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## CUSTOMERS PERCEPTION ON UNETHICAL ADVERTISING – A STUDY ON RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

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### ABSTRACT

*Advertising is not a matter of thinking up cute pictures or writing clever slogans, but a serious business tool. The ultimate purpose of advertising is to assist in the selling of the product. It is not good advertising unless it sells. Advertising is not an art form; the purpose of advertising is not to entertain, but rather to create sales. Advertising is simply a way of selling something in the most effective method possible. Good advertising creates sales and not just attention. Advertising is the communication relayed from companies to persuade an audience to purchase their products. From a marketing context, advertising could be defined as “a paid form of non-personal communication about an organization and/or its products that is transmitted to a target audience through a mass medium.” Therefore it is one kind of promotional activity, separate from publicity, sales promotion and personal selling.*

**KEYWORDS:** Advertising, Marketing, Economic Growth, Society, Electronic Media.

### INTRODUCTION

Ethics means a set of moral principles which govern a person’s behaviour 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. 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. The media of news and information should make it a point to keep the public informed about the world of advertising. Considering advertising's social impact, it is appropriate that media regularly review and critique the performance of advertisers, just as they do other groups whose activities have a significant influence on society.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Advertising as a matter of fact is the most leading and predominant aspect of effective marketing. On the other hand, advertising is an important element in today's society especially in the functioning of market economy, which is becoming more and more widespread. Moreover we believe advertising can, and often does play a constructive role in economic growth, in the exchange of information and idea, and in the fostering of solidarity among individuals and groups. Yet it also can do and often does, grave harm to individuals and to the common good. This is due to the unethical aspects that are being pertained in the advertisements. Likely the ethical and unethical aspects are also based on the views of the consumers. Yet now-a-days since the levels of ethics are being highly observed in the advertisements, an attempt has been made in this research to analyze the various aspects and levels of ethics that are being pertained in the advertisements at present scenario.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The present study has been attempted to analyze the consumer's perception towards

the ethical and unethical aspects of advertising. In such a scenario, this study focuses on highlighting the views of consumer towards the advertisements being made through various media. The study has concentrated on idealizing the consumer's awareness, perceptions and level of satisfaction towards advertisements. But the study has refrained from the effects or consequences of the unethical advertisements on a greater extend. Apart from that, the perceptions of consumers have been considered generally without any target grouping of customers.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To identify the factors relating to perception of customers regarding unethical advertising.
2. To measure the reliability and validity of the factors regarding unethical advertising.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **• Type of research**

This research is carried out from the view point of the objectives of the research, hence exploratory type of research has been adopted.

#### **• Source of data**

##### **Primary data**

Primary data is information that is collected specifically for the purpose of research project. Normally the major method of collecting primary data is the questionnaire. Questionnaires are basically with a set of carefully designed questions posed to the target population. Hence through this method the required data is being collected.

##### **Secondary data**

Secondary data is information that has already been collected for a purpose other than the current research project but has some relevance and utility for the research. In this research secondary data has also been considered.

- **Sample size**

Sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations or replicates to include in a statistical sample. The sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. In the research 250 respondents has been used as the sample size for collecting the required data.

- **Area of the study**

Coimbatore also known as Kovai, is a city in India. It is the second largest city and urban agglomeration in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is one of the fastest growing in India and a major textile, industrial, commercial, educational, information technology, healthcare and manufacturing hub of Tamil Nadu. It was the capital city of the historical Kongu Nadu and is often referred to as the Manchester of South India

- **Tools and techniques used**

The reliability analysis and factor analysis were used for testing the validity of the scale as well as to assess the reliability of the scale. The analysis will ensure the reduction of variables if necessary.

## LIMITATIONS

However the study is also hedged with some limitation. They are

1. The research is being carried out in Coimbatore district alone.
2. The conclusions drawn from the study are applicable only to the area studied and may fluctuate with regard to other areas.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Dalip Raina and Kritika Khajuria(2012)** conducted an empirical study on “Effectiveness of ethical advertisements in India”. The study comments that the media, especially television

and satellite channels, certainly affects the lifestyle of individuals and hence these advertisements induce the consumers to buy products advertised by media, irrespective of its cost and its ethical aspects. The study also suggests that the advertisements are being given more attention because people are not just watching advertisements for fun; they get more involved, they evaluate the things and they are more accepting the same.

**Pongiannan(2012)** conducted a descriptive analysis on the topic “Effectiveness of creativity and its impact on the value of ethics in television advertisements”. The study reviews that ethical aspects in creative advertisements are among the most visible of the marketing strategy and have been the subject of a great deal of attention in the last ten to fifteen years. Hence, the study suggests that the effectiveness of such creative advertisements in television media and their impact on ethical values of advertisements through television is very essential for effectively reaching the final consumers.

**Sunil Barthwal and Gupta (2012)** conducted a study on “Cultural values as advertisements themes in International and Indian advertising”. The study discusses the importance of cultural themes that are manifested in International and Indian advertisements. Furthermore, the paper states through various advertisements examples across nation, the fact that culture is not immune to change, and that the advertisers are always faced with a challenge to embed the right cultural themes in advertising with changing culture over the years. The study reiterates that standardization of advertisements across nations is not an advisable strategy hence suggests exploring the scope of identifying certain cultural values with respect to India,

which can be probable values open to modernism and change in advertising.

**Anbarasan and Pongiannan(2012)** conducted a study on “Comparative analysis on ethics in advertisements of print and electronic media”. The study insists that honesty, integrity and quality are the important features of ethical advertising; these features create value to all the stakeholders of the advertising media. The study reports that now-a-days only ethical based advertisements are highly welcomed by all the audiences and ethicality in advertising improves the quality of the advertisements in any media and enhances the brand image for the advertised product.

**Raghunathan(2013)** conducted a detailed study on “Defining ethics in a changing society”. The study places emphasis about the ethics needed in a society. The study states that society being large, ethics changes very little, but when the ethical values undertaken by a professional body or organization decides to embrace change can more often lead to favourable society changes. The study concludes that often it is not always easy to see how ethical conduct can help society, when evidence seems to abound that not being ethical frequently is to their advantage.

**Shafiulla(2013)** conducted a comparative advertising on “Ethical analysis of case of disparagement”. The study reports that ethics in comparative advertising is an effective positioning tool, especially for market followers and challengers. The study suggests that once guidelines for comparative advertising are firmly established and misuse of the same is severely dealt with, the benefit that result out of comparative advertising may of more value to marketers and consumers on a permanent basis.

**John Rossiter and Larry Percy (2013)** made an attempt to study, “How the role of ethical advertising merely appears to have changed”. It is observed that the new advertising options to consider what goes into the ethics is that, the new media delivery has not changed and neither has the desired response. Image and words in one form or another will be found in all advertising and the way the ethics process the images and words has remained the same for all the time. Finally, the study suggests that as advertising is changing the level of ethics is certainly changing.

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A pilot study for a small sample size of 250 was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the scale. The questionnaire was scientifically administered to the respondents. This questionnaire was divided into two parts A and B, part A relates to the personal questions. Part B was framed and classified as Likert scale questions. There were 6 factors and 43 variables. These variables were identified according to the literature that has been reviewed. These factors were tested for reliability in SPSS 21. The following data were the results for the reliability analysis.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items	Number of items
.990	.991	43

The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. However, there is actually no lower limit to the co-efficient. The closer Cronbach Alpha co-efficient is to 1, the greater will be the internal consistency of the items in the scale.

**Table 2: Statistics for Scale**

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum/Minimum	Variance
<b>Inter-Item Variance</b>	1.174	.050	2.864	2.814	57.386	.335
<b>Inter-item Correlations</b>	.718	.117	.994	.876	8.469	.042

Based upon the formula  $= rk/(1+(k-1)r)$ , where k is the number of items considered and r is the mean in the scale and inter-item correlations. The rule of thumb is  $>.9 = E$

xcellent. The reliability statistics in Table 1 showed Cronbach's Alpha variation of .990 which is considered to be excellent and the overall reliability for the scale is achieved.

**Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha for Individual Factors**

S. No	Factors	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items
1	Medical	.932
2	Awareness	.909
3	Society	.919
4	Negative advertising	.947
5	Fake advertising	.915
6	General advertising	.943

The Cronbach's Alpha variation for the individual factors also showed variations above .9. This showed that there is an excellent variation in the scale. The reliability ensured appropriate within the adequacy of the sample size. The validity of the scale also ensured

through appropriate literature. These factors are further tested through KMO bartet and showed the same results without any deviations to a larger extent. Therefore, these results conclude that there is efficiency in the scale that has been tested through reliability and validity.

**Table 4: Age wise Distribution of the Respondents**

Age	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
<b>16-20 Yrs</b>	10	4%
<b>21-25 Yrs</b>	10	4%
<b>26-30Yrs</b>	150	60%
<b>31-35 Yrs</b>	50	20%
<b>36-40 Yrs</b>	30	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table indicates that the majority (60%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 26-30 years.

**Table 5: Gender Distribution of the Respondents**

Gender	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Male</b>	110	44%
<b>Female</b>	140	56%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table indicates that the majority (56%) of the respondents are female.

**Table 6: Location of Residence of the Respondents**

Residence	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	190	76%
Rural	60	24%
TOTAL	250	100%

The above table indicates that the majority (76%) of the respondent's location of residence is at urban area.

**Table 7: Marital Status of the Respondents**

Marital status	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Married	150	60%
Unmarried	100	40%
TOTAL	250	100%

The above table indicates that the majority (60%) of the respondents are married.

**Table 8: Children Status of the Respondents**

Children	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	130	52%
No	120	48%
TOTAL	250	100%

The above table indicates that the majority (52%) of the respondents have children.

**Table 9: Number of Children of the Respondents**

No of children	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Infants	20	9.5%
Toddlers	20	9.5%
Pre-schoolers	60	28.6%
Middle childhood	80	38.1%
Young teens	20	9.5%
Teenager	10	4.8%
TOTAL	210	100%

The above table indicates that the most (38.1%) of the respondent's children are of middle childhood.

**Table 10: Considering Children Opinion of the Respondents for Purchasing of Products**

Children opinion	Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	53.8%
No	60	46.2%
TOTAL	130	100%

The above table indicates that the majority (53.8%) of the respondents consider their children's opinion while purchasing products.

**CONCLUSION**

From the above pilot study it is clear that the factors such as medical, awareness, society, negative advertising, fake advertising and general advertising pertaining to unethical aspects of advertising are considered to be reliable and valid. Hence these factors are considered for future studies, because they support the aspect of unethical advertising in a most predominant way. These factors related to the study were obtained by literature of the previous studies relating to this topic. And as a matter of fact, this study finding can be used as a major review for the future project which would be more supportive.

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