

## ETHICS IN ADVERTISEMENT AND IMPACT ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

Modern age is the age of advertisement and advertising has become a necessity for commercial success. The businessmen can demonstrate their commercial ability through advertisement. Advertisement is an impersonal presentation where a standard or common message regarding the merits, price and availability of product or service is given by the producer or marketer. It is a paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor. The advertisement builds pull effect as advertising tries to pull the product by directly appealing to customer to buy it. Every part of advertising is a mode of satisfaction of human needs and wants. This paper include the theme of how the advertisements will effects on the women and children and how the organizations are using their techniques to put the pressures on customer to purchase their product and how the children are force their parents to purchase the products. It also gives the information about how much the company are acting with ethical values in their advertisements and how they cheat the people in the society.

**KEYWORDS:** Advertisement, Ethics in Advertising, Women and Children

### INTRODUCTION

Every day and everywhere in our life we see, hear and feel a number of products at home, in a shop, while travelling in the bus or train etc. and many talk about their qualities. It is, therefore, anything that turns attention to an article or service might be called advertising. The term advertising originates from the Latin word 'adverto' i.e. ad means 'towards' and 'verto' means 'I turn'. Thus advertising means 'to turn attention' towards a specific thing. Advertising may be defined as the process of buying sponsor-identified media, space or time of a product or an idea to promote their sales in present and future [4]. Advertising consists of those activities by which visual or oral messages are addressed to select publics for the purpose of informing and influencing them to buy products and services. The first requirement is that the advertisement should capture the attention of its audience [2]. In other words, the advertisement has to go through the attention filter of the target audience. It may give them new information, or it may support the information they already have or it may attempt to alter their existing views or beliefs. It is essential that the advertisement should appeal to them and influence their attitude, though process and purchase behavior in favour of the advertised brand [6]. Advertisement can be defined as the "paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of idea, goods or services by an identified sponsor" [8]. From the above definition we can find that the three distinct features of advertising are:

- **Paid Form:** The sponsor has to pay for advertising he has to bear a cost to communicate with customers.
- **Impersonality:** There is no face to face contact between customers and advertiser. It creates a monologue and not a dialogue.

- **Identified Sponsor:** Advertisement is given by an identified company or firm or individual.

Advertising is an indirect but powerful impact on society and plays a significant role in awareness creation and attitude formation. It plays a role of religious media as well as commercial media [1]. It is an instrument which reaches to the customers and makes them to frame their wishes and make plans to get what they want.

### Need for Advertising

Advertising is a media communicating information to the customers which enables them to compare and choose the different products. It gives an idea to make the customer to right choice. It is a most economical means where the manufacturer or an organizational body can communicate to a customer's whether to sell a product or promote their goods [9]. Advertising also increase the economics of the developing country.

### Ethics

Ethics means a set of moral principles which govern a person's behavior or how the activity is conducted. Ethics is defined as the study of the general nature of morals and of the specific moral choices to be made by the individual to the relationship with others in social life [10]. It is a justice between good and bad, right and wrong. It is a set of principles of morality at a given place and given time. Ethics is related to group behavior in ultimate analysis setting the norms for an individual to follow consistence with the group norms [9].

### Advertising and the Ethical Aspects

Ethics means a set of moral principles which govern a person's behavior or how the activity is conducted. And advertising means a mode of communication between a seller and a buyer. Thus ethics in advertising means a set of well defined principles which govern the ways of communication taking place between the seller and the buyer. Ethics is the most important feature of the advertising industry [5]. Though there are many benefits of advertising but then there are some points which don't match the ethical norms of advertising.

- An ethical ad is the one which doesn't lie, doesn't make fake or false claims and is in the limit of decency. Nowadays, ads are more exaggerated and a lot of puffing is used. It seems like the advertisers lack knowledge of ethical norms and principles [4]. They just don't understand and are unable to decide what is correct and what is wrong.
- The main area of interest for advertisers is to increase their sales, gain more and more customers, and increase the demand for the product by presenting a well decorated, puffed and colorful ad [7]. They claim that their product is the best, having unique qualities than the competitors, more cost effective, and more beneficial. But most of these ads are found to be false, misleading customers and unethical [3]. The best example of these types of ads is the one which shows evening snacks for the kids, they use coloring and gluing to make the product look glossy and attractive to the consumers who are watching the ads on television and convince them to buy the product without giving a second thought [9].
- Ethics in Advertising is directly related to the purpose of advertising and the nature of advertising. Sometimes the manufactures need to prove the benefit of the product through the advertisement which may not be in an ethical mode. But they should give the attention towards the advertisement does not be exaggerated [5].

- Ethics also depends on what we believe. If the advertisers make the ads on the belief that the customers will understand, persuade them to think, and then act on their ads, then this will lead to positive results and the ad may not be called unethical [3]. But at the same time, if advertisers believe that they can fool their customers by showing any impractical things like just clicking fingers will make your home or office fully furnished or just buying a lottery ticket will make you a millionaire, then this is not going to work out for them and will be called as unethical [10].
- The advertisements should follow three moral principles i.e. Truthfulness, Social Responsibility and Upholding Human Dignity. Generally, big companies never lie as they have to prove their points to various ad regulating bodies. Truth is always said but not completely. Sometimes its better not to reveal the whole truth in the ad but at times truth has to be shown for betterment [4].
- **Children:** Children are the major sellers of the ads and the product. They have the power to convince the buyers. But when advertisers are using children in their ad, they should remember not to show them alone doing their work on their own like brushing teeth, playing with toys, or infants holding their own milk bottles as everyone knows that no one will leave their kids unattended while doing all these activities [9]. So showing parents also involved in all activities or things being advertised will be more logical.
- **Alcohol:** Till today, there hasn't come any liquor ad which shows anyone drinking the original liquor. They use mineral water and sodas in their advertisements with their brand name. These types of ads are called surrogate ads. These type of ads are totally unethical when liquor ads are totally banned. Even if there are no advertisements for alcohol, people will continue drinking [3].
- **Cigarettes and Tobacco:** These products should be never advertised as consumption of these things is directly and badly responsible for cancer and other severe health issues. These as are already banned in countries like India, Norway, Thailand, Finland and Singapore [10].
- **Ads for Social Causes:** These types of ads are ethical and are accepted by the people. But ads like condoms and contraceptive pills should be limited, as these are sometimes unethical, and are more likely to lose morality and decency at places where there is no educational knowledge about all these products [9].

Looking at all these above mentioned points, advertisers should start taking responsibility of self regulating their ads by:

- Design self regulatory codes in their companies including ethical norms, truth, decency, and legal points.
- Keep tracking the activities and remove ads which don't fulfill the codes.
- Inform the consumers about the self regulatory codes of the company.
- Pay attention on the complaints coming from consumers about the product ads.
- Maintain transparency throughout the company and system.

When all the above points are implemented, they will result in:

- Making the company answerable for all its activities

- Will reduce the chances of getting pointed out by the critics or any regulatory body.
- Will help gain confidence of the customers; make them trust the company and their products.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is carried out with the following objectives:

- To study the ethics in advertisements.
- To analysis the impact of ethical and unethical advertisements in respondents.
- To ascertain where the advertisements were construct through ethical values.
- Impact of advertisements on children and women.

## METHODOLOGY

It is an analytical study. For accomplishing above objectives secondary data were collected. The necessary secondary data was collected through the books, different websites, magazines and library etc.

### Ethical Principles in Advertising

Modern age is the age of advertisement and advertising has become a necessity for commercial success. Marketing experts have laid down the principles of advertisement in order to assist the marketing managers so that they can make the advertisement more attractive and impressive in pursuance with these principles. According to R.S. Buskirk, “Be in the right media, meet to the right people, with the right message, at the right time [6].”

### General Principles

- Advertisement should never be in negative form.
- There should be truth in the advertisement.
- Means and techniques of advertising must also be considered: manipulative, exploitative, corrupt and corrupting methods of persuasion and motivation.
- Optimistic outlook should be there while making advertisement.

### Three Specific Moral Principles

- Respect Truthfulness (deception objection)
- Respect the dignity of each human person (attacks autonomy objection)
- Respect social responsibilities (promotes consumption, empties communication, objections)

If the media are to be correctly employed, it is essential that all who use them know the principles of the moral order and apply them faithfully in this domain. There are only two outcomes of social communication through the media: to authentically assist in the understanding of information to further human understanding, or to play the role of a negative misrepresentation that arouses conflict and deception [9]. The document further discusses the unethical practices of manipulation, exploitation, and corruption that arise in unstable environments of the media.

The media of social communication in advertising must remain true on verifiable and authentic basis [3]. The Council insists on honest communication in advertisements, as the truth can be distorted by implementing irrelevant facts. The manner in which something is advertised must respect human dignity and human morality that furthers a growth in human development [10].

### **BENEFITS OF ETHICAL ADVERTISING**

- **Economic:** Useful tool for sustaining honest and ethically responsible competition by informing people of the availability of rationally desirable new products and services and improvements in existing ones [9].
- **Political:** Helps counteract tendencies toward the monopolization of power by informing people of the ideas and policy proposals of parties and candidates.
- **Cultural:** Can exert a positive influence on decisions about media content; contribute the betterment of society by uplifting and inspiring people and motivating them to act in ways that benefit themselves and others [1]. Importance of witty, tasteful and entertaining advertising, even to the point of becoming art.
- **Moral and Religious:** Communicate messages of faith, patriotism, tolerance, compassion and neighborly service, charity, health, education [10].

### **IMPACT OF ADVERTISING ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

#### **Positive Impacts of Advertising on Women**

Advertisements are messages paid for by a business or advertiser and delivered via a mass medium with the attempt to persuade a women audience to like a brand, develop a more favorable attitude or intend to buy. Small businesses often have limited budgets to spend on advertising, but the positive effects are often worth it [5].

- **Awareness:** An effective and often repeated advertisement helps women audience become more familiar with brand and ideally recall it when a need arises for which that brand intends to meet [6].
- **Information and Education:** Advertisement serves to inform and educate women consumers. This is especially true when new brand or products are introduced to the market or when product complexity means more education is required. Understanding the value of an advertiser's brand relative to the needs they have helps women consumers make more informed decisions [9].

#### **Negative Impacts of Advertising on Women**

We live in an age inundated with advertising, from commercials on TV to posters on the sides of buses. We see ads every time we open a magazine or call up a Web page on the Internet. All that exposure has a significant effect, and the stakes are often more than deciding whether or not to buy a certain product. Women, in particular, can suffer some serious psychological blows from the subtle and pervasive effects of advertising aimed at them [4].

- **Excessive Thinness:** One out of every four female college students engages in unhealthy means of controlling their weight. This comes in no small part because of advertising and commercials depicting excessively thin women [1]. Unhealthy body images in advertising regardless of whether they are used to sell weight-loss products or something else project an unrealistic image of women's body weight, and can contribute to the development of anorexia, bulimia and other serious eating disorders in women [3].

- **Ageism:** Along with body weight issues, advertisements often depict very young and impossibly beautiful women. Advertiser's covert young demographics since they often have more spending money. That can result in ageism, particularly against women, who may perceive images of unattainable youth as ideals to strive for. As women get older, they feel pressure to look younger, ignoring the natural beauty of a 50- or 60-year-old body in an impossible effort to retain a 20- or 30-year-old one [9].
- **Consequence-Free Fantasies:** Many ads present consequence-free scenarios with beautiful people enjoying, say, junk food or video games. Such images imply that one can live a healthy lifestyle by purchasing such products, when in truth, the opposite is often true. When coupled with other images presented to women thinness, youth and sexuality it creates a dangerous impression that such a lifestyle is attainable, when in fact it can often result in low-self esteem and damaging habits [10].

### Positive Impacts of Advertising on Children

There are not many people in the world today that would disagree with the fact that children are our future. Children are the ones that must carry on family traditions, continue to build and develop new public projects, and continue to learn and expand the knowledge of the human race. With that said it is important to understand that children are also future consumers [9]. Advertising to children has long been a very successful way to build a solid consumer base that will win the minds of children in order to secure a lifetime of consumer purchasing. It will create the marketing of the product through the children [7].

- Advertising makes the children aware of the new products available in the market. It increases their knowledge about the latest innovation in the field of technology.
- Convincing ads which centre around the healthy food products can help improve the diet of a child, if they are attractive enough [9].

### Negative Effects of Advertising on Children

- There was a time in 60s and 70s when the main target audiences of advertisers were house-wives but this gave way to youth being the target of the ads. The focus then shifted to children, which continues even today. Today, children can be seen in ads which are not at all child products. Even in an advertisement of Maruti Esteem two children were shown comparing whose daddy has the bigger car [10].
- In fact, today 84% of parents take their children along with them when buying products which are not child-products simply because children have a big say in buying decisions. Advertisements do have great impact on children whether it is decision of purchasing toys, dresses or imitating their favorite characters [9].
- Boys in the south imitate Rajnikant, the popular actor of films in the south, who had a particular style of flipping a cigarette to his lips. They unconsciously started trying to flip the cigarette in the same manner and many took to smoking through this playful, imitative initiation [10].
- Many advertisements nowadays include the dangerous stunts which can be only performed by the experts only. Even though the ad maker shows the warning the child's are simply imitating the stunts which will be dangerous to their life [9].

- Junk foods such as pizzas, burgers and soft drinks are heavily promoted during the T.V. viewing time this develops a craving for fatty, sugary and taste foods for child's, thereby affecting their health adversely [7].
- The children usually get more attracted towards most costly branded products even though parents are not able to purchase such costly products the child's force them to purchase [3].

## SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on the study it has been suggested that advertisement in any media should enhance the public morality and living standards of the general public. It is recommended to the media owners that only the advertisement which will give more prestige, code of conduct, moral values and thereby increase the standard of living and maintaining good living style of the consumers should be permitted to be aired.
- It is suggested that the advertisement should create awareness and influence the consumers by providing valuable suggestions to make their purchase decision. Thus the advertisements shall not be so framed as to abuse the trust of consumers or exploit their lack of knowledge.
- Every advertisement should be unique in nature and it should create integrity and honesty among consumers for the social welfare. Advertisements shall not be allowed to take the advantage of the superstitions or ignorance of the general public.
- Don't take all advice for granted by advertiser. Public should pick what's useful for their best use. Make up their own rules and change them at their will.
- Consumer should be a self-starter. If they identify an idea take charge and go for it. Do not blame others. If they are unhappy about something take the initiative to change instead of whining about it. Be decisive even if sometimes wrong with their feelings.
- Do not overestimate the value of formal education. Most successful adman never had formal advertising education. Real work experience is more valuable than any education.
- Advertise maker should be loyal to their clients and their agency. It will be appreciated even by the competition. Be honest with their work. Never lie or mislead to the consumer.
- If admen clearly see they're going into the wrong direction with their strategy, do not be afraid to stop and rethink everything even if it means they have to start everything from scratch.
- No advertisement should be allowed regarding drugs and medicines, foodstuff, until they are granted a license of their being of reasonable quality by the medical departments concerned.
- Finally from this study it is suggested to admen that the advertisements shall not make unjustifiable use of the name or initial of any other firm, company or institution, not to take unfair advantage of the goodwill attached to the trademark or symbol of another firm or its product by the advertising campaign. This will able the consumers to have a clear state of mind and they would not be disturbed with the misleading information.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study includes the importance of ethics, morality and standards to be applied for designing the good advertisements. In order to make advertisements as an effective based on the ethics considered and important to get the public involvement. Representative of the public should participate in the formulation application and periodic updating of ethical codes. In this regards honesty which costs nothing is the foundation of confidence and that confidence is the greatest asset that any business can have. Dishonesty in advertising not only destroys confidence in a particular advertising but also in the medium which carries such dishonest advertisement.

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