
A Study on Influence of Ethics Upon Viewer's Attitude

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Abstract:

Business ethics is one of forms of the art of applied ethics that examines ethical principles and moral or ethical problems that can arise in a business environment. This study shows that the ethics in advertisement can have a positive or negative effect on an individual's attitude towards the advertisement. The use of various types of appeals is controversial because of the potential for unwanted reactions by consumers.

Keywords: Business Ethics, attitude, advertisers, ethicality of an advertisement.

Introduction

Ethics in any profession is ruled by two parameters—the professional code of ethics and the value system of practitioners.ⁱ Business ethics is one of forms of the art of applied ethics that scrutinizes ethical principles and moral problems that can appear in a business environment.

In an ever-increasing conscience-focused market places of the 21st century, the demand for more ethical business processes and actions are increasing. At the same time, pressure is applied on industry to improve business ethics through new public initiatives and laws. Business ethics can be both a normative and a descriptive discipline. As a business practice, the field is basically normative. In academics, descriptive approaches are also taken. The range and quantity of business ethical issues reflects the degree to which business is supposed to be at odds with non-economic social values.

Advertisements which evaluate their product with other company's offerings where the name of advertisers is specified are allowable for the safety of the public. The comparisons should be factual and accurate. The consumer should not be misled due to this comparison. The advertisements should not let down other products. But despite the code of ethics and a number of acts and statutes administrating advertising, many famous companies have made alliance with each other.ⁱⁱ Advertising has an important part in setting up and maintaining brand names. This identifies the source of the product and gives the information which may be useful for the buyer to store for future.

People are much more inclined to those ads for the brands which they are able to see along with their family. It gives them positive feelings of comfort, security, ownership, or familiarity. Additionally the effect of ethicality on the credibility of the ad was not found to be significant, the indirect effects of it are clear. There have been many circumstances in the where consumers have been faced with ethical or moral dilemmas. Often, the resolution of the dilemma has affected purchases of a particular brand.ⁱⁱⁱ This research presents strong evidence that the audience may have positive attitude towards the morally right advertisement. Alongwith this it also points to the ethical brands which are evaluated more highly than unscrupulous ones linked with uncertainty.

Literature Review:

Advertisers increasingly try to immerse their commercial messages in supplementary forms of communication, thus observing the distinction between communication whose primary task is information, and communication whose basic task is information and communication whose primary objective is

persuasion.^{iv} The most common analysis of advertising concerns is its influence on consumer beliefs. Because advertising is form of communication. Most disapprovals of advertising focus on the misleading aspects of contemporary advertising.^v Ethics demands that one agency should not handle competitive brands, looking at the scope it provides, many agencies are acquiring a corporate character, having a number of independent units and subsidiaries, which do handle competitive brands.^{vi} Some advertisers have imposed the ethical guidelines that assure them that the messages they are putting forward are morally sound. Non-governmental organizations are also participating in it. They have increased their inquiry around commercial activities. Through Education and dialogue the development of community in holding business responsible for their actions is growing.^{vii}

Research Methodology:

This section includes sample, measure and procedure. The working class or considerably high income group i.e. businessmen and service-class people were taken into consideration. They all were literate people. All of the subjects were at least graduate and were working in Rewa (MP). This study utilized field study in demographically small town Rewa. The use of field study has provided good response rates and, although having some flaws, it proved to be a good source of representative data. For convenience the sample has been divided into two broad groups.

First group included the working class involving service class and businessmen and the other group included non-working group consisting of students and women who are either working or whose income are considerably low. A description of the sample is as follows –

S.No.	Group 1		Group 2	
01	Businessmen	100	Housewives	100
02	Service-class	100	Students	100
Total Respondents		400		

The working class included mostly the women whose income was less than those of men. Students were also included to rate their belief on a five point scale. About 24 questions were asked from them that were based on Graphic Rating Scale.

Measures – All measures were assessed using five gradations. The respondents have to show the degree of their agreement with a statement or disagreement with a statement. These five gradations are as follows -

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Indifferent (Neutral)	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Statements are selected from a large list. Non discriminating statements are dropped. The Research Methodology was in two parts

Data Collection:

The instructions were printed on the questionnaire. The instructions were read before the respondents and subjects were told to rate their beliefs on their own. If the instruction were not clear, their relevant information was provided to them and their doubts were cleared. Sufficient time was provided to the subjects so that every subject completed all the questions being asked.

Objectives

1. To analyze the role of ethicality of an advertisement in making people to have positive attitude towards advertising as per the 2 groups of the respondents.
2. To analyze the role of ethicality of an advertisement in making people to have positive attitude towards advertisers as per the 2 groups of the respondents.

3. To find out the tendency of the respondents towards morally right advertisement as per the 2 groups of the respondents.
4. To analyze the aim of the morally right advertisement as per the 2 groups of the respondents.

Hypotheses

H₁ - "Ethicality of an advertisement makes people to have some positive attitude towards the advertising."

H₂ - "Ethicality of an advertisement makes people to have some positive attitude towards the advertisers".

H₃ - "People tend to enjoy an advertisement more if it is morally right."

H₄ - "Audience may have positive attitude towards the morally right advertisement although the main aim of business is profit making and businessmen and service-class people may be less concerned about it."

Hypothesis Testing

HYPOTHESIS: 1

"Ethicality of an advertisement makes people have some positive attitude towards the advertising"

To find out the value of the χ^2 , the formula is

$$X^2 = (O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2 / E_{ij}$$

The derived value of $X^2 = 2.55$

Degrees of freedom = (c-1) (r-1)

$$= (5-1) (2-1)$$

Therefore, the calculated value of degree of freedom = 4

Table-1

	Mean	Median	Std. Dev	Chi Square test
Group 1	40	40	14.543	2.55
Group 2	40	40	10.793	

Source: Personal Survey

Total value of χ^2 for 4 degrees of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is 9.488. Calculated value = 2.55 is less than the table value. Calculated value of χ^2 is much less than this table value which means that the calculated value can be said to have arisen just because of chance. So hypothesis may be accepted. We can conclude that there is no significant difference between the opinions between working and non-working group regarding the statement, "Ethicality of an advertisement makes people have some positive attitude towards the advertising."

HYPOTHESIS: 2

"Ethicality of an advertisement makes people to have positive attitude towards the advertisers"

To find out the value of the χ^2 , the formula is

$$X^2 = (O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2 / E_{ij}$$

The derived value of $X^2 = 6.82$

Degrees of freedom = (c-1) (r-1)

$$= (5-1) (2-$$

Therefore, the calculated value of degree of freedom = 4

Table-6

	Mean	Median	Std. Dev	Chi Square test
Group 1	40	39	4.358	6.82
Group 2	40	37	8.775	

Source: Personal Survey

Total value of χ^2 for 4 degrees of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is 9.488. Calculated value = 6.82 is less than the table value. Calculated value of χ^2 is less than this table value which means that the calculated value can be said to have arisen just because of chance. So hypothesis may be accepted. We can conclude that there is no significant difference between the opinions between working and non-working group regarding the statement, “Ethicality of an advertisement makes people have some positive attitude towards the advertisers.”

HYPOTHESIS: 3

“People enjoy an advertisement more if it is morally right”

To find out the value of the χ^2 , the formula is

$$X^2 = (O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2 / E_{ij}$$

The derived value of $X^2 = 14.74$

Degrees of freedom = (c-1) (r-1)

$$= (5-1) (2-1)$$

Therefore, the calculated value of degree of freedom = 4

Table-3

	Mean	Median	Std. Dev	Chi Square test
Group 1	40	39	15.716	14.74
Group 2	40	39	6.670	

Source: Personal Survey

Total value of χ^2 for 4 degrees of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is 9.488. Calculated value= 14.74 is greater than the table value. Calculated value of χ^2 is much higher than this table value which means that the calculated value cannot be said to have arisen just because of chance. It is significant. Hence the hypothesis does not hold good. We can conclude that there is significant difference between the opinions between working and non-working group regarding the statement, “People enjoy an advertisement more if it is morally right.” Hence the result does not support the hypothesis. Therefore it can be said that there is no relationship between the responses of the two groups.

HYPOTHESIS: 4

“Audience may have positive attitude towards the morally right advertisement”

To find out the value of the χ^2 , the formula is

$$X^2 = (O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2 / E_{ij}$$

The derived value of $X^2 = 9.38$

Degrees of freedom = (c-1) (r-1)

$$= (5-1) (2-1)$$

Therefore, the calculated value of degree of freedom = 4

Table-8

	Mean	Median	Std. Dev	Chi Square test
Group 1	40	43	15.016	9.38
Group 2	40	38	6.78	

Source: Personal Survey

Total value of χ^2 for 4 degrees of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is 9.488. Calculated value= 9.38 is less than the table value. Calculated value of χ^2 is less than this table value which means that the calculated value can be said to have arisen just because of chance. It is significant. Hence the hypothesis holds good. We can conclude that there is no significant difference between the opinions between working and non-working group regarding the statement, “Audience may have positive attitude towards the morally right advertisement”.

Findings and Discussion

The statistics indicate slightly positive effects about the general construct of the advertising. There is no significant difference between the opinions between working and non - working group regarding the statement, “Ethicality of an advertisement makes people to have some positive attitude towards the advertising.” However the sample also comprised students who may be positively disposed towards advertising and other business practices.

When it was asked from the respondents that if ethicality of an advertisement makes people to have positive attitude towards the advertisers, all the respondents were having their personal judgment, not all the respondents were having the same opinion. According to them, it’s the advertisers who have contributed to the ability of the masses to acquire and enjoy increased quantities and varieties of commodities.

If the advertisers may include some empathy for the consumers then it can create mental revolution which will inspire in the population to have better living. According to the respondents, people feel belongingness to the advertisers. It is somewhat difficult to get adapted to ethics while involved in some business activities. Most of the respondents also thought that for earning money, advertisers may not always keep in mind the so called ‘ethics’. They just plan the advertisement and display it not worrying about the outcomes of that. They do not expect about the attitude people form about them or their profession.

Most of people were agreed on this point strongly that **people enjoy an advertisement more if it is morally right**. For example the advertisement for BIG TV. It seems to be enjoyable, memorable and credible. We can also take the example of Cadbury Celebrations endorsed by Amitabh Bachchan. There is humour appeal also in these advertisements but they do not distort the message delivered by these advertisements. Some people also said that they also enjoy the advertisements which are not morally right or the advertisement which convey simple message through odd presentation of advertisements. Apparently, one unethically perceived advertisement is insufficient to negatively affect the universal attitude towards advertising construct, supporting the similar findings by Mackenzie and Lutz (1989).^{viii}

Some people were firm on the point that they enjoy those advertisements also which seem unethical to a considerable segment of the society. It cannot be said that if any advertisement is unethical, then it would not be watched by the audience. What really matters is, what the audience notices.

Conclusion:

From the study it can be concluded that the audience may have positive attitude towards the morally right advertisement and is very much inclined to morally right advertisements. They are at least able to view them along with their family and very often it has been observed by them that their spouse convinces them to purchase the advertised product. In small towns, society has not changed. People like to read those books, magazines or see those kinds of movies; serials which they think are not morally harmful to them or any member of their family.

Reference :

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