What is the influence of Social Media advertisements on Millennials and Generation Z consumers' behaviors towards dating Apps? A study of Muzz

Bachelor Thesis Spring 2023

Bachelor Thesis Within: Business Administration/Marketing
Number of Credits: 15
Program of Study: International Management
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Group Number: 101
Jönköping: 19/05/2023
Acknowledgements

Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to our tutor Max Mikael Wilde Björling. We could not have had a more successful journey if it was not for his constructive feedback and guidance throughout this process. With his experience, we were able to obtain effective feedback that aided us in our writing.

Secondly, we want to thank all the participants for their time and say that we value their insights and opinions.

Lastly, we would like to thank each other for always motivating, supporting and encouraging one another throughout these months. As this is something new to all of us, we knew how crucial it was to create an environment which we all find positive, enjoyable and helpful.

Jönköping International Business School, Jönköping University
May 2023

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Bachelor’s Thesis in Business Administration

Title: What is the Influence of Social Media (Tiktok & Instagram) advertisements on Millennials and Generation Z Consumers' Behaviors Towards Dating Apps? A case of Muzz

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Key terms: Muzz, Niche Dating Apps, Social Media, Consumer behavior model, Uses and Gratification Theory, Advertising effectiveness

Abstract

Background:
Social media is becoming more prominent each day. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram are amongst the top six social media platforms used by Generation Z and Millennials (Dixon, 2023; Ceci, 2023). From a business perspective, it entails that these platforms, as well as social media as a whole, are essential for attracting users’ attention when promoting a product or service. These platforms have changed how people communicate, share information, and behave as consumers. Understanding the factors that affect behaviors on social media platforms is crucial given the growth of niche dating apps that target the Muslim community, such as Muzz. This study intends to examine how TikTok and Instagram advertisements affect how viewers perceive Muzz, its features, expected advantages, and the probability of individuals using the app.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of social media on behaviors towards dating app. This is specified towards Generation Z and Millennials. Ultimately, this study aims to find how this target audience interacts with advertisements and what factors affect their behavior. The findings from this paper can be useful to marketing departments of various companies within the dating app industry as they can begin to improve their marketing strategy to appeal to a new and larger target audience.
Method:
The findings from this thesis was conducted through qualitative research including interviews of 10 participants with ages between 19-30 years old. The analysis of these findings was done through a thematic analysis approaching grouping the findings in themes and similarities.

Conclusion:
The findings and analysis from this report indicate that social media and advertisements presented on social media significantly influence the behaviors of Generation Z and Millennials towards dating apps, specifically Muzz app. The way in which social media has an influence is in relation to three theories/models: Advertising Effectiveness, Consumer Behavior Models and Uses and Gratification Theory. Each of the said models and theories aid in the analysis of how behaviors shift depending on social media presence.
# Table of Contents:

1. **Introduction**  
   1.1 Background  
   1.2 Problem discussion  
      1.2.1 Current Knowledge  
      1.2.2 Importance  
      1.2.3 Contribution  
   1.3 Purpose  
   1.4 Research Question  
   1.5 Delimitations  
   1.6 Definitions  

2. **Frame of References**  
   2.1 Social Media  
      2.1.1 Advertising Effectiveness  
      2.1.2 Targeting  
      2.1.3 Influence Marketing  
   2.2 Consumer Behavior Models  
      2.2.1 Consumer Decision-Making Process  
      2.2.3 AIDA Model  
   2.3 Uses and Gratification Theory  
      2.3.1 Connectivity and Social Interaction  

3. **Methodology**  
   3.1 Research Design  
   3.2 Participants  
   3.3 Instruments  
   3.4 Procedure  
   3.5 Data Analysis  
   3.6 Ethics  
   3.7 Validation and Verification  

4. **Findings & Analysis**  
   4.1 Data in Relation to Advertising Effectiveness and Influence marketing  
      4.1.1 Interest in Ads  
      4.1.2 Perception of Ads  
      4.1.4 Memorable Ads  
      4.1.5 Influencers and Celebrities  
      4.1.6 Influential Factors in Ad Effectiveness  


4.2 Influence of Instagram and TikTok Advertisements 35
   4.2.1 Influence of Advertisements on Downloading Dating apps 35
   4.2.2 Influence of Social Media ads on Behaviors Towards Dating and Relationships 36
   4.2.3 Recommendations Based on Advertisements of Dating Apps 37
   4.2.4 Changes in Muzz’s Marketing Strategies 38
4.3 Data in Relation to the Uses and Gratification Theory 40
   4.3.1 Awareness of Muzz 40
   4.3.2 Advertisements for Muzz and Their Persuasiveness 41
   4.3.3 Influence of Social Media Advertising on Personal Preferences and Relationship-Building Culture 42
   4.3.4 Convenience and Accessibility 43

5. Conclusion 44

6. Discussion 45
   6.1 Contributions 45
   6.2 Practical Implications 46
   6.3 Limitations 46
   6.4 Future Research 47

7. References 48

8. Appendices 58
   8.1 Interview Questions 58
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

With technology's continued evolution more individuals are utilizing social media and with that comes the influence of social media ads. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram are key factors in influencing younger generations' on their consumer behavior towards dating apps. By exploring the influencing factors, this chapter aims to underline the significance of social media ads and how these ads are designed to be highly targeted and engaging, capturing the attention of potential users and influencing them to use the app being advertised (Dinh et al., 2021).

As social media continues to gain momentum and become an increasingly integral part of our daily lives, dating apps are considering the approach of targeting more individuals through social media advertising (Rita et al., 2020). Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have turned into great tools for advertisers to utilize as they could promote their apps and bring them more users. These platforms reformed how people communicate, share information and buy products or services. However, today targeting users through social media ads has proven to be much easier as marketers could directly target a specific demographic such as Millennials and Generation Z consumers thereby making it easier to connect with them on a personalized level (Knoll, 2016).

Over the past decade, there has been a notable increase in the utilization of dating apps. Following Pew Research Center, 30% of American individuals have used dating apps and within that set 55% are people aged 18-29 (Smith, 2016). Since dating apps are becoming increasingly popular, different dating apps are emerging that target different niches. This has led to the emergence of niche dating apps. While there is no current literature defining niche dating apps we propose the following definition, “A dating app that caters to a specific community or demographic, based on different factors”.

One example of a niche dating app that has emerged is Muzz. Muzz is targeted toward the Muslim community to provide a place where Muslim individuals can connect with potential spouses. To understand the emergence of niche dating apps, scientific frameworks such as the Uses and Gratification Theory may be used. This theory suggests that user behaviors are one of the factors that explain this dynamic (Dolan et al., 2016).

TikTok and Instagram ads are used by Muzz to attract its targeted audience. Taking into consideration the increasing popularity of dating apps, and additionally, niche dating apps, understanding factors that influence behaviors from these platforms is important. Theoretical frameworks such as Uses and Gratification Theory, Advertising Effectiveness, and Consumer Behavior models would be used to analyze the reasons why.
1.2 Problem discussion

1.2.1 Current Knowledge

The significant impact that social media marketing strategies have on dating apps such as Muzz is undeniable. Social media marketing can enhance a dating app’s user base, and brand recognition and create a sense of belonging as well as a community within users. Social media can be seen as a tool to display user testimonials, opportunities for promotions and discounts as well as providing useful tips in the dating world. It can also assist target specific demographics and increase interactions among users (Li et al., 2021).

Social Media Marketing plays a huge role when it comes to building brand awareness and driving user acquisition for dating apps like Muzz. The way that Muzz can potentially take advantage of social media marketing is through creating targeted ad campaigns, utilizing influencer collaborations as well as interacting with targeted groups which in the case of Muzz would be the Muslim community. It is vital for a dating app, in general, to maintain a consistent brand message due to a more cohesive consumer experience (Meek et al., 2019).

1.2.2 Importance

As aforementioned, the growth of social media and dating apps is undeniable. Therefore studying the social phenomena of consumer behaviors towards dating apps such as Muzz through social media ads has both theoretical and practical benefits and implications.

The theoretical implication is that by this study we can contribute to the advancement of current theoretical frameworks and models that are used to understand the influence of social media ads. This would benefit research by providing data and knowledge regarding how social media ads shape and influence niche dating app consumers. The knowledge provided can be used for both current theoretical frameworks and could contribute towards the development of new theories related to consumer behaviors.

Additionally, by investigating and examining the impact of social media ads, more specifically Tik Tok and Instagram ads, the study will be able to contribute by providing data and knowledge of how consumer behaviors are altered and changed within the digital age.

One main practical implication of the study is it will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of social media ads in influencing consumer behaviors toward niche dating apps, more specifically Muzz. Additionally, the study can be deemed valuable to marketers. By analyzing the influence of social media ads on consumer behavior, marketers can extract and highlight key findings which may prove useful for future marketing and advertising campaigns.
Ultimately the study will be invaluable to Muzz itself or other niche dating apps alike. The reason for this is that there is currently no published literature regarding the company. Being one of the first research papers about the company may provide useful information for the company itself. Other niche dating apps may also benefit from this study.

1.2.3 Contribution

With there being a large knowledge gap in terms of understanding social media ads in regards to niche dating apps, more specifically Muzz, we intend to contribute to improving the understanding of social media ads' influence on niche dating app users by conducting a study on Muzz users.

This will be done in multiple different ways. Firstly, current theories and models extracted from our literature review will be analyzed and applied to our results. The three main theories and models that will be referenced and used are advertising effectiveness models, consumer behavior models, and the Uses and Gratification Theory. The aim of this would be to understand which theories may be applicable and agree with the data gained. This would contribute to current understanding by allowing us to establish which theories apply to our research and which theories do not apply to our context.

1.3 Purpose

As time goes by in recent years, social media platforms have revolutionized how businesses promote and market their product or/and services. The rise of niche dating apps targeting specific communities, such as one of the fastest if not the fastest growing communities, the Muslim community(Gao, 2015), has seen tremendous growth in recent years. Additionally, social media marketing has been trendy in the past couple of years and a very effective tool that assists applications which in our case is the dating app “Muzz” by attracting and retaining users.

Muzz is a dating app known within the Muslim community and is currently the most recognized dating app in the Muslim world (Muzz - How the Free App Is Revolutionizing Dating for Thousands of Single Muslims Across the Globe, 2023). It has managed to grow immensely in the past few years. Due to the continuous numbers of users that are active within social media in the Muslim world which keeps increasing in number, it is with no doubt that social media has a huge influence contributing to Muzz’s success. The purpose of the thesis is essential to explore how effective and crucial social media strategies have on Muzz and their influence on user engagement and growth.

This research aims to study the influence that Tik Tok and Instagram ads produce on the viewers of Muzz via the advertisement of pictures and videos. Part of the study will examine the influence of social media advertising on the perception of Muzz, its functionalities,
expected benefits along with the likelihood of these individuals utilizing the app. To conduct the research, a qualitative approach will be used in the form of interviews. The findings and analysis will then be applied to niche dating apps in general.

1.4 Research Question

In correspondence to the problem and purpose previously stated, this study aims to explore what effects or influence social media advertising has on Millennials and Generation Z through the following research question:

Research Question: What is the influence of Social Media on Millennials and Generation Z consumers' behaviors towards dating Apps? A study of Muzz

1.5 Delimitations

A potential limitation of this study could be the fact that the results might not apply to all demographics since this study will only focus on the Millennials and Gen Z. Another limitation could be the fact that this study mainly focuses on specific platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, therefore ignoring the possible differences when compared to other social media platforms such as Facebook or Snapchat. Lastly, due to the research investigating more of the short-term results, it may change in the long term which means what we manage to discover could potentially have different outcomes in the long future. Additionally, results gained from this study may not necessarily apply to other niche dating apps, or dating apps in general.

The two main reasons why a qualitative approach was used are understanding and theory building. The research attempts to understand the influence of TikTok and Instagram ads on Millennials and Generation Z behaviors toward dating apps. To understand the influence, interviews were required to understand the personal experiences and motivations of users. Additionally, as aforementioned, the study aims to build knowledge on the three frameworks mentioned. With qualitative research being well suited for theory-driven research, it was deemed as the suitable approach for this study.

1.6 Definitions

Advertisements (Ads): An advertisement is deemed as a public message to promote a good or service. Throughout this research, “advertisements” and “ads” will be used interchangeably.

Dating apps: Dating apps are known as software applications aimed to make individuals date and possibly form relationships (Orchard, 2019).
Niche dating apps: “A dating app that caters to a specific community or demographic, based on different factors”.

Muzz: Muzz is a Muslim dating app focused on serving individuals who practice the Islamic religion (Muzz - How the Free App Is Revolutionizing Dating for Thousands of Single Muslims Across the Globe, 2023)

Social Media Advertising: Any type of advertising conducted via any type of social app or website.

Muslim: Muslims are the followers of the religion of Islam

Shia: Shia is a subsect of Islam and forms around 10 percent of Muslims around the world (Who Are the Shia’A?, 2013).

2. Frame of References

This section provides a literature review highlighting and presenting important aspects of this research. The reader is first familiarized with current research on Social Media, more specifically, TikTok and Instagram’s adverts, focusing on their influence on Generation Z and Millennials. Additionally, the concepts of the Advertising Effectiveness Model, Consumer Behavior Model, and Uses and Gratification Theory are discussed. These models and theories serve as the basis for this thesis. They offer a theoretical viewpoint allowing the research question to be investigated.

This chapter’s purpose is to assess the current research available on social media’s influence, focusing on TikTok and Instagram adverts that influence Generation Z and Millennials' behaviors towards dating apps. Gathering, identifying, and analyzing information regarding this topic can contribute and offer insights into the emerging phenomena of social media, and more specifically niche dating apps, with a specific emphasis on Muzz. The literature review contributed by identifying current gaps within the literature and highlighting potential insight for future research.

For the frame of reference, the following topics and keywords were used to steer the literature review: TikTok, Instagram, Social Media, Social Media adverts, Advertising Effectiveness, Consumer Behavior Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, Millennials, Generation Z, Dating apps, Niche Dating Apps, Muzz, Muzmatch (Previous name of Muzz). Several sources have been referenced repeatedly throughout the study. This is because these sources were considered relevant and important to the research.
During the literature review process, scholarly databases such as Google Scholar and Primo were used. The review aimed to use current sources and literature to ensure that the research was up to date with current literature, yet due to the nature of the research’s topic and theories used, older sources and articles were also used.

2.1 Social Media

In 1983, Tim Berners-Lee had officially created the World Wide Web (WWW) or as it is referred to in today's society: The Internet (Beranek, 2007). The challenge Berners-Lee was facing, being the purpose of the internet’s creation, was “The computers simply could not communicate with each other” (Beranek, 2007). Furthermore, throughout the years of its creation, other issues were brought up such as the need for “Social interactions that could be enabled through networking” (Leiner et al., 2009) thus, providing an additional purpose. Nevertheless, the internet was a success and has led to a variety of communication platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc. All these platforms fall under the category of Social Media (Dewing, 2010).

Social media has many different definitions, according to Lewis (2010) social media is presented as a “label for digital technologies that allow people to connect, interact, produce and share content”. Whereas Peters et al., (2013), defines social media to consist of features distributing “dynamic, interconnected, egalitarian and interactive organisms”. Heath and Kent (2010) gives a broader definition of social media to be “any interactive communication channel that allows for two-way interaction and feedback”. Additionally, social media includes “those that facilitate online communication, networking, and/or collaboration” (Russo et al., 2008). Another way to understand social media is “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

One thing to be concluded from all these definitions is that there is no precise definition of social media. However, it should also be noted that each definition has one thing in common, they all include that social media is some form of communication or exchange of content to an extent.

From a business perspective, Rugo and Prenaj (2016) explain how social media “offers tremendous opportunities for the business to use it as a marketing tool, it gives them the chance to promote their brand and of course the products and services that they offer”. As the world is becoming technologically advanced, social media is the main technology used, especially by Millennials and Generation Z (Yadav & Rai, 2017), which means that businesses have had to adapt marketing strategies in line with social media. With this being said, for any company to get awareness nowadays, it is primarily through advertisements on social media.
2.1.1 Advertising Effectiveness

Expanding on social media and the marketing possibilities that have come to fruition as an outcome, it is important to understand the effectiveness of advertising on social media platforms. An effective advertisement is an ad that conveys the message it is sending and also is able to influence others. Various models and theories have been used to explain what criteria and factors determine an ad's effectiveness, however, to gain a further understanding of this, this research will delve into the advertising effectiveness method as a means to establish and understand the connection between social media adverts and adverts effectiveness. Throughout the research we aim to understand how TikTok and Instagram ads for dating apps can capture the attention of Millennials and Generation Z. This understanding will be the foundation for the development of further theories such as the Uses and Gratification Theory and Consumer Behavior theory, which are used throughout this research.

Advertising effectiveness measures how successful or influential an advert or advertising campaign is. It is determined by whether the advertising goals are met, such as increasing brand awareness, creating interest, or increasing sales. However, it is also stated that the fundamental and core reason for advertisement is to convey a specific message (Todri et al., 2020).

According to the advertising effectiveness theory there are six main contributors to the effectiveness of advertising.

1. **Customers interest in Ads:**
   For an advertisement to be effective, consumers need to be interested in the content (Calder et al., 2009). This includes capturing and maintaining the viewers' attention and this is crucial for the success and effectiveness of the advertisement.

2. **Perception of Ads:**
   Consumers' perception and their understanding of advertising has great influence on how they respond to the ads. Personal behaviors, prior experiences and cultural surroundings are some illustrations of this. Advertisers utilize this to create unique, appealing and market-specific commercials, thereby contributing to the enhancement of customers' perceptions on the service or product (Wedel & Pieters, 2000).

3. **Characteristics of effective ads**
   Specific qualities may boost an advertisement's effectiveness. According to (Heath, Brandt, & Nairn, 2006) the qualities that can enhance the commercials include creativity, concise language, customer relevance, content clarity, emotional resonance, use of humor and the app's value proposition.
4. **Memorability of Ads**
   The effectiveness of an ad relies on how memorable it is, this is frequently measured by “recalling” in advertising research. Advertisements that create an ongoing mark are more inclined to influence a customer's behavior (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Effective advertising includes vital qualities to make an ad memorable (Heath, Brandt, & Nairn, 2006). These vital qualities include a number of things such as shared cultures, privacy, compatibility, customer success stories and safety.

5. **Role of influencers and celebrities**
   By enhancing their popularity and trustworthiness, influential individuals and celebrities can improve the performance of commercials (Erdogan, 1999). Moreover according to (Hovland & Weiss, 1951) the effectiveness of a message of an advertisement relies on the perceived competence, trustworthiness and the appearance of the source which all influence how effective a message is.

6. **Influential factors in Ad effectiveness**
   The influential factors that influence the effectiveness of an Ad depends on several things. These include the social proof, target audience's demographic traits, trust, the medium of advertisement, the frequency and timing of the commercial, the socio-cultural circumstances, and the rivalry of other advertisements (Belch & Belch, 2004).

Social media, more specifically, TikTok and Instagram have harnessed a reputation for their unique and targeted advertisement models, which have been demonstrated to influence and sway consumer behavior (Kumar, 2016). The following aims to provide an understanding of how the behaviors of Millennials and Generation Z are influenced by the advertising effectiveness of TikTok and Instagram related to muzz. In addition to advertising effectiveness, the use of social media has allowed for targeted ads.

2.1.2 **Targeting**
   TikTok and Instagram have a large database of user data which allows individuals, companies, and advertisers to create ads based on specific criteria. Such criteria could be interests and geographical location (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). The option to target ads specific to the advertisers' desired criteria, has enabled social media adverts to be favored and highly effective (Turow et al., 2015). Recent research has shown that to capture the interests of Millennials and Generation Z, targeted ads are one of the effective options and tools to utilize. This has positive consequences such as increased engagement which also includes increased engagement for dating apps (Li et al., 2021). The use of targeted ads has introduced a new form of marketing through the use of influencers and public figures.
2.1.3 Influence Marketing

Influence marketing has become a frequent and dynamic tool for advertising on social media. Brands have started to leverage an influencer's legitimacy and social following to advocate and grow their cause or organization (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Due to Millennials and Generation Z consumers deeming influences to be more authentic than traditional means of advertising, they are more responsive and interested in influencer marketing (De Veirman et al., 2019). Dating apps can utilize influencer marketing to tailor the behaviors of their audience (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

2.2 Consumer Behavior Models

To further build on the advertising effectiveness model, the consumer behavior theory is a widely researched framework within the space that provides an understanding on how these mentioned advertising strategies influence a consumers behavior and attitude towards the advert.

Advertisers and marketers use theories and models to gain an understanding of how individuals make decisions when purchasing a product or service. There are numerous Consumer Behavior models applicable to corporations. With the world becoming more advanced in terms of technology, the theories and models of consumer behavior have begun to adapt towards online consumers. This makes it slightly harder for companies to predict consumer behavior as they are not dealing with the consumer directly but through a screen.

Nevertheless, this has not hindered the useability of these models and theories. Millennial and Generation Z behaviors towards dating apps can be examined and to a certain extent explained by two consumer behavior theories, the consumer decision-making process, and the AIDA model. By implementing the two mentioned models to the previously aforementioned strategies of advertising effectiveness such as targeted advertisements and influencer marketing, we are able to gain an in-depth understanding of advertising effectiveness. Moreover, we gain an understanding of the effectiveness of TikTok and Instagram adverts in relation to niche dating apps such as Muzz and the influence these ads have on its users.

2.2.1 Consumer Decision-Making Process

The Consumer Decision-Making Process (CDP) is one of the most common and successful models companies use. This is relevant to the research as it offers an understanding of why consumers behave the way they do when purchasing, or downloading, a product or service
(Stankevich, 2017). As previously mentioned, the world has become digital at a rapid pace, which means in order for companies to sell their product or service, they need to rely on digital marketing to attract customers. Furthermore, companies must identify what type of marketing will attract customers as well as how customers behave towards certain advertisements, hence the need for understanding the Consumer Decision-Making Process is valid. Blackwell (2006) explains in his book Consumer Behavior their expanded model of the CDP called Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model (EKB) created by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell in 1968 (Engel et al., 1973). Since its creation, there have been numerous updates, improvements and changes, it is now referred to as the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard Model which includes seven steps instead of five, in comparison to the CDP and EKB.

There are five key stages to the Consumer Decision-Making Process:

![Figure 1. Consumer Decision-Making Process](image)

**Stage 1: Need Recognition & Problem Awareness**

This initial stage is when the customer is encountered with a situation where they realize something is missing, and begins to research what product or service is needed to fill the gap. By realizing that there is something missing, it creates problem awareness and needs recognition according to Consumer Behavior Blackwell (2006). However, consumers can easily be swayed into purchasing a want instead of a need. It is important to understand the difference between these two terms, A need is something that a consumer is unable to live without whereas a want is the realization of an unfulfilled need and the desire to satisfy it (Stankevich, 2017). On the other hand, a want can be disregarded depending on the consumer's ability to purchase it. This is referred to as the Want-Got-Gap which describes the disparity between a consumer’s desire and their current state. This discrepancy must be substantial enough to be noticeable by the consumer and inspire them to take action towards making a purchase (Roozmand et al., 2011).
Similar to the Consumer Decision-Making Process (CDP) is the well renowned EBM of consumer behavior created in 1973 and has “Problem Recognition” as the first step of understanding consumer purchasing behavior (Blackwell, 2006). In addition to this, exists the “The Consumer Decision Journey” (Court et al., 2009) with its first stage being “Initial Consideration”. Both of which correlates to Need Recognition and Problem Awareness.

This stage creates a stimulus in the consumer to take action and solve the problem by either purchasing or not purchasing the needed product or service. The way in which this decision is made depends entirely on how the consumer perceives the product's ability to solve the problem. This process can be referred to as the Stimulus-Organism-Response Model of Decision Making (Cziko, 2000).

![Stimulus-Organism-Response (S.O.R) Model of Decision Making (Bray, 2008.)](image)

The S.O.R model describes the relationship between stimuli and the response or behavior a consumer will have. The way in which these two are connected is through an organismic component, hence, this model placing the Organism in the middle of Stimulus and Response representing the linkage (Buxbaum, 2016). In addition to this, there are two categories of stimuli which are External Stimuli and Internal Stimuli. External stimuli is in correlation to any environmental influences such as advertisements, social class, culture or something as simple as a discussion with a family member or friends will trigger a stimulus. An internal stimuli is caused by any input which influences one of the five senses - taste, sight, hearing, smell and touch (Munthiu, 2009; Muruganantham & Bhakat, 2013).

The S.O.R model can provide important information into how TikTok and Instagram adverts influence behavior. The adverts which are the stimuli, could lead to a change in emotions which is the organism, and therefore lead to the consumer downloading the app which is the response.

The Howard-Sheth Model of Consumer Behavior (Prakash, 2016), shares similarities with the S.O.R model. The initial stage of the Howard-Sheth model comprises “Inputs” which encompass two distinct types of stimuli:

1. Symbolic Stimuli such as price, quality, visual or verbal characteristics.
2. Significative Stimuli which include physical brand characteristics

This is followed by the second stage which is “Perceptual and Learning Construct” which is the interpretation of these input stimuli which leads to a response (Prakash, 2016). The first evident connection which can be made is that both models have two variations of stimuli with different
names but the same fundamental meaning. The second connection would be between the second stage of the Howard-Sheth Model of Consumer Behavior and the “Response” stage of the S.O.R. With this being said, it can be denoted that this is a common process which different consumer behavior theories include in their own way.

**Stage 2: Information Search**

After the consumer has recognised their need, they begin to research for different information that can potentially serve as a solution and fulfill their need (Lamb et al., 2011). In addition to this, the consumer behavior model presented by Court et al., (2009), includes a similar step referred to as “Process of researching potential purchases" reflecting the EKB and CDP models. There are types of information search a consumer can conduct, one being *External Information Search*. This type of information search is when a consumer has no prior knowledge about a product and proceeds to collect information from outside sources such as social media, acquaintances, peers or family. Under certain circumstances, the consumer might even observe the actual product in person to see their initial reaction to it.

However, it is more likely for them to seek information from the sources previously mentioned as well as advertisements, commercials, brochures or consumer-ratings of a product or service (Munthiu, 2009). Such sources can be labeled as *Marketing-Controlled Sources* as they focus on promoting the product through mass media (Stankevich, 2017). This is relevant to the research as current literature indicates that individuals often use TikTok and Instagram as a source of external information (Kesten et al., 2019). Thus showing the capabilities of an advert in changing an individual's perspective of a product such as a dating app like Muzz.

The other information search is *Internal Information Search*. This includes recalling previous information from their memory such as earlier discussions or impressions. Internal information search is often used as the initial basis for determining whether to purchase or not purchase the product they are seeking (Lamb et al., 2011; Stankevich, 2017; Prasad & Jha, 2014). These sources can be described as *Non-Marketing Controlled Source* as these sources don’t originate from markets from the company nor is there a purpose to promote the product (Lamb et al., 2011). The *Hawkins Stern Impulse Buying Theory* (Stern, 1962) theories four categories of impulse purchasing: planned impulse buying, reminded impulse buying, suggestion or fashion-oriented impulse buying and pure impulse buying.

In regards to external and internal information charts, one could find similarities with Hawkins Stern impulse buying theory, more specifically with the first and last impulsive buying categories respectively. For instance, planned impulse buying can fall within external information search as a consumer takes time to research information about the product or
service. Whereas when a consumer quickly recalls information from prior knowledge about a product or service and proceeds to make a purchase, it can be considered as a pure impulsive purchase which falls under internal information search (Stern, 1962).

Moreover, the Nicosia Model of Consumer Behavior (Vignali, 1998), consists of four fields where its first is “Transfer of Information”. This indicates the communication between the company and consumers which is displayed through its marketing which leads to the consumers purchasing response. This can be associated with external information search. The second field is “Search and evaluation” which illustrates the consumer engaging in a search process of information regarding the product. This can be linked to information search in general (Panwar, et al. 2019; Pellemansm, 1971).

**Stage 3: Evaluating Alternatives**

After having completed the first stage and the second, the consumer now knows that there is a need for a certain product and has researched information from various sources about the product and its category. Things bring the consumer to the third phase, which is the evaluation of all brands and products they have found based on the previous stage (Khan, 2007). Throughout this process, the consumer aims to provide answers to any possible questions that might emerge. These questions could be “Why is this alternative better than the other one?”, “How come this one is more expensive?”, “Which one am I able to afford?” and “Which alternative is better suited for my problem?” (Blackwell, 2006).

In order to answer these questions, the consumer uses the knowledge gathered from the prior stages. This allows the consumer to determine which alternative fulfills their need at the most successful level. In order to determine these, each consumer follows their own personal criteria which often relates to their standards, needs and wants, which is determined by internal and external factors. This procedure is also known as creating an *Evoked Set*, a concept used in the third stage of the Howard-Sheth Model of Consumer Behavior Model (Prakash, 2016). An evoked set is the remaining brands and products after evaluating all possible alternatives (Brisoux & Laroche, 1981; Prakash, 2016). An example of this entire process could first be the need of finding a partner. Secondly, the consumer’s alternatives could include dating apps, blind dates or connections through friends. After evaluating which option would be the most suited for the consumer, they would create an evoked set of dating apps including Tinder, Hinge and Muzz as the top alternatives.

**Stage 4: Purchase**

This stage occurs when the consumer has made a decision on which product to purchase and proceed with making the purchase. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), there are two phases a consumer goes through when finding themselves in this stage. This is referred to as the “Purchase Decision” in the *Buying Decision Process* by Kotler and Keller (2016).
The first phase is when the consumer chooses the location of the purchase such as a specific website or retailer. The second phase includes in-store choices which can be affected by mass media advertisement, salespeople and banners on websites (Stankevich 2017; Kotler and Keller, 2016). Stankevich (2017), explains that products which are established as *nondurable* meaning they are made from raw materials, such as wood, will be able to be purchased shortly after making the decision to purchase that product. On the other hand, it is more common for there to be a time delay between the decision to purchase and the actual acquisition of the product or service. This occurs depending on whether the initial plan of purchase coincides with the two phases previously described (Stankevich, 2017), meaning that the in-store choice might be out of stock of the product the consumer wishes to purchase, for instance.

Furthermore, this can be connected to the *Theory of Planned Behavior (TFB)* proposed by Ajzen (1991). This theory states that individuals' behavior is reliant on their subjective norms, perceived behavior control. In addition to this, the purchase of a product can be *partially planned* or *fully planned* relating back to the *Hawkins Stern Impulse Buying Theory* (Stern, 1962). By making a partially planned purchase, the consumer has chosen a product, time, location and method of payment. When making a fully planned purchase, the consumer has chosen all factors previously listed but with more specific information such as which exact store they will purchase their product or if it will be done online - the two phases of this stage (Roozmand et al., 2011).

**Stage 5: Post-Purchase Behavior**

In this stage the consumer has purchased their needed product or service and experiences either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The factor which determines this is the “consumer’s expectations and the product’s perceived performance” (Munthiu, 2009). A consumer will experience satisfaction when they feel the product or service has fulfilled their need or problem. Additionally, the feeling of satisfaction will occur if the consumer feels their expectations of the product or service have been met. However, if the consumer does not feel this way, they will instead feel lied to which leads to the feeling of dissatisfaction. If the consumer's expectations are not met, they will feel uneasy as well as regretful for not picking the other alternatives which could have possibly satisfied them (Munthiu, 2019).

Depending on whether the consumer is satisfied or dissatisfied, will affect a range of different components. If the consumer is satisfied, the probability of increasing consumer loyalty is high. A satisfied consumer is more likely to influence other people to purchase from that brand. This is relevant to our research as a positive experience entails users promoting the app within their own social network, therefore, projecting a positive attitude towards the app. Despite these positive externalities, there are also negative externalities. If the consumer is dissatisfied, they will connect the company to a negative feeling which means they will most likely not purchase
from them again. The consumer will not advise any people to purchase from this company and speak poorly of them (Qazzafi, 2019).

2.2.3 AIDA Model

As aforementioned, the CDP focuses on five cognitive stages of decision making for a consumer. These 5 stages can be further built upon using the AIDA model to provide a more comprehensive approach in understanding the effectiveness of adverts in order to understand the influence of social media adverts on consumer behavior.

The AIDA model is a well known model of consumer behavior that summarizes the stages of a consumer’s purchase decision: attention, interest, desire and action and was developed in 1898 (Barry, 1987). The AIDA model can help dating app marketers design effective ads to capture users’ attention, create interest in the app, create the desire to use it and trigger an action such as downloading the app (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

According to the AIDA model, TikTok and Instagram ads can be utilized to meet millenial and Generation Z preferences and provide visually appealing content, informative messages and persuasive content (Vollrath & Villegas, 2021). This is relevant as dating apps could be advertised using such models.

The 4 stages of the AIDA model are:

**Stage 1: Attention**
This is the first stage in the model, and its purpose is to capture a users’ attention (Vollrath & Villegas, 2021). As TikTok and Instagram offer the opportunity to make unique ads using different features such as stickers and polls, attention grabbing adverts that are related to Generation Z and Millenials interests and principles can be created.

**Stage 2: Interest**
The next step is to develop the attention gained. Once a users’ attention has been captured, the next aim is to turn that attention into interest (Vollrath & Villegas, 2021). This can be done via various different means such as addressing or highlighting certain features of the app.

**Stage 3: Desire**
The next step is to develop on the interest gained by creating a desire and a sense of want within the user. This is often done by creating a relationship between the user and the service (Kim et al., 2020). In the case of dating apps this is often done by addressing the loneliness within Generation Z and Millenials (Demarinis, 2020) and their want for companionship. In the case of Muzz, the emotional connection could be finding a companion in a way that pleases their intuitive want of a companion and a way that adheres to their religious belief.
Stage 4: Action
The last step is to ultimately ensure that the user takes action. In the case of dating apps this would ensure that the user downloads the app (Kim et al., 2020). This could be done by offering users a free trial of their premium version or other promotions.

As aforementioned the AIDA model is a well known model that was created over a century ago. This has allowed for certain negative opinions to come to fruition regarding the model. One of these opinions is that the model is viewed as far too simplistic. As models are a mere explanation of perceived reality, they are often simplified versions. This allows for complex aspects of reality to be overly simplified. In regards to consumer behavior, the AIDA model is regarded as far too simplistic. As consumer behavior is related to the complex nature of human wants and decision making, the model does not address and take into consideration this complex dynamic (Elrod & Forenberry, 2020).

An additional negative criticism regarding the AIDA model is the fact that the model focuses solely on the process of getting the user to take an action. This means that vital factors regarding post purchase behavior are not taken into account (Prathapan et al., 2018). This entails factors such as user satisfaction and word of mouth recommendation to be dismissed. In regards to dating apps this would mean there would be a dismissal of the users emotions about using the app and how satisfied they are. The only focus is attracting the user and not actually retaining the user. These are important factors as unsatisfactory experiences could lead to users having a negative image towards the dating app.

The AIDA model is a favorable framework and model to use in regards to social media (Idris & Rahman, 2017). The reason being that TikTok and Instagram have certain tools that allow you to analyze and gain a large set of data. The data gained could be used to examine how each stage of the AIDA model influences a user. For example, analyzing current trends and identifying the attention grabbing aspect enables the AIDA model to be used in both explaining behavior and predicting behavior. The importance of this is that the AIDA model established a connection between advertisements and user action (Idris & Rahman, 2017). Understanding this connection and causation allows for a better understanding of consumer behaviors and the emotional aspect involved in determining whether an ad is influential or not.

2.3 Uses and Gratification Theory
The uses and gratification theory essentially theorizes that individuals actively seek out and take advantage of media to fulfill their desires. According to the UGT it illustrates the fact that individuals actively seek out media material that would fulfill their unique desires as compared to being submissive receivers of information.
The UGT was initiated when Elihu, Jay Blumber (Katz et al., 1973) and other social scientists realized that media usage is a deliberate decision made by individuals that chose to pick media depending on what desires and wants they gain from it. According to the UGT individuals take advantage of the media from all sorts of aspects, for instance information seeking, entertainment, social engagement and persevering a sense of personal identity. This theory indicates that individuals are more likely to use media that best fits with their pre-existing beliefs and way of thinking. For example some who are religious and conservative with their belief will tend to use media to reinforce their faith, meanwhile someone who is into fashion will most probably use media in his favor of clothes preference and keep up with the latest fashion trends and style (Katz et al., 1973).

According to Ruggiero (2000), the core of the UGT consists of five different aspects that people to chose to fulfill their desires, the first one of them being:

**Aspect 1: Cognitive Gratifications**  
This refers to when individuals take advantage of the media through gathering new information and further deepening their knowledge and their understanding (Duffet, 2020).

**Aspect 2: Affective Gratifications**  
This term indicates individuals taking advantage of the media favoring emotional well being (Ekberg, 2010) which essentially means that individuals exploit the media in hopes of getting either entertained, relaxed and excited or all three.

**Aspect 3: Personal Integrative Gratifications**  
This aspect essentially implies the usage of media for the sole purpose in trying to discover your self identity including morals, beliefs and values.

**Aspect 4: Social Integrative Gratifications**  
This includes the exploitation of media in order to try and enhance or even build their relationships amongst other individuals with the help of social media platforms such as the mainstream Tik Tok and Instagram.

**Aspect 5: Tension Release Gratifications** is the fifth and final core aspect of the UGT meaning that individuals use media in a way that distracts them reality in order to feel relieve stress and tension, a very common example amongst Gen Z is video gaming in where they invest a lot of their time into console video gaming to release stress and tension Ruggiero (2000). A common example amongst Millennials is for instance watching comedy stand ups or a movie which helps them survive mentally throughout the day.
The UGT just like any other theoretical framework has got both advantages and disadvantages. An advantage would be that the UGT underlines that media use is a complicated and dynamic process that is influenced through each individual's objectives, priorities and motivations. However, the disadvantage being the fact that the UGT has been criticized that it heavily focuses solely on how the individual behaves rather than taking into account other factors such as cultural, social and political viewpoints.

Ultimately the UGT framework is useful to a certain extent when it comes to trying to understand the reason behind individuals' use of media and the type of gratification they try to fulfill from it. It underlines that individuals have authority over their own media encounters and that media use is an active, goal- directed process (Ruggiero, 2000).

With social media apps such as TikTok and Instagram growing and becoming household apps, UGT has been used to examine and understand the motives of Generation z and Millennials engaging with social media ads and their subsequent perceptions of dating apps. There are 4 factors for Generation Z and Millennials in regards to advertising, information seeking, connectivity and social interaction, entertainment, and self-expression and identity with connectivity and social interaction being the main factors.

2.3.1 Connectivity and Social Interaction

Social interaction and connection are driving forces in Millennials and Generation Z engaging with social media ads. Allowing users to interact with each other via means such as sharing and commenting fulfills the need for social connectedness (Lamblin et al., 2017). Research has shown that dating apps that encourage social interaction via different means such as polls can significantly increase user engagement and promote positive behaviors towards the app, including dating apps (Van Noort et al., 2013).

As the UGT theory addresses the importance of connectivity and social interaction in Millennials and Generation Z engagement with social media adverts (Dolan et al., 2016), it is important to note that there are limitations to this. One of these limitations is that some individuals prefer to stay private and not have a social media presence. This could be especially true when it comes to finding a partner. It is important to mention that this could be an effect of religious beliefs or cultures around the world (De Rooij, 2020) where relationships are seen as a private matter and therefore not addressed or found online.

Additionally the UGT theory, specifically the connectivity and social interaction factor, could be redundant when it comes to certain apps. Users may use more private apps, which could be interpreted as those users wanting to limit their number of social interactions. This therefore would mean that the way an app is used and its privacy settings may play a significant role in
determining the influence of connectivity and social interaction being a factor in engaging with adverts.

2.4 The Gap
To fully understand the research, it is critical to understand the current state of literature in regards to social media advertising, dating apps, and more so niche dating apps. This is to understand how current strategies used in larger literature such as social media marketing as a whole, has an effect on niche dating apps such as Muzz.

As with the emergence of dating apps and online dating, there has been an increase in the number of niche dating apps that cater to specific demographics. Many of these apps will opt for social media advertising due to their online nature and due to the hope of attracting their target audience. This leads to the gap within the current literature that this research aims to address. There is an absence of literature regarding marketing in niche dating apps, more so, how these marketing strategies may influence consumers behaviors.

The frame of reference indicates that there is an abundant amount of literature regarding theoretical frameworks such as UGT that explain and provide an understanding of the current state of social media advertisement, however the correlation these frameworks have on niche dating apps is not addressed. The literature shows that while there is a vast amount of literature that mentions the motivations and intricacies of the frameworks, there is no current study that links these frameworks to the effect on consumer behaviors through TikTok and Instagram specifically.

Additionally the lack of literature in regards to niche dating apps, specifically, religious based dating apps such as Muzz, highlights a number of implications. One implication being that we have no study based understanding of whether current marketing and advertisements are influential and effective in niche dating apps. A lack of research in this area also highlights that there is a gap in addressing potential differences between the apps. Thus, proving that there is a lack of knowledge and literature currently that addresses the current market. The aforementioned gaps highlight the requirement for further research in these areas. Additionally it highlights potential vital information that could prove useful to marketers.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design
A qualitative research method was implemented to discover the influence of social media on Millennials and Generation Z consumer behaviors towards dating apps focusing specifically on Muzz. As human actions and perspective are complex and the underlying factor in determining
their behaviors, qualitative research was deemed to be suitable as shown in research conducted by Cresswell & Poth (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). To gain a better understanding, a semi structured interview was used and conducted. This allowed for participants to express themselves while answering questions. The questions formulated were based on three anchoring theories, UGT, consumer behavior, and advertising effectiveness.

As aforementioned, UGT suggests that individuals interact with media in order to fulfill their needs or desires (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). UGT was specifically chosen as an anchoring theory as it can help explain why and how social media influences an individual's use of Muzz. With consumer behavior identifying the decisions individuals make when deciding to consume a product, this theory was used to identify how social media ads could influence Millennials and Generation Z behaviors towards Muzz (Solomon, 2014). Advertising effectiveness was used as it aims to describe how effective an advert is (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999).

3.2 Sampling Method

The sampling method that was used for this study was a purposive sampling method (Patton, 2002). This sampling method is mainly used by researchers when a certain demographic or cultural domain is wanted. In the case of this study, the requirement were Muzz users.

The requirement for participants were individuals who were familiar with Muzz, additionally, they were required to have used the app at least once. The authors decided this was important as it would allow for a better understanding of the research question at hand.

Additionally, the authors aimed to have an equal balance of male and female participants, however due to lack of available participants, we achieved a ratio of 6 males and 4 females equating to a 60-40% ratio.

3.3 Participants

A total of 10 participants were interviewed. As aforementioned sampling method used was a purposeful sampling strategy (Patton, 2002). This sampling method was used as it allowed us to identify and interview individuals who we believed to have insightful information. One participant was found by downloading the app and messaging individuals if they would be willing to be part of our research. The 10 other participants consisted of family members, friends, and the local muslim community at the university.

Based on the research conducted by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana in 2014, we identified that ensuring that our participants came from different backgrounds would allow us to capture a wider range of perspectives.
3.4 Instruments
The primary data instrument was a semi structured interview that consisted of 15 questions based on the three different theories, UGT, consumer behavior and advertising effectiveness. Semi structured interviews offered the benefit of more discussion based interviews while keeping a consistent topic and question base for the participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The questions were selected after conducting research on the literature available. Other similar research conducted on dating apps were also identified to establish a similarity amongst the questions used. A question bank of over 50 questions was shortened down to 15 questions. The most relevant questions in regards to the theories used were selected.

The voice recording app found on Iphone was used to voice record the interviews. This was to make sure that the data was accurately stored. This method is common within qualitative research and is regarded as an effective method for storing data (Davidson, 2009).

3.5 Procedure
Before the interviews were started and conducted, each participant was told about the purpose of the study and was explicitly informed of their voluntary participation and that they could leave and end the interview when they pleased. The confidentiality of answers and participants was ensured (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). The interviews were scheduled at the university at an agreed time once consent papers were signed and received from the participants. The interview's average time was roughly one hour following the aforementioned semi-structured approach.

Throughout the interviews, participants were encouraged to give the raw truth of their experiences and not to hold back information. Open-ended questions were used to allow for more discussions to be had with the hopes of more information being shared. Additionally, follow-up questions were asked when needed. Notes were taken by us invigilators to capture nonverbal cues, and our personal reflection of the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

3.6 Data Analysis
Based on Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis was used so that we could use the six step approach to analyze the data from the interviews. The six steps are, identifying and becoming familiar with the data, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

During the identifying and becoming familiar with the data phase, we as invigilators and interviewers, listened to the voice recordings while reviewing the notes taken. Initial ideas and
impressions were noted down before proceeding to the next step. Initial codes were generated by finding data that was deemed relevant to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Codes for the data were then created. The codes were then reviewed to ensure that the data was represented correctly and to avoid inaccuracies. The end consisted of naming the themes, and extracting quotes to support the themes identified.

3.7 Ethics
To ensure that ethical measures were conducted and up to standard, we utilized the guidelines offered by the American Psychology Association. This consisted of obtaining consent forms from the participants prior to the interviews being conducted. Additionally, the aim of the study, the purpose of the study, the handling of data, the voluntary nature of participation, and the participants right to end the interview and withdraw at any moment they wish, was expressed verbally and written on their consent forms.

Additionally, the participants were assured confidentiality. This was done by removing all personal data such as names from the study ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. All notes, and audio transcripts are restricted to research members only.

Finally, as the nature of the interview consisted of personal topics, we were aware that power imbalances could occur throughout the interview (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). By being aware of this possibility, we were able to take appropriate steps to address and minimize these issues. Steps taken included establishing and creating a relationship with the participants to ensure that they felt comfortable and knew that there was no judgment. The participants also knew that there could be interviewee biases that could influence data.

3.8 Validation and Verification
To ensure that the study was credible two main steps were taken. The first step consisted of member checking as conducted by Cresswell & Poth (2017). Additionally participants were allowed and given the opportunity to review the theme identified and quotes extracted from their interviews. This was to give participants the opportunity to confirm or refute our findings (Birt et al., 2016). This was to ensure we understood and accurately were able to describe the participants' experiences and perspectives.
4. Findings & Analysis

4.1 Data in Relation to Advertising Effectiveness and Influence marketing

4.1.1 Interest in Ads

When executing the interviews, seven out of ten interviewees claimed that advertisements catch their attention when they emphasize unique traits or features. This was expressed by a participant “Honestly, I find some of the advertisements on Tik Tok/Instagram for dating apps like Muzz to be nice and this makes me interested in the app”. The participant explains some of the advertisements appeal to their interest which makes them more prone to using the app.

Moreover, the response to Muzz or other dating app advertisements on social media depends on their presentation and content. As mentioned above, advertisement is regarded as interesting and engaging if it highlights distinctive traits or features. The opposite is true if the advertisement is highly promotional or repetitious, as a participant said “There are those advertisements that never stop appearing and make me feel as though my personal space is being invaded. So I'd say that depends on the advertisement and how it's delivered”. From this statement one can infer that the participant is feeling overrun by some advertisements, especially those that are persistent or intrusive. They feel as though their privacy is being invaded because these ads appear so frequently. Therefore advertising efficacy and attractiveness may vary depending on how it is presented and delivered, which influences how a person perceives an advertisement overall. This emphasizes the significance of placing suitable ads and its frequency managed in order to avoid fatigue and negative responses.

In this context, a negative response can include the failure of grabbing the attention of consumers which seems to be true when a participant states “Muzz’s ad never really caught my attention. It came across as superficial and focused on appearance like every other dating app ad I’ve seen”. The participant’s opinion regarding muzz Tik Tok/Instagram ads is that they are shallow and superficial, focusing primarily on superficial factors such as physical appearance. As the participant doesn’t observe anything unique about Muzz it created a negative response where they did not find any use of downloading the app. This emphasizes the importance for creating advertisements that not merely highlight the unique traits but as well establish an emotional connection with the audience.

The interviewees' feedback reinforces (Calder et al.'s, 2009) theory, stating that the effectiveness of an advertisement depends greatly on its capacity to coordinate with consumers interests, offer a unique value proposition, and foster an emotional connection. Despite that, such findings also point out potential issues in digital advertising, such as perceived intrusiveness and the likelihood of presenting a superficial image, which could turn away
potential customers. Therefore, creating good advertisements requires an accurate compromise of balancing between these views.

4.1.2 Perception of Ads
According (Wedel & Pieters, 2000), the way consumers perceive and understand advertising has a great influence on how they react to the ads. These views are influenced by several factors such as personal behaviors, past experiences, and cultural context. Marketers utilize this information to come up with effective and niche targeted advertisements. The findings of the interview aligns well with this theory.

Generation Z and Millennials may view dating apps in both favorable and unfavorable ways as a result of social media advertising. The influence of such ads are related to elements such as quality, relevancy and targeting. Ads that are original, interesting and suited to the target market might have a favorable impression on the ad viewer while obtrusive, pointless or badly performed ads can do the opposite effect. This can be applied to the Muzz app as supported by a participant who receives Muzz ads on a daily basis and their reaction varies. This is due to the factors previously mentioned as they state “When I see a nice ad that has good quality, helpful info or a cool feature I am more likely to try it. But if the ad is simple and doesn’t really show anything then I just skip it”. The respondent mentioned that the ad quality and the features presented in the muzz ads could favorably influence the perception of the users to utilize muzz.

Visually appealing, educational, and sincere advertisements may leave a good first impression and persuade the ad viewers to download muzz app. This is consistent with the thought that personal behaviors and past experiences influence how they respond to muzz ads or commercials in general. Contrarily, advertisements that are viewed as spammy, obtrusive, or irrelevant may leave a bad impression and push away potential users, thereby leaving a negative customer response.

Furthermore the importance of targeted advertising in influencing consumers' behaviors is a further significant conclusion mentioned properly by a participant “I know that we as customers are continuously targeted especially if we search for something, there was this time when my friend told me about muzz and suddenly the ads started to appear frequently in my instagram reels. However, if the ad is targeted well and shows something that actually interests me then I am fine and if the ad is boring then nevermind”. Ads are more likely to leave a favorable impression and encourage users to explore the muzz app if they speak to their target audience's particular needs, aspirations, and expectations. This emphasizes how important it is for dating app advertisers to have a thorough grasp of their target market in order to tailor their ads to suit their interests and preferences.
Nevertheless, although the interviewees were not specific about their cultural surroundings, it could be presumed that their perceptions are influenced by the social and cultural environment they live in. By way of illustration, the participants are part of Millennials and Generation Z, both of these demographics are recognized for their dependence on digital media and the desire for authenticity and personalization. Such cultural surroundings could probably influence the participants' expectation for online commercials, further highlighting the necessity of high quality, unique and relevant commercials.

4.1.3 Characteristics of Effective Ads
The response of the interviewees is strongly related to (Heath, Brandt, & Nairn, 2006). According to the interviewers, relatability, engagement, and emphasizing the app's special features or advantages are all elements that contribute to a good advertisement. Creativity, sense of humour, concise language, highlighting the app's value proposition, and having a clear call to action were also mentioned as significant qualities.

This is supported by the statements of interviewee responses of the participants as the following,

"An effective advertisement should be eye-catching but also educational, and entertaining, by letting us know what nice features the app has”.

" I don't know so much about ads but the ones I see should be relevant to what I want and targeted to me. If the ads are funny then it's a very big plus as well”

" I usually scroll through Instagram fast and the ads that I click have to include colors, slogans or titles that include something meaningful, such as Happy mothers Day”

The necessity for realistic dating app marketing was one crucial factor that the participants brought up. By speaking to their particular needs, wants, and expectations when it comes to dating and building connections, the commercials should resonate with the target population. Ads may, for instance, illustrate actual circumstances that Millennials and members of Generation Z can relate to, such as overcoming the difficulties of contemporary dating, meeting like-minded people, or looking for committed partners. Dating app commercials may build a deep emotional connection and encourage trust with potential users by appealing to their emotions and experiences.

Additionally, in the realm of social media advertising, interaction is crucial. Dating app commercials must be compelling enough to draw in and hold the attention of Millennials and
Generation Z users in the face of myriad other adverts competing for their attention. This may be done by employing captivating imagery, engaging material, or even user-generated content that entices visitors to take part in a discussion or activity centered on the dating app. For instance, adverts may highlight user success stories or testimonials, or they may invite users to submit their tales of online dating success. Ads for dating apps may successfully raise curiosity and encourage user growth by building a feeling of belonging and connection.

The necessity to highlight the app's distinctive features or benefits is another essential aspect stated by respondents. Marketers must highlight what makes a certain app stand out from its rivals because Millennials and members of Generation Z have an overwhelming amount of dating app options to choose from. To do this, the app's potential to serve a certain market or set of preferences might be highlighted, along with its cutting-edge features, unique advantages, and so on. Dating app ads may successfully grab the interest of potential users and persuade them to download the app by providing a unique selling proposition.

Effective dating app advertising also requires creativity. Advertisements on social media sites like TikTok and Instagram should be in line with the innovative and dynamic content that these sites are renowned for. Ads should take a unique, creative approach to storytelling, using comedy, wit, or provocative ideas to stand out from the crowd. Consumers in Generation Z and Millennials might be attracted to dating app adverts by using a unique and creative approach, which may lead them to discover more about the app and eventually sign up as members.

Moreover, it is impossible to emphasize the significance of concise language, a distinct value proposition, and an effective call to action. Because social media users have a short attention span (Subramanian, 2018), dating app advertising must convey their message clearly and concisely. Ads may effectively communicate their value proposition and inspire potential users to take action, such as installing the app, establishing a profile, or encouraging others to join, by utilizing straightforward, uncomplicated language. Ads for dating apps such as muzz may be made more effective by including five crucial components, which will eventually increase user growth and engagement.

### 4.1.4 Memorable Ads

The memorability of commercials and the incorporation of specific significant qualities such as shared cultures, privacy, compatibility, customer success stories and safety greatly influence the concept of the theory with regards to the effectiveness of advertisement presented by Rossiter & Percy (1987), and Heath, Brandt, & Nairn (2006). Such factors are acknowledged to have great influence on customer behavior.
In practical terms, eight out of ten interviewees recalled memorable Muzz advertisements that highlighted the distinctive qualities of shared cultures, compatibility, privacy, safety, or success stories. Due to the emotional resonance, relevancy, and focus on the app's distinguishing features, these advertisements attracted their attention and left a favorable impression. For instance, six out of ten of the interviewees preferred the advertisements that featured success stories, like a couple who wed using the app and are now happily married. This sentiment was expressed by a participant saying: “I prefer advertisements that are based on actual success stories, like ones that feature a couple that met using an app, got married, and talked about their experience” and another participant saying: "I really appreciate ads that show real-life stories and romantic connections”

What could be derived from such ads is that the emotional connection made by actual people sharing their satisfied experiences with Muzz makes the advertisement stick out more. Additionally, this strategy gives the advertisement authenticity and relatability, which encourages viewers to trust the message and learn more about muzz app. In contrast to scripted or exaggerated advertising that could not relate with the audience's actual experiences, advertisements that depict real experiences tend to be more engaging and effective.

The success of muzz advertisements actually confirms the theoretical concepts regarding what makes the ad recognizable. The practical part not merely backs the theory, yet also points out the influence of the distinct qualities like success stories, on real consumer perceptions and experiences. Thus, utilizing such unique features in advertising could render it more memorable and could as well influence user behavior regarding the muzz app.

4.1.5 Influencers and Celebrities

Seven out of ten of our participants polled think that celebrities or influencers can have a big influence on how they and other people use an app, especially if they sincerely believe in and support its guiding principles. They observed that genuine recommendations from well-known persons can promote social proof, trust, and authenticity, which can persuade users to download the app. Additionally, the Muzz app's reach and visibility can be effectively increased through the influence of celebrities and other influential people on TikTok and Instagram advertisements. Their substantial fan base and authority may inspire aspiration and curiosity in their audience, boosting the likelihood that people will download and utilize the app.

The participants had really interesting replies when it comes to influencers and celebrities stating the following:

“I follow some Muslim influencers and I did see a few of them doing muzz ads, somehow this made me more interested in trying this app to see what it has”
“I don't really let celebrities or influencers who promote dating apps affect me. I believe that their comments might not be sincere because they are paid to do the ad. But I do like it when regular users talk about their experience with the app, this makes it more real.”

The results from the interviewees' comments show that there might be a wide range of effects on total app usage from social media influencers, celebrities, and testimonials in dating app marketing. Some people consider these recommendations to be powerful, especially if the influencer is someone they respect or can relate to. Real user testimonials that convey a feeling of reliability and trustworthiness can also be effective in persuasion.

On the contrary, some individuals are still skeptical or unconcerned about the influence of famous people and influencers on dating app marketing. They believe that these types of influencers are being paid and do not speak their real opinions about the muzz app or other apps.

4.1.6 Influential Factors in Ad Effectiveness

The success of an advertising campaign as a whole and the respondents' reactions to the app can both be influenced by elements such as trust, credibility, social proof, and authenticity. Nine out of ten respondents mentioned that a well-executed campaign that appeals to them and seems sincere can influence their choice to try the muzz app favourably.

The respondents stated the following about the influential factors in ad effectiveness:

“If the ad campaign is reliable and trustworthy then it's a good one, for instance, I am more likely to like the muzz app and recommend it to friends if the ad is persuasive and speaks to me personally”

“I don't always think that the factors that affect how well an advertisement does affect how I feel about Muzz app. Sometimes I can see an amazing ad but the app itself is not that much”

The statements of the interviewees show that the variables affecting the general efficacy of muzz marketing campaigns can as well affect how each individual responds to the marketed app. The level at which these characteristics coincide might vary from person to person.

Some respondents assume that elements that lead to the success of an ad campaign are related to engagement, relatability and trustworthiness which can affect how they react to the app. These users are more prone to download for instance the muzz app and recommend it to someone they know if the advertisement successfully appeals to their interest.
However, respondents who share the same opinion as participant 5 feel that their reactions to the Muzz app or other apps do not necessarily match with those factors influencing the efficacy of the marketing campaign. Such individuals might consider certain features of the marketing interesting while remaining uninterested in the app itself.

4.2 Influence of Instagram and TikTok Advertisements

4.2.1 Influence of Advertisements on Downloading Dating apps

A similarity found among the interviewees was that the advertisements displayed on Tiktok and Instagram seemed to have played a large role in downloading Muzz. The reason for this, from what can be gathered, is because of certain factors such as relatable content, distinctive characteristics and eye-catching features. In addition to this, nine out of ten interviewees agreed that social media advertisements in general do catch their attention as a well-placed and engaging advertisement creates curiosity which leads to downloads.

In regards to the consumer decision-making process, this response shows the attributes of stage one - Need Recognition & Problem Awareness. This is because the advertisements had shown a “need” that they did not know was there. This “need” is for a relationship, connections and socialization. Furthermore, the visual features and engaging content increase awareness among future users. This is proven when a participant stated “After seeing the ad of Muzz on TikTok, it made me realize I am ready to settle down” where the key word is “realize”, thus proving the need for recognition. As another participant stated “Seeing as my best friend met her fiance through a dating app and how happy they are, I realized that I also wanted this”. Therefore, proving that this participant did not know this was something they wanted until seeing their friend's happiness. As a follow-up, this participant mentioned: “After talking with my friend, she told me it was through Muzz that she met her fiance. This got me looking into the app and other dating apps like Tinder”. Thus, this participant is already moving towards stage 2 Information Search.

When relating the information from the interviewees to the AIDA model one could directly align it with step 1: Attention, where the goal is to catch the consumer’s attention. As a participant stated “Yes, I believe that a Muzz advertisement on social media might make people curious about the app and influence them to download it”, furthermore, participant 6 expressed “The power of social media advertisements should not be underestimated. They can influence app downloads”. Another example of how this can be connected to the Attention stage is deduced from a participant’s statement “Ads can spark interest, but ultimately it’s the app’s features and reviews that drive downloads”.

35
In following this, as previously mentioned, a common similarity between the participants was the fact that social media advertisements increase curiosity which is what leads to the investigation of the product or service, moreover, the purchase or download. The participant’s states support this conclusion as they express explicitly how it is the app’s features and reviews that persuade downloads. The reason it does this is that the advertisement shows the features which encourage curiosity and the persuasion to download the app to experience these features. Therefore, proving that the right advertising persuades consumers to purchase or download the product or service due to its representation of certain features. Thus, grabbing the attention of consumers which relates to the first stage of the AIDA model: Attention.

4.2.2 Influence of Social Media ads on Behaviors Towards Dating and Relationships

The influence of social media advertisements in regard to behaviors towards the general view on relationships and dating was a recurring subject in most of the participants' answers. Three out of ten participants expressed that certain dating app advertisements portrayed what seemed to be unrealistic expectations about what relationships should entail. Furthermore, five out of ten felt that the advertisement had a lot of focus on appearance and how one should look to have a successful dating life. On the other hand, the remaining participants agreed that they felt encouraged to form connections with a new approach.

When reflecting upon the consumer decision-making process, it can be concluded that demonstrations of stage 3 - Evaluating Alternatives are shown. When performing stage 3, it means that stages one and two are already complete, furthermore, the consumer (or participant) has already researched the different alternatives of dating apps. The part in which stage 3 occurs is when the participant evaluates the positives and negatives of each option including the current one seen in the advertisement. Social media advertisements for dating apps present information needed to aid the decision of choosing which app to use. This can be seen in this response as the participants generally perceive advertisements as encouraging and motivational to download the app. For instance, a participant stated “I’ve been getting a lot of ads on my Instagram of Muzz actually and it’s really changed the way I think about dating apps because usually, the go-to app is Tinder. And I feel that the people who use Tinder are using it only to find a ‘one-night stand’ but Muzz seems to be an app that helps people find a more serious relationship, which is what I am looking for personally”.

In this interview, it is clear that the participant has completed stage one as they are aware of their need as well as having completed stage two as they are familiar with other dating apps such as Tinder. Furthermore, this would indicate that the participant is evaluating the alternatives between Muzz and Tinder and is more favourable towards Muzz, therefore, completing stage 3. One participant expressed that advertisements for certain dating apps “discourages me from downloading the app” because “the people in the ad are usually the
stereotypical pretty type. It's usually a ‘skinny girl’ with flawless skin, blond hair, blue eyes and makeup matching with a muscular and fit guy”. With this being said, the participant performs stage three in a way where they have decided to not download that app.

The participants’ responses represent step 2 of the AIDA model, which is Interest. Within this step is the goal to develop the attention-caught interest. The advertisements have successfully captured the interest of consumers, leading them to further investigate the application. However, based on the responses, this interest differs based on the viewer's perception as demonstrated by a participant when they stated “Based on my experience, dating app ads usually create an ideal image of dating and relationships. But I think it is important to remember that the actual experience is not always what the ads portray”. Contrary to this, a participant stated: “Seeing ads for dating apps makes me more open to the idea of using them, to be honest”. Nevertheless, this interview proves that the interest has been made and recognized.

Moreover, these interviews also indicate a connection to step 3: Desire to a certain degree. This is highly relevant to step 2: Interest as the desire to download the application is influenced by the way certain apps are portrayed, thus, influencing both the interest and the desire. For instance, in a participant’s comment, it is clear that they no longer have the desire to download an app based on the advertisement because of previous experiences they have had. Additionally, As mentioned earlier, a common similarity found from each participant is that dating app advertisements tend to reveal an unrealistic vision of dating, thereby, affecting the interest as well as the desire to purchase it.

### 4.2.3 Recommendations Based on Advertisements of Dating Apps

According to the responses, two out of ten the participants had in fact recommended dating apps to peers based on two reasons. One of them being because of the social media marketing of the app, which includes exclusive features and celebrity influence. The other reason is simply based on their own personal experience with the dating app. However, there was one finding where a participant did not recommend a dating app due to their experience.

The participants' statement, “I told my friends about Muzz and now they all have it and are enjoying it as much as I do”, reflects the influence of post-purchase behavior, which aligns with stage 5 of the consumer decision-making process. This statement proves that the participant enjoyed the app and demonstrates consumer satisfaction and loyalty, which is why they recommended it to their friends. By spreading positive word-of-mouth, they improve brand awareness and the attraction of new customers. The participant's statement, “If an ad shows unique features of a dating app, I usually download it and then tell my friends about it. Which is something I have done” reflects all stages of the AIDA model. Due to their Attention being
caught by the advertisement showing the unique features, it leads to a piqued interest, thereby the desire to download the app and lastly, the action of doing so.

On the other hand, a participant had the exact opposite experience which provides an example of how unmet expectations lead to negative post-purchase behavior. The participant includes how having bad experiences with dating apps lead to them talking negatively about them. This dissatisfaction can be related to their expectations not being met, as indicated in their statement that “the ad for apps always makes it look so easy to match with ‘the one’ who is for you”. With this said, it indicates that they anticipated that the application would help them find a compatible partner based on shared beliefs, interests or hobbies. Unfortunately, they discovered that reality did not match the advertised picture. In terms of the AIDA model, this data illustrates a disconnect between the Desire created by the advertisements and the experience itself which caused unhappiness and unfavorable post-purchase behavior.

To summarize, there is a relationship between the stages of Attention, Interest, and Desire and their influence on the Action of recommending or speaking about a dating app which places these examples within the context of the AIDA model. The participants’ post-purchase behavior proves that the AIDA model extends beyond the pre-purchase phases to include the consumers’ continuous experiences and perceptions. With this being said, it means that all stages of the AIDA model is recognized in these interviews.

4.2.4 Changes in Muzz’s Marketing Strategies

In regards to Muzz’s marketing strategies on TikTok and Instagram, all participants had noticed some changes such as the usage of influencer partnerships, display of success stories and more eye appealing material.

The data collected from this topic shows the entire consumer decision-making process. Starting with stage one - Need Recognition & Problem Awareness, the changes in Muzz’s marketing strategy on TikTok and Instagram could cause consumers to recognize a need such as a partner and would begin to ponder possible solutions. Which is continued in stage two - Information Search, as the consumer would now be finding information on different dating apps due to the improvements of Muzz’s advertisements on social media which contains information about the benefits, various features and as a participant states “user feedback and success stories” thus, making the advertisements “feel more relatable”, which could potentially meet the consumers needs. In terms of stage three - Evaluating Alternatives, based on the information that Muzz’s advertisement now has after altering their marketing strategy, it influences the consumer on how to evaluate the app. For instance, a participant stated “I’ve noticed some new features which I think are really interesting” which indicates that consumers might compare whether the new features make the app more qualified compared to others. Stage 4 - Purchase, this is
closely connected to stage three as once the evaluations have been made, the consumer will now know which app they want to download. Lastly, stage five - *Post-Purchase Behavior* will show if the modifications to Muzz’s marketing strategy was beneficial or not. This will be determined based on the consumer's experience and whether or not their expectations were met. Their expectations are set based on the new developments of Muzz’s marketing strategy which includes new features and information.

Based on the findings from the interviews, it can be determined that all stages of the AIDA model are present. The Participant made the observation that “Muzz’s marketing seems to have become more inclusive and diverse in their advertisements now”, recognizing the diversity of Muzz’s evolved marketing strategy. Similar to another participant, who highlighted the evolution of Muzz’s marketing initiative in “trying different themes and concepts”. These statements suggest that Muzz is actively pursuing the attention of their target audience by utilizing modern and varied marketing techniques. Muzz successfully sets itself apart from niche Muslim dating apps and attracts users who might feel ignored or not represented in the normal dating app market. This is consistent with the first stage of the AIDA model, *Attention*, as Muzz’s inclusive and diversified marketing methods successfully grabs the attention of new consumers, thus, expanding their customer base.

Furthermore, a participant commented “I feel like Muz’s marketing is becoming more targeted and personalized”, while another participant added “Muz seems to have adopted a more ‘storytelling’ approach in their ads lately, which is interesting”. These findings demonstrate Muzz’s efforts to pique consumer’s interest and curiosity as well as personalizing their marketing approach. By incorporating a storytelling approach, it proves that Muzz aims to engage consumers on a personal and relatable level. This aligns with stage 2: *Interest* of the AIDA model as Muzz’s targeted and personalized marketing methods increase consumer’s interest and establish a sense of feeling valued.

Moreover, the third stage: *Desire* of the AIDA model is also justified in these interviews. The goal of this stage is to persuade the consumer into wanting to purchase. However, it can also decrease the want to purchase. This can be gathered from the participants. The participant remarked that the addition of user-generated content has made Muzz’s marketing “more interactive and engaging” is important. This tactic provides a sense of social proof which increases the motivation of potential users to engage with Muzz. According to a participant, “I haven’t noticed any changes in Muzz’s marketing on Instagram or TikTok”, which contrasts with the previous observation. This suggests a possible change in Muzz’s ability to effectively drive desire.

Lastly, a participant emphasized the influence of Muzz’s marketing strategy on consumers’ perceptions of the app by saying “it seems like they are targeting a broader audience in a sense
which makes it feel more approachable”. This finding represents the fourth stage of the AIDA model which is Action. This includes motivating the consumer to make a decision to either purchase or not purchase. Two of the participants explain similarly how they feel the use of success stories makes the app seem more “authentic and relatable”. Although this data is connected to Action, it can also be used to reflect the desired stage. This is because if the desire to purchase a product or service increases, it commonly leads to the act of doing so, as mentioned earlier in this report.

In summary, the entire AIDA model as well as the Consumer Decision-Making Process has been identified throughout these findings. These two models are in close relation to one another. Due to the fact that they have been acknowledged, it proves that they actually are used and that their stages are accurate. Furthermore, it shows that these models can be trusted and should be studied in order to perform successfully.

4.3 Data in Relation to the Uses and Gratification Theory

4.3.1 Awareness of Muzz

As far as the Awareness of Muzz is concerned, we have managed to gather the data needed from our interviews in which the participants had an awareness of Muzz to a certain extent as three were more familiar than others. Nevertheless, we were able to conclude that all participants were aware of the app. The pattern that we have embraced is the fact that those who were less familiar with the app frequently stated that it was due to their lack of interest in seeking dating apps and that they had only witnessed the advertisement a minimal amount such as once or twice. On the other hand, we have had interviewees that had personally used the app and further discussed their interaction with it, including the caliber of matches, the simplicity of use as well as their general satisfaction with it. Interviewees who knew people that used Muzz frequently stated that they heard about it mainly through Tik Tok and Instagram or word of mouth as well “posters on the walls of subway” which was stated by a participant.

The participants from the interview showed different degrees of hobby and familiarity with Muzz. The different levels can be applied to the individual's different desires and gratifications that they want from Muzz. Six of the ten participants heard about Muzz from word of mouth from friends, additionally some users used Muzz personally, hence why some participants were more familiar with the app than others. However, the remaining 4 have little to no interest in dating apps which is why they are less acquainted with the app.

A number of the participants indicated that the social media adverts for Muzz were effective and persuasive. This showed to be more true in regards to the adverts that were targeted for Millennials and Generation Z or participants who are actively on the search for a partner. A
participant commented that due to the advertisement “It seemed like exactly what I was looking for, so I downloaded it”. This contributes to the theory that individuals' level of interaction with social media adverts is influenced by their needs and wants. Alhabash et al. (2014) observed that the UGT theory provides an adequate understanding of the motivations behind social media use, especially in terms of seeking information, entertainment and social interaction.

The findings also indicate that all participants were aware of Muzz given to different reasons and the familiarity varied on different levels. The majority of recognition was due to social media ads, specifically that of TikTok and Instagram which can also be found in relation to the UGT theory. Word of mouth advertisements and in addition to subway advert posters also had a role in the recognition and awareness of Muzz. Lyons & Montgomery (2013) indicated that social media adverts can extensively influence a brands awareness, especially in young audiences, indicating that Generation Z are heavily influenced by social media adverts. This also indicates that social media adverts should be at the forefront of any marketing or advertisement campaigns targeted at younger audiences. As aforementioned, there were different familiarity levels among the participants. This could be connected to the participants' own interest in Muzz. Naturally this would affect the likelihood of the individuals interacting with Muzz.

4.3.2 Advertisements for Muzz and Their Persuasiveness

In regards to the advertisements for Muzz it was made clear by all our interviewees that they have witnessed it at least once. Additionally, one participant mentioned the content of the advertisements and their features. Specifically, a participant expressed “I noticed the feature in terms of an algorithm where I noticed that my potential partner is more likely to show up due to our Shia belief as Muslims”. Moreover, they emphasize on how they admired the option to limit matches based on religious views which is one of the most distinctive aspects of the app, which has been showcased in the advertisements they had seen. Some interviewees said that they saw Muzz advertisements occasionally, whereas others claimed to see it more frequently. A participant emphasizes “I see it at least once everyday when I am scrolling on my for you page on Tik Tok and when I scroll through my Instagram feed”, meanwhile another participant states “I spend my days usually working due to my tight schedule, I barely use social media but when I do I usually see a Muzz ad every once in a while on Instagram”.

The interviewees' views on the effectiveness of Muzz’s advertisements and overall marketing strategy varied. Six of the interviewees found the advertisement of users' success stories to be persuasive. However, the remaining four felt otherwise in where a participant stated “I feel like the advertisements for Muzz were too generic and it did not give me a feeling that it was any different from those in other dating apps”, additionally, another participant emphasized “I felt like the app was targeting a certain demographic which I am not a part of and that made me feel excluded thus lose interest”. The other portion of our interviewees said otherwise as a participant
stated “I felt like Muzz utilized a great marketing tool by displaying a users successful experience in the app which made me more inclined to give it a try” and also another participant mentions “The first thing that caught my eye with Muzz was the uniqueness of it both internally and externally”.

Based on the findings that we established we can therefore examine the UGT in relation to the advertisements for dating app Muzz. The UGT indicates that people intentionally seek out and take advantage of the media in order to fulfill their desires (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). Taking a deeper look into the findings in regards to the participants perception of Muzz marketing approach and advertising we can acknowledge that as a participant emphasized the algorithm of Muzz which allows users to limit their matches in accordance with their religious and values preference. This finding is relevant when looking into the UGT as it showcases how the app responds to the user's desire fulfillment in terms of social contact and personal identity through providing a platform that backs their own values and preferences. Additionally, the interviews conducted indicate why participants engage with Muzz and social media advertising which align with the UGT. In reference to the theory, individuals have specific wants and needs and individuals use media as a means to fulfill their wants and needs (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). Applying this theory to dating apps, more specifically Muzz, it implies that people's use of such apps is dependent on their preferences and gratifications they gain from them.

The findings showed that Muzz’s perception differed among the participants. Five participants admired the functions and features of the app, one of which was the ability to blur out and hide one's picture. These participants favored the fact that Muzz specified on demographics and addressed social groups based on religion. On the contrary, the remaining five participants found that Muzz was too generic or even exclusionary. The difference in perception could be caused by a number of factors such as personal preferences and experiences, and how the individuals associate with the focused demographic. Baek et al. (2017) study found that a consumer's brand perception can be altered by how they perceive the adverts message. Individuals would have more positive brand perceptions given that they feel that their values and needs are being met and addressed by the advert. This connects directly to Muzz’s persuasiveness in the sense where there was a difference amongst participants with some deeming the adverts to be too generic or exclusionary as aforementioned. Others admired the app’s success stories and features that were displayed through the ads. These differences could be linked to the demographic targeting of Muzz’s adverts and individuals preferences.
4.3.3 Influence of Social Media Advertising on Personal Preferences and Relationship-Building Culture

Based on our interviews four out of ten of our interviewees' preference for how they would encounter new partners or even friends has changed as a result of using dating apps that are supported by social media advertising. The results prove that social media adverts influenced how the participants interacted and approached finding a relationship. They also mentioned that social media adverts played a role in influencing their preferences in meeting a potential partner. This influence is evident from the growing usage of dating apps, and the change in how individuals establish and mating relationships.

The data collected from the interviews indicates that two participants favored the benefits and convenience provided by dating apps. A participant states “Social media advertising has made it much simpler for me to be more picky and basically design what traits my dream partner would possess” in agreement with another participant explaining how they admire “the way I can locate potential partners by having similar values and interests”. It can also be acknowledged that eight participants are still accustomed and prefer their traditional way of finding and establishing connections, especially potential romantic ones. For instance a participant explains that they would rather “meet people the more old school way, it is more genuine when I meet someone in person and forge a connection that way”. Additionally, a participant states “I feel social media advertising especially on Tik Tok and Instagram has made dating more commercialized and made it seem more transactional rather than natural and that made me develop trust issues when it comes to actually committing to a relationship”.

From the data collected we can see the relationship between the UGT and social media advertising due various aspects from the interviews. For instance, the preference of using dating apps is due to social media advertising in which they claim that it has made it easier and a smoother process for them to be picky and find their potential partner. This can be linked to UGT, more specifically the first two aspects: Cognitive and Affective Gratification, since it showcases how the participants utilize these applications to fulfill their wants and needs as well as have control when searching for a partner.

4.3.4 Convenience and Accessibility

Concerning the matter of convenience and accessibility it has been noted that social media marketing, in specific Tik Tok and Instagram advertisements, provides this. A participant states “Due to Tik Tok and Instagram ads I have managed to expand my social circle through meeting new friends and partners and even helped me network with people of similar values and interests”. It has also been emphasized in a participant’s statement “It has become much easier to interact with people as I am an introvert and I do not get to socialize a lot in Sweden, dating apps have made it much more convenient through their Instagram and Tik tok ads”. The use of
social media advertisements has also saved a lot of time and “effort into searching for a connection which ultimately made my life easier” stated by a participant. However, two participants mention that advertisement through social media is not always convenient nor accessible. This is due to their personal preferences of seeking relationships which is highlighted in a participant’s statement, “I prefer to invest a lot of time into seeking a relationship rather than just swiping on a dating app which I see as a risk and a waste of time”. Overall, while our interviewees' opinions varied, we believe that the majority could agree that social media advertising through Instagram and TikTok has a significant influence on how people meet potential partners and build relationships.

Dating apps in general are based on the idea of convenience and accessibility. Participants showed admiration to the fact they were able to expand their network and possibly find individuals with similar interests and hobbies. This can help streamline the process of meeting a potential spouse. This may be seen as more beneficial for individuals who would struggle to find a spouse due to various reasons such as geographical location or personal traits such as being an introvert.

Nevertheless, two participants also showed concerns regarding the disadvantages and risks of using dating apps to find a spouse. This included a number of reasons such as commitment and trust. Trust was a significant factor as it was rooted in one, trusting the individual, and two, trusting that the relationship being created as an authentic relationship.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, our study explored the influence of social media advertising, primarily TikTok and Instagram advertisements on Generation Z and Millennials' views and behaviors with regards to the muslim dating apps with a certain emphasis on Muzz dating app. The conclusion acquired from the study is multifaceted, surrounding the Advertising effectiveness, Consumer Behavior Model, and Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT).

In particular, social media advertising influenced the personal preferences and relationship-building culture. Several participants enjoyed the simplicity in the dating app muzz for finding a partner, which displayed the intellectual and emotional gratification views of UGT. However, multiple respondents expressed their doubts concerning the authenticity of relationships and connections made via dating apps, thus pointing out the complicated ways consumers pursue gratification from media.

A substantial effect on the individual's behaviors, cultural nuances and past experiences on perceptions of advertisements have been observed. In order to increase the likelihood of having successful advertisements it is recommended that the advertisements interact with the targeted
individuals on a human level and try to evade invasive methods. The common factors that were noted which made an advertisement more likely to be successful were engaging, relevant, inventive and humorous attributes. Advertisement that gave a sense of belonging, a feeling that promoted a sense of community in regards to an individual's emotional connection with the advertisement was proven to be an important criteria hence the enhancement of Muzz’s brand trust and the growth of users.

Moreover, the AIDA model and Consumer Decision-Making Process mutually backed the effectiveness of Muzz commercials. Considering the social media advertising for dating apps, the research proved the applicability and accuracy of both approaches. In particular, AIDA’s Action phase and post-purchase behavior in the consumers decision-making process were both indicated by the participants' inclination to promote Muzz to peers correlated with each other. The participants as well commended Muzz’s advertising strategies for including influencer collaborations and success stories on Tik Tok and Instagram, thus resulting in more likelihood of downloading the muzz app and using it.

The correlation between UGT and Muzz users engagement is undeniable which means that each user's contact with Muzz is encouraged by unique demands and preferences, which aligns consistently with the principles of UGT. The personalisation of the advertisements has been proved to be a core aspect that has an outrageous influence on user perception and awareness of Muzz’s marketing on the social media platforms Tik Tok and Instagram. On the contrary, a portion of the reactions to those platforms displayed that each user had a different taste in dating, shedding light on the importance of meeting a diversity of standards for a pleasant user experience.

Nevertheless, the research reveals the strong influence social media advertising has on dating app consumer behaviors. The results emphasize the influence social media plays on consumer behavior and the need for businesses to actively align their advertising campaigns with widely recognized behavioral models with the goal to achieve the greatest results. Thus, Muzz and other muslim dating apps could be successful in achieving their primary goal of creating significant relationships through establishing a balance between a meaningful relationship with the audience, respect for personal space and offering a unique relevant user experience.

6. Discussion

6.1 Contributions
The findings of this study could prove useful to marketers when designing advertisements targeting directly towards Generation Z and Millennials. Throughout this study, the analysis of the interviews in relation to the User Gratification Theory, Consumer-Decision Making
Process, AIDA Model and Advertising Effectiveness Theory, provides an understanding of how to approach Generation Z and Millennials. As these theories and models serve as a backbone in developing marketing strategies, it could be established that this information is valuable. Furthermore, the findings and analysis supports these theories to be valid, which is why other researchers could use this information and investigate further within the area of consumer behavior, User Gratification Theory or alternative theories relevant to the topic of dating apps.

6.2 Practical Implications

The results from this study can be implemented by marketing developers within Muzz’s advertisement team as well as other dating apps in general in order to improve their marketing strategy related to social media. As Generation Z and Millennials use social media as their main source of communication, entertainment and information, the findings from this thesis can contribute to how a company can engage with possible consumers. As this thesis focuses specifically on Muzz, the statements from the interviewee’s provide insight as to how they perceive their brand and service. With this information, Muzz has the ability to adapt its advertisements and alter their service as a whole to their target audiences’ liking.

6.3 Limitations

This study is not free from limitations. The first main limitation is in regards to generalisability. A sample size of 10 is not large enough for the data to be generalized for the Muzz user base. This limits the findings to be generalized to our local town, or additional individuals with similar experiences to the 10 participants. It is important to note that this sample may not be representative of actual Muzz users which in turn could limit how generalizable this study is (Cresswell & Porth, 2017). This is based on several reasons such as Muzz current user base being over 1.5 million users. This indicates a sample size of 10 participants being far too little. Additionally, 10 participants are not enough to meet the countless different backgrounds and differences within the user base.

The second main limitation stems from the fact that all participants, par 1, have some sort of personal relation to one or more of us investigators. This could introduce selection bias (Cresswell & Port, 2017). By using selective sampling our data may not be a reflection of the total population due to the possibility of our sampling being homogeneous (Miles et al. 2014). Future research should address these limitations, and could utilize different sampling methods to gain a larger diversity of participants and therefore a larger data set.

Lastly, as there has not been many studies on Muzz, there is no empirical data available which would strengthen our conclusion and overall answers to the research question of this thesis.
Additionally, the only data about Muzz is from their own website which is not as credible of a source in comparison to a study found in google scholar for instance. However, for certain areas of this thesis when explaining what Muzz is, the only source provided was their website which is why it has been used.

6.4 Future Research

As this is a unique and one of the few, if not the first, research paper on the influence of social media on niche dating apps, there are numerous studies that could be made in the future. The following points suggest various aspects which could be explored further based on the findings and analysis of this thesis:

1. A more detailed comparison of two different niche dating apps with the aim of identifying and analyzing the role of culture in influencing the influence of advertising effectiveness and the influence of advertisements on consumer behavior.

2. Targeting the limitations of this paper. This entails collecting more data about Muzz itself and researching empirical evidence. Additionally, researchers could select a larger size of interviewees and conduct surveys as well. By doing this, it would aid the credibility to the analysis of the topic surrounding Muzz and social media.

3. As this is a quantitative research, a qualitative research measuring the extent of influence on a similar topic would provide valuable knowledge and literature. This would provide quantifiable data and measures that could be used in additional further research.
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8. Appendices

8.1 Interview Questions

The following text are the questions asked when conducting the interviews for this paper. Each set of questions is in correlation to the theories used throughout the study:

Advertising Effects

1. How do you usually react when seeing ads of Muz and dating apps in general? And do you tend to find these types of ads annoying or interesting?
2. Do you believe that advertisement from social media effects your perception of dating apps positively or negatively?
   ➢ Follow up: In what ways? Kindly explain.
3. From your perspective, what are the different factors that would make a dating app advertisement effective? *(Effective includes: ie. Attracting consumers and interesting)*
4. Can you recall any specific dating app advertisement that you found effective?
   ➢ Follow up: What was it about the advertisement that caught your attention?
5. Do you believe the use of social media influencers, celebrities or testimonials in dating app advertisements effects the overall usage of the app?
   ➢ Follow up: If so, how? Kindly explain.
6. Do you believe these same factors influence the overall effectiveness of the advertisement campaign itself? As well as your personal response to the advertised app?

**Influence of Instagram and TikTok Advertisements (Consumer Behaviour)**

1. Do you believe that the presence of a Muz advertisement on Instagram or TikTok influences people to download and use the app?
   ➢ Follow up: If so, how?
   ➢ Follow up: If so, how did that influence your decision to download it?
2. How do advertisements for dating apps presented on social media influence your opinion towards dating and relationships?
3. Have you ever recommended a dating app to someone after having seen an advertisement of it on social media?
4. Have you noticed any alterations in Muz marketing strategies on Instagram or TikTok over time? *(Marketing Strategies includes: A variety of advertisement sets)*

**Uses and Gratification Theory**

1. Have you heard of the app Muz? Do you know what it is?
2. Have you ever seen advertisements for Muz? How often do you see ads for Muz on Instagram or TikTok? (ie. daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)
   ➢ Follow up: Do you find these ads persuasive, and if so, why?
3. How likely are you to use the Muzz after seeing an advertisement for it on social media?
4. Do you believe that the use of dating apps, driven by social media advertising, has impacted the way you build and maintain relationships outside of social media platforms?
   ➢ Follow up: If yes, in what ways?