

The Impact of Unethical Advertising on the Brand Image of the Corporate Firm: Providing Insights from the Economic Trends in UAE

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Abstract

A raising concern in the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) dynamic economic environment is the impact that unethical advertising can have on a brand image. In the context of the UAE, this research examines the impact of the unethical advertisement on the reputation of the brand along with the evaluation of economic developments in the UAE. Customers are essential stakeholders who create opinions about businesses based on their moral obligations. Deceptive tactics, such as giving incorrect information, disparaging competitors, making overstated assertions, and ignoring the interests of the public and the country, are what constitute unethical advertising. The paper discuss and highlight certain category of the advertisement that has contain unethical elements that make it unethical. Companies use advertising, especially audio-visual content, as a vital tool to market their goods and spread messages. Following social standards in advertising gives businesses an edge over their competitors by drawing in customers. Emotional attachment to advertising have a significant impact on consumer purchasing behavior, sometimes overshadowing the quality of the product. Additionally, this paper examines various viewpoints on advertising ethics while highlighting the significance of national and international advertising laws. Integrity and transparency are the hallmarks of ethical advertising practices, which improve the value offer for all parties involved in the sector and eventually increase market share. Most consumers are prepared to pay extra for goods produced by transparent firms, demonstrating the importance of transparency in fostering brand loyalty. On the other hand, unethical advertising exert detrimental effects on staff morale, customer trust, and brand image.

1 INTRODUCTION

Brand image is referred to as the impression of the firm in the eyes of consumers of the products and service offered by the brand (Susanto et al., 2022). Several factors forms the perception of the consumer about the brand which include whether a company is trustworthy, what is the track record of the corporation, reputable and reliable (Levitt, 1965). Corporate image refers to the perception and evaluation held by individuals regarding a company, which is influenced by the available information, whether accurate or not, pertaining to the company's activities, workplace environment, historical achievements, and future outlook (Fombrun, 2000). According to Heand (2014), the establishment of an ethically responsible corporate image association entails the development of consumer perceptions regarding a company's involvement in community programs, support for artistic and social endeavors, and overall efforts to enhance societal well-being.

There is a clear and close relationship between corporate image and ethical branding. These aspects encompass responsibility, accountability, diversity, honesty, integrity, quality, and respect. An ethical brand incorporates ethical advertising. The establishment of an ethical brand contributes to the enhancement of the firm's reputation, which subsequently reinforces the brand itself. The examination of ethical branding is possible at both the corporate as well as product levels. Unethical activity of any kind resultantly such as deceptive ads has hazardous consequences leading to severe damage to a corporation's intangible property as can be seen from some of the recent notable scandals, for instance, Anderson and Enron Consulting where the deceptive practices employed by the company resulted in substantial harm to both its corporate image and financial stability (Roszkowska, 2021). Advertising at the product level encompasses the strategic activities of labeling, packaging, and communication. While the aforementioned factors may not exert a direct influence on the corporate image, they can nevertheless have an effect on the organization's reputation. The existing body of literature appears to exhibit a divergence of opinions regarding consumer responses. There exist divergent perspectives regarding the extent to which effective labeling, packaging, and interaction directly contribute to an organization's reputation, as opposed to the potential influence of contextual variables, authenticity, and personal tastes on consumer responses. A survey conducted in the United States reveals that ethical conduct holds significant importance in the process of making purchasing decisions, with consumers demonstrating a willingness to pay premium prices for products offered by companies that exhibit ethical behavior (Creyer and Ross, 1997). The more well-known a brand is, the more expectations of ethical operations and behavior the public has toward the brand. With the growing awareness of ethical considerations among consumers, there is a notable inclination toward taking ethical problems in branding more seriously (Fernandes, 2013). Consequently, this will compel branding practices to assume a greater degree of ethical responsibility. The

business is an overall human attempt that, akin to other human activities, has historically and is expected to persistently undergo moral scrutiny (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987)

In the marketing industry advertising is a captive field (Gordon et al., 2019). Creativity and attractiveness should be the elements of the advertisement to attract the consumers' attention. As per Clow (2012), the growth of advertising companies has been increasing gradually year by year which provides the up to date information on a product. Advertising serves as a means to promote not only products, but also services, entertainment, lost and found items, land, and various other entities. Advertising can be disseminated through various media platforms, including but not limited to the "internet, television and radio, pamphlets, banners, billboards, and newspapers," as determined by the ingenuity of an advertising agency. As per William (1998), "advertising encompasses all such activities that are involved in displaying a non-personal, sponsored, and paid message to an audience about a product of a company". In other words, an advertisement is any funded message to an audience regarding a product or organisation with the purpose of its promotion.

Advertising is currently executed by professionals who are equipped with the necessary skill set to develop advertisements with the potential to elevate a product to the highest level. This is demonstrated by the rapid growth of advertising companies and the professionalisation of the advertising industry (Katz, 2022). Advertising is a potent tool that is utilised by advertisers to disseminate information, provide knowledge, and endorse their product or service lines, which encompass both tangible goods and intangible services. The primary objective behind these efforts is to influence and convince customers to acquire their products and utilise their services.

Advertisements serve a significant role in cultivating a favorable brand image, thereby affording companies a competitive edge over their rivals in the market. This outcome is evident in increased market share, enhanced reputation, trust, and goodwill (Aaker et al., 2013). However, it is worth noting that advertisers occasionally engage in unethical practices to captivate the fascination of customers, often disregarding the potential adverse effects of such advertisements on consumers. The paper aims to develop a review of unethical advertising practices and their effects on the reputation of corporate firms with special reference to the UAE.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ruchi (2012), in his study on "Ethics in advertising," asserts that the effectiveness of advertising is contingent upon public trust, and it is imperative that no practices involving immorality and indecency be allowed. It is imperative for advertisers to comply with their societal obligations. According to the findings of Andrews & Shimp (2018), ethical advertising is characterised by the significant attributes of honesty, integrity, as well as quality. These characteristics contribute to the greater benefit for each stakeholder involved in the advertising media. The cultivation of trust, confidence in brands, and positive customer experiences is facilitated by the presence of integrity, truthfulness, and quality in advertising. This symbiotic relationship between consumers and businesses yields mutual benefits. In contemporary times, advertisements that adhere to ethical principles are widely embraced by audiences. The incorporation of ethical principles in promotion practices contributes to the enhancement of advertisement levels across various media platforms, thereby bolstering the brand image associated with the promoted product. Nevertheless, there are instances particularly corporate firms that are ignoring their ethical obligation by regularly telecasting and producing unethical ads. Unethical advertisements encompass a range of practises that involve false assertions, perpetuation of stereotypes, exploitation, body denigration, deliberate targeting of children, cultural insensitivity, infringement upon privacy, fear-inducing tactics, deceptive environmental claims, and promotion of detrimental conduct (Polonsky & Hyman, 2007). The ethical considerations pertaining to advertising are applicable to companies on a global scale as well as to all consumers. The consideration of ethical principles is of utmost importance for multinational corporations as they navigate through various social, cultural, and legal environments. In the specific context of this paper's emphasis on the UAE, it is of utmost importance to comprehend and abide by ethical advertising principles. This is because engaging in unethical advertising practises has the potential to negatively impact the perception of a brand, diminish consumer confidence, and undermine economic patterns within the UAE market. It is imperative to ensure that consumers are not subjected to any form of deception or misinformation regarding the goods or offerings that are being advertised. The main focus of the research is based on the impact of unethical advertisements on brand's image. Ahaiwe et al. (2015) pinpointed the impact of negative K-pop advertising on product brand reputation. The survey conducted by them disclosed that there are four features of the contents of negative ad which have a prima facie impact on the brand reputation. The discrepancies between respondents' views of the products and marketers' conceptions of them were exposed by the comparison. The analysis reveals the incongruity between consumer perspectives on products and the beliefs held by marketers, thereby underscoring the substantial consequences of adverse K-pop commercials on brand standing. Additionally, it offers valuable insights into the determinants that shape consumer sentiment.

According to Kumar et al. (2013) categories the types of advertisements that fall under the umbrella of unethical advertisements when they present false and fraudulent information, it is degrading a substitute

product or a competitor product, presents exaggerated assertions, and it is in contradiction to public and national interests, an advertisement that impacts on human existence and that is immoral or Indecent. It renders misleading information. Such as the Horlicks Company advertises claiming that it will make a child stronger sharper and taller but in reality, no such results are found which is evident that it is an over-exaggeration of the benefits of a product. In their research, they also discussed the forms of unethical advertisement such as the use of women by corporates on such ads that have nothing to do with the female gender, the utilization of women in advertisements that are unrelated to their products or services contributes to the perpetuation of objectification, the reinforcement of detrimental stereotypes, and the normalization of gender inequality, thereby raising ethical concerns. It also includes advertisements of illegal or band products such as advertising of tobacco or Alcohol that are injurious to the health of the human being, or surrogate advertisement (Upadhyaya, 2012).

There are serious implications of unethical advertising in every section of society such as unethical advertising practices have the potential to perpetuate detrimental stereotypes, undermine public confidence in media outlets, endorse unhealthy behaviors, and foster a societal climate characterised by consumerism and materialism. Children are not an exception that are severely affected by unethical advertising. In UAE there is a sizable percentage of children that were exposed to TV ads daily (Semary & Khaja, 2019). As per the findings of the American Psychological Association, a youngster is often exposed to more than 40,000 commercials on television annually that ultimately has effects on a child perception. De Veirman et al. (2019) demonstrated the impact of adverse advertising on the perception of brand image among children. The research findings indicate that the act of providing negative affirmation has the potential to establish a detrimental perception of the brand within the cognitive framework of children, resulting in a lasting impression. In his study, Rajagopal (2010) compiled a comprehensive list of variables that displays a link between unethical advertising practices and brand equity. The study conducted is a qualitative review that diagnoses the variable of children's memory, capacity to grasp, and support of parents in relation to the construct of customers' product brand equity. As stated in the book "Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion," it is stated that children between the ages of 2 and 11 are exposed to approximately 25,600 commercials annually. In accordance with studies cited in the book, certain child psychologists argue that the advertising industry promotes violence, contributes to obesity among children, hinders early learning abilities, and undermines parental authority. One plausible advantage of engaging in unethical advertising practises is the potential to initially capture attention and arouse curiosity, thereby potentially enhancing the visibility of the brand in the short term. The extent and occurrence of such effects may still be subjects of ongoing debate, but it is crucial for businesses to acknowledge the possibility of harm and take necessary precautions to prevent their advertisements from endorsing undesirable behaviors among children.

Advertising should not be contrary to the laws and regulations of the country publishing it, also it should not be in contravention of the standards of decency and morality (Hafez, 2002) and it must not be against the religious sentiments of the public. As per Hunt et al. (1989), an advertisement that adds to the value of a good corporate firm and its reputation to the public at large, complies with moral standards, and enhances the business of the advertised product is perceived as an ethical advertisement. Advertisement puts a significant influence on the diversified portion of society and serious repercussions can be witnessed when corporations disregard it in the course of the advertisement of their product revealing the arrant need to regulate it. Advertising in certain jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom (UK), is predominantly governed by autonomous self-regulatory entities and dedicated legislation. UAE lacks a self-regulating body for advertising, resulting in a regulatory framework that combines clauses from consumer protection laws and laws addressing unfair competition by businesses.

3 METHODS

For the purpose of completing a systematic literature review, a thorough evaluation was conducted on empirical and theoretical studies that have been issued in peer-reviewed scientific journals within the specific discipline of unethical advertising and its impact on the brand image of a corporate firm. This research utilises a secondary research methodology to examine the influence of unethical advertising on the brand reputation of corporate organisations, specifically concentrating on economic trends within the UAE. To enhance the comprehensiveness and reliability of the secondary research, a rigorous search method was established to locate pertinent material. The databases were chosen based on their extensive inclusion of scholarly material in the respective academic discipline. The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis and integration of empirical and theoretical research pertaining to unethical advertising and its impact on brand image. The process of doing a search in an organised and systematic manner to retrieve relevant information from many sources.

This analysis aims to provide insights derived from the examination of economic trends in the UAE. Several databases, including "Emerald, SSRN, Taylor and Francis Group, Wiley Online Library, ResearchGate, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and JSTORE, Google Scholar". Were used in this literature study.

The literature search incorporated key terms such as "unethical advertising," "brand image," "unethical advertising practises," "corporate firms," and "UAE." The selection of these terms was conducted with precision to encompass a broad range of pertinent research that examines the interconnection between unethical advertising and brand image, specifically within the framework of corporate enterprises operating in the UAE. The present study employed inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine the eligibility of participants. These criteria will be used to establish specific characteristics and conditions that studies must possess or lack to be included or excluded from the study. The inclusion criteria mandated that studies must have been published after the year 2012. Furthermore, this study exclusively incorporates peer-reviewed publications published after 2010 for the purpose of examining discourses, definitions, and conceptual frameworks pertaining to unethical advertising and its impact on brand reputation. The temporal emphasis guarantees that the chosen research accurately represents current advancements and understandings within the discipline.

In addition to gathering data from empirical investigations, the researcher also gathered secondary data concerning the existing literature. Then, thematic analysis was used to examine the secondary qualitative data. Lastly, the themes are derived in the context of existing literature. Ultimately, the researcher has formulated implications for future research endeavors and practical applications.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection procedure encompassed a methodical extraction of relevant information from the listed research, specifically focusing on the influence of unethical advertising on brand image. The selected papers were used to collect secondary data, which included empirical findings, theoretical insights, and conceptual frameworks. Thematic analysis was subsequently utilised to discern reoccurring themes and patterns within the existing body of literature. This approach enabled the retrieval of significant insights and viewpoints that enhance a holistic comprehension of the subject matter under investigation. The validity of the secondary research is established by implementing a comprehensive search strategy that spans several databases and utilises key terms that accurately represent the study subject. The inclusion criteria serve the purpose of ensuring that only research that are pertinent and up to date are considered. The research strived to employ thematic analysis as a means of reducing bias and improving the dependability of findings. This will be achieved through a systematic process of discovering and analysing reoccurring themes across a range of various sources. This research is focused on the influence of unethical advertising on brand image within the business landscape of the UAE. Although attempts have been made to incorporate a wide range of studies, there can be limitations due to potential gaps in the coverage of literature and discrepancies in terminology employed across various studies.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 Unethical Advertisement and Brand Equity

The image of the brand is further explored in this theme. It can be drawn that it is an element of brand equity. For this purpose, it is essential to understand what brand equity is. Brand equity is something that is not confined to logos, names, or symbols (Serić, 2017). Brand equity depicts the experience of a specific emotion within a consumer's psyche that contributes to the generation of additional value (Xu & Chan, 2010). The comprehension and quantification of brand equity hold importance for a brand, as it comprises the customer's recollection of the brand. The concept of brand perception alludes that errors on the part of a brand, especially those that affect affairs of importance to the consumers, have the potential to be retained in the consumer's memory over an extended period of time. Brand image is one element of brand equity there are other elements as well.

The brand's image is depicted in Keller's brand equity model. Keller (2013) brand equity model serves as a guide for corporations to know and understand their customer's feel regarding their brand. The model is helpful to comprehend the perception of the general public concerning a brand that exhibits unethical practices or those brand that manifests controversial behaviors. Figure 1 shows the visual representation of Keller's brand equity model.

The purpose of the initial step is to develop brand salience, this concept is further elaborated upon in the section that specifically addresses Aaker's brand identity system. In the second step of measuring what you are, the objective is for the brand to pinpoint and convey the meaning of the brand. In the third step, the perceptions expressed by customers towards your brand can be classified into two distinct categories: "evaluative judgments" and "emotional responses." These factors are primarily concerned with the offerings of the brand. In the last stage, Keller divides this portion into four distinct categories. Behavioral commitment, attitudinal connection, a sense of community, and active engagement are key concepts that are often studied in the field of consumer behavior and marketing. These constructs are used to understand and measure the level of loyalty and commitment that individuals have towards a particular brand, product, or community. Behavioral loyalty refers to the repeat purchase behavior and consistent patronage exhibited by consumers. Attitudinal attachment refers to the emotional connection. Consumer trust can be harmed by unethical advertising tactics, which can lower behavioral loyalty because repeat purchases are made less frequently.

Additionally, by instilling unfavorable attitudes like distrust and disillusionment in the brand, these practises might erode attitudinal connection. Promoting consumer loyalty and favorable brand perceptions requires maintaining ethical advertising practises.

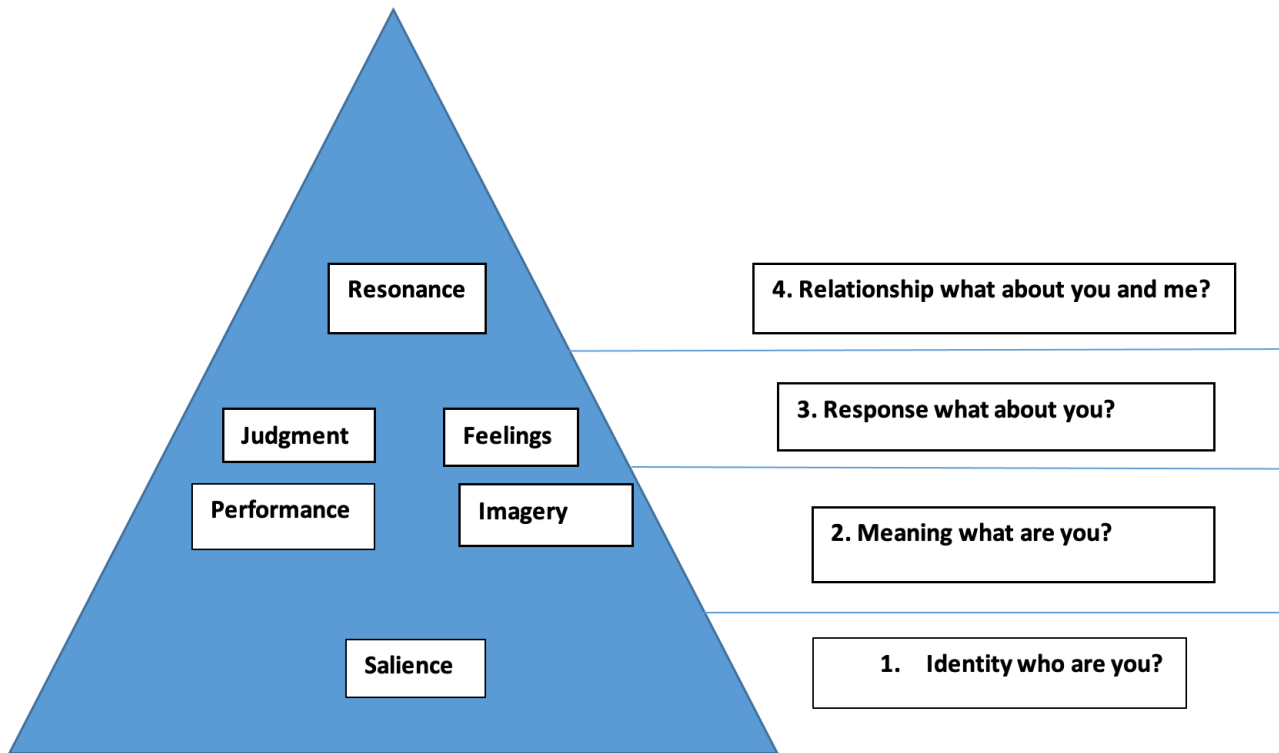


Figure 1: Killer's brand equity model

4.2 Unethical Advertisement and Consumer Perception

It is noteworthy that it is the customer's perception of a firm and its product that constitutes its image or reputation. Unethical advertisement has a close link with the consumer's perception of those that use the brand's product and services and what makes an advertisement unethical is determined on the basis of its adherence to the social and moral values. Recently, the customer using the products and services of the brand are rendering a boosted level of attention to the ethical criteria when buying or when making a purchase decision (Katja, 2015). Moreover, in his study, author analyse how customers, when encounter misleading or false information that is inconsistent with reality, make their moral perception of the brand. In a nutshell, this study alludes that the impression of the customer about brands revolves around whether branding is sticking to ethics or not. This Implies that unethical advertising can harm a brand's reputation by undermining trust and ethical standard.

When evaluating ethical standards in corporate firms, it can be evident that the marketing practitioners and approaches from the scholarly paradigm are two different perspectives. Research conducted by Parliti et al. (2014) asserted that ethical attributes including accountability, honesty, citizenship, and values would serve as guiding principles for intricate advertising choices within an organisation. An alternative viewpoint posits that an organization's moral decisions should be guided by its values, codes, and training. It is noteworthy that consumers perceive ethics as the moral as well as personal values of a brand, which significantly influences the ethical choices undertaken. According to Choy (2012), corporations developed their identity ethically in the manner in which they respond to a given circumstance that is negative in nature.

Thomas & Fowler (2016) maintained that consumer impressions about a brand can be formed by the affiliation they build with the brand. The influence of a brand's violation on customer opinion is frequently contingent upon the consumer's existing perceptions of the brand's image and credibility. This furthermore supports the argument that the identity of a brand has an essential impact on the brand's reputation. Consumers tend to subject a brand with a perceived sexist image to more stringent scrutiny during a controversy, in comparison to a brand that is commonly associated with a playful or ironic tone. It is always vital to have a good impression to win the trust of the consumers among other market competitors and for the purpose of the buyer giving preference over other brands in the course of purchasing (Diallo & Lambey, 2017).

4.3 Societal, Cultural, and Religious Perspectives of Unethical Advertising

Certainly, there are differences between unethical advertising and illegal advertising which means that is prohibited by law, unethical advertising is something that is not in compliance with the moral standards that are set by the society in their customary practice, that is contradicts the religious values. UAE is an Islamic country and the Islamic perspective has an influence on the ethical norms of advertising to be complied by the advertising agencies. While Western cultures may diverge by exhibiting more liberal clothing codes and actively advertising alcohol and pork products, the UAE and Islamic culture match with ideals by featuring modest apparel and avoiding alcoholic and pork product promotion. Cultural and traditional values have a significant impact when building an impression about a brand. In this region, advertisement goes through rigorous self-regulations and media council adornment to make sure it adheres to ethical and cultural values (Sajiet al, 2015). Asian consumers place significant importance on their cultural heritage and hold strong ethical values regarding the ethicality of advertisements (Ko & Lee 2011). Western individuals also possess their own distinct perspectives on moral values and ethical principles (Haron et al., 2020). Expatriates relocating to this region tend to adopt and embody the cultural values and principles of the host country, thereby exhibiting a propensity to interpret advertisements in a comparable fashion. When a consumer has positive sentiments for an advertisement service and product their purchasing desires will be stronger (Lin, 2011). In their study, Bahanor & Homayoun (2010) conducted an evaluation of branding principles in the modern era, focusing on four key principles: the recognition of human greatness and dignity, the importance of ethical considerations, and the incorporation of spirituality. Advertisements should be grounded in spirituality, as spirituality serves as the foundation of Islam. This entails promoting awareness and appealing to emotions, ultimately encouraging individuals to refrain from excessive indulgence. However, it is argued that the existing advertising model is grounded in an instrumental perspective of humanity, thereby neglecting ethical considerations, distancing itself from religious and spiritual values, relying on convincing and deceit, and promoting consumerism and excessive indulgence (Imam Khomeini, 1987). It is therefore essential for the advertising agency to employ the best discourse that is great, expressive, interesting, and brief (Keller, 1994). And convey a message about their product and services that is true and honest (Rice & Almosawi 2002). In their novel model of Islamic advertising, Rahmani et al. (2013) stated principles as macro "Islamic values" The micro Islamic values within Islamic advertising encompass various aspects, including modesty in both genders, an appreciation of schooling and disciplines, truthful discourse, economic consumption, and environmental care, as well as human health, justice, and the contribution of women in society. Amiri (2013) links feelings aroused by branding leads to the formation of an impression concerning ads and this links to the establishment of a perception concerning the quality of a brand that consequently leads to the buying intention.

According to Blair et al. (2006), Unethical advertising refers to the utilisation of strategies that contravene moral principles, societal conventions, sensitivity to culture, and religious tenets. The act of advertising in such a manner serves to erode trust, perpetuate detrimental stereotypes, and engage in consumer deception, thereby compromising the growth of the economy. From a sociocultural standpoint, the phenomenon in question contributes to the cultivation of a culture characterised by manipulation and deceit (Belanche, 2019). Additionally, from a cultural lens, it has the potential to offend and exploit various communities through the appropriation of symbols or the trivialization of cultural practices. Advertising that lacks religious sensitivity demonstrates a disregard for sacred beliefs and exposes itself to the potential consequences of public disapproval Guo (2006) illustrative instances encompass deceitful advertising, stigmatisation of body image, appropriation of cultural elements, and utilisation of fear-inducing strategies. In order to address these challenges, advertisers should give precedence to principles such as integrity, cultural sensitivity, and reverence for religious beliefs. This approach will cultivate an ethical advertising milieu that is in harmony with a wide range of viewpoints.

Unethical advertisements encompass three main inclinations. First of all the advertising content, second, the manner in which the advertiser attempts to put a message to the audience's mind, and third the procedure of tracking persons, particularly experiences on the net with the object of promoting corporations' offered services and products (Morteza, 2012). The material of advertising serves to inform customers about the products, presenting both positive and negative perspectives based on their interpretation. The attraction of customers is a significant function that it fulfills. This matter can also be encompassed within the broader context of advertising that employs sexualized and religious imagery to endorse products, a practice that is deemed unsuitable for individuals across all demographics, particularly children.

4.4 Unethical Advertisement and Consumer-Perceived Ethicality

Consumer perceived ethicality (CPE) and the notion of ethical branding apparently hang over the management of the brand and the ethics of the business. The term perceived ethicality is defined as "A comprehensive summary framework delineating the subjective moral evaluation of consumers regarding notions of right and wrong, or good and bad" (Brunk & Blümelhuber, 2011). A corporation is considered to

engage in ethical advertising when it portrays honesty, integrity, promotes the social cause, and acts with responsibility and agreeableness (Fan, 2005). A thorough analysis of the literature reveals that it is always in the best interest of the brand to act ethically and responsibly (Schamp et al., 2019). CPE holds significance for the brand as it can serve as a robust factor in influencing a range of favorable consumer reactions, including but not limited to intention, commitment, and advocacy (Utkutug, 2022). According to Markovic et al. (2018), the CPE of a corporate firm imparts a vital role in extracting consumer responses due to the fact that CPE supports positive consumer-company identification. It is been connected to various positive results including consumer trust, effect on brand reputation, and loyalty of consumers (Lambey-hecchin, 2017).

As per the social identity theory by Scheepers & Ellemers (2019), persons who firmly identify brands tend to follow it and are engaged in the activities that were supposed to be promotional for the brand and ultimately advocated for the brand due to the assimilation of the brand into their self-concept (Giakoumaki & Krepapa, 2020). A brand that adheres to ethical standards and manifests a good track record and goodwill is easily identified by the people and brand identification has a very positive impact on consumer behavior as confirmed by previous studies (Raza et al., 2020). The notion of self-brand connection is extensively employed in the marketing literature. Bhattacharya & Sen (2003) allude that the self-brand relationship is a meaningful relationship that advertisers are proactively seeking to develop with their consumers. Individuals who self-identify as innovative are more inclined to select and establish a connection with a corporation that is founded on principles of innovation.

As per Sierra et al. (2017), corporate brand level Consumer perceived ethicality refers to the perception of a brand's honesty, responsibility, and accountability towards various stakeholders. This concept aligns with the emerging body of literature on customer ethical perspectives. The concept of customer identification has been extensively explored by numerous researchers, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of branding and marketing. The occurrence of corporate wrongdoing or unethical practices can significantly affect the overall reputation and image of a corporation. The perception of a company's ethicality in doing business is closely associated with its brand image and competitive capabilities in the market. Huang et al. (2021) asserted that consumers exhibit a negative or unfavorable response toward businesses perceived as unethical

5 DISCUSSION

In the fast changing economic environment of the UAE, the impact of unethical commercials on company brand image is a serious concern with possible effects on customer trust and business performance. This discussion tries to investigate this dynamic by looking at pertinent economic trends and how they interact with ethical advertising. Walsh et al. (2009) believe consumers as very important stakeholders for a business. The consumer tends to make an impression about the firm based upon the adherence of the firms with ethical responsibilities (Park et al., 2014). An advertisement is considered unethical when it has any of the features including presenting false information, it is degrading a substitute, it presents tall claims, and it is against the public and national interests, that affect human life, and that is immoral or vulgar. Morality or ethics is originally a branch of philosophy that incorporates well-ordered defending and suggesting notions of wrong and right acts. It actually answers the question of what constitutes right and wrong. Ethics basically means the best way for people to live which complies with the moral standards of the society. Advertising is a kind of marketing performed in audio-visual form. That is sponsored by companies aiming to promote their services or product or who intended to convey a message to the audience. Advertisement backed by ethical support gives a beneficial edge to the company to attract customers to buy their product and avail their services. The responsibility of companies to adhere to ethical norms is due to the standard acceptable rules of society in which a corporation is operating. Purchasing behavior has been always given so much significance in the literature study of the effect of advertising concerning its effectiveness (Ahmed & Ashfaq, 2013). It has been witnessed that consumer buying behavior is affected by the disliking or liking of a user toward the product advertisement that is advertised (Strick et al, 2009).

As per the words of Josiassen et al. (2011), the influence on consumer purchasing behavior is primarily attributed to the emotional response that establishes subsequent exposure to advertising for the advertised product. According to Zhou (2021), the way consumers act toward a product is solely influenced by advertising, without any consideration for the product's quality. It has been observed that advertisers occasionally employ tactics that overstate the details and advantages of a product in a manner that strategically influences consumers, leading them to experience psychological pressure from the persuasive nature of advertising and intentionally choose to purchase the item being sold.

Brunello (2010) emphasises the connection between advertising and ethics and took forward the opinion of several consumers and experts concerning advertisement in ethical constraints. Author based on three contravening opinions that are acquisitiveness, advocacy, and accuracy. This study furthermore inculcates the idea of advertisement regulations, which encompasses the rules and norms. The study suggests looking at the ethics which are followed at the local level, international level, and European level. Hemalat (2013) focused on the obligation of advertisers which is the duty on the shoulders of advertisers to comply with ethical

standards when advertising their services and product. The study concluded that graduation, puffery, deceitful or unethical advertising, and abusive advertisements having negative ratings are a few of the unethical practices. In addition, the researcher discovered that comparative advertising, alongside fraudulent and deceptive advertising, constitutes an additional example of unethical practices within the advertising industry. The ethical implications of advertising are contingent upon the manner in which it is executed. The speaker underscored the significance of integrity, honesty, and quality as fundamental attributes of ethical advertising. The aforementioned characteristics contribute to the overall value proposition for all stakeholders involved in the advertising media industry. Therefore, it can be inferred that strict adherence to moral standards in advertising has the potential to enhance the market share of the promoted product. This is particularly crucial for the advertising industry, encompassing both print and electronic media, given the current circumstances.

Ethical advertising is about accountability and transparency. Label Insight conducted a study that reveals 94% of the users are most likely to follow a brand and remain loyal to it which presents complete transparency. Moreover, 73% of the customers believe that they would be willing to pay more prices for a product or a service from such a brand (De, Iacobucci & Pagliaro, 2021). If it comes to the knowledge of the consumer that is being deceived by the brand through their products and services and believes that they are the target of this unethical practice consequently the consumer may upload their negative review on the website or page or anywhere on social media will have serious effects on the brand image.

It can be witnessed that unethical advertisement has not only negative effects on the brand image but has serious repercussions on customers, and employees and it also leads to unhealthy competition with other market competitors (Advani, 2019). When advertising a product an employee of a corporate firm is at the front line, and they will have to face the consequences brunt and the response coming from the consumers due to false advertisement. In such a situation the poor employees found themselves in between a hard place and a rock and the consumer acting as a rock and the deceptive advertisement as a hard rock. It is noteworthy that the employee in the ad is not guilty of this unethical act as they neither create it nor support the endorsement. When employees are not able to meet the unrealistic expectations created by deceptive advertisements, customers may express their dissatisfaction with them. The presence of adverse working conditions is likely to contribute to an increase in employee turnover within the company, as individuals may choose to resign from their positions. In the event that employees choose to remain with the company, there is a possibility that their motivation to exert significant effort may be lacking, thereby exacerbating the company's existing challenges.

6 FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Based on the valuable findings obtained from this scholarly research paper, numerous noteworthy prospects for future implications emerge as prominent. To begin with, the implementation of cross-cultural comparative studies has the potential to enhance comprehension regarding the various ways in which diverse societies interpret and react to unethical advertising. This, in turn, can facilitate the formulation of advertising strategies that are attuned to the cultural sensitivities of different societies. Furthermore, conducting an in-depth analysis of the enduring consequences of unethical advertising and the sustainability of a brand would provide insights into the relative significance of immediate benefits derived from such strategies compared to the potential enduring drawbacks. Examining the interrelation between unethical advertising practices and a company's wider corporate social responsibility (CSR) endeavors may provide insights into how consumers perceive a brand's ethical conduct as a whole, rather than as separate entities. With the continuous development of advertising channels driven by technological advancements, it becomes imperative to explore the ethical implications associated with emerging platforms such as social media advertising and augmented reality. This exploration serves the purpose of establishing ethical guidelines within these innovative spaces. In addition, conducting a thorough examination of the efficacy of regulatory structures and industry guidelines in discouraging unethical advertising practices may contribute to the development of stronger ethical standards. The investigation of customer awareness and education levels pertaining to unethical advertising has the potential to provide valuable insights for developing approaches that empower consumers and promote responsible purchasing choices. By incorporating these diverse and complex future ramifications into both research and practical applications, it is possible to cultivate a holistic comprehension of the intricate dynamics between immoral advertising, brand perception, and consumer conduct. This, in turn, can contribute to the development of a more ethical and socially responsible advertising environment.

There is a transformation from the traditional perception of branding in which advertisement is in the form of sandwich boards, public announcers in the marketplace, and other such other procedures which are largely done by proprietors themselves and this is sometimes free of cost (Carmona & Wunderlich, 2013). There are numerous issues associated with unethical advertising some of which are discussed in this research paper such as it has a negative effect on children's mindset who are believed to be the future of a nation and who are able to pick things quickly and have a long-term impact on their minds. Quantitative research can be conducted in order to generate data related to the affected percentage of children exposed to the unethical

advertisement. Moreover, primary research will prove to be even more beneficial to find first-hand data about the repercussions of unethical advertisements on a significant segment of society. Advertisers should not target children and employ them for their benefit as there are incapable of judging what is right and wrong. A shift in the appropriate target audience as children could not be the potential audience for all kinds of products in the future by the advertising agency will prove to be beneficial for their image and to preserve a good reputation in the eyes of the public at large. Furthermore, it is very important to safeguard children, particularly from indecent and obscene advertisements.

An examination of the advertisement regulation reveals that most countries lack self-regulating bodies particularly UAE lacks a self-regulating body for advertising, resulting in a regulatory framework that combines clauses from consumer protection laws and laws addressing unfair competition by businesses. The United Kingdom (UK), is predominantly governed by autonomous self-regulatory entities and dedicated legislation. There is an utmost need for policies and regulations at the governmental level to avert the negative impacts of unethical advertising and to preserve brand reputation. Regulations will result in a more ethical advertisement and a transformed attitude of advertising agencies from deceptive behavior to ethical behavior. Deception is not limited to only false claims about a product's quality rather it also includes deceptive announcements just to attract customers such clothing brands advertise that they are offering up to 50% or 60% but in reality, only 20 or 30% off is available on the seasoned suites. Remember fair competition is allowed by law and a competitor can set up the same business in the locality where another same kind of business is running already. When misleading or false advertisements cause damage to another business or consumer through their advertisement it is actionable and falls under torts claims and a lawsuit can be filed for it. For instance, a restaurant falsely advertised that their burger is healthier than the adjacent restaurant selling burger, the competitor restaurant can sue the advertising company for false statement and the damage caused to it financially. Similarly, any advertisement results in damage to the employee and can also sue for instance a person is prescribed by a doctor not to take Chinese salts in the diet as he/she is a high blood pressure patient. And upon visiting a restaurant they claim that they have not added Chinese salt to their food resultantly there is a severe impact on the health of the person.

7 CONCLUSION

The study in this paper explores the complex correlation between unethical advertising practices and the brand reputation of corporate organisations, with a specific focus on UAE The study emphasises the significant influence of brand image on consumer perceptions, encompassing various factors such as trustworthiness, reputation, and responsibility. The concept of ethical branding is defined as a potent instrument that not only amplifies the standing of a company but also fortifies the brand itself. There is certain element that renders an advertisement the tag of unethical advertisement such as it containing false and fraudulent information when it is causing damage to a competitor's product by degrading it in their advertisement, advertisement having tall claims with unnecessary exaggeration, that immoral or obscene, that is in contravention to the public or national interest and advertisement that has deleterious effects on human life. Unethical advertisement can be done in several forms advertising any brand or illegal product like tobacco, alcohol, and advertisement of surrogates, an advertisement that involves the exploitation of children, that is based on stereotypes and that cast baseless claims without verification. This paper highlights the diverse effects of unethical marketing on consumers, providing insight into its capacity to diminish trust, perpetuate adverse stereotypes, and mislead consumers. The study uncovers that consumer perceptions are instrumental in influencing purchasing behavior, with ethical considerations exerting a substantial impact. This underscores the crucial need for brands to align their values with the moral standards held by consumers. Furthermore, this study examines the wider societal, social cultural, and religious aspects, highlighting the importance for advertisers to acknowledge and accommodate these varied viewpoints in order to maintain a favorable brand reputation.

In anticipation of future inquiries, the paper proposes a number of auspicious avenues for further investigation and potential applications. One crucial aspect to consider is the requirement for more comprehensive quantitative research in order to accurately measure the extent to which unethical advertising affects susceptible populations, such as children. Furthermore, it incites a reevaluation of the intended recipients, advocating for the ethical practice of targeting that refrains from subjecting susceptible individuals to detrimental material. In addition, the paper emphasizes the significance of government laws and regulations in mitigating unethical advertising methods and upholding brand reputation. In general, this study highlights the importance concerning moral advertising adhering to ethical standards in the contemporary market. It emphasises that businesses need to acknowledge that ethical advertising is not solely a moral decision, but also a strategic necessity for long-term success in a consumer environment that is becoming more socially aware. Thus, it can be concluded that the unethical practices in the advertisement have a negative impact on a brand image.

An evaluation of unethical advertisement manifests that it has a strong effect on a large segment of society; therefore, it is the moral responsibility of the advertising company to comply with the ethical codes in the course

of their promotion of their products. In this process the goal of the advertising agency should be the guidance of the customer regarding its quality and its usage rather than misleading and blackmailing by wrongly intimidating them to buy their product. The implementation of appropriate and efficient advertising strategies consistently aids companies and marketers in enhancing their brand reputation and expanding their market share (White et al., 2019). An effective advertisement is basically the name given to the attention and persuasion of the consumer to buy and use a product and to avail of an offered service. There exist several influential factors within the realm of advertising that significantly impact customer purchasing habits. Similar to the construct of likeability, the image of the brand, persuasiveness, endorsement by celebrities, information about products, and entertainment are factors that contribute to the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

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