

## Consumers' Religio-Spiritual Insights in Ramadhan Advertisements

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### ABSTRACT

*Due to the lack of customers' religio-spiritual insights, consumers become frustrated and distracted when viewing Ramadan television advertising. This irritation can sometimes result in a poor impression of the brand being promoted. The holy month of Ramadan has been turned into a shopping festival by merchants, who view it in the same vein as other seasonal shopping festivals celebrated in the West. Marketers set aside nearly half of their annual budget for advertising purposes during the month of Ramadan; however, they do not take into account the spiritual atmosphere that permeates the month, even though it is the Islamic month in which Muslims engage in the most profound spiritual contemplations. This study presents a thorough framework that will assist marketers in incorporating customers' religio-spiritual insights into Ramadan television commercials so that consumers are not upset or distracted by the advertisements. The concepts of spirituality and religion, as well as amusement, information, and the legitimacy of the source, are some of the significant ones that are investigated in this study. This exploratory investigation is being carried out in accordance with the recommendations of grounded theory. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the consumers' spiritual perspectives and to develop a comprehensive model, a total of 25 in-depth and semi-structured interviews with consumers of various religious, non-religious, and athletic/yoga orientations were undertaken.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Consumers' Religio-Spiritual Insights, Irritation, Ramadan Advertising, TV Commercials

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Ramadan is the holiest of all months in the Islamic calendar. Muslims are religiously abode by following the same routine on daily basis from dawn to sunset. Consumers avoid watching TV commercials during the spiritual month of Ramadan because there is a strong criticism that advertising clutter is increased (Ansari, 2020; Keenan & Yeni, 2003) and the types of products advertised, are not fitting into the spiritual theme of Ramadan. Consumers get irritated and distracted from the TV commercials and sometimes this irritation creates a negative brand image. In Pakistan, PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) issues the guidelines for airing TV programs and advertisements before Ramadan (Rawan & Bibi, 2019). Since 2013, they had to ban some programs and commercials because of the complaints lodged by the consumers, regarding the offensive and irritating content in TV commercials and programs (Bandsynario, 2015; Propakistani, 2015). The entire month of Ramadan is a period of increased spirituality and religious contemplation for Muslims across the world (Keenan & Yeni, 2003).

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Besides the spiritual contemplations of Muslims, the month of Ramadan is gradually converting into a shopping month like other western festivals (e.g. Christmas) due to the increasing consumption pattern (Ozlem et al., 2007). Some of the marketers spend half of their annual marketing budget in advertising during this month. Marketers are more focused on their sales by airing Ramadan campaigns but they do not consider consumers' spiritual insights in their TV commercials (Ozlem et al., 2007; Touzani & Hirschman, 2008).

Muslims abide by some religious obligations like Fasting and paying Zakat during this spiritual month of Ramadan. Muslims perform all rituals more religiously in this month than in other months (Düzçeker et al., 2019; Odabasi & Argan, 2009). Although fast is obligatory for all Muslims during Ramadan but it can be skipped for various prescribed reasons. The spiritual aura created in this month keeps the spiritual contemplations of Muslims higher than any other month, so the marketers should incorporate spiritual elements in their TV commercials so to avoid the distraction of consumers (Ansari, 2020; Marmor-Lavie et al., 2009).

### **1.1 Research Objectives**

The literature lacks in providing a specific framework for marketers to incorporate the spiritual elements in the advertising content to get the consumers' attention. The main purpose of this study is to identify the factors that can help marketers to design and develop specific Ramadan campaigns to reduce the consumers' irritation and attract more consumers towards their TV commercial. Specifically, there are two sub-goals of this study: 1) to explore the consumers' understanding of spirituality at personal and brand level in Ramadan TV commercials, 2) to identify the key factors influencing the consumers' spiritual insights while watching a TV commercial in Ramadan.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

Previous studies indicate that people spend much time watching TV and listening to radio from breaking fast (Iftar) till late at night, and that is why marketers specifically air the Ramadan advertising campaigns to the target audience in peak timings (Afifi, 1997; Al Salah, 2018; Keenan & Yeni, 2003). Marketers are more focused on increasing consumption rather than taking care of consumers' spiritual insight. While observing these issues in Ramadan advertising and identifying the gaps in previous literature, the study is focused on the following research questions:

- Q1: What are the consumers' understanding of spirituality at a personal and brand level in Ramadan TV commercials?
- Q2: What are the key factors that should be incorporated in Ramadan TV commercials to attract consumers?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Spirituality has been a well-researched construct in various contexts for many years. It has been explored and extensively modeled in several domains such as medical health, nursing, work environment, employee happiness, and well-being (Benefiel et al., 2014; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Hafeez & Rafique, 2013; McSherry et al., 2002). For example, the use of spirituality in the treatment of fatal patients is an active area of research (Delaney, 2005; Khanna & Greyson, 2014; West, 2012). Spirituality in marketing and advertising domains has received comparatively lesser attention.

During the spiritual month of Ramadan, marketers should nourish an emotional and spiritual bond between the consumers and their brands (Rickard, 1994). This bonding can be developed

by incorporating the spiritual elements in Ramadan advertising. Although several scholars consider spirituality as a component of religion, however there are numerous scholars who believed spirituality to be an experience that is broader than religion (Ansari, 2020). This spiritual experience occurs within the context of our daily lives, in the form of feelings, emotions, connections, music and enjoyment, and these are some of the factors which people want to see in advertising messages (Marmor-Lavie et al., 2009).

## **2.1 Theoretical Grounding**

A person's belief in God is the theological description of spirituality, which is usually expressed through a man's religious beliefs and religious practices. Religion is defined by the rituals, doctrines, ethics, myths, social and personal experiences like fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). Cohen and Hill (2007) proposed a theory, corresponding the religiosity and spirituality, that explains the variation in religious cultures with respect to the individualistic and collectivistic aspects (Cohen & Hill, 2007). Whereas spirituality has intangible and multiple dimensions which include the inner forces which give purpose to life. Several scholars believe that spirituality is all about trust in yourself rather than depending on any divine power (Ansari, 2020; Hafeez & Rafique, 2013). There is no universally recognised definition of spirituality available (Marmor-Lavie, 2010), however, it is usually described as the person's individual desires/experiences on the basis of existential relationship with. Spirituality is a multi-dimensional construct that includes concepts such as meaning, direction, and intimacy with God (Dasti & Sitwat, 2014); sharing, transformation, love, belonging, connectedness, and openness to the infinite journey (Marmor-Lavie, 2010).

## **2.2 Spirituality in Advertising**

It has been claimed in several studies that spirituality is going to be the defining trend of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as the spiritual values of consumers will continue to grow. Spirituality will play an increasingly vital role in the lives of consumers (Marmor-Lavie & Stout, 2016; Moore, 2005). There is a greater need to identify connections between the world of advertising and spirituality. This approach of incorporating spirituality in the ads of Ramadan can potentially change the way marketers think about consumerism and the process of consumption.

In previous studies, Spirituality in Advertising Framework (SAF) was given (Marmor-Lavie, 2010), which is a framework resulting from qualitative research. It explores perceived spirituality in advertising in the United States, where demographics and religious orientations are different from those in the Muslim world. Although SAF covers the religious orientation, it cannot be applied for the Ramadan campaigns, which run during the whole month consisting of the same routine of rituals being followed daily. As such SAF cannot be directly applied for the specific Ramadan specific campaigns and a separate framework is required for seasonal campaigns like Ramadan (Marmor-Lavie, 2010; Marmor-Lavie & Stout, 2016).

Advertising and spirituality are often considered to revolve around one another, as advertising messages reflect the pattern and trends in our society (Kadar et al., 2015; Twitchell, 2004). Despite the differences between the commercial and spiritual worlds, there are predictions of the increased use of spirituality in advertising, to attract spiritually-inclined consumers (Minton, 2019; Rickard, 1994). Therefore, marketers are required to focus more on selfless marketing, instead of focusing exclusively on the revenues.

## **2.3 Spirituality in Ramadan**

Ramadan has a much stronger religious bonding with the Muslims as they strictly follow the prescribed routine of rituals during this spiritual month (Koku & Jusoh, 2016). Muslims observe the fast from Suhur (before Dawn) till Iftar (after sunset) regularly for thirty days. Muslims make

special arrangements and prepare for these spiritual moments, which often consist of Iftar parties in which friends, immediate family, extended families, relatives, neighbors, and others are invited to exclusive gatherings. These events continue throughout the month. The spiritual month ends with the celebration of Eid which in itself is a religious festival spread over at least three days and may extend much beyond with get-togethers and gatherings of networks (Odabasi & Argan, 2009). Moreover, this month is customarily reserved for the computation of payment of the annual religious obligation of alms, 'Zakat' and 'Fitrah' to the poor and deserving people, and thus a source of increasing religio-spiritual contemplations of Muslims. Many charity and social organisations target the Muslims with their TV commercials and other advertisements to sustain themselves by receiving Zakat and other donations collected during this month (Afifi, 1997; Coutinho et al., 2013; Khan, 2015).

## **2.4 Christmasation of Ramadan**

Iftar had traditionally been home and close family event. However, there is an increasing trend of holding exclusive and sometimes lavish Iftar parties at public places such as restaurants, hotels, and clubs. Ads of these Iftar packages have also become significant. This has been accompanied by huge spending on advertising of brands in the spiritual month (Keenan & Yeni, 2003). Research indicates that the spiritual month of Ramadan is being converted into a shopping festival like Christmas and other western originated festivals (Maqsood, 2014; Saad, 2010). Branding efforts are required to focusing not only on the product, but also on other elements such as product characteristics, uses, name, emotions, symbols, and music (Maqsood, 2014). This trend of marketing and advertising is now being referred to as the 'Christmasation' of Ramadan.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

This study employed qualitative research techniques to explore the spirituality-related consumer insights in Ramadan advertising. The qualitative research approach guides in identifying the important factors involved in Ramadan advertising and also led to the development of a comprehensive framework using the guidelines provided by grounded theory and its extension proposed by Miles and Huberman (Clark, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Marmor-Lavie, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994b). The details of the methodology are described below.

### **3.1 TV Commercials Sampling**

A panel of 5 marketing scholars was invited to select the stimuli for this study (Varan et al., 2015). Two of the scholars were PhD. in marketing, two were the Masters of the marketing subject having 5 years of professional experience, and one was the marketing faculty having the Master's degree. A brief overview of the factors associated with spirituality in advertising, identified previously (Marmor-Lavie, 2010), was also presented before panelists. After analysing the ads, two TV commercials were selected by the panel, that was representing the religious and spiritual theme of Ramadan, so that respondents can interpret the spiritual insights easily. The duration of each ad was 30 seconds, and the details of the ads are given as under:

1. Faysal Bank advertisement (Barkat Ad – Islamic Banking): This TV commercials promoted the Islamic banking concept and highlighted the appeal of "Shariah-compliant offerings" and personified religious injunctions for Muslims.

2. Olpers (Complete Milk – Ad): This commercial was identified by the panel as a spiritually dense Ramadan commercial. This TV commercials used the spiritual elements of unity, life, experience, music, meditation, and prayers. It contained visuals depicting peace, sharing, and humanity across nations.

### **3.2 Method: In-depth Interviews**

An In-depth interview is the most direct method adopted to learn about the consumers' interpretations and perceptions. The objective of selecting the interview method was to ensure that the variation of spiritual inclination among participants should emerge from the transcript of the interviews (Clark, 2007; Greasley et al., 2005).

### **3.3 Participants Sampling**

As this is one of the initial attempts to explore spirituality in Ramadan advertising (to the best of our knowledge) with human subjects, it is a logical choice to select purposive sampling for data collection. The purposive sampling method is preferable while conducting qualitative research instead of representative sampling (Hafeez & Rafique, 2013; Marmor-Lavie, 2010).

The preferable time for the interview was selected early morning (After dawn i.e. starting the fast) and late evening (before iftar i.e before breaking the fast). Total 25 participants were selected for in-depth interviews, with three sets of orientations i.e. i) Religious Orientation (8 people having Fast), ii) Non-Religious Orientation (8 people without fast), and iii) Spiritual orientation (9 people practicing Yoga/Meditation). This division of sample was inspired by the methodology used in the development of SAF (Marmor-Lavie, 2010).

### **3.4 Research Protocol**

Each respondent was interviewed individually, and the interview session took about half an hour. Respondents were first asked to see the provided TV commercials and then a semi-structured questionnaire was used for conducting an in-depth interview (Ansari, 2020; Marmor-Lavie, 2010). Then respondents were briefed with the concluding remarks. Overall, the entire interview session was comprised of 5 small parts that include the audio recording, consent form signing, add interpretation on personal and brand level, and finally the briefing of spiritual elements that the respondent has identified from the ads.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The analysis process involved the steps including the interview recording, preparing a summary sheet as suggested by Miles and Huberman (Miles & Huberman, 1994a), and writing an author's memo at the end of each interview (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During the analysis process, memos were read and re-written to generate codes from the memos. The codes are created in a reduction process of the data; from the smallest details to the biggest generalisations while reading the memos (Clark, 2007).

After completion of the coding phase, cross-case analysis was conducted, in which the researcher had to read and re-read the transcripts, and constant comparison was required to yield more memos, followed by the emerging themes and examination of relevant categories to fit the data. Then, a major analytical memo was written, combining all previous memos with their emerging themes, this process of memo writing resembled the selective coding process. Finally, the data was once again reviewed and scrutinised to develop final categories of some themes (Clark, 2007; Marmor-Lavie, 2010).

After getting a thorough understanding of consumers' responses using grounded theory, we have identified several behaviours that underlie the constructs. The major categories identified are Information, Credibility, Attitude towards Advertisement, Entertainment/Hedonic, Familiarity,

Religiosity, and Spiritual Themes in advertisement, Experience, Self-Assessment, Spirituality in Advertising, Unity, Humanity, Trust, Attention and Brand Image.

These identified factors can positively or negatively influence consumer's attitude, so marketers need to take cognisance of these factors. Incorporating consumers' spiritual insights suggested by the proposed framework of Religio-Spirituality in Ramadan Advertising (See Table 1) will also help in maintaining the spiritual aura of Ramadan and consumers will not be irritated by watching these TV commercials. In order to analyse the frequencies of written questionnaires for triangulation, a quantitative analysis was utilised, using the SPSS computer program (See Table 2).

Consumers were able to derive the personal meanings of spirituality as well as they were able to derive the brand's message when the elements of spirituality were incorporated in the TV commercials. Consumers could derive various meanings from spiritually dense commercials, as we found that humanity, unity, and trust are the most meaningful factors in spiritually dense commercials. It was also found that participants, across the three groups, not only captured the spiritual themes but also offered some new themes that need to be implemented in future studies.

**Table 1** Religio-Spirituality in Ramadan Advertising Themes

Categories/Themes	Codes
Information	Timely information, latest information, immediately accessible, updates
Credibility	Trust on a source like celebrity, convincing source, credible TV Channels
Attitude	Favorable, good, positive, like, love
Entertainment	Funny, pleasing, entertaining, happiness
Familiarity	Ad recall, top of the mind, informed about ad, seen this ad before
Religiosity	Prayers, avoid sins, religious knowledge of Islam, religious obligations, knowledge of halal/haram, paying Zakat,
Ad Content	Rhythmic, poetry, literature, creative, meaningful, conceptual, unique, storytellers
Experience	Heal my mind, inner satisfaction, close with nature, deep thought process, attracts my heart
Self-Assessment	Analysing myself, understanding myself, increase capabilities
Spirituality	Mediation, internal powers, peace of mind, imagination power, reminds me of my God, divine light inside me
National Unity	Unity, patriotism, building society
Humanity	Kindness, humanity, help for others, caring, pay my respect
Trust	Satisfied, increasing trust, trust on relatives, trust in yourself, confidence level
Attention	Paying attention, concentrate, involved with spirituality, evaluating spiritual thoughts, noticing spiritual thoughts
Brand Image	Promising, trustworthy, reliable, different, good image, well established

Data collected from the interviews consisted of transcriptions, interview recordings, questionnaires, and summaries. Interview transcripts were analysed as per the guidelines provided by Glaser and Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Coding and further analysis were done using the guidelines were from Miles and Huberman's (Miles & Huberman, 1994a) and Strauss' (Strauss, 1987).

#### 4.1 Triangulation of Data

Triangulation refers to combining different methodology for validating the results (Jick, 1979). Considering the qualitative nature of this research, triangulation was added by using the quantitative method to make the results more reliable and valid (Harris & Brown, 2010; Marmor-

Lavie, 2010). It is important to note that the purpose of the quantitative frequency analysis presented in the current study is not to suggest the generalisability of the data, it is merely brought here as an additional piece of information that should be considered with its limitations. A simple frequency analysis was performed on the demographic questions that appeared in the questionnaire and the 15 belief statements (Marmor-Lavie, 2010) to measure the frequency of spirituality ranking score is presented in Table 2. On the basis of the analysis, this study proposes a comprehensive framework of spirituality in Ramadan advertising, which comprises of the elements that should be incorporated in the Ramadan TV commercials (See Table 3).

To understand the consumers' insights about religio-spirituality in advertising, participants were asked to rank 15 belief statements as guided by (Marmor-Lavie, 2010). Respondents were required to rank their level of agreement on a 4-level scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). Table 2 summarises the results.

**Table 2** Religio-Spirituality Ranking Score, Calculated on the Basis of Belief Statement

Respondents	Group	Responses of Religio-Spirituality Statements															Religio-Spirituality Index	Religio-Spirituality Ranking Score
1	Fasting	4	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	26	9
2	Fasting	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	26	9
3	Non- Fasting	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	24	9
4	Non- Fasting	1	1	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	22	10
5	Non- Fasting	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	22	10
6	Non- Fasting	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	23	9
7	Yoga	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	20	10
8	Non- Fasting	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	24	9
9	Non- Fasting	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	31	7
10	Yoga	1	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	22	10
11	Fasting	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	22	10
12	Yoga	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	15	15
13	Fasting	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	23	9
14	Non- Fasting	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	22	10
15	Fasting	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	3	2	1	1	2	25	9
16	Non- Fasting	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	22	10
17	Yoga	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	26	9
18	Fasting	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	28	8
19	Yoga	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	3	32	7
20	Yoga	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	28	8
21	Fasting	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	27	8
22	Fasting	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	27	8
23	Yoga	1	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	23	9
24	Yoga	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	21	10
25	Yoga	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	20	10

Each participant's religio-spirituality ranking score was calculated from 1 to 15, i.e. a person who ranked all questions '1' will get the lowest spirituality index score which is '15', and a person who ranked all answers '4' will get the highest religio-spirituality index score which is '60'. However,

the religio-spirituality index scores are understood in such a way that the lowest index score has the highest religio-spirituality index score and vice versa. In comparison to the index score, a spirituality ranking score is calculated from '1' to '15', provided that a person having a spirituality ranking score of '15' has the best understanding of religio-spirituality (Marmor-Lavie, 2010). Question-wise responses are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3** Percentage of Responses for Spirituality Belief Statements

<b>Category</b>	<b>Agree Strongly (%)</b>	<b>Agree Somewhat (%)</b>	<b>Disagree Somewhat (%)</b>	<b>Disagree Strongly (%)</b>
Information	84	8	4	4
Credibility	64	32	4	0
Attitude	32	60	8	0
Entertainment	16	44	40	0
Familiarity	68	32	0	0
Religiosity	56	40	4	0
Ad Content	48	44	8	0
Experience	40	56	4	0
Self-Assessment	32	64	4	0
Spirituality	36	56	8	0
National Unity	56	32	12	0
Humanity	16	76	8	0
Trust	76	24	0	0
Attention	56	36	8	0
Brand Image	40	56	4	0
Brand Attention	84	8	4	4
Brand Image	64	32	4	0

Software tools SPSS 18 and Microsoft Excel 2007 were used to store the relevant information. The questionnaire responses were entered in the excel sheet. While the socio-demographics were also entered in another excel sheet. The frequency of answers was calculated using SPSS to determine the spirituality amongst respondents. It is important to note that the purpose of these ranking scores is not to suggest that one individual is more spiritual than the other, but just to provide another piece of information by triangulating the collected data.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This research explored the consumers' responses and answers the two research questions raised, i.e. i) Understanding the consumers' interpretation of spirituality in the TV commercials, and ii) Identifying the key factors that should be incorporated in a TV commercial airing in Ramadan.

Initially, consumers were mixing the concepts of spirituality and religiosity as they were using these terminologies interchangeably. However, when they saw both ads, they were able to identify the spiritually dense commercial of Olpers. On the basis of consumers' interpretation, several categories were identified. Some of the categories like Information, Credibility, Attitude towards Advertisement, Entertainment/Hedonic, Familiarity, Religiosity, and Irritation have already been studied in the context of attitude towards advertising (Mansour, 2013; Wang et al.,



2002; Yoo & Kim, 2014; Zabadi et al., 2012), however, the codes emerged from this study have never been explored previously in the domain of Ramadan advertising.

Some of the other categories like Spirituality, Unity, Trust, Experience were also explored in previous research (Marmor-Lavie, 2010) but there is a difference in consumers' interpretation because this study is focused on consumers' spiritual insights in Ramadan which are different from the consumers' insights other than Ramadan (Ansari, 2020).

There are some issues related to brands that were identified in TV commercials. Marketers are not incorporating the key factors of consumers' religio-spiritual insight in their ads. Either they are focused on increasing sales or the advertising message is not well-formed (Guy, 2014; Odabasi & Argan, 2009; Ozlem, Sandikci & Sahver, 2007). For example, the humorous ad of Faysal Bank, attracts the consumers for the first time but as the frequency of the ad increases, consumers lose their interest in that TV commercials. Similarly, adding music or some offensive content may irritate the consumers and they can switch the channel, which may lead to a negative brand image.

Another finding is that sometimes consumers get confused in understanding the advertising message. For example, some respondents argued on the Islamic Banking concept in Faysal Bank's Barkat Islamic Banking advertisement. Some respondents thought that Islamic banking is a good alternative banking solution in the country, but some respondents were completely opposed to the concept from a counter religious perspective and said that it was not "halal" and not allowed (Ansari, 2020).

This shows that marketers should compose their advertising message by incorporating the core consumers' insight and if an ad cannot convey the message clearly and concisely to the consumers, it can hurt the brand image. Islamic Banking in Pakistan has been studied by different scholars and there is a difference of opinion exists about its "halal/haram" aspect (Shahid et al., 2010). That is why the viewers of the advertisement were a bit confused about responding about spirituality after watching the Islamic banking advertisement.

Some respondents argued ads should contain some hidden spiritual connections e.g. mother's love for their children and emotions associated with ambitions that are larger than life. This kind of understanding was also expressed in terms of journey and inspiration (Marmor-Lavie & Stout, 2016). It was also identified by understanding the consumers' responses that people tend to find the solutions of their problems in religion or spiritual practices, as one of the respondents elaborated it in this way:

*"Spiritually inclined person having a specific following are working in Pakistan and making people fool in the name of religion and spiritual things. They show scientific tests in the name of magic and people get inspired with them." (R-3 28)*

Among the different identified interpretations of consumers regarding spirituality in advertising, one interesting dimension of patriotism was also identified. Many of the respondents talked about the national bonding and community effect in their responses, like one respondent states:

*"As far as Olpers as a brand is considered, this is a Brand used by patriotic and Spiritual People..." (R1)*

The Olpers is a Pakistani brand promoting human values, religion, and culture, which is good for creating a positive brand image. Consumers were able to identify the spiritual moments while watching the Olpers' TV commercials, so other marketers should understand that such spiritual moments should be incorporated in their TV commercials to get the consumers' attention. People have different mindsets and they perceive spirituality with respect to their understanding,

however, there are some common elements that can be perceived as spiritual insights e.g. meditation, healing of mind, peace of mind. One of the respondents said:

*“Spirituality is healing your mind, through therapies in which Reky, Meditation, Yoga and Acupuncture are few things people using these days. These are new inventions challenging medical science. These things are replacing psychiatrists with their own beliefs and teachings. People who are severely ill, cannot even stand on their foot just visit some healing personality, he put his hand on the patient nerves and ask them to stand, and by the next minute, that patient is walking. This is what spirituality does. It makes people believe that he is all good.” (R3- 29)*

Such diversified respondents' interpretations helped us to identify the important spiritual factors, required to grab the consumers' attention while watching a Ramadan TV commercial. The framework proposed in this study is based on the themes that emerged by using grounded theory and based on the consumers' understanding of religio-spirituality. Therefore, this framework is important for all marketers and brand managers specifically designing the Ramadan campaigns.

### **5.1 Implications for Practice**

The framework developed in this study can play an important role in shaping the positive attitudes of consumers. By incorporating the identified key factors of religio-spirituality, marketers can improve the reach and frequency of their ads so that consumers can be attracted to their ads, rather than switching the TV channel. Incorporating religio-spirituality in advertisement with other factors can motivate a consumer to concentrate on advertising message, specifically when he is fasting. However, other factors like entertainment, information, and credibility of the source shouldn't be ignored, as these factors are also important and have their significance.

### **5.2 Limitations and Future Research**

In this research households within the geographic boundary of a metropolitan city were approached. Since a qualitative method is used, generalisation abilities are very limited in this exploration. A sample size of 25 people may not be considered enough sample to draw general conclusions. Moreover, only three TV commercials were used as stimuli, and there are several categories of products like detergents, oil, charity organisations that are promoted extensively through TV commercials during the spiritual month of Ramadan. Further research can be conducted in the future, to analyse the impact of spirituality in Ramadan advertising on consumer's buying behaviour and the attitudinal changes that occur after watching the TV commercials.

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