divergence* construct are assessed for suitability for factor analysis by KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO value is .903 and Bartlett's value is statistically significant, supporting the factor analysis method. All of the measurement item communalities that explain the total variance of the construct are above the minimum accepted value of .5 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Five factors are extracted explaining 69.4% of the total variance which is satisfactory. All variables load significantly on factors except Originality 3 (.660) and Elaboration 2 (.375) since the cut off value is .7 for factor loadings. At this stage, Originality 3 and Elaboration 2 are eliminated from the data set as they do not significantly load on factors *Originality* (O) and *Elaboration* (EL). After taking the necessary remedy actions, it is observed that the *Originality* and *Elaboration* factors do not represent *Divergence* dimension with the measurement items.

Factor analysis is run one more time with the remaining nine measurement items and three final factors are extracted with a KMO value of .852, and a significant Barlett's value. The three factors extracted explain 70% of the total variance. These values report a satisfactory factor analysis for the *Divergence* dimension with three factors. Table 6.7 presents the individual factor loadings of each item on the final three factors.

Table 6.7 Factor Loadings for Divergence

Cronbach's Alpha	Factors		
	Flexibility-F ( $\alpha$ .900)	Synthesis-S ( $\alpha$ .901)	Artistic Value-AV ( $\alpha$ .823)
Flexibility1	.885		
Flexibility2	.848		
Flexibility3	.823		
Synthesis1		.773	
Synthesis2		.876	
Synthesis3		.923	
Artistic Value1			.759
Artistic Value2			.806
Artistic Value3			.773

The 14 items of *Relevance* construct are assessed for suitability of factor analysis by KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO value is .876 and Bartlett's value is statistically significant, supporting the factor analysis method. Except Product-to-Consumer Relevance 5 (.084), Ad-to-Product Relevance 2 (.100), and Ad-to-Product Relevance 4 (.126), remaining measurement item communalities are above the minimum accepted value of .5 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, these items do not load on factors. Accordingly, items with communalities lower than .5 are eliminated from the factor analysis. In fact, it was expected to encounter problems in the factor analysis since these three items reported higher reliability values if they were deleted in the *Reliability Analysis* section.

After the remedy action of eliminating these items (Product-to-Consumer Relevance 5, Ad-to-Product Relevance 2, Ad-to-Product Relevance 4), further problematic factor loadings are stimulated. *Product to Consumer Relevance* (PCR) becomes problematic with a Heywood case item (PCR3 loading is higher than 1) due to fewer items defining



the factor (McDonald, 1985). Moreover, *Ad to Product Relevance* (APR) does not reflect *Relevance* dimension with its individual measurement items. This is due to the fact that factors should ideally be represented with at least three or more items in factor analysis (Pallant, 2016). This is supported by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) that factors with only one or two items are less stable and reliable.

The remaining factors are *Ad to Consumer Relevance* (ACR) and *Product to Consumer Relevance* (PCR) that have satisfactory loadings. The KMO value of the *Relevance* dimension with the two factors extracted is .886 and Bartlett's value is significant. The two factors extracted explain 80% of the total variance. These values report a satisfactory factor analysis for *Relevance* dimension with two factors. Table 6.8 presents the individual factor loadings of each item on the two final factors.

Table 6.8 Factor Loadings for Relevance Dimension

Cronbach's Alpha	Factors	
	Ad to Consumer Relevance-ACR ( $\alpha$ .940)	Product to Consumer Relevance-PCR ( $\alpha$ .873)
Ad-to-Consumer Relevance 1	.887	
Ad-to-Consumer Relevance 2	.790	
Ad-to-Consumer Relevance 3	.818	
Ad-to-Consumer Relevance 4	.873	
Product-to-Consumer Relevance 1		.791
Product-to-Consumer Relevance 2		.946
Product-to-Consumer Relevance 4		.807

Although factor loadings are satisfactory, correlation between the two factors is .763. Bivariate correlations above .7 are not desirable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007) as they imply redundancy. When ACR and PCR are extracted as one factor they produce satisfactory factor loadings that are above .7 however they do not form *Relevance* dimension successfully due to non-redundant residuals of 52%. The non-redundant residual values should be below 50% for factor analysis purposes (Field, 2009).

In this case, the inter-factor correlation of .763 is an indication of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity is evident when “two or more variables are very closely linearly related” (Field, 2009, p.790). A degree of multicollinearity is expected since the research variables are interrelated by theory and multicollinearity is unavoidable with consumer response data (Hair *et al.*, 2010). However, multicollinearity issues such as ACR and PCR multicollinearity mean the analysis require critical attention. According to Tabachnick and Fidell, (2007) when the analysis aims to predict relationships multicollinearity can be ignored. At this stage of EFA, multicollinearity is reported. This is further assessed by confirmatory factor analysis in *Part II*.

The 10 items of the *Cleverness* dimension are assessed for suitability of factor analysis by KMO and Bartlett’s test of sphericity. KMO value is .949 and Bartlett’s value is statistically significant, supporting the factor analysis method. Except C9 (.408), all measurement item communalities are above the minimum accepted value of .5 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The *Cleverness* dimension explains 68.9% of the total variance which is satisfactory. Cleverness 9 measurement item, also, has a low factor loading (.639). All other items load significantly on *Cleverness* well above the cut off value of .7 for factor analysis. Taking the remedy action of eliminating Cleverness 9 item due its low loading reveals a satisfactory factor analysis. *Cleverness* is extracted with KMO value of .948 and a significant Bartlett’s value, explaining 72% of the total variance. Table 6.9 presents the individual factor loadings of each item on *Cleverness* dimension.

Table 6.9 Factor Loadings for Cleverness Dimension

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cleverness-C ( $\alpha$ .958)
Cleverness1	.844
Cleverness2	.887
Cleverness3	.909
Cleverness4	.849
Cleverness5	.836
Cleverness6	.819
Cleverness7	.856
Cleverness8	.860
Cleverness10	.774

The 8 items of *Attention* construct are assessed for suitability of factor analysis by KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO value is .895 and Bartlett's value is statistically significant, supporting the factor analysis method. Measurement item communalities are above .5 and satisfactory except *amount of attention items* Amount of Attention 1 (.484), Amount of Attention 2 (.461), Amount of Attention 3 (.471), and Amount of Attention 4 (.377). These items also have low loadings on *Attention* such as Amount of Attention 1 (.696), Amount of Attention 2 (.679), Amount of Attention 3 (.686), and Amount of Attention 4 (.614). This means that these items do not reflect *Attention* construct. Accordingly, these are eliminated from the analysis and the final factor analysis for *Attention* has a KMO value of .849 and a significant Bartlett's value, extracting 77% total variance and satisfactory factor loadings. *Attention* construct is successfully reflected with *motivation to process* items that report factor loadings above .7 as a satisfactory factor analysis. Table 6.10 presents the individual factor loadings of each item on the Attention construct.

Table 6.10 Factor Loadings for Attention Response

Cronbach's Alpha	Attention-A ( $\alpha$ .932)
Motivation to Process1	.911
Motivation to Process2	.920
Motivation to Process3	.817
Motivation to Process4	.873

The 7 items of *Likeability* construct are assessed for suitability of factor analysis by KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO value is .907 and Bartlett's value is statistically significant, supporting the factor analysis method. Measurement item communalities are above .5 and satisfactory for all items. *Likeability* extracts 74.7% of the total variance. Measurement items load significantly and above .7 on the construct except Likeability 7 (.664). After elimination of Likeability 7 due to its low loading on the construct, the final KMO value is .875 with a significant Bartlett's value, extracting 2 factors explained 75% of the total variance. Table 6.11 presents the individual factor loadings of each item on the Likeability construct.

Table 6.11 Factor Loadings for Likeability Response

Cronbach's Alpha	Factors	
	Likeability1 ( $\alpha$ .895)	Likeability 2 ( $\alpha$ .903)
Likeability1	.851	
Likeability2	.835	
Likeability3	.822	
Likeability4		.736
Likeability5		.846
Likeability6		.924

The 10 items of *Engagement* construct are assessed for suitability of factor analysis by KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO value is .927 and Bartlett's value is statistically significant, supporting the factor analysis method. Measurement item communalities are above .5 and satisfactory. All items load above .7 on the *Engagement* construct except ENG8 (.673). Accordingly, this item is eliminated from the analysis and the final factor analysis for *Engagement* has a KMO value of .922 and a significant Bartlett's value, extracting 70.7% total variance and satisfactory factor loadings. *Engagement* construct is successfully reflected with 2 factors and all item loadings are above .7 as a satisfactory factor analysis. Table 6.12 presents the individual factor loadings of each item on the factors of *Engagement* construct.

Table 6.12 Factor Loadings for Engagement Response

Cronbach's Alpha	Factors	
	Emotional Engagement-EENG ( $\alpha$ .921)	Cognitive Engagement- CENG ( $\alpha$ .903)
Engagement 2	.883	
Engagement 4	.757	
Engagement 6	.765	
Engagement 7	.873	
Engagement 9	.781	
Engagement 1		.813
Engagement 3		.728
Engagement 5		.781
Engagement 10		.924

The first part of the main analysis (*Part I*) has presented the procedure of EFA and the application of factor analysis to research constructs. The measurement items adopted from the literature are tested for reliability and validated one more time with exploratory factor analysis. After this process, the data is investigated with a confirmatory approach in which the hypotheses are tested.

The following section in *Part II* focuses on the structural equation modelling of the data. Following the EFA, confirmatory factor analysis is conducted for each construct and the overall measurement model. This provides the final factors and Goodness of Fit Indices of the variables. After this, path analysis is conducted in *PART III* in order to test the relationships between the research constructs.

#### **6.4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis/Measurement Model**

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a means to test research hypotheses and the relations between the research variables (Field, 2009). After the EFA, this sub-section presents CFA to finalise the measurement model of consumer perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity. CFA is conducted using IBM SPSS AMOS software.

The CFA procedure is similar to EFA in which the factor loadings of items are taken into account to determine the strength of a factor reflecting the research construct. Factor loadings above .7 are ideally satisfactory for CFA (Hair *et al.*, 2010). All extracted items from the EFA are examined in CFA. While EFA has an assessment of factor items free flowing, CFA is more constructed and fixed which confirms the final measurement items of a construct that are statistically significant in explaining the construct. Therefore, unlike exploratory purposes, in CFA it is specified by the researcher ‘which variables are associated with each construct, and then loadings are estimated only where variables are associated with constructs’ (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.641).

The CFA of each research construct are presented in the next section. Overall measurement model with all constructs and the final items are presented in the following section with measurement fit values.

#### 6.4.3.1 Factor Loadings

The 9 items of *Divergence* extracted by the EFA are analysed with a confirmatory approach. CFA reports only 2 factors which are *Flexibility* (F) and *Synthesis* (S), each with 3 items. *Artistic Value* factor's items are not significantly reflecting *Divergence* dimension therefore they are eliminated from the model. Final factors and item loadings of *Divergence* dimension are presented in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Divergence

Items	Factor Loadings
Flexibility 1	.76
Flexibility 2	.78
Flexibility 3	.82
Synthesis 1	.71
Synthesis 2	.77
Synthesis 3	.77

According to the CFA, hypotheses H1a and H1d are accepted since only *Flexibility* and *Synthesis* factors reflect *Divergence* dimension and hypotheses for Originality (H1b), Elaboration (H1c), and Artistic Value (H1e) are rejected.

The 7 items of *Relevance* extracted by the EFA are analysed with a confirmatory approach. CFA reports 2 factors which are *Ad to Consumer Relevance* (ACR) and *Product to Consumer Relevance* (PCR).

IBM SPSS AMOS software provides modification indices for possible cross loadings between constructs that are not identified in the model. These problematic indicator variables can be removed from the analysis to improve the measurement model (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Assessment of modification indices is a necessary step since CFA lets variables load only one construct by default (Hair *et al.*, 2010). This approach helps researchers improve research models by eliminating redundant items that explain each other.

Considering modification indices for *ACR* and *PCR* factors' items, it is observed that *ACR* items cross load with *PCR* items. Specifically, *ACR1* explains *PCR1*, *ACR2*

explains PCR2, and lastly ACR3 explains PCR4. These ACR items become redundant since they share great variance with and explain PCR items. This is not unexpected since multicollinearity was reported with these two factors in EFA.

Since CFA has a confirmatory approach rather than predictive multicollinearity at this stage should be eliminated. Multicollinearity limits the impact of a single variable and thus makes the research interpretation less reliable (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the redundant items of ACR factor are eliminated from the *Relevance* dimension construct. Final factor and item loadings of *Relevance* dimension are presented in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Relevance

Items	Factor Loadings
Product-to-Consumer Relevance 1	.82
Product-to-Consumer Relevance 2	.79
Product-to-Consumer Relevance 4	.82

According to the CFA, hypothesis H2b is accepted since only *Product to Consumer Relevance* factor reflects *Relevance* dimension and hypotheses for Ad to Consumer Relevance (H2a) and Ad to Product Relevance (H2c) are rejected.

The 9 items of *Cleverness* extracted by the EFA are analysed with a confirmatory approach. CFA reports all items strongly reflect *Cleverness*. Modification indices assessment reveal 2 items to be redundant and cross loading, therefore, these are eliminated from the CFA. Final factors and item loadings of *Cleverness* dimension are presented in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Cleverness

Items	Factor Loadings
Cleverness 2	.89
Cleverness 3	.91
Cleverness 4	.85
Cleverness 5	.84
Cleverness 6	.82
Cleverness 7	.86
Cleverness 8	.80

All items for *Advertising Creativity* construct's dimensions of *Divergence*, *Relevance*, and *Cleverness* are analysed with a confirmatory approach to examine if they reflect advertising creativity as a latent variable. *Advertising Creativity* is reflected strongly by *Cleverness* (.86) and *Divergence* (.77), while *Relevance* is removed due to its low loading (.55) on the latent variable advertising creativity. Accordingly, *Advertising Creativity* is explained only by *Divergence* and *Cleverness* in this research. Accordingly, hypothesis for Advertising Creativity dimensions of Divergence, Relevance and Cleverness (H3) is rejected since only *Divergence* and *Cleverness* are remaining dimensions.

The four items of *Attention* extracted by the EFA are analysed with a confirmatory approach. CFA reports all items strongly reflect *Attention* dimension. According to modification indices, Motivation to Process 3 item is explained by both Motivation to Process 1 and Motivation to Process 4 and therefore it is eliminated from the CFA. Final factors and item loadings of *Attention* response are presented in Table 6.16.

Table 6.16 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Attention

Items	Factor Loadings
Motivation to Process 1	.91
Motivation to Process 2	.92
Motivation to Process 4	.87

The 6 items of *Likeability* extracted by the EFA are analysed with a confirmatory approach. CFA reports all items strongly reflect *Likeability* dimension. Final factor and item loadings of *Likeability* response are presented in Table 6.17.

Table 6.17 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Likeability

Items	Factor Loadings
Likeability 1	.77
Likeability 2	.80
Likeability 3	.78
Likeability 4	.83
Likeability 5	.81
Likeability 6	.81



The 9 items of *Engagement* extracted by the EFA are analysed with a confirmatory approach. CFA reports all items strongly reflect *Engagement* dimension except Engagement 1. Engagement 1 is eliminated from the CFA due its low loading (.65). According to modification indices, two items are eliminated since they are redundant. Final factors and item loadings of *Engagement* response are presented in Table 6.18.

Table 6.18 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Engagement

Items	Factor Loadings
Engagement 2	.77
Engagement 3	.77
Engagement 5	.80
Engagement 6	.83
Engagement 7	.80
Engagement 9	.81
Engagement 10	.75

This sub-section presented the individual research constructs with a confirmatory factor analysis. In order to test for model fit the whole measurement model should be taken into consideration. The next sub-section presents the overall measurement model with goodness of fit indices.

#### **6.4.3.2 Overall Measurement Model**

After the individual CFA of each research construct all construct items are analysed one last time in order to test the model fit. Following the CFA there are six constructs which are Divergence (D), Cleverness (C), Advertising Creativity (AC), Attention (ATT), Likeability (ENT), Engagement (ENG) and 29 items reflecting these in the measurement model.

Measurement models should be assessed for two categories. The first category is the Goodness of Fit Indices. These indices report the strength of the model. The second category is validity and reliability. Once a strong model is achieved it should be tested for validity and reliability. The measurement model is presented with discussions of these categories in the following sub-sections.

#### 6.4.3.2.1 Goodness of Fit Indices

Goodness of Fit (GOF) is an indication of “how well the specified model reproduces the observed covariance matrix among the indicator items” (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.664). When presenting a measurement model there are certain elements to report and these are discussed in the light of Hair *et al.* (2010) recommendations.

According to Hair *et al.* (ibid) all models should be reported with chi-square ( $X^2$ ), degrees of freedom (DF), and these should be supported with additional GOF indices. The GOF indices act as a guideline rather than offering a single cut off value and 3 to 4 indices are adequate evidence of model fit (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, this research reports the most commonly used GOF indices.

Absolute fit indices are examined by Normed Chi-Square ( $X^2/DF$ ), Goodness-of-fit index (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR). Incremental fit indices are examined by Comparative Fit Index (CFI) to test “how well the estimated model fits relative to some alternative baseline model” (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.668).

The  $X^2/DF$  value should ideally be below 3. The guideline range for GFI is 0 to 1, and values above .90 are accepted as good fit. The cut off value for RMSEA is .05 and .08 for SRMR. CFI values above .90 indicate a good fit for the measurement models (Hair *et al.*, 2010). These guideline cut off values are presented in Table 6.19.

Table 6.19 Goodness of Fit Indices Criteria

Model Fit Indices	Recommended Criteria
$X^2/DF$	3:1
GFI	.90
RMSEA	.05
SRMR	.08
CFI	.90

The overall measurement model for this research has six constructs and 29 measurement items. The initial model has  $X^2$  value of 1486.929 and DF value of 369. However, the GOF indices are below the recommended criteria. In this case, Anderson

and Gerbing (1988) suggest to delete certain measurement items when a proper solution is obtained with unacceptable model fit.

Following this step to improve the model fit, the final model meets the recommended criteria for the model fit. The refinement of the model should be kept at a minimum level and modifications should not be done on more than 20% of the measurement items (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.713). The final measurement model has 23 items which is just within the 20% range and is presented in Figure 6. The initial model and the final model after modifications are presented with GOF indices in Table 6.20.

Table 6.20 Goodness of Fit Indices for the Measurement Model

Model Fit Indices	Initial Model	Final Model
$X^2/DF$	4.030	1.453
GFI	.715	.920
RMSEA	.100	.039
SRMR	.0628	.0450
CFI	.864	.984

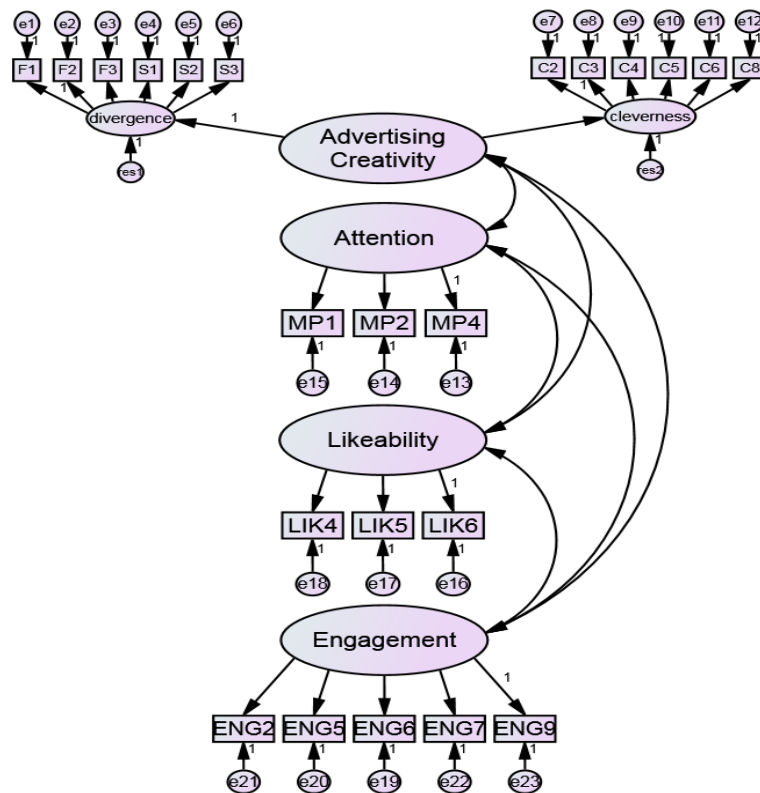


Figure 5 Overall Measurement Model

#### 6.4.3.2.2 Assessing Validity and Reliability

After achieving the model fit validity and reliability should be assessed for the model. Construct validity assessment assures that the latent constructs are measured by the designed variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010). This can be tested in four forms. Face or content validity is achieved since the measurement items of this study are adopted from the literature with theoretical considerations. Nomological validity is achieved through the relationships between research constructs that are supported by the literature. The other two forms of construct validity are discussed below.

##### 6.4.3.2.2.1 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is “the degree to which two measures of the same concept are correlated” (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.126). There are 3 criteria to be met in order to achieve convergent validity. First, the factor loadings should be greater than .7. This has been achieved with the individual CFA for each construct. Second, the average variance extracted (AVE) should be .5 or higher. AVE is the “mean variance extracted for the items loading on a construct” (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.709). Third, the construct reliability (CR) should be .7 or higher. Convergent validity values are presented in Table 6.21.

Table 6.21 Convergent Validity Assessment

Criteria	Advertising Creativity (AC)	Attention (ATT)	Likeability (LIK)	Engagement (ENG)
CR	0.816	0.908	0.903	0.902
AVE	0.699	0.767	0.756	0.648

CR: Construct Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Thus, in Table 6.21 it can be seen that all constructs’ AVE values are higher than .5; .699 for Advertising Creativity, .767 for Attention, .756 for Likeability and .648 for Engagement. Lastly, all constructs’ CR values are higher than .7; .816 for Advertising Creativity, .908 for Attention, .903 for Likeability and .902 for Engagement.

##### 6.4.3.2.2.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is “the degree to which two conceptually similar concepts are distinct” (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.126). Discriminant validity is achieved by higher values of the square root of average variance extracted for a construct compared to the

correlation estimate between that construct and any other (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Discriminant validity values are presented in Table 6.22.

Table 6.22 Discriminant Validity Assessment

Constructs	AVE	AC	ATT	LIK	ENG
Advertising Creativity (AC)	0.699	<b>0.836</b>			
Attention (ATT)	0.767	0.751	<b>0.876</b>		
Likeability (ENT)	0.756	0.721	0.698	<b>0.870</b>	
Engagement (ENG)	0.648	0.795	0.746	0.658	<b>0.805</b>

AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Table 6.22 presents the AVE values for each construct and the square roots of these values in bold. In order to achieve discriminant validity the square root of average variance extracted of a construct should be higher than the correlation estimate of that construct with other constructs. According to the table, the AVE value of Advertising Creativity is .699 and the square root of the AVE is .836. Assessing the discriminant validity for Advertising Creativity, it can be seen that .836 is higher than the correlation estimates between Advertising Creativity and Attention (.751), Likeability (.721), and Engagement (.795). The AVE value of Attention is .767 and the square root of the AVE is .876. Assessing the discriminant validity for Attention, it can be seen that .876 is higher than the correlation estimates between Attention and Advertising Creativity (.751), Likeability (.698), and Engagement (.746). The AVE value of Likeability is .756 and the square root of the AVE is .870. Assessing the discriminant validity for Likeability, it can be seen that .870 is higher than the correlation estimates between Likeability and Advertising Creativity (.721), Attention (.698), and Engagement (.658). Lastly for Engagement, the AVE value is .648 and the square root of the AVE is .805. Assessing the discriminant validity for Engagement, it can be seen that .805 is higher than the correlation estimates between Engagement and Advertising Creativity (.795), Attention (.746), and Likeability (.658). Thus, it can be concluded that all constructs meet the criterion to achieve discriminant validity.

#### 6.4.3.2.3 Measurement Model Invariance

Lastly, the overall measurement model is tested for configural and metric invariance between males and females to assess if the data are equivalent. Groups are not different at the model level which means that there is configural invariance according to the model fit values. The chi-square difference test conducted as the metric invariance test reports that p value is not significant and therefore metric invariance test is met.

The measurement model invariance test reveals that the data set can be converted into composite variables for the next stage of the SEM.

#### 6.4.4 SEM Model and Testing of Hypotheses

*Part II* presented the measurement model after a confirmatory factor analysis. The measurement model was tested for model fit, reliability and validity. *Part III* presents the structural model and testing of hypotheses with path analysis. Structural equation modelling (SEM) tests theoretical explanations concerning how research constructs are linked and the directions of significant relationships (Schreiber *et al.*, 2006).

Before conducting the path analysis, a structural model should be formed and this was done with IBM SPSS AMOS software. The structural model is a representation of research constructs that were imputed as composite variables after the CFA. This was done with the imputation feature of AMOS software. The composite variables account for the individual measurement items and their error terms created in the measurement model. In order to test research hypotheses the measurement model achieved in CFA was altered according to the hypothesised relationships between research constructs to represent the structural model (Hair *et al.*, 2010). According to the structural model specifications *Advertising Creativity* is an exogenous variable, and *Attention*, *Likeability* and *Engagement* are endogenous variables that are hypothesised to depend on Advertising Creativity.

The structural model output reported an additional path to be added from *Likeability* to *Attention* that was not initially hypothesised in this study. This function of SEM is a valuable principle for analysis purposes as it enables the researchers to see “how well the theory fits reality as represented by the observed data” (Hair *et al.*, 2017, p.164).

The additional path reported by the model needs to be added to the analysis as the “models are always simplified representations of reality and before any conclusions are derived from a model, the degree to which the model is in agreement with the data has to be ascertained” (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 2000, p.196).

Attention and Likeability constructs were hypothesised to occur at the same stage of the conceptual framework that is derived from the HOE model; the affective stage. Thus, they were not originally suggested to represent a sequential relationship within the affective stage. Likeability and Attention relationship proposed with the new path can be explained by the measurements of these constructs. Attention is measured with *Motivation to Process the Ad* and Likeability is measured with *Energy* and *Entertainment*. Creative advertising that scores highly on energy and entertainment and, thus, is liked by the viewers motivates consumers to pay attention by processing the ad. Accordingly, the new path from *Likeability* to *Attention* suggests that when consumers like creative advertising they pay more attention.

Moreover, *Consumer Responses to Advertising Creativity* chapter (3) presented the discussion the way in which these constructs are intertwined, thus, adding this path can be theoretically supported rather than adjusting the model without theoretical justification. Accordingly, the path from Likeability to Attention is added to the model and the altered structural model tests for the relationship between *Attention* and *Likeability* as well. The final structural model is presented in Figure 7.

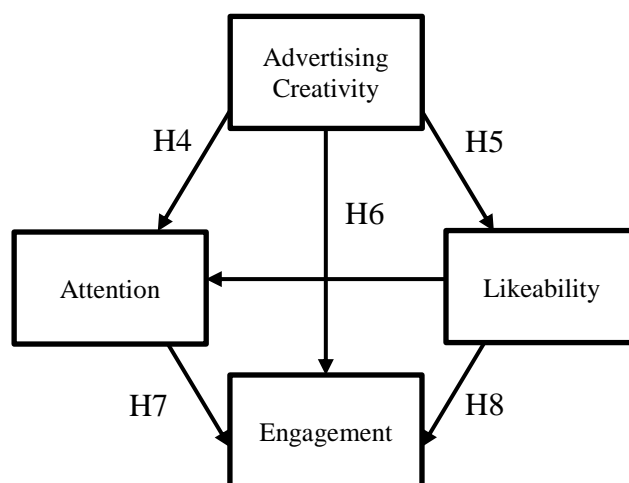


Figure 6 Structural Model

The procedure for structural model and path analysis is similar to CFA. First, the model fit indices should be met and secondly, path estimates should be examined. Similar to the CFA, Normed Chi-Square ( $X^2/DF$ ), Goodness-of-fit index (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) were used to examine the fitness of the structural model and path analysis.

The structural model has Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value of 1059.211 and degrees of freedom (DF) value of 6. All values are within the suggested GOF criteria and indicate a good fit of theory. Table 6.23 presents the GOF indices for the structural research model.

Table 6.23 Goodness of Fit Indices for the Structural Model

Model Fit Indices	Recommended Criteria	Initial Model	Refined Model*
$X^2/DF$	3:1	1.415	1.011
GFI	.90	.998	.998
RMSEA	.05	.037	.006
SRMR	.08	.0082	.0053
CFI	.90	1	1

\*Refined model when the suggested path added

After the structural model was specified SEM was conducted with path analysis. Path analysis enables to estimate strength of the structural relationships between research constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The hypotheses stated in the *Research Framework* chapter (4) represent the structural relationships between Advertising Creativity and the Attention, Likeability, Engagement responses. These structural relationships were tested with path analysis and presented as direct and indirect effects in the following sub-sections.

#### 6.4.4.1 Direct Effects

After achieving the structural model with satisfactory fitness indices next step was to examine the structural parameter estimates. Path estimates were examined for significance of factor loadings, magnitude and sign of coefficients, and squared multiple correlation coefficients (SMCC) for the endogenous variables. Additionally,



critical ratio (CR) is interpreted as a t-value in which values above 1.96 are significant. It is the ratio of unstandardized estimate to its standard error (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

According to the theory drawn from the literature review advertising creativity is expected to capture attention, generate likeability and, ultimately, to engage consumers. These relationships are direct effects of Advertising Creativity as consumer responses which represent the second and third layer of the theoretical research framework.

Hypothesis 4 states that Advertising Creativity is positively related to Attention. H4 is supported since the path from *Advertising Creativity* to *Attention* was significant at  $p < .001$  level with an estimated parameter of .53. Thus, H4 is accepted. Hypothesis 5 states that Advertising Creativity is positively related to Likeability. H5 is supported since the path from *Advertising Creativity* to *Likeability* was significant at  $p < .001$  level with an estimated parameter of .77. Thus, H5 is accepted. Hypothesis 6 states that Advertising Creativity is positively related to Engagement. H6 is supported since the path from *Advertising Creativity* to *Engagement* was significant at  $p < .001$  level with an estimated parameter of .56. Thus, H6 is accepted.

The additional structural path as another direct effect in the model from *Likeability* to *Attention* was significant at  $p < .001$  level with an estimated parameter of .34. This suggests that Attention was caused not only directly by Advertising Creativity but also indirectly through Likeability.

Moreover, the squared multiple correlation coefficients (SMCC) of the endogenous variables reported satisfactory values above the cut off value .3. SMCC values of endogenous variables indicate how much they are related to the exogenous variable. Advertising Creativity explains the variance in Attention by 68%, Likeability by 59% and Engagement by 76%. Table 6.24 presents the path coefficients of the direct effects and SMCC values.

Table 6.24 Direct Effects

	Estimate	Standard Error	CR	P value	SMCC	Results
H4: Advertising Creativity→Attention	.534	.123	10.576	***	.68	Accept
H5: Advertising Creativity→Likeability	.768	.079	20.962	***	.59	Accept
H6: Advertising Creativity→Engagement	.564	.101	12.211	***	.76	Accept
New Path: Likeability→Attention	.341	.386	6.749	***		Accept

\*\*\*=p<0.001, CR=Critical Ratio

#### 6.4.4.2 Indirect Effects

The next set of research hypotheses test mediation effects in the structural model. More specifically, it was hypothesised to see positive and partial mediation between *Advertising Creativity* and *Engagement* with *Attention* and *Likeability* as the mediators.

Hypothesis 7 states that *Attention* positively and partially mediates the structural relationship between *Advertising Creativity* and *Engagement*. Since *Advertising Creativity* has a direct effect on *Engagement* (H6 supported) the mediator effect of *Attention* can only be partial if the *Attention* to *Engagement* path is statistically significant. H7 is supported since the path from *Attention* to *Engagement* was significant at p<.001 level with an estimated parameter of .35. Thus, H7 is accepted. This meant that *Advertising Creativity* leads to *Engagement* not only directly but also indirectly through *Attention*.

Hypothesis 8 states that *Likeability* positively and partially mediates the structural relationship between *Advertising Creativity* and *Engagement*. Since *Advertising Creativity* has a direct effect on *Engagement* (H6 supported) the mediator effect of *Likeability* can only be partial if the *Likeability* to *Engagement* path was statistically significant. H8 was not supported since the path from *Likeability* to *Engagement* was not significant (p value of .314 and path estimate of .047). Thus, H8 is rejected. This meant that there was neither an indirect effect of *Advertising Creativity* on *Engagement* nor mediation between *Advertising Creativity* and *Engagement* through *Likeability*. Table 6.25 presents the path coefficients of the indirect effects.

Table 6.25 Indirect Effects

	Estimate	Standard Error	CR	P value	Results
H7: Advertising Creativity- Attention→Engagement	.282	.042	7.668	***	Accept
H8: Advertising Creativity- Likeability→Engagement	.000	.048	1.006	.314	Reject

\*\*\*=p<0.001, CR=Critical Ratio

The additionally suggested path from *Likeability* to *Attention* created two other indirect mediation effects between *Likeability* and *Engagement*, and *Advertising Creativity* and *Attention*. These mediation effects are presented in Figure 8.

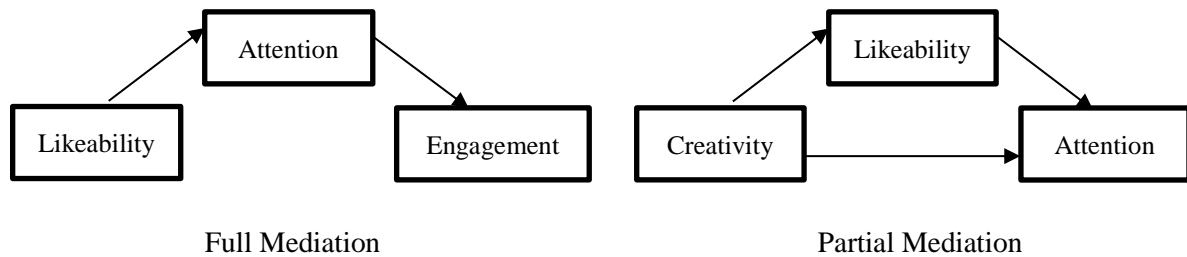


Figure 7 Additional mediation paths

The full mediation of *Attention* on the structural relationship between *Likeability* and *Engagement* is evident since both paths are statistically significant at p<.001 level and have path estimates of, respectively, .34 and .35. This means that although there is not a direct effect of *Likeability* on *Engagement* there is an indirect effect of *Likeability* on *Engagement* and it is fully mediated by *Attention*. Considering this is the mediating effect of the new path added to the structural model, it means creative advertising that is liked by the viewers is engaged with through paying more attention. Therefore, *Attention* reinforces the impact of *Likeability* on *Engagement*.

The partial mediation of *Likeability* on the structural relationship between *Advertising Creativity* and *Attention* is evident since the direct path from creativity to attention is statistically significant with .53 path estimate (H4), and the paths from creativity to likeability (H5) and likeability to attention have path estimates of, respectively, .77 and

.34. This means that *Advertising Creativity* not only directly leads to *Attention* but also has a mediated effect on *Attention* through *Likeability*. This indicated that the variance of *Attention* that was not directly caused by *Advertising Creativity* was explained through *Likeability*. The partial mediating effect of the new path between *Likeability* and *Attention* means that the attention paid to creative advertising by the viewers is reinforced through their liking of the ads. Therefore, *Likeability* reinforces the impact of *Advertising Creativity* on *Attention*. Table 6.26 presents the additional mediation effects on Engagement and Attention.

Table 6.26 Total Mediation Effects of Likeability and Advertising Creativity

	Estimate	P value	Results
Likeability-Attention→Engagement	.121	***	Full Mediation
Advertising Creativity-Likeability→Attention	.796	***	Partial Mediation

\*\*\*=p<0.001, CR=Critical Ratio

#### 6.4.4.3 Moderation Effects

The next set of hypotheses tested the moderation effect of Advertising Avoidance. More specifically, it was hypothesised that *Advertising Avoidance* negatively affects *Engagement* as a moderator in the structural model.

Hypothesis 9 states that Advertising Avoidance negatively moderates the relationship between Attention and Engagement. The moderator effect of *Advertising Avoidance* was not significant (p value of .814 and path estimate of -.011), thus H9 was rejected. This meant that *Advertising Avoidance* has not a significant moderator effect on *Engagement* through *Attention*.

Hypothesis 10 states that Advertising Avoidance negatively moderates the relationship between Likeability and Engagement. The moderator effect of *Advertising Avoidance* was not significant (p value of .482 and path estimate of .032), thus H10 was rejected. This meant that *Advertising Avoidance* has not a significant moderator effect on *Engagement* through *Likeability*. Table 6.27 presents the moderation effects of Advertising Avoidance on Engagement.

Table 6.27 Moderation Effects

	Estimate	Standard Error	CR	P value	Results
H9: Advertising Avoidance-Attention→Engagement	-.011	.030	-.236	.814	Reject
H10: Advertising Avoidance-Likeability→Engagement	.032	.030	.703	.482	Reject

CR=Critical Ratio

#### 6.4.4.4 Multi Group Effects

The last set of hypotheses tested the moderation effect of *Experience* in advertising. More specifically, it was hypothesised that *Experience* in advertising negatively affects *Engagement* as a categorical moderator in the structural model. In order to test the moderation effect of Experience Chi-square difference test was conducted. Chi-square difference test determines if two models are different based on groups. In this case, the two groups were respondents with experience in advertising and respondents with no experience in advertising.

Hypothesis 11 states that Experience in advertising negatively moderates the relationship between Attention and Engagement such that consumers' engagement who do not have experience in advertising is stronger than those with experience. The moderator effect of Experience in advertising was not significant with p value of .747, thus H11 was rejected. This meant that *Experience* in advertising has not a significant moderator effect on *Engagement* through *Attention*.

Hypothesis 12 states that Experience in advertising negatively moderates the relationship between Likeability and Engagement such that consumers' engagement who do not have experience in advertising is higher than those with experience. The moderator effect of Experience in advertising was not tested since there was not a significant relationship between likeability and engagement. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between *Experience* in advertising and *Engagement* through *Likeability*.

Since the p values for moderation effect of Experience in advertising on Engagement through both Attention and Likeability were not significant, the model is not different between groups. Therefore, there is not moderator effect of Experience in advertising on Engagement.

## **6.5 Summary**

This chapter presented research analysis and findings. First, an overview of the sample characteristics and a preliminary analysis of data cleaning were presented. Next, the main analysis was presented in three parts. The first part consisted of exploratory factor analysis, the second part consisted of confirmatory factor analysis, and the last part consisted of structural equation modelling.

*Part I* provided the reliability tests and conducted the exploratory factor analysis of the factors extracted with IBM SPSS software. In *Part II* confirmatory factor analysis was conducted and a measurement model was established. The measurement model was examined with Goodness of Fit Indices and tested for validity. Lastly, *Part III* presented the structural equation model (SEM) and conducted testing of hypotheses with path analysis.

The SEM was specifically employed since it allows more than one dependent variable to be tested simultaneously with covariance structure analysis technique (Hair *et al.*, 2010, p.648). The structural model and path analysis were tested against the overall model fit and structural parameter estimates of the path diagram.

Hypotheses 4 to 7 were accepted. These indicated that Advertising Creativity directly effects Attention, Likeability, and Engagement. Moreover, there was a causal relationship between Likeability and Attention which was not initially hypothesised however was accepted with theoretical justification. In addition, it was found that Attention mediates the relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement, which meant that the variance of Engagement that was not directly explained by Advertising Creativity was caused through Attention.

Hypothesis 8 was not supported which indicated that Likeability did not mediate the relationship between Advertising Creativity and Engagement. Thus, Likeability does not have a direct effect on Engagement but has an indirect effect through Attention. Hypotheses 9 and 10 were also rejected, which indicated that Advertising Avoidance neither through Attention nor Likeability affects Engagement. Hypotheses 11 and 12 were rejected as groups were not different for Experience in advertising, which indicated that Experience has not significant effect on Engagement.

The next chapter presents the discussion of research findings.

## **7. Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the analysis of the structural model and hypotheses testing with path analysis. This chapter presents the discussion of research findings and their theoretical meaning, and practical explanations in relation to the research framework that was proposed. First, conceptualisation of advertising creativity with its dimensions and consumers' perceptions of those is discussed. Following this, responses to creative advertising are discussed in relation to the structural model. The final structural framework that was adapted from the original structural model is then presented. The chapter concludes with a summary of this discussion.

### **7.2 Conceptualisation of Advertising Creativity and Discussion of Hypotheses**

This study presented an investigation of advertising creativity. It examined consumers' perceptions of and responses to creative advertising – advertising that had been judged by experts to be creative – in order to conceptualise antecedents and consequences of advertising creativity. A three-stage conceptual research framework, adapted from the Hierarchy of Effects (HOE) model, was developed, with the antecedents in the first stage, and consequences in the second and third stages. The first stage comprised the dimensions of advertising creativity, which were conceptualised as the antecedents. The next stages consisted of the responses as consequences of advertising creativity perceptions. Specifically, in the second stage attention and likeability were posited. In the final stage engagement was posited as the ultimate response to advertising creativity. The relationships between these research constructs, which represent the three stages of the research model, were indicated with research hypotheses. The testing of these hypotheses was presented in the previous chapter (*Research Analysis and Findings*); a summary of that is presented here for ease of reference. The following sub-sections discuss those hypotheses in two parts.

#### **7.2.1 Antecedents of Advertising Creativity**

Advertising creativity has become an important focus in advertising strategy (Chen *et al.*, 2014). It has attracted practitioners because their success depends on it (Stuhlfaut and Yoo, 2013) and researchers, perhaps, mostly because it lacks a well-defined



meaning. Similar to the constant need to redefine advertising as it evolved (Huh, 2016) advertising creativity requires a conceptualisation that accounts for its antecedents and consequences.

Moreover, the fact that it is highly subjective (Piffer, 2012) has resulted in insufficient explanation of creativity in the advertising literature. A common approach to studying and defining advertising creativity has been to refer to its dimensions. The literature suggests two common perspectives on what constitutes creativity dimensions; primarily divergence and novelty or a combination of divergence, relevance, and meaningfulness (Lehnert *et al.*, 2014). The most commonly agreed dimensions of advertising creativity are divergence and relevance (see, for example, Smith and Yang, 2004; Smith *et al.*, 2008; Sheinin *et al.*, 2011). These two overarching dimensions were a starting point for this study to conceptualise advertising creativity with a model that, uniquely, accounts for both antecedents and consequences. The model proposed that divergence and relevance were the antecedents of advertising creativity. Additionally, this study proposed that cleverness was another dimension of advertising creativity and antecedent in the model.

H1 concerned Divergence and was expressed by five hypotheses, each concerned with a sub-factor of the divergence dimension. It was stated that *Divergence* is reflected by five sub-factors which were flexibility, originality, elaboration, synthesis, and artistic value. Only flexibility and synthesis were found to reflect *Divergence*. This means that advertisements that “contain different ideas or switch from one perspective to another” and “combine, connect, or blend normally unrelated objects or ideas” (Smith *et al.*, 2007, p.821) were effective for divergence.

This raises a concern regarding *Divergence* since originality was not perceived by respondents as a sub-factor of divergence. When the two perceived sub-factors (flexibility and synthesis) of divergence are considered it is clear that they share reflections of originality with ‘*different and unrelated ideas*’. In this case, it can be interpreted that consumers reported divergence with subtle notifications of originality, rather than directly reporting it as original.

H2 concerned Relevance and was expressed by three hypotheses, each concerned with a sub-factor of the relevance dimension. It was stated that *Relevance* is reflected by three sub-factors which were ad to consumer relevance, product to consumer relevance, and ad to product relevance. Only product to consumer relevance was found to reflect *Relevance*. This means that advertisements that establish a meaningful link between the relevant product category and the consumer (Smith *et al.*, 2007) were effective for relevance and not the links between the ad and the consumer or the product category.

H3 concerned overall dimensions of advertising creativity and stated that divergence, relevance, and cleverness are the three dimensions of advertising creativity. This study defines cleverness as those ad elements that are clever, smart, witty, ingenious, intelligent, and insightful. Only divergence and cleverness were found to be advertising creativity dimensions while relevance did not strongly reflect advertising creativity. Creativity award shows are judged by practitioners who are bounded by their experiences and expertise. As a consequence, it might be much harder for practitioners to assess the relevance of a campaign to consumers while they can “certainly use their experience and expertise to evaluate the novelty and freshness of a particular campaign” (Lehnert *et al.*, 2014, p.276).

Despite the fact that advertising creativity has been conceptualised as a combination of divergence and relevance, this study found that relevance was not as effective as divergence in explaining practitioners’ advertising creativity from the consumers’ perspective. This may be due to the fact that creativity can be achieved without being relevant as suggested by Lehnert *et al.* (2014); a message can be creative despite not conveying the intended meaning or relevance. Moreover, this study found evidence that cleverness is another dimension of advertising creativity. This means that the addition of a new dimension, cleverness, has affected dimensional creativity measurement.

Specifically, when consumers were introduced to a new dimension of advertising creativity relevance became less important. This can be explained by consumers’ cleverness perception. When consumers perceived ads to be clever, smart and so on, the relevance of the product category was no longer a dimension of creativity. This can be explained by considering the relationship between relevance and effectiveness. Relevance is suggested to be more related to ad effectiveness than creativity by

enhancing meaningfulness and a less important contributor to creativity rather than being its component (Lehnert *et al.*, 2014). Consumers have become “advertising literate” (Dahlen, 2008, p.393) over the years with experience and, perhaps, clever ad elements were more relevant to consumers than the products in the ads.

Moreover, the measurement of the [dummy variable] of creativity revealed that consumers were neutral rather than strongly creative in their creativity perceptions of the ads employed in this study. This has two implications. Firstly, consumers’ perceptions differ from those of practitioners in the way they use the word ‘creative’. Advertising awarded by practitioners for being highly creative is not necessarily highly creative or uncreative but neutral in consumer perceptions regardless of how it is measured. This may mean that ‘creativity’ is simply a professional word, used by practitioners ‘for the sake of their work’ and not a significant assessment factor in consumers’ perceptions. Secondly, advertising that is highly creative to practitioners, thus, awarded is both divergent and clever to consumers, but not relevant. This means creativity measurement remains unique in practitioner terms and consumer perceptions as suggested by this research.

In conclusion, the conceptualisation of advertising creativity from the perspective of consumers revealed that divergence and cleverness strongly reflect Advertising Creativity. This supports the suggestion of this study that consumers’ perspectives of advertising creativity can differ from those of established creativity perceptions presented in the advertising literature. According to this study’s sample relevance is not effective unlike divergence while cleverness is another facet of advertising creativity. Limited studies in the literature suggested that advertising creativity can differ between perspectives of practitioners or academics and consumers (i.e. Kover *et al.*, 1995; West *et al.*, 2008). The findings provide further evidence that advertising creativity can take varying forms depending on the audience.

### **7.2.2 Responses to Advertising Creativity**

Investigation of the operationalisation of advertising creativity aids the search for better explanations of its influence. This requires advertising creativity conceptualisation to consider creativity effects. It is for this reason that advertising creativity was

conceptualised with its consequences as the responses in the research model. Kover (2016) recently argued that advertising creativity research should elaborate “how, when, and where” creativity makes a difference for advertising effects (p.237). The discussion in this section elaborates on the effects of creativity on these factors.

This study conceptualised advertising creativity such that when its dimensions were perceived they generated responses. These responses were presented in two levels in the research framework. The first level of responses that was hypothesised were attention and likeability. Literature suggests that advertising creativity is praised for aiding attention (e.g. West *et al.*, 2008; Sheinin *et al.*, 2011) and likeability (Stone *et al.*, 2000). Accordingly, once viewers are exposed to creative advertising it is reasonable to expect this to result in attention and liking.

H4 concerned attention and stated that advertising creativity has a positive effect on *Attention*. This was supported by the data, which means that attention was gained through advertising creativity. H5 concerned likeability and stated that advertising creativity has a positive effect on *Likeability*. This was supported by the data, which means that liking was developed through advertising creativity.

Moreover, within the first level of responses it was found that likeability had a positive effect on attention. Therefore, attention was gained not only directly through advertising creativity but also indirectly, through likeability. Although this was not initially hypothesised in this study, the influential relationship between the first level of responses is reasonable considering two points. Firstly, according to Johar (2016) the change in society has also changed the way advertising is perceived by consumers and they may be “less averse to advertising messages because they view ads as entertainment” (p.319). Secondly, attention was measured by consumers’ motivation to process ad information, and respondents were more motivated to pay attention when they liked the ads. This means that consumers’ liking of the ads affected their motivation and they paid attention to the adverts that they liked.

The second level response that was hypothesised was engagement. Literature suggests that “advertising is based on attempts to engage consumers” (Schultz, 2016, p.277). Therefore, H6 concerned engagement and stated that advertising creativity has a

positive effect on *Engagement*. This was supported by the data, which means that creative advertisements were able to engage with consumers. It is stated that engagement concerns “bonding, shared meaning, and identification” (Rappoport, 2007, p.138). Engagement, in this study, is defined as *the intensity of an individual’s participation in and connection with an advertisement*.

In accordance with the hypothesised research model consumers become active in the communication process as suggested by Young (2000). Consumers develop perceptions of creative advertising and as a result of this they become engaged with the ads. Consequently, engagement develops because of their perceptions rather than being a part of creativity as ‘relevance’. In other words, consumers become engaged with creative advertising as a response to the perceived divergence and cleverness. This supports not only the view that creativity is a driver of engagement (Johar, 2016) but also Wang (2006) who stated that engagement is not an indicator, rather it is the purpose of advertising creativity.

The next set of hypotheses represented the mediation effects of the first level of responses on advertising creativity.

H7 concerned the mediating effect of attention on engagement and stated that attention positively and partially mediates the positive relationship between advertising creativity and engagement. This was supported by the data, which means that engagement with creative ads was achieved through attention. In other words, when the respondents perceived creativity dimensions and paid attention to the ads they became engaged. H8 concerned the mediating effect of likeability on engagement and stated that likeability positively and partially mediates the positive relationship between advertising creativity and engagement. This was not supported by the data since likeability was not a directly effective factor on engagement. Likeability was effective on engagement through attention. This means that advertising creativity engages with the audience both directly and, also, when the audience likes and becomes motivated to pay attention to the ads. Thus, engagement with creative ads was achieved through attention.

The last set of hypotheses represented the moderation effects of advertising avoidance and experience in advertising on advertising creativity.

H9 and H10 concerned the moderating effect of advertising avoidance on engagement and hypothesised that the respondents who tend to avoid advertising would be less engaged with creative ads. The negative moderation effect of ad avoidance on engagement was not significant. Therefore, these hypotheses were not supported by the data and there was no specific relationship between ad avoidance and engagement.

H11 and H12 concerned the moderating effect of experience in advertising on engagement and hypothesised that the respondents who have or had working experience in advertising would be less engaged with creative ads. The negative moderation effect of experience in advertising on engagement was not significant. Therefore, these hypotheses were not supported by the data and there was no specific relationship between experience in advertising and engagement.

### **7.3 Final Structural Model**

A general goal of advertising creativity research is to examine the way in which it is applied and to understand its outcomes (Kover, 2016). Therefore, conceptualisation of advertising creativity should comprise what creativity represents and what effects it has.

The research framework has three stages and presents the interrelationships between advertising creativity and the responses to it. Advertising creativity represents the antecedents in the first stage, while consequences are represented by attention and likeability in the second stage, and engagement in the third stage. This model enhances understanding of how practitioners' advertising creativity is perceived and responded to by consumers. The initial structural model was altered according to the data and final model is presented in Figure 9.

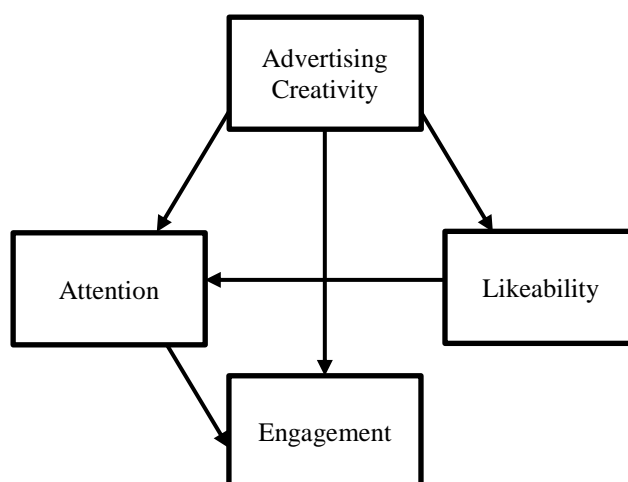


Figure 8 Final Research Framework

#### 7.4 Research Contribution

Similar to the advertising research in need of a “thoughtful and rigorous conceptualisation” (Huh, 2016, p.356) creativity needs to be investigated more rigorously. This study contributes to advertising literature in four specific ways. These are the incongruency between practitioner and consumer perceptions, the addition of a new dimension to advertising creativity, the development of a unique advertising creativity model that combines both antecedents and outcomes, and the relationship between antecedents and outcomes of advertising creativity.

It is accepted that advertising practitioners have different views of creativity and this affects the nature of creativity awards, while it is the same case for academics’ research (Kover, 2016). This is not unexpected since creativity cannot be simplified into a single meaning. Yet, the literature offers limited reflection on this context. In order to minimise the effect of this drawback researchers need to be aware of various perspectives. This study provides an insight into whether practitioners’ and consumers’ perceptions of advertising creativity are congruent: it was established that there was no congruency between the perceptions of consumers and practitioners.

Advertising research has borrowed from other fields such as psychology and sociology (Schultz, 2016) and in order to advance practice Royne (2016) suggests that theories need to be tested in new contexts. This study introduced the concept of cleverness, taken

from the psychology research, as an additional dimension of and antecedent to advertising creativity. This provides a new and unique model of consumers' mental responses to creative advertising. While this model is in accordance with the literature that creativity is "multifaceted" (Wang *et al.*, 2013, p.52), cleverness is evidently perceived by consumers as a dimension that has not previously been considered.

An alternative conceptualisation of advertising creativity is provided with this study, and it makes a theoretical contribution to literature with a unique model that accounts for its antecedents and outcomes. Consequently, both the introduction of a new dimension and the model with antecedents and outcomes are contributions to research since there has hitherto been a gap in the research literature regarding consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity.

Lastly, this study contributes to the limited knowledge of consumer perceptions by uncovering the relationships between advertising creativity antecedents and outcomes. Consumers develop responses and engage with creative ads through their perceptions of those ads.

Some aspects in advertising "will likely be debated continuously and disagreed upon regularly" (Huh, 2016, p.358) and creativity is one of them as there still remains confusion about it (O'Connor, 2016). This sub-section has presented how this research contributes to the advertising creativity literature with findings on consumer perceptions of and responses to creative advertising.

## **7.5 Summary**

This chapter discussed the conceptualisation of advertising creativity according to the research findings. The discussion was presented in two parts; antecedents of advertising creativity, and consequences of advertising creativity.

The data provided evidence that divergence and cleverness were representing advertising creativity as its antecedents. The reported creativity measures were neutral rather than creative, which may lead us to conclude that a differentiation between creative and non-creative is not made by consumers. This supports the suggestion that



“not only is creativity different for those different purposes but also it may be unnecessary” (Kover, 2016, p.236).

Moreover, advertising creativity with only these two perceived dimensions was effective to attract attention, and generate likeability and engagement as consequences. Moreover, likeability positively influenced attention but however did not influence engagement directly. Advertising creativity led to consumer engagement not only directly but also through attention and likeability responses.

The relationships between engagement and ad avoidance, and engagement and experience in advertising were not significant: the effects of advertising creativity were influenced by neither advertising avoidance nor experience in advertising. The interrelationships between advertising creativity and consumers’ responses were presented in the final research framework.

## **8. Conclusion, Managerial Recommendations, Limitations and Future Research**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusion of the thesis. The chapter first provides a summary of the thesis, and then revisits the research objectives in order to review the extent to which they were achieved. These were presented in two sections: first, consumers' perceptions of and second, consumers' responses to advertising creativity. Following that, a summary of research findings is provided. Finally, research limitations and recommendations for further research are outlined.

### **8.2 Summary of Thesis**

This section presents a summary of this thesis. This first chapter (*Introduction*) presented an introduction to the thesis with the background and research aims. The second and third chapters consisted of a review of the relevant literature on advertising. In the second chapter (*Advertising Creativity*), the definitions and various dimensions of advertising creativity were introduced, followed by a discussion of its importance and measurement. The third chapter (*Consumer Responses to Advertising Creativity*) discussed the Hierarchy of Effects model and presented consumer responses to advertising creativity. This included the definitions, importance, and measurements according to the literature of each hypothesised response.

Chapter 4 (*Research Framework*) presented the conceptual research framework and proposed research hypotheses. In Chapter 5 (*Methodology*) research design and methodological approach were discussed with details of the data collection process. Chapter 6 (*Research Analysis and Findings*) presented the research findings based on the data analysis with structural equation modelling. Chapter 7 (*Discussion*) provided the discussion of findings and research hypotheses. Chapter 8 (*Research Contribution and Managerial Implications*) outlined theoretical research contribution and managerial implications. Lastly, Chapter 9 (*Conclusion*) presents the conclusion with regards to research objectives, and lists the limitations and future research considerations and suggestions.

### **8.3 Research Objectives**

The importance of creativity to advertising has long been acknowledged (Till and Baack, 2005), hence the significant number of studies that investigate advertising creativity. Further investigations of creativity require careful consideration and, perhaps, a unique perspective to understand the way in which the ‘creative wonder’ is perceived by viewers.

This study aimed to contribute to advertising literature by unveiling consumers’ perceptions of and responses to creativity judged by practitioners. Specifically, the study had two purposes. The first purpose was to understand consumer perceptions of advertising creativity; and the second to reveal how consumers’ perceptions act as antecedents of their responses to advertising creativity. Four research objectives were established in order to achieve the research aims. These are presented below.

#### ***8.3.1 Consumers’ perceptions of advertising creativity and relationships between advertising creativity dimensions***

The first two objectives of this study were to analyse how consumers perceive creative advertising and its various dimensions; and to examine the relationships/interrelationships between the dimensions as perceived by consumers. The hypothesised research model was presented in Chapter 4 (*Research Framework*) and suggested that advertising creativity was represented by three unique dimensions: divergence, relevance, and cleverness. These dimensions were conceptualised as antecedents of advertising creativity.

The data were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) and the results were presented in Chapter 6 (*Research Analysis and Findings*). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was presented in section 6.4.3 in order to examine advertising creativity dimensions. The findings indicated that while relevance was not significant as an advertising creativity dimension, consumers value divergence, with flexibility and synthesis, and cleverness. The results show that, from the perception of consumers, advertising creativity judged by practitioners is conceptualised with divergence and cleverness as antecedents. A detailed discussion of advertising creativity dimensions was presented in *Antecedents of Advertising Creativity* section (7.2.1).

### **8.3.2 Consumers' responses to advertising creativity and the relationships between them**

The last two objectives were to examine how consumers respond to creative advertising and its various dimensions, and to investigate the relationships/interrelationships between the different types of consumer responses to creative advertising. The research model (*Research Framework*) hypothesised that advertising creativity would generate attention, likeability, and engagement as consumer responses. These responses were conceptualised as outcomes of the advertising creativity perceptions.

As part of the SEM analysis path analysis was presented in *SEM Model and Hypotheses Testing* section (6.4) in order to examine the relationship between the antecedents and outcomes of creativity. The findings indicated that advertising creativity generated all hypothesised responses. The results show that consumers perceive creative advertising – advertising that had been judged by experts to be creative– with divergence and cleverness; and respond to it by liking, paying attention and becoming engaged with the creative adverts. A detailed discussion of the relationships between the outcomes of advertising creativity was presented in *Responses to Advertising Creativity* section (7.2.2).

## **8.4 Summary of Research Findings**

This study investigated advertising creativity and demonstrated the way consumers' responses to advertising that had been judged by experts to be creative are influenced by their perceptions of creativity. In order to answer the research questions a conceptual research framework was developed after a critical review of the literature. The framework conceptualises advertising creativity with dimensions as antecedents and responses as outcomes.

The first set of research questions were: Do consumers perceive advertising creativity in the same way as expected by the practitioners? If not, how do they perceive advertising creativity? The literature review indicated a common method of investigating advertising creativity with its dimensions. Accordingly, the two most

referred to creativity dimensions were divergence and relevance. Moreover, this study hypothesised that cleverness is a third dimension of advertising creativity that is perceived by consumers. This study found that although consumers, unlike the experts, did not consider the ads particularly creative they perceived divergence and cleverness in creative advertising. This shows evidence that consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity differ from those of practitioners. Therefore, the first set of research questions are answered with a unique conceptualisation of advertising creativity with two dimensions; divergence and cleverness.

The second set of research questions were: How do consumers respond to advertising creativity? Are consumers' responses to creative advertising affected by their perceptions of advertising creativity? Literature suggests that advertising creativity is effective in generating responses. According to the research framework, adopted from the Hierarchy of Effects (HOE) model, attention and likeability were hypothesised as affective responses. This study suggested that advertising creativity, ultimately, engages viewers as a conative response. This study found that advertising judged by practitioners to be creative generates attention and likeability, and engages viewers through their perceptions. Therefore, the second set of research questions are answered with the conceptualisation of advertising creativity with antecedents that result in consumer responses to advertising creativity as outcomes.

## **8.5 Managerial Recommendations**

Advertising theory and practice is advanced by research that is relevant to both academics and practitioners (Chang, 2017). The contribution of this research was discussed in the previous chapter as implications for researchers and this sub-section presents the managerial recommendations for practitioners.

Advertising, as a means of communication, is a two-way process. The message from the brands to the consumers is "only one side of the story" while the message from the consumers to the brands is "equally important" (Rust, 2016, p.347). Researchers, following the footsteps of practitioners, refer to creativity as a "hidden tool" to justify its powerful impact on advertising (Dahlen, 2008, p.395). This study aims to uncover what is believed to be hidden by conceptualisation of advertising creativity from the

perspective of consumers. Consequently, with a better understanding of consumer perceptions of and responses to creativity, implications are drawn for advertising practitioners in mainly two important aspects. The primary aspect is eliminating the risk for practitioners that is related to creativity, and a second aspect is to consider the outcomes of advertising creativity. These aspects are elaborated individually below.

Creativity involves risk for practitioners (El-Murad and West, 2004) and this can be decreased, if not eliminated altogether, with a fully understood meaning and impact of creativity. Therefore, an alignment of consumers' and practitioners' perceptions of advertising creativity is important to consider. This study found that consumers have different creativity perceptions than practitioners. Consumers, unlike practitioners who praise creativity, are neutral towards it while being able to perceive divergent and clever ad elements. This means that practitioners can put emphasis on these elements in their designs rather than concentrating on what they think 'creative' is. In return, this may improve the design process, message delivery, and the desired responses from the target audiences. This would provide practitioners better opportunities for delivering what is expected by the advertising viewers. Thus, practitioners' emphasis on divergent and clever elements in advertising design could eliminate the risk factor associated with creativity.

Additionally, this study found that advertising creativity engages viewers through their perceptions as an outcome. This offers implications for practitioners with an understanding of the effects creativity has on consumer responses as outcomes. Although consumers do not have strong perceptions of creativity (in contrast to practitioners) it is clear that it is creativity that generates the desired outcomes. Specifically, this study's findings showed that consumers liked, paid attention to, and engaged with the creative ads employed in this study despite the fact that, unlike the experts, they did not consider them particularly creative. This means that creativity is not only capable of attracting attention and likeability but it also eliminates the barriers to engage with viewers by developing open minds. This may be a result of the fact that consumers have become more sophisticated and "less vigilant about being influenced by advertising" (Johar, 2016, p.324). This implication offers opportunities for practitioners in the ways that they can ensure achieving the desired outcomes.

Practitioners compete with other practitioners but what is more challenging is, perhaps, that they also compete against the clutter of advertisements. The conceptualised model of advertising creativity with antecedents and outcomes suggests that practitioners should consider expectations of the viewers. Divergent and clever elements embraced in advertising design can enhance engagement. In the long run this might have a positive impact on the general view of the public that advertising is a matter to be avoided.

According to Dahlen and Rosengren (2016) despite the advances in advertising research consumer behaviour and its extended effects have not been reflected on. This research can be considered as response to their call. Similar to the mission of advertising research to develop theoretical meanings of how advertising works (Chang, 2017) a model has been developed to explain how creativity works. By focusing on consumer perceptions of and responses to advertising creativity this research presented implications for practitioners that can be used to improve advertising creativity and to better communicate with the consumers.

## **8.6 Limitations**

All research has limitations and this study is no exception. The limitations of this study are related to the research sample, questionnaire, and creativity measurement, which are presented in the following sub-sections.

### **8.6.1 Sample Related Limitations**

Due to the limitations of self-selected sampling approach the results cannot be considered to be representative of the population. Limitations related to sampling may be due to non-probability sampling, which is a limitation of most online surveys. However, for Internet mediated research (IMR), the feasibility of probability sampling is open to discussion (Hewson and Laurent, 2008, p.66). This is due to the fact that conducting probability sampling with a true geographically covered area is not feasible since there is no access to a complete list of Internet-user population elements. As Fricker (2008) stated the current Internet structure does not provide sampling frames or alternatives to sampling.

This challenges IMR sampling in terms of problems around sampling frame and coverage (LozarManfreda, 2008). However, Tuten (2010) noted that sampling error doesn't make sense in non-probability sampling. Having no sampling frames and thus no response rate affects the generalizability of the research beyond the sample but this does not conclude that research data are inadequate (Fricker, 2008).

Another limitation related to sampling was the difficulty in reaching respondents over the age of 50 and 60 and to have them to participate in the online survey. However, this is a tolerable consequence of employing IMR since only 49% of households with one adult aged 65 or over had internet access (ONS, 2015). Moreover, 12% of adults aged 55 to 64 have never used a computer before, while 32% of adults aged 65 and over never used a computer. (ONS, 2015).

#### **8.6.2 Length of Questionnaire**

A crucial factor that may have affected the completion rate of the online survey was the length of the questionnaire. In order to take account of different advertising creativity dimensions the survey had several questions for the respondents to answer, with batteries of statements to consider for two adverts. This, perhaps, explains the number of respondents who started the survey and the significantly smaller number who completed it. Initially, the online questionnaire reached 498 consumers; the completed return was only 318.

#### **8.6.3 Measurement of Advertising Creativity**

Another limitation of this research is the difficulty of measuring advertising creativity. Due to the subjective nature of creativity, the chosen measurement method is limited in itself despite the effort to employ a comprehensive approach compared to other measurements in the literature. Another element that impacts the measurement of advertising creativity is the creative stimuli used. Although this approach "may also contain unseen biases", when it is found to be more appropriate for research aims, it is common to employ adverts that had been acknowledged previously by experts (Sasser and Koslow, 2008, p.11). Using award winning advertisements rather than adverts chosen by the researcher eliminates researcher bias. Measurement error was taken into account by measuring each construct with multiple items rather than one (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 2000). Although extreme care has been taken in order to minimize



measurement error, “respondents’ motivation, computer literacy, abilities” might have affected their responses (LozarManfreda, 2008, p.183). For example, the respondents who completed the survey without being reminded might have had more motivation than those who were reminded to complete the survey. Another example could be that some respondents might have had higher computer literacy or abilities compared to others who are, for example, in the age group of 61 and above.

## **8.7 Future Research**

Further investigations of advertising creativity should consider some important aspects. First, attention should be paid to the perspective in which the research is interested. Rather than simply reporting creativity researchers should consider the effects various perceptions have on creativity. Kover (2016) asked “creative to whom”? (p.235). This is a crucial question to be answered.

Second, depending on which perspective the research is considering, if consumers are subject to investigation, unique approaches can be considered in explaining their perceptions of advertising creativity. This study found that practitioners’ perceptions of advertising creativity were incongruent with those of consumers. Therefore, it is worth considering different approaches in advertising creativity research. For example, as a potential area to study, cleverness can be investigated in more detail with a qualitative research approach.

The final recommendation reflects on both the first and second and is related to the measurement of advertising creativity. Subjectivity of creativity had impact on its investigations. In order to improve its investigation researchers should take into account the need to develop conceptualisation of advertising creativity. When its meaning and effects are investigated comprehensively better explanations of how creativity works will be provided.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Survey

You are invited to participate in a research study about consumers' perceptions of advertising creativity. I am conducting this research as part of my PhD Thesis in Marketing at University of Westminster.

Your participation is voluntary and will be highly appreciated. The data collected from the survey will be used for academic purposes only and all responses will be kept confidential. If you have any concerns regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at [p.demir@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:p.demir@my.westminster.ac.uk)

The following questionnaire should take no more than 15 minutes. Considering the advertisement provided, for each of the following statements please indicate your own opinion by clicking on the appropriate button. Only one answer can be selected for each statement. You will be able to see the advertisement on every page as you progress in the questionnaire. Once you complete all the statements you will be provided with a second advertisement. The procedure will be the same as the first advertisement. Please continue to indicate your opinion on the second advertisement by clicking on the appropriate button for each of the statements.

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

Pinar Demir

Do you currently live in the UK?

- ☐ No, I don't.
- ☐ Yes, I do.

1

	No, I have NOT	Yes, I have
Have you seen this ad before?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The advertisement is out of the ordinary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement breaks away from habit-bound and stereotypical thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement is unique.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The advertisement contains ideas that move from one subject to another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement contains different ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement shifts from one idea to another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The advertisement connects objects that are usually unrelated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement contains unusual connections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement brings unusual items together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The advertisement contains numerous details.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement takes basic ideas and makes them more intricate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement contains more details than expected.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The advertisement is visually/verbally distinctive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement makes ideas come to life graphically/verbally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement is artistically produced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The advertisement is meaningful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement is appropriate to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement is useful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement is valuable to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The product or service is meaningful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The product or service is appropriate to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The product or service is useful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The product or service is valuable to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do NOT care about this product or service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



9

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The product or service is the primary focus of the ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The product or service is NOT a central character in the ad, it is more a background component.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The heart of this ad is what it says about the product or service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The product or service does NOT seem to be relevant to what goes on in the advertisement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad presents useful information about the product or service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10

All things considered, please rate the unusualness of the advertisement according to the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The advertisement is different.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement is uncommon.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement is unusual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11

All things considered, please rate the advertisement's overall relevance, meaningfulness, and usefulness according to the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The viewing experience is relevant to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The viewing experience is useful to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, the advertisement and the product or service are NOT really applicable to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



12

All things considered, please answer the questions regarding the advertisement's overall creativity compared to the average advertisement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
In general, the advertisement is very creative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement should win an award for creativity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advertisement is not very inventive and displays little creativity in its design.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13

Please rate the advertisement's overall creativity by giving marks out of 20.

14

Please rate the cleverness of the advertisement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The ad is intellectual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is intelligent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is smart.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is clever.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is ingenious.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is witty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is imaginative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is insightful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is ironic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is fitting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The advertisement demanded my attention.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I examined the main elements of the advertisement very carefully	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tried to carefully evaluate the information provided in the ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spent considerable time analysing the ad's message.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I had a strong desire to examine the ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was highly motivated to read the ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really wanted to understand the ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was very interested in the ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The ad is entertaining.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is appealing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is well done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is gentle.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is warm.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is sensitive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I like the ad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The following 10 statements ask you to rate the advertisement according to extremes of 10 different qualities. For each question please indicate the extent to which you think the ad has that quality by clicking the appropriate button.

From Important to Unimportant...

	Important					Unimportant
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Boring to Interesting...

	Boring					Interesting
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Relevant to Irrelevant...

	Relevant					Irrelevant
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Exciting to Unexciting...

	Exciting					Unexciting
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Means Nothing to Means a lot...

	Means Nothing					Means a lot
The ad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Appealing to Unappealing...

	Appealing					Unappealing
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Fascinating to Mundane...

	Fascinating				Mundane
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Worthless to Valuable...

	Worthless				Valuable
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Involving to Uninvolving...

	Involving				Uninvolving
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From Not Needed to Needed...

	Not Needed				Needed
The ad is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>