

An Analysis of Ethical Issues in the Newspapers Advertisements of Pakistan

Abid Zafar¹ and Zamir Assadi²

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Abstract

The significance of print media in contemporary local and international societal issues can never be oversight particularly; the influence of such source has broader outcomes and a larger number of targeted audiences. The medium of news through the circulation of newspapers has greater levels of public accessibility even amidst developing and underdeveloped societies. The influence of print media and the demand that it grasps through the means of advertisements deeply appeals the minds of its readers. The dynamics of Eastern culture encompassed through the Islamic traditions however, puts an extended responsibility on the shoulders of the stakeholders of the print media. The Pakistani culture having particular regard for its culture only accommodates the notions of professional journalism and the constructive projection of the news coverage. This research explains that the Pakistani newspapers are highly violating ethics in the publishing of advertisements of different products. These newspapers are focusing more on the projection of the women rather than the message. The media concentration theory is applied to scrutinise the core ethical issues while advertising in the newspapers besides the social and cultural values. The Comparative Legal Method and Conceptualization research procedure used to examine problems of persuasive means of vulgar and explicit advertisements and their positive and negative effects publishing ethical and unethical substances. Overall, this study concludes that the Pakistani print media highly violating the journalistic ethics by promoting vulgarity and explicit paraphernalia.

Keywords: Women Portrayal, Public Appeal, Explicit Stuff, Ethics, Print Media

Introduction

Pakistani media is generally following the trends and styles adopted by international media advertising. It is adopting the latest technology and trends from the international market for grabbing the attention of the viewer. Advertising in Pakistan evolved on a very slow pace just after the independence as there was minimal number of newspaper and one radio channel and there was no competition. The idea of the advertisement here in local industry was not known to everyone. Pakistani media observed very slow growth of advertisement. Advertisement also saw low growth because it is an Islamic state and people felt annoyed in the changing innovative advertising industry.

With the passage of the time as the market expanded, the competition increased due to financial interest. Than the advertisement which was only relying on newspapers and one radio. This industry started using newly introduced radio and TV channels. As the time passed international advertisers landed in Pakistan following the statement that world is a global village. This phenomenon observed innovation and new technology was being used in Pakistan by advertising industry.

¹ Research Officer, Centre for Research on Islam and Global Media, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan, Email: aabidzafarwarraich@gmail.com

² Reporter, Independent News Pakistan, Islamabad, Email: zamirasadi@gmail.com



Advertising industry always influenced and dominated by local cultural traditions but now the time is changing and we are observing the things above to the traditional values of society. Advertising industry is also playing a critical role in the revenue generation and creating bundle of jobs locally. For effective success of the product all depends on the creativity and unique message.

This is the reason millions are being invested for creating the unique and attractive message. Advertisers all around the world use different approaches and appeals such as sexist message, romantic language and adventurous including controversial tone, which sometimes gain excessive attention. In doing so sometimes advertisers most of the times use such appeals, which are not according to local traditions and norms of the society. Such advertisements are taken controversial as society raises objections and do not like to talk and refer these ads.

The impacts are deep yet the negative affect deeper and evading the ethical issues will only bring disastrous outcomes throughout the society. Such a matter of great national concern often bypassed merely because of the financial gains and the projection of suspense and explicit material with the view that will increase the amounts of readership.

The newspaper and other forms of the print media are also the varying means of national harmony and social integrity if employed effectively would bring-up tremendous gains of vital national interest including promotion of social ethics, civic awareness, education, and cultural conserve. The factors beyond the human control can only serve the unforeseen outcomes if the code of professional conduct handled less carefully or even unconsciously. Since the readership of the printed substance does not limit only to a particular age group and gender but however, younger generation due to their less experienced approach becomes prone to many unethical actions and gets the straight influence out of the published material.

This in turn would only drag the society towards chaos and anarchy through social imbalances and adding more to the individual and collectively shared sufferings. The absence of professional journalism and the lacking sense of responsibility cause the issues of publishing and circulating the unethical and immoral stuffs of advertisement in the newspapers. The physical appeal to the masculinity of youth often exploited by the newspaper advertisements, the factors that people usually pay less heed to accustomed modes of advertisement are the pressing reasons.

Advertising in Pakistan

The history of advertising dates back to 1947 but it is interesting to note that in the early years, the mediums available for it were only newspapers and radio. There was no competition in the market so the violation of ethics not observed in the advertisement. With the passage of the time as TV arrived in Pakistan, this industry observed a drastic change. The industry witnessed major changes in advertisement and such ads were created which were unique and different as compare to the old ones. Advertising industry also availed the maximum benefits as the time passed. TV was more attractive and effective sources of communication so the advertisement industry in Pakistan took the maximum gain by creating unique and different ads. With the passage of time, newspaper industry also opened up and they began to publish such newspapers, which were not according to the merits and ethics of the society. Society started talking about the openness of newspapers but these things went out of control.

The Objectives of the Study

The study follows the below as an objective:

- To explore and analyze the motives behind immoral and unethical practice in newspaper advertisement.

- The outcomes and effects of the publication of explicit material in the print media.
- The consequences of the unethical and non-professional behaviors of print media.
- The role of state in employing the code of conduct in national newspaper publications.

Literature Review

A great number of recently published books, scholarly material and other literature are available on the subject that encompasses the outcomes of the immoral means of advertisement and its implications for the society.

Ali (2013) proclaims the sensationally appealing and the explicit material serve the interests of the companies and organizations who successfully sell their products by means of unethical advertisements in the newspapers. The ignorance about such ethical issues causes the obliteration of national values and societal customs and ultimately causes a great destruction of the individual life, family and the society.

Meyer (2004) explores issues of advertisement in the modern times, the press and media bears the responsibility as the fourth pillar in the national institutions. The print media particularly has extensive spread of message and the kind of negativity in these messages ultimately twists the reaction back to its own readers and people of the same society.

Faust (2008) asserts that the unethical publication of advertisements detracts the youth merely because of selling products and gaining financial benefits but in longer-run, such reasons destroy the cultural values, social and religious norms, and the national integrity. The readers also go through the advertisements that appeal their senses and needs therefore; any form of misleading advertisement can cause a waste of time and resources and ultimately will cause a disorder and chaos amongst the masses.

Chadwick (2001) calls the irresponsible media owners the real cause of the human sufferings in the contemporary era of greater access and approach of newspapers and other sources of the print media having a big of number of targeted audience but the professionalism is the key of the real journalism.

Wilson (2001) stated that it is not good to simplify about business ethics across the ethnically known countries of the Islamic ummah, which are at very special stages of growth. In a study conducted by David Krueger (1998), it is clear that the organizations involved in the study consider that ethical considerations will emerge in the newspaper advertisements they generate and their association with clients. In other words, the advertisements will represent the ethical direction of the advertising organizations involved in creating them.

A research conducted by Drumwright and Murphy (2004), establish that advertising professionals seldom speak about ethics or in other words they are afflicted from “moral Myopia”. Zinkhan, on the other hand, suggested that in order to understand advertising ethics, researchers have to identify advertising practices, which are potentially damaging to the society (Zinkhan, 1994).

The actuality that unethical advertisements are accessing the market ideas recommended that recent methods of examining advertisements might be inadequate for some of today’s notorious or modern campaigns (Bush & Bush, 1994). The portrayal of diet and fatness in TV and advertisement has negatively affected food-eating habits in children (Schmitt & Kirch, 2007). This thought is maintained by a study conducted by Davis (1994) in which he surveyed on 206 advertising specialists and found out that ethics play a minimum role in their decision making procedure.

Theoretical Framework

The theories pertaining to the broadcast journalism having both constructive and destructives roles of the newspaper are the principle focus of this study. Comparatively, the

theory also addresses the unethical trends that might contemplate outcomes of the advertisements serving to their purposes but in turn they overwhelmingly they put the quality on stake and sacrifice the greater objectivity of public motivation towards a just cause rather than timely financial gains through dissemination of message through erroneous conduit. Known the actuality, the gestures and the illustrations have accessibility beyond the limitations of language barrier, shared culture and the levels of thinking. The media concentration theory, elaborates the importance of the core ethical issues while advertising in the newspapers besides the social and cultural values furthermore, the repercussions and the affects of the low-quality advertisement publication and further explores the contribution of such factors in demoralizing of the social coherence under theoretical framework.

Hypothesis

H1: Print media violates advertising ethics

H2: Print media does not violate advertising ethics

Methodology

The methodology of the research follows the review of already published material that gives as a variety of possible justification about follow and ignore of the code of ethical conduct the issue analysed with the logic and authenticity under each category. The possible answers underline the consequences that point of overwhelming evidence supporting the notion of professionalism and civic rules of the advertisement and publication in the print media particularly the newspapers.

In addition, the study will also try to come with the reasons that persuasively engage the sponsors of such advertisements and the implications for the newspaper owner as part of their financial limitations or the non-professional behaviors cause the absence of quality advertisements. The sizzling celebrities through their objectionable physical gestures by putting on revealing clothes yet attracted the ire of people and simply add fuel to the fire deflated ethics and the morality of the society. Despite the facts that Pakistan has a broad range of quality newspapers and a big number of professional journalists along with a well-educated readership but in spite of all these factors what are the reasons that yield in the occurrence of bypassing the ethical code of conduct.

The study further follows the following research procedure:

1. Comparative Legal Method: This method simply chalk-outs the follow of few steps that discernate the positive and negative effects of the publishing ethical and unethical substances of advertisements in the newspapers.
2. Conceptualization: The conceptualization of the ethical issues in the newspaper advertisement defines and differentiates two different problems of persuasive means of vulgar and explicit advertisements in the national newspapers of Pakistan.

Population

The population of the study is all Pakistani newspapers, which are publishing news and opinion pieces on daily basis for millions of people in Pakistan.

Sample

Sample is the subset of population. The researcher of the study wanted to approach all population to strengthen the study but practically it was impossible to conduct the whole population of the area therefore researcher relied on sample. For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected two major newspapers including Daily Jang and Daily Express.

Sampling Method

Convenient sampling technique was used for data collection. The researcher used random sampling techniques and selected two newspapers to explore violation of advertising ethics in newspapers.

Data Analysis

Recently published advertisement of Nargis Fakhri an American born model in leading daily national newspapers Daily Jang and the Daily Express in which Ms. Fakhri holding a new launched Mobilink-Jazz mobile phone was shown in the advertisement in an obnoxious pose and wearing vastly disgustingly tightly clothes. The advertisement was highly objectionable and against the core norms and values of the Pakistani society. The behavior of the Jang and Express newspaper management is also questionable since they forsake the ethics of the advertisement publication in their respective newspapers.

The advertisement was highly aimed at appealing the sensational emotions through vulgar practices and raises the query of rationality in which capacity the national values were overlooked by Pakistan's leading Urdu newspapers including Jang and the Express. Such issues were strongly condemned and criticized by various segments of the society but demanded the implementation of code of conduct and properly following the code of conduct before their publications however, these issues envision the loose control of the government over advertisement and publication. The women are being used in the ads as a product and the message is being ignored. Newspapers are minting money by publishing such ads and they are least bothered by ethical issues of journalism and ethics of Islamic society. Such ads are deteriorating the image of the reputable journalism and advertising industry but no one is stepping forward to snub these kinds of activities. Obscenity in advertisement was clearly against the codes of ethics and traditional norms, which resultantly generated debate in the public. The pose of model in the star printed on the leading newspaper was a clear example that it looked like a playboy magazine. The presentation of the advertisement in this is a clear example absurd and cheap set of mind. This advertisement was offensive which a clear example violation of code of ethics is. The presentation of model depicts that women is being objectified in a tricky manner. The image was definitely stating that women in Pakistani advertisement are being used as a product. Although it was an appealing advertisement but not fulfilling the code of ethics of genuine advertisement. This ad is against journalistic ethic, women's rights and Islamic values in Pakistan. In the opinion of the researcher Islamic values have been violated while if we talk about women's rights than it seems that a woman was objectified. This ad was also against the theory of women empowerment so it was stunning for the society.

Concluding Remarks

Ethics in the newspaper advertisement include a standard set of moral rules and professional ethics that wholly govern the civic behaviors and average attitude of the newspaper, patron and customer how the things are illustrated by disseminator and how the targeted audiences receives and interprets the message and the purpose of the advertisement. The particular mode of communication between buyer and seller, the newspaper advertisement plays the role of bridging channel that greatly appeal the civilized frame of mind. The ethics in the advertisement hold the utmost importance essentially they might benefit the seller but at the other they just drag the youth to disparaging immoral activities. Ironically, the limitations on creating a balance and censoring the newspaper advertisements deemed as a restriction on the flow of freedom of the information. The subtler shade of expression in the infamous commercials promoting any electronic or household product might compel the newspapers and the sponsors of the advertisements to circumvent the

proper means of selling their products. People soaked in the appealing explicit curves of models and celebrities actually oversee the purposes of the newspaper advertisement.

The main reasons being non-professional behaviors that lead to sensational attitude and abide the journalistic and newspaper advertisement norms and ethics in a civilized social structure. The Islamic values and Pakistani culture based upon the Islamic value having particular regard and respect for women often breached while publication of the advertisements in national newspapers.

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