The ethics of marketing in Islamic and Christian communities

Insights for global marketing

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper takes advantage of the closeness of two separated communities on the island of Cyprus to study how controversial products and forms of offensive advertising executions can be related to levels of religiousness, time usage and temporality. The resulting observations are then to be offered as insights into the notion of ethics of the two religious groups and how these might influence marketing to multicultural communities

Design/methodology/approach – The findings are based on a small-scale survey of 530 students (211 Christians, 302 Muslims and 18 undeclared) who responded to a questionnaire distributed at two privately owned English-speaking institutions, one in the north and one in the south part of Cyprus.

Findings – The study indicates a high degree of commonality between Islamic and Christian student Cypriots living in adjoining regimes, even given their ideological and political differences.

Research limitations/implications – The relatively small numbers studied and the focus on students could limit the generalisation of these results.

Practical implications – The results raise some issues for marketing segmentation and image use. For instance, positive and forward-looking images would stimulate most of the group regardless of their level of faith.

Originality/value – This paper identifies commonalities and also ontological differences that ought to inform global marketing campaigns.

Keywords Islam, Christianity, Ethics, Marketing, Cyprus, Advertising

Paper type Research paper

Background

Europe's Muslims are, to a large extent, differentiated by their cultural and ethno-national background and not some assumed idea of a homogeneous unity of Islam based on its singularity (10 per cent being Shiites for instance). The presence of Muslims in Europe is, according to Buijs and Rath (2000), mainly a consequence of the influx of workers from the Middle East and the former colonial territories in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean region. There are also relatively large communities of indigenous Muslims in Europe (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania and Bulgaria). This leads the Muslim communities of Europe to exhibit a variety of ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics, and to have multiple networks with major other regions of the Islamic world. In this respect the influence of Islam in Europe is growing. The number of Muslims in the European Union is difficult to estimate, since according to the European Commission no such figures are available, so the figure of approximately 15 million

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Muslims in Europe quoted by Buijs and Rath (2000) and attributed to Maréchal is the closest current estimate.

Cyprus is a micro socio-political system in Europe where two religiously and ethnically different communities are situated on one island in the Eastern Mediterranean with a rich heritage of faiths and ideologies. The communities in the North are Turkish Cypriot and Turkish (mainly Muslim) and those in the South are Greek Cypriots and Greek (mainly Orthodox Christian). Although there are various forms of censorship of the media, for the most part marketing communications transcend them. The context for this study is two English-speaking universities on either side of what has become known as the "Green Line" that divides the island. This paper takes advantage of this closeness of otherness to study how controversial products and forms of offensive advertising executions can be related to levels of religiousness, time usage and temporality. The resulting observations are then offered as insights into the notion of ethics of the two religious groups and how these might influence marketing to multicultural communities.

Introduction
This paper proposes linkages that have a sound theoretical basis and could reveal more essential differences in the two communities that surface changes in marketing executions may fail to accommodate. This paper does not attempt to review the work on marketing ethics, religiousness and models of marketing ethics. This has been discussed in detail elsewhere (e.g. Whysall, 2000; Gaski, 1999; Smith, 2001; Murphy *et al.*, 2005). It also takes as established the importance of culture and religion on marketing ethics decisions (Hunt and Vitell, 1986, 1993), the differences that cultural frameworks have on notions of time use (Hall, 1959; McGrath and Kelly, 1992; Bluedorn, 2002) and in consumption (Kaufman *et al.*, 1991, Kaufman-Scarborough and Lindquist, 1999) and the importance of temporal orientation on consumer behaviour (e.g. Graham, 1981; Hirschman, 1987; Bergadaà, 1990; Usunier and Vallette-Florence, 1994; Gibbs, 1998). Neither does it attempt to review the literature on religiousness and marketing for, although it is fairly sparse, its linkage to consumer decision-making is again established (Delener, 1994; Kennedy and Lawton, 1998; Longenecker *et al.*, 2004 (business ethics); Michell and Al-Mossawi, 1999; Singhapakdi *et al.*, 2000, Fam *et al.*, 2004; Angelidis and Ibrahim, 2004). Furthermore, the literature – albeit predominately American and Christian – indicates that highly religious individuals (students or marketers) will be influenced by their religiousness in their sensitivity to ethical evaluations and their disapproval of unethical behaviours (Clark and Dawson, 1996). However, the literature has a scarcity of comment on the linkage between temporality and the time patterns of consumers and their views on ethical marketing. This paper attempts to address this issue for, it is argued, the primordial nature of temporality can distinguish communities in ways that religion affinity alone cannot achieve.

Theoretical position
For human beings, time is the primary meaning of being; time forms the horizon in which beings are understood by themselves and others (see Levinas, 1997[1]; Heidegger, 1962). Conceptualised through the lens of sociology or consumer behaviour, the notion of a personal temporality entrapped by McGrath and Kelly (1992) and defining culture through its rituals, pacing and time use becomes a way of being in the

world with others. Furthermore, the notion of temporality of the moral and the eternity of the divine is a key premise of monotheistic religions. Hence the eternal God of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic tradition is not temporal in this way[2]. Human temporality – the human awareness of time and temporal orientation – is intimately connected with human ethical concern. Ethics is about how we ought to use our time, how we ought to relate to objects in time, and what we ought to preserve or forget in time. In the sense of monotheistic religious belief, time and temporality are a manifestation of mortality, not of divinity. As such the notion of time and its temporalisation is a common feature in both Islamic and Christian traditions, where both religious traditions offer us an interpretation of human life that hopes that mortality can be defeated and time can be overcome. Real value, from this perspective, lies in the realm of the unchanging, essentially timeless, ideas. Values, according to this point of view, ought not to change over time.

The value of beings, the value of any being in time, is intimately connected with the human capacity to hold past, present, and future together in a coherent whole. In Heidegger's language, "temporality reveals itself as the meaning of authentic care" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 374). Ethics and the ground of ethics within being itself merge through the actualised practice of ethical being in the world, directly linked to the transformation of the "reflective" person whose being and actions reflect the distillation and refinement of in-dwelling *ēthos*. Thus arises the praxis of searching and researching the essence of the consumer for the advancement of humanity, privileging nobody and manipulating nothing. Therefore, in a Heideggerian context, the notion of ethical theory is problematic if it is divorced from the "praxis" of caring for all things emerging and presupposing a transformation of being itself. This is an ontological development that transcends the ontic to lead the person in his or her development as their being. In this transformation the personal relationship has changed from one using ethical methodology to hold apart the relative positions of subject and object through a traditional notion of ethics, to an understanding of *ēthos,* merging in the process of transformation within the unitary, pre-ontological ground of care, presencing, opening, dwelling as the fulfilled essential nature of the caring human being[3].

The Koranic vision is focused on transcendence rather than temporality and, as befits such a world view, the addressee of its discourse is a universal, archetypical and trans-historical human being. Even the covenant that God has with man is primordial and is contracted prior to the advent of the historical time. Man enters his/her historical existence only after submitting to the sovereignty of God (The Koran, 2003, 7:172). The very notion of faith, *Islam* (surrender to God) also presupposes a trans-historical and transcendent disposition of man (*fitra*). Time, according to the Koran, is not the perpetual flux that results in a linear or cyclical conception of temporality, but an eternal present that always carries with it the possibility of surrender to God (*Islam*).

Moreover, the notion of time usage is explored by Hall (1983) and others (including Bluedorn, 2002) who make the assumption that cultural difference will be made manifest in time usage. That is, in low-context cultures, explicit, verbally communicated messages are emphasized, as is punctuality and adherence to schedules and monchronicity is likely to dominate. In direct contrast, in high-context cultures, establishing relationships through a flexible approach to time is the rule. Thus cultures of higher religiousness where common values are implicit in their way of

being ought to lean towards higher polychronicity than those where religion is less identified as being and more with acting. Indeed it is proposed that polychronicity ought be to higher in the ontologically more essential Islamic faith than in the Christianity.

A notion of a secular market and Islam

Before embarking on a discussion of methodology we wish to conceptualize the notion of Islam. We take for granted an understanding of the other theistic tradition – Christianity – and its acceptance of a self-interest and notion of the market gaining its genius from Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. We argue here (as does Sauer, 1999), that the application of the moral prescriptions of religious texts to economic transactions are considered in Christian and secular societies as putting economic development under the illegitimate control of religious idealism, whereas the market has its own constitutive logic. This is not to deny the rootedness of justice and fairness in the model of the market, just that when the Christian holy texts are applied to the market they may require different ontologies than the development of the neo-liberal market has come to encourage (for a further development of this argument, see Audi, 2000, chapter 2).

However, such an accommodation between secular self-interest and Christian benevolence is not possible in an Islamic metaphysics where the notion of being is interactive rather than substantive. Thus the understanding of the world focuses on the relations of things rather than their nature or essence. What a thing is, is framed by its relationships in processes not its essence or necessary structure. This metaphysics is based on the view that creation is the locus of God-centred purpose. The created order is relational. God has not only created the universe as a natural world but also framed its functions and purpose. God's revelation as law and word govern the created order, and human activity must be ordered to the universe, i.e. to divine reality or order. At the core of the different world view of Islam is the notion of unity and the divine truth of God as revealed through the Koran and its interpretation by those empowered with its authority (Choudhury, 2000a, b). Ethicising marketing is a concept where, in the Islamic political economy, the notion of ethics gets "induced on the consumption, production and distribution sides" (Choudhury, 2000a, p. 26) in the market model, thus increasing the social levels of market interaction.

Compared to secular notions of positivism, rationalism and Cartesian separation of transcendental and the immanent futures, these differences are most evident in a reality that seeks societal and collaboration goals (Saeed *et al.*, 2001) rather than self-orientated and competitive ones. The most often quoted justification for this Islamic position is the Koran's advocacy of fairness and prohibition of self-interested disruption of the market mechanism for the enrichment of one to the disadvantage of others. This creates a notion of a market and its accompanying economics that places social welfare at the centre of the mechanism and which, in many senses, is incommensurable with the notion of the market as commonly interpreted in capitalist states. By adopting a capitalistic market's epistemology of deconstruction a specific ontology is revealed related to this epistemological stance, and given the growing hegemony of the capitalistic neo-liberal model, obscures any other truths or claims that might be made. Applying an epistemological approach based on a secular market to Islamic consumers is just to cherry pick particular manifestations of an ideology to

entrap another. Where the ideology is robust, complex and unified, such an approach risks that those who devoutly identify with the target ideology will see the epistemological fraud and view it as bad faith towards Islam. The alternative approach to cherry picking requires an understanding of the phenomenological ontology of being a Muslim and how that constructs the nature of being. For instance in the notion *Isfar*, waste is deeply related to the whole economic system, so that images of waste removed from advertising do not change the implicit notion of the careless and excessive consumption of certain products or of the planned obsolescence of many goods. The same applies to *Haram* business activities: the repackaging of a forbidden activity does not change its nature nor the inappropriateness of the activities of the supplier or the purchaser. In this sense the market mechanism in Islam is itself morality rather than by being excepted from or structured to appease ethical concerns.

Interpreted in term of an Islamic market, marketing is an instrument that mobilises resources towards the moral law, whereas advertising for self, contested markets and undue competition is not allowed since advertising is then an act impeding the fair flow of resources for the common good. Such advertising seeks for all to be best informed and where an undue claim by some on the resources (whose ultimate owner is God) is inappropriate, as man is trustee for its good and fair use. Marketing thus seeks to satisfy customer need within his spiritual and physical well-being. The contrast is illustrated in the difference between the self-interested notion of buyer beware and the Islamic obligation to deal all information in a sales trasaction. These Islamic marketing ethics have best been discussed in the literature based on the role of Islamic banking in the community (e.g. Choudhury and Hussain, 2005; Harahap, 2003) and are similar to the view expressed by Saeed *et al.* (2001) and Rice and Al-Mossawi (2002) in the international marketing context of Islam, and Gibbs (2004) relating to the well-being of consumers.

The few authors (e.g. Rice, 1999; Rice and Al-Mossawi, 2002; Marta *et al.*, 2004) who have addressed the notion of Islam in the marketing ethics literature have had relatively little concern for the epistemological position of the ideology and have chosen and shown how pragmatic methods can be used to "colour" an existing neo-liberal capitalist approach with a gloss of Islam. This approach is transparent to the faithful because it concentrates on the surface value and can lead to misleading ways of seeing the world. To offer an alternative requires an understanding of the phenomenological ontology of being a Muslim and how that constructs the nature of being.

Research hypotheses and method
The exploratory approach taken in this paper is an attempt to overcome the superficial and investigate the deeper differences – if any – between the Islamic and the Christian in respect to the offensiveness of the execution of promotional material and to link this to religious affiliation, temporality orientation, and use of time (i.e. polychronicity). In doing this the following hypothesises are tested:

H1. There will be commonality in the level of offence of product and service and their execution in a sample of students living in close proximity exposed to the same media outlets, local and international (MTV), and that this will be fairly low.

H2. In Cyprus religious intensity will be expressed to be higher in Christian Greek Cypriots than in Islamic Turkish Cypriots because of the emphasis in Turkey on secularism and EU entry.

H3. Islamic students will be more offended by the execution of advertising as Islam has an ontological quality that the pluralistic personal representation of Christianity does not require.

H4. Polychronicity will be high in both communities given their high context cultures, but for those with high levels of faith, polychronicity will be stronger.

H5. Both communities will share a forward-looking orientation, but religious intensity will lean more towards the past, because its orientation will reflect more the truths revealed through the historic holy texts which will direct temporal orientation.

H6. Religious intensity, polychronicity and past temporality will be related to a high level of offence regardless of religious affiliation.

Method

The findings are based on a small-scale survey of 530 students (211 Christians, 302 Muslims and 18 undeclared) who responded to a questionnaire distributed at two privately owned English-speaking institutions, one in the North and one in the South part of Cyprus. Students were taking courses as part of their undergraduate degrees. The questionnaire consisted of a number of five-point Likert scales designed to reveal the offensiveness of products/services, images used in marketing to promote products/services, level of polychronicity, and levels of faith. In addition data was collected on declared religious affiliation, age, sex and resident city. A non-probability sampling method was used. The students were surveyed in classrooms that were not part of the research team's teaching schedule. The respondents voluntarily participated with no pressure, penalty or reward used for those who did or did not wish to do so. The data was analyzed using the SPSS package. Frequencies, cross-tabulations and χ^2 tests were used for ordinal relationships relating to temporal orientation, and ANOVA and *t*-tests were used for nominal data.

To investigate the hypotheses various published instruments were used which were based on the subjects' reaction to controversial products[4] and their religious intensity (Fam *et al.*, 2004)[5], their temporal orientation (Trompenaars, 1993) and their use of time (Lindquist *et al.*, 2001)[6].

Results

General characteristics of the two groups

For both groups the average levels on all attributes relating to products and services were at or below the mid-point of the scales used, and the Islamic students tended to be more offended on the majority of the attributes. Table I shows the products/services and offensiveness of image use for both groups using an average of the mid-point of the scale (3) or above for inclusion and listed in descending order of average score.

As can been seen, the main offending products/services and images are the same for both groups, However, when an independent *t*-test was performed on the whole group

	Islamic students			Christian students	
Product/service (mean)	Racially extreme groups	(3.21)	Racially extreme groups		(3.17)
Offensive images (mean)	Racist images	(3.44)	Racist images		(3.56)
	Stereotypes	(3.25)	Violence		(3.37)
	Sexist images	(3.24)	Sexist images		(3.28)
	Immorality	(3.18)	Immorality		(3.20)
	Indecent language	(3.18)	Stereotypes		(3.10)
	Violence	(3.18)	Antisocial behaviour		(3.06)
	Antisocial behaviour	(3.15)			
	Hard sell	(3.09)			
	Too personal subject	(3.08)			

Table I.
Average levels of
offensiveness
(5 = extremely offensive)

using religious affiliation as the independent variable, the results showed significant differences in a number of product groups and offensive images (significance is at the 5 per cent level or below). Given that the range of products and services includes guns and armaments it is interesting to consider the similarity in choices and those products which are commonly absent. (Perhaps most surprising is the inclusion of gambling at the 0.05 level; in the North of Cyprus casinos are legal, whereas in the South they are not.) Indeed given the nature of the Islamic faith, hard selling with its potential to deceive was a predicable point of divergence from the capitalistic tradition. Moreover, most of the differences between the groups' views on product and service discrimination would appear – see the guidance for advertising, Gulf Media International WLL (Bahrain Code of Acceptance) in Rice and Al-Mossawi (2002).

Furthermore, the two religious groups were significantly different (0.01 level) on levels of faith, with Christians indicating a higher level of faith (Table II).

Religion and level of faith
Comparing the means the level of religious intensity it was the Islamic group (3.01 compared to 2.67) that had the higher scores, and significantly so (at 0.02). The

Products/services	Religious affiliation (significance level)	Reasons for offence (significance level)	Religious affiliation
Alcoholic products	More offensive for Muslims (0.01)	Hard sell	More offensive for Muslims (0.01)
Charities/fund raising	More offensive for Muslims (0.01)	Indecent language	More offensive for Muslims (0.01)
Cigarettes/tobacco	More offensive for Muslims (0.01)		
Gambling	More offensive for Muslims (0.05)		
Funerals	More offensive for Muslims (0.05)		
Male underwear	More offensive for Muslims (0.01)		
Pharmaceuticals	More offensive for Muslims (0.02)		

Table II.
Significant difference is
level of offensiveness
between the two groups

relationship between religion, ethical inclination, temporality and declared intensity is problematic from these results. An ANOVA with level of religious faith as the dependent variable revealed significant differences at the 0.01 level for religion, polychronicity and level of religious faith, but on further investigation of the two groups this was found only to apply to the Islamic group with no relationship found in the Christian students.

An ANOVA was used on the separate grouping of religious affinity, and the result indicated that for Christians intensity had very little discrimination on product/service (condoms were the only significant difference) and similarly a small discrimination on images, differently only on nudity and stereotyping. For the Muslim group, level of religious faith significantly distinguished within the groups those who found cigarettes, gambling, political parties and racial extremism. Furthermore, all the image variables were differentiated by level of faith. Clearly level of stated faith is a more significant for the Muslim group in this project than for the Christian group in regard to the stimuli presented.

To investigate further, a new bipolar variable, "intensity", was constructed from the level of religious faith to act as a proxy for intensity[7] (higher declared level of religious intensity). This was then used as the independent variable in a series of independent t-tests on the two religious groups. The religious intra-group relationships using intensity revealed a significance difference in attitude towards products, service and form of execution, with those with the higher expressed level of faith being more offended, for the Christian respondents specifically concerning condoms, female underwear, sexual diseases and in respect to images, nudity, and sexual stereotypical images. Overall for the Islamic students there was a little significant differentiation between those students who were more offended by the images and those who were not and their level of religious intensity. This occurred in the product groupings of charities and personal topics. This seems to imply that the Islamic students were generally more offended regardless of the intensity of their faith, whereas great offence was associated with higher levels of faith. Indeed, 28.7 per cent of Muslims and 41.75 per cent of Christians claimed to be of a high level of faith.

Ethical inclination
In the light of the results presented above, a further variable was constructed from the ten potentially offensive images to create an index to discriminate those who were less inclined to be morally offended by the images used in promoting the product/service and those who were more inclined to be offended. This was called "ethical inclination", and those who had an aggregate score of 30 (the mid-point 3) or less on the above cluster of reasons for offensive imaginary were termed less ethically inclined in this context than those who scored above 30. This new index showed no significant difference between the two religions but did show significance (at the 0.01 level) for all the product/service groups except women's underwear and sexually transmitted diseases.

Furthermore, using the raw score of ethical inclination and religion, a significant correlation was revealed at the 0.01 level. Intra-group analysis shows that this correlation is due to a strong and highly significant Islamic correlation and no significant relation for Christians.

Time usage and temporality
The levels of polychronicity (Table III) were calculated using the PAI3 (Lindquist *et al.*, 2001) instrument which required recoding and aggregating the scores of the three questions that made up the PAI3, each of which was calibrated on a five-part Likert scale. A score of above 9 indicated a tendency towards polychronicity. The low levels of polychronicity in both communities is a surprising result given the high levels of context of these communities, yet the similarities between the two groups are interesting should they hold the same common or distinctively different values.

An independent *t*-test was performed on the whole group using the tendency scores of polychronicity. This showed there were no significant differences between religious groups on levels of religious faith. Only gambling revealed a significant difference between the groups.

Regarding temporal orientation the group overall held 34.7 per cent future orientation, 13.2 per cent present, 22 per cent past, 13.9 per cent showed no preference and 16 per cent gave no response. The data for temporal orientation were collected differently from the other nominal data. The students were asked to draw circles of different sizes to represent their primary temporal orientation. These were then coded independently by two assistants and allocated to one of four groups (future, present, past or balanced). The ordinal nature of this data was analysed on the basis of frequencies with the other variables, specifically ethical inclination, religious application, polychronicity and religious intensity. A series of χ^2 tests performed on these variables for the whole group and for the two religious groups indicated significant associations between the variables.

The nature of this association is difficult to ascertain but by inspection of the cross-tabulation the relationship appears to be that those with higher ethical inclination are more past orientated than those who were less ethically inclined, those who were polychromatic were more balanced in their temporal outlook, and Muslims are slightly more past orientated. This is assumed, as those who scored more highly on these variables were more inclined to a past orientation than those who scores less highly. However, in all cases the dominant orientation was future. A Kruskal-Wallis test on the variables of faith, ethical and religious intensity showed there to be no significant difference between the groups regarding their temporal orientation

Ethical inclination, religious intensity and time use
A correlation matrix for each group showed there to be no significant relationship between raw scores on ethical inclination, polychronicity and intensity for the Christian group. However, for Islamic students a positive and highly significant correlation was found between ethical inclination and the level of religious faith (0.01) and ethical inclination and polychronicity (0.02). This seems to support the notion that

Table III.
Inclination towards polychronicity: percentage with tendency towards polychronicity, (scoring over the mid-point aggregate of 9)

Combined group	Islamic	Orthodox Christian
39.7	39.5	39

intensity, polychronicity and ethical inclination might be caused by the higher context nature of an Islamic ontology theorised earlier in the paper.

Discussion

Regarding the type and offensiveness of image, the results of the study tend to support the findings of Fam *et al.* (2004) and Waller *et al.* (2005) that Islamic students were more sensitive to moral offence, although overall the group was insensitive. This may well be a reflection of the cultural similarity of the two groups in Cyprus and may be more indicative of issues related to a more integrated European context.

Furthermore, the higher intensity scores were a good discriminator of a high level of potential offensiveness of images regardless of the faith of the respondent. This seems to indicate that intensity and faith are distinctive attributes. This finding is support by the early study of McNichols and Zimmerer (1985, p. 180) who found, in American students, evidence to suggest that the "strength of religious belief affects individual opinion of what is [ethically] acceptable". The study's finding is indicative and offers partial support for *H2* in that the Christian group expressed higher levels of faith (although they were less sensitive to offensive images and products/services) perhaps because of the secular nature of the Turkish state and commerce, as supported through anecdotal evidence[8].

The separate analysis of the two groups showed that both scored low levels of offence for product/service and images (see Tables I and II). The Islamic students where, on the whole, more sensitive to these issues and this offers support fro *H1* and *H3*. These results in the most part confirm work previously undertaken and support the proposition that advertising and marketing issues can be tailored to the specific needs of the two faiths for the majority.

Overall the levels of polychronicity (compared to Lindquist *et al.*, 2001, for example) do not support the notion that the two communities are high context. There was evidence that intensity and polychronicity are correlated, so the evidence fails to support the first part of *H4* although the second part is supported. Indeed this might point to the greater ontological nature of context for those holding higher levels of faith. *H4* is thus considered to be partially supported.

The theorised relationship between temporal orientation and ethical inclination and religious intensity articulated in *H5* received partial support. This association may be a function of the instrument, the coding or the student ability to respond so the result should be treated with care. However, should it subsequently prove that the association is robust then the importance of temporality in consumer ethical inclination the images used to promote products and services might prove to be of benefit to marketers.

The indicative relation between polychronicity, religious intensity and ethical inclination found in the Islamic students but absent in the Christian students points towards support for *H6*. The finding offers only partial support, since the cause of the relationship is only theorised and no empirical evidence is yet offered.

Finally, the temporality issue is exciting in that it does tend to offer a link between intensity, ethical inclination and polychronicity. Given the earlier theorising of the temporal nature of being based on the philosophical position of Heidegger, these results offer some support to the deeper nature of religiousness as a temporal and thus ontological essence of being. If this is true then, at least for the more ethically inclined and religiously intense, assumptions about their world view based on superficial

engagement with a world of transferable images would be problematic to achieve positive reactions. This is not to say that the majority of students did not have a commonality of response to products/services and the images used to promote them. Indeed, at this level the study offers indicative support for little need for change other than the superficial issue identified by Rice and Al-Mossawi (2002) to avoid obvious and careless offence for ethically neutral products/services for those with low levels of faith.

Conclusions

The results of this study are broadly consistent with the findings of Fam *et al.* (2004) and Waller *et al.* (2005). As indicated by Waller *et al.* (2005) when discussing Malaysia, multi-cultural groups will tend to be more liberal in their rules so as to "maintain social and cultural harmony between the various groups" (p. 10). Further support for this position comes from Mike Longhurst[9], Senior VP, McCann-Erickson Europe and Board member of the European Association of Communications Agencies (EACA) that:

> Issues to do with particular ethics of buying and selling would normally only be considered when communications are clearly targeted at Muslims. In that case they would be expected to be very closely matched to consumer expectations. It is often found that Muslims are happy to apply double standards and recognise when non-Muslims are principally being addressed. They will take offence when Muslims are shown acting "improperly", but not when others are.

However, this study indicates a high degree of commonality between Islamic and Christian Cypriot students living in adjoining regimes, even given their ideological and political differences. Yet, we feel there is a deeper issue that the data points towards but fails conclusively to reveal, i.e. the primordial notion of temporality and its association to the self-expression of religious intensity and ethical inclination. The survey did reveal that Islamic students and Christian students see many things the same way, negatively rejecting a number of the ethically objectionable promotional images, and showing a liberal attitude (lack of offensiveness) to services and products previously found to cause offence. Indeed both groups only rejected racist extreme groups at a level above the average. This finding differs from the previous work of Fam *et al.* (2004). However, taken as a whole the outcomes of this research point towards Islamic students being more sensitive to ethical issues and Christians declaring themselves to be more religiously intense but less sensitive to offence. The common feature of these two monotheistic religions is that religious intensity is a strong indicator of how offensive the images and the type of product and service will prove.

The theorised concern with temporality proved to be significant in association with ethical inclination, polychronicity and religious intensity. The indication that an association might be linked to a past rather than the dominant future orientation does raise some issues for marketing segmentation and image use. For instance, positive and forward-looking images would stimulate most of the group regardless of their level of faith. However, images that are based on traditional values which are then respectfully used as a trajectory into the future would seem to have an appeal to, and better accommodate, those with self declared high levels of faith. Indeed it might be possible to conjecture that ethically positive activity with a positive forward-looking orientation is the least likely to offend modern Islamic and Christian students.

Notes

1. Levinas (1997) links religiousness and the eternal by stating that "Everyday life is a preoccupation with salvation" (p. 58).

2. Heidegger (2002, pp. 4-7) makes the point that if we were indeed atemporal in the sense of godlike eternal, then we would not need to be anything for we would be everything.

3. For a fuller discussion see Michaelides and Gibbs (2006).

4. The reason for this is derived from what Heidegger calls the present-at-hand (a reflective, technical understanding) over the more fundamental ready-to-hand (the non-thematic, working, living flow of being). That is, we need to highlight the impact of marketing in order for it to be considered, and thus the use of controversial products where the act of advertising is more easily reflected upon than in standard product where the promotion becomes, itself, part of non-reflective relationship to the product.

5. We are aware of the scenario methodology of Robin *et al.* (1996) and its use by Singhapakdi *et al.* (2000), but as this is developed for the creator of marketing the approach chosen was similar to the purpose of this study, and in so doing we have results to compare from other Islamic countries.

6. The author is grateful to David Waller (controversial questions and religiousness) and Carol Kaufman-Scarborough (PAI3) for permission to use their developed instruments.

7. Waller *et al.*'s (2005) clustering of the raw intensity score was used, where those scoring 3 or under are low intensity.

8. Letter received from the CEO of Doğan Group in response to this question: "Turkey, whose population happens to be predominantly Muslim, is a secular, democratic state governed by the rule of law. Our national values do not differ from those of other secular, democratic and constitutional states around the world. Therefore I see no assistance to your research in answering your questionnaire. I wish you all the best" (16 March 2005).

9. We are grateful for this personal communication.

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