



RESEARCH PAPER

The Dilemma of Ethics in Advertising in Pakistan: An Islamic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

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This paper analyzes the dilemma of ethics regarding the promotion of foreign culture as opposed to local cultural values by the advertising industry in Pakistan from the Islamic perspective. Advertisers rely on the western business models, disregarding the Islamic business models or ethics that understate exaggeration of the user, consumer, or product attributes. The absence of the advertising ordinance or state control facilitates this manipulation process. The control is an independent variable while culture and emotion are dependent variables whose coupling links the emotions and actions of westernized models to those of traditional viewers. The study assumes the advertiser negatively influences Pakistani culture and conduct of young women due to a lack of governmental guidelines for producing advertisements from an Islamic cultural perspective. The researchers used a quantitative research design for collecting data from 250 university students from three universities at Lahore and Karachi through an online survey questionnaire. The regression analysis shows correlation among control, culture and emotions. The results show the youth believes the advertiser influences young women's conduct in the absence of the state control over Pakistani advertising agencies for promoting the Islamic code of conduct, culture and business model, or to sort out the ethical dilemma.

Introduction

Advertisements surround young Pakistani audience anywhere anytime. There is a rising debate that Pakistani advertisements hardly depict Islamic cultural norms or business practices and rely on western business model, cultural practices and artifacts: appeal, look, or grooming of models, users, or consumers that confuse young viewers of both genders about their association with their birth culture, a dilemma of ethics. The advertisers rely on the western business model: make the

product the hero (Ogilvy, 1985) and exaggerate the user-product attributes, disregarding the Islamic business model that emphasizes honesty and ethics without falsely exaggerating the product attributes in advertisements. The advertiser hardly promotes true qualities of products and mostly uses emotional appeal or elements of foreign culture to influence purchase decisions of consumers. Ali Shafiq, Ahsanul Haque, and Kalthom Binti Abdullah say advertisements must support the interest of both the advertisers and consumers (2016), as they are an integral part of business life in the country. Pakistani advertisers demolish, what Djavlonbek Kadirov calls, the advertiser's responsibility for giving the right message to the consumers (2020). Audience strongly criticizes advertisements that adopt a foreign look and have acculturating influence on youth especially young women. *Bata* Pakistan, the footwear company, received harsh criticism from the public for featuring a male model with the caption: "womanizer & comfortable with it" in an advertisement (Kadirov, 2020; Naveed, 2017). The advertisement was considered sexist and received outrage from the public on social media for misrepresenting social values of Pakistan. *Bata* Pakistan had to issue an apology due to the negative criticism by the public and an outrage by the media.

Pakistan is an Islamic republic. Though Islam does not directly influence advertising, its principles provide guidelines for maintaining a sense of morality in business (Beekun, & Badawi, 2005). It has an effect on the way individuals connect with advertisements or with each other. Their imagination and views of the world rely on their knowledge of their culture, faith and religious teachings. Rafik I. Beekun and Jamal A. Badawi say advertisements have an effect on the way viewers respond to the emotional appeal, or select brands, or consume media, or communicate with each other (2005). Though the Islamic culture indirectly feeds moral principles in Pakistani advertising, many of recent campaigns show an increasing effect of the western culture or fashion trends on models who consume products within the diegesis. The range of products varies from soft drinks to fabrics, to feminine napkins, or private garments. Abdalbaki Halliru Bashir says advertisers adopt the culture of another country to promote these brands (2018). Halil Zaim says Pakistani advertising crosses the limit of Islamic culture by emphasizing westernized conduct of models and exaggerating real attributes of products (2020). It has created an ethical dilemma in society, being devoid of local values.

Literature Review

As either the public or advertiser emphasizes on the presence or absence of a specific look or cultural background in an advertisement, the researchers examine the divine command and contemporary advertising theories from the west, Middle East, and Pakistan to examine the relationship among control, culture, and emotions. Contemporary advertising theories emphasize on the importance of brand image, emotional appeal and culture whereas the divine command theory emphasizes on the importance of religion in business and lives of viewers.

Divine Command Theory

The divine command theory emphasizes the significance of ethical and moral values for adherents or consumers in view of the religion. It influences ideas of right and wrong deeds or conduct of users of a product in the light of their religion. It implies that men and women make the right and wrong choices upon the basis of their religion or culture. Though choices vary from one culture to another; the righteousness of a conduct in a particular society does not make it, what Mohammad Noorizzuddin Noohcalls, automatically right for another culture (n.d.).He adds that advertisements should follow the principles of religion and keep within the limits of the culture of a country (Nooh, n.d.). He implies that advertisements should promote Islamic culture in a religiously dominant Muslim country. The researchers use the divine command theory as advertising is not free from the question of this ethical dilemma in Pakistan. Adeel Bariand Zamin Abbas notethat companies use materialistic pleasure and social presence of models as vital weapons for earning the profit in unethical manner (2011). They realize the effectiveness of these weapons (Beekun, & Badawi, 2005). They hide reality of products behind exaggeration, wrong occurrences, or misleading evidence. Women are shown in un-Islamic or revealing clothes (Usman, Saqib, Muhammad, & Tahir, 2010). The minds of male models appear manipulated with female attraction when advertising certain deodorants (Shafiq, Haque, & Abdullah, 2017). These advertisements stress that women get sexually attracted only to the specific perfume, perhaps implying that the male intellect and good nature have no specific meaning for women. This overstatement collides with the Islamic teachings of modesty, and is not acceptable in view of the Islamic ways of business or conduct for both men and women (Rizwan, & Pirzada et. al., 2019). The approach is deceptive, as no woman runs after a man in real life under the spell of a perfume he wears.The theory implies that western advertisers rely on deceptive stories while Islam condemns the act of deceptiveness stating, "Give just measures and cause no loss. And weigh with scales true and upright and withhold not things justly due to men" (Al-Quran, 26:181).

Contemporary Advertising

Advertising represents promotion, purchasing, social networking, direct sale, content marketing, time coupons, and a variety of other practices (Schultz, 2016). It aims at promoting the sale of products and services in the market. The market seeks monopoly by boosting sales or gaining the largest market share for a product by creating its demand. Advertising agencies are always working on different promotional campaigns to increase the market share of their products. Thus, advertising becomes a business condition for increasing the market share and profits. According to Yawar Khan, Amir Razi, and Rehan Mirza et. al., advertisers show us an image of "family life, passion and affection, sexuality and enjoyment, fellowship and sociability, leisure and comfort, freedom and regulation of life," which neither represents real life nor real product, yet it claimsit can convert the consumer's lifelong wishes or fantasies into reality(2013). Muslim scholars feel advertisers abuse and undermine the local culture by stressing on western culture

for promoting their products (Farooq, Raza, Rehman, & Bhatti, 2018). Advertisers ignore if consumers protest against their manipulation.

Culture and Advertising in Pakistan

Pakistani society reserves the right to react to what many call sex-based advertising culture in view of Islamic principles of both modesty and economy. Al-Aidaros and Kadir (2015) say that in Muslim majority countries the advertising industry should project Islamic principles and system that condemn the use of harmful, immoral, and un-Islamic motivation for selling products (Al-Aidaros, & Kadir, 2015). Gillian Rice and Mohammed Al-Mossawisay Islam condemns "erotic appeal, sentimental appeal, terror appeal, fake testimony and pseudo-science appeal," which may cause "the dullness of the mind or facilitate extravagance" (Rice, & Al-Mossawi, 2014). Advertisers manipulate human insufficiency and degrade the customers by emphasizing their inability to choose. Al-Aidaros and Kadir (2015) examine how the mind of an ordinary Muslim owner of an advertising company can be shifted from the superficial western to the sincere Islamic principles of business, conduct and economy under the Quran and Sunnah (Al-Aidaros, & Kadir, 2015). Where Al-Aidaros and Kadir (2015) stress on the correlation between communication medium and a civilization, Shafiq, Haque and Abdullah (2016) warn against the stress on the faith and historical perspective in the production of Islamic marketing.

Emotions and Advertisements

Nooh says the bulk of critique focuses on unhealthy-social impact of advertisements that promote hedonism, facilitate excessive spending, produce false ideals, and intellectually and spiritual contaminate culture (n.d.). He adds that advertisers create appeals to terror, shame, apprehension, worthlessness, dissatisfaction, and insufficiency by planning campaigns on behalf of influential corporations, preying on the consumer's unaware psyche and making him take drastic steps to improve his appearance and self-image while mimicking the idols (Nooh, n.d.). Despite investing large sums of money, advertisements create frustration among viewers whose urge to look like idols remains unaccomplished (Nooh, n.d.). Ima Ilyani Ibrahim, Nur Rashidi Johari, and Mohamad Niza Md Nor et. al. emphasize that the western marketing practices and methods incorporate deceiving or deception by representing the positive and good features of products and hiding their bad or negative traits (Shafiq, Haque, & Abdullah, 2016).

Control and Advertisements

Ibrahim, Johari and Nor say controls are essentials the western style advertisements widely exploit emotions of viewers, create many ill-effects and bad habits and consume their culture in manipulative ways (2016). They went so far that some countries promulgated formal regulations to avoid their endorsement of divisive products like cigarettes, alcohol, gun, gambling, sexual care products,

underclothes and other sexual condition drugs through advertisements (Ibrahim, Johari, & Nor, 2016). They often remained under criticism for their strong exaggeration, undermining people's intellect and corruptibility, inducing distress and friction between parents and kids for buying branded products (Ibrahim, Johari, & Nor, 2016). Advertisers disregard such ethical questions involved with marketing practices, exaggerate attributes of goods, project a hyper image of the actual product and use emotional and sexual stimulation techniques to market or to sell their goods to the consumers (Niazi, Ghani, & Aziz, 2019). These promotional tactics have influenced the Pakistani nation to trending of what was once considered immoral in the country. Local and international corporations not only expose skin of teenage male celebrity models to the extent of nudity, they also create an unrealistic glossy version of a real product in a commercial to draw attention of consumers of the same age group (Rice, & Al-Mossawi, 2014). Soft drink advertisements emphasize equal mixing of young persons of different sexes, which Islam discourages in view of numerous social issues that it may cause. Uchenna Cyril Eze and Chai Har Lee(2012) say advertisements not just they promote culturally incompatible look, they propose scenarios that are not worthy of open discussion (2012). Some advertisements use the words female contraception, a term which is not openly debated in Pakistani society. Advertisements contest the values of the Muslim civilization. The content may be perfect for the western society but many Pakistanis shy away, considering it immoral. The models wear socially unacceptable clothes in many skincare and cosmetic advertisements (Eze, & Lee, 2012). The ethical dilemma starts with the acculturation of young women as Pakistani youth values celebrities high in their lives and many young women aspire to be like them. Young viewers neglect their religious obligations and traditional identity in mimicking their conduct that triggers chaos, confusion and depression among those who cannot follow them under the societal pressures. Pakistan though is part of the Islamic world, follows the economic system of capitalist societies that is based on profit making policies and rejects the Islamic framework for business and business ethics (Kothari, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

This study uses the divine command and contemporary advertising theories to examine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables: control, culture and emotion from the Islamic perspective, assuming that the governmental control on advertising would protect the youth and young women from the emotional influence of western culture, and advertisements produced in context of local culture and religion will keep the traditions intact. The conceptual map for the study is displayed here below:

Hypotheses

- H1: Western culture is negatively influencing Pakistani culture through advertisements from an Islamic perspective.
- H2: Advertisement inspires negative emotions in young women from an Islamic viewpoint.

H3: Governmental control is essential for guiding Pakistani advertisements from an Islamic view point.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The research uses the quantitative method for data collection from a sample of 250 students of age group 16 to 27 years mostly enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate degree programs at three universities in Lahore and Karachi that include the Lahore School of Economics, University of Central Punjab and University of Karachi. The students anonymously responded to an online survey questionnaire on voluntary basis. The data is analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Procedure

A sample study was randomly administered to about 250 students to see if Pakistani youth comprehends the items concerning the dilemma of ethics advertisers. While about 50 students did not respond, the feedback from 200 respondents was filtered after an initial screening. The researchers excluded the responses of 17 students from the study as they had selected more than one, or all options as correct, or had not submitted their forms. 183 survey questionnaires were used at the final stage for data analysis. The survey questionnaire included an explanatory paragraph at the start that explained the objective of this study to the students. The instructions at the start of the questionnaire briefed the respondents about the ethical issues and gave them the choice to not participate in the study, or decline to respond at any time in case of discomfort. The collected data was entered into SPSS 20.0 and analyzed to find out the replies to the research questions and hypotheses of this study.

Sampling

The sample comprised of 250 students enrolled at three universities in Lahore and Karachi. The data was collected by sending the link to the online survey questionnaire to students through personal contacts and inner circle people at the universities. They helped in circulating the information about the survey among various groups of students enrolled in various degree programs. 183 students comprising 81 (44%) female and 102 (55.7%) male respondents participated in the final study. 70 respondents (38.3%) belonged to the age group 19-21 years, 69 respondents (37.7%) belonged to the age group 22-24 years, 40 respondents (21.9%) belonged to the age group 25-27 years, and four respondents (2.2%) belonged to the age group 16-18 years. 110 respondents (60.1%) were seniors, completing their bachelor degrees while 65 respondents (35.5%) were completing their Masters and

M. Phil degrees. The remaining eight respondents (4.4%) were either diploma students or in high school.

Sampling Techniques

The researchers used the random sampling method for data collection from students on voluntary basis.

Instrument

The instrument comprised of four demographic and 11 five point Likert Rating Scale questions. A four items scale was used to measure the influence of culture in advertisements on viewers, a three items scale for measuring the influence of emotions in advertisements on viewers, a four items scale for measuring the influence of governmental control on advertisements. The researchers used the five-point rating scale ranging from (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree to (5) Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was created for studying the youth's opinion about acculturation effect on young women in context of the link among Pakistani advertising, Islam and culture after closely examining content of Pakistani advertisements and different researches (Usman, Saqib, Muhammad, & Tahir, 2010; Eze, & Lee, 2012). The researchers adapted (Sloane, & Patricia, 1999, on emotions; Kadir, & Al-Aidar, 2015, on culture and control) and created a variation of scales, focusing on gender concerns, and provocation and control issues of Pakistani advertisements.

This study focuses on gendered opinion of Pakistani youth about the effects of advertisements on young women. Conducted during the pandemic, the survey questionnaire intends to measure either the control issues or influence of advertisements on gender norms and gender stereotyping: 1a) if women feel compelled to adopt foreign style after watching advertisements, b) if women imitate foreign culture shown in advertisements, c) would the respondents be more comfortable with the look if women complied with the values of Islam in advertisements, d) if women's foreign look in advertisements leaves bad impression about the Pakistani culture; 2a) if advertisements promote gender stereotyping, b) if advertisements encourage young women to dress in un-Islamic ways, c) if advertisements encourage young women to adopt a provocative or superficial westernized look to impress others (thus, ignore the interest of their families or eastern culture/structure where the interest or honor of a family is joint); 3a) if government should strictly censor advertisements for the Pakistani market, b) if advertising poses more dangers to Islamic values than print media, c) if the frequency of provocative advertisements affects the respondent's mind, d) if provocative advertisements attract viewers more than normal advertisements. The questionnaire was designed to get answers to the three variables that affect the advertising in Pakistan. Culture represents society or country; viewers get emotionally connected to advertisements; control pertains to the effect of the law on advertising in Pakistan. The tool is useful for measuring the youth's concerns about

the strong influence of western culture on young women through advertisements and their responses would help in preparing an action plan for the future.

Results and Discussion

The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). It was inserted into SPSS version 20 and analyzed. The scree plot was used to determine the number of factors to maintain in the exploratory factor analysis (FA). The skewness and kurtosis tests were run and skewness measured the degree and direction of asymmetry and kurtosis defined how heavily the tails of the distribution differed from the tails of a normal distribution. It explained whether the tails of the given distribution contained extreme values or not. After these tests, the factor analysis test was run which is a technique to reduce the large number of variables into fewer numbers of factors. The process gave the maximum common variance from all the variables and put them in a common score.

Culture

Table 1
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.638	.640	4

The acceptable level of reliability for culture shows that 0.640 is a good level because the Cronbach Alpha higher than 0.95 is not considered good as it may indicate redundancy.

Emotions

Table 2
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.669	.670	3

The acceptable level of reliability for emotions shows that 0.670 is a good level with three question items.

Control

Table 3
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.667	.668	4

The acceptable level of reliability for control shows that 0.668 is a good level with four question items.

Advertisements

Table 4
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.598	.598	2

The acceptable level of reliability for advertisements shows that 0.598 is a good level with two question items.

Table 5
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.828	
Approx. Chi-Square	561.409	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	78
	Sig.	.000

The KMO measures the sampling of adequacy which is used to find the differences between magnitudes of the observed correlation coefficients in relation to the magnitudes of the partial correlation coefficients. Large KMO values such as 0.75 to 0.8 are good because they show that the correlations between the factors are good. The Bartlett's test of sphericity is used to test the correlation hypothesis between two variables. The hypothesis of correlation matrix shows identity matrix. The significance should be less than 0.05 as is in this research. It shows that the variables are correlated and the factor analysis can be done.

Factor Analysis

The researchers used the factor analysis technique to reduce a large number of variables into fewer factors. This technique extracted maximum common variance and put all variables into a common score. As an index of all variables, we used this score for further analysis. Though numerous methods were accessible, the researchers used Principal Component Analysis being most common. It extracted the maximum variance and put them into the first factor. After removing variance explained by the first factors, it extracted maximum variance for the second factor, and then up to the last factor.

Table 6
Total Variance Explained

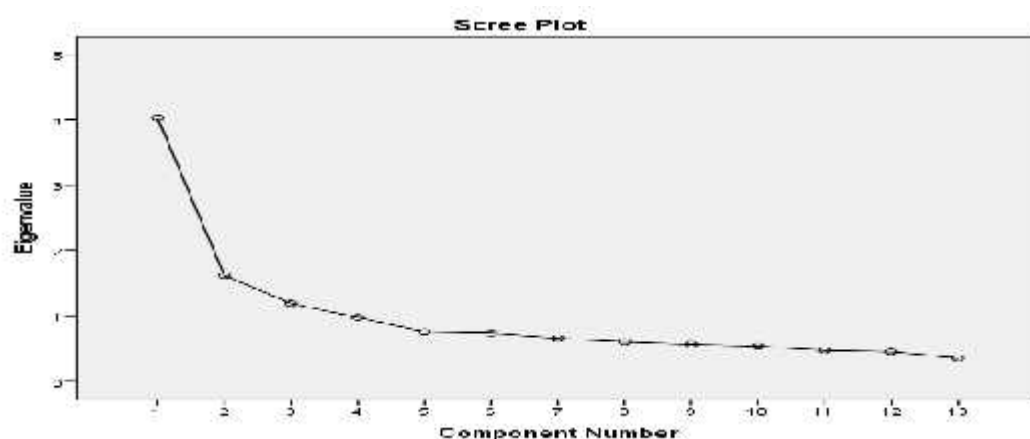
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	4.028	30.983	30.983	4.028	30.983	30.983	3.017
2	1.620	12.461	43.443	1.620	12.461	43.443	2.327
3	1.194	9.182	52.625	1.194	9.182	52.625	2.864
4	.985	7.576	60.201				
5	.762	5.860	66.061				
6	.741	5.703	71.764				
7	.660	5.076	76.840				
8	.608	4.681	81.520				
9	.569	4.379	85.899				
10	.540	4.157	90.057				
11	.479	3.685	93.742				
12	.456	3.506	97.248				
13	.358	2.752	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

With 13 input items, the Principle Component Analysis initially extracted three factors which had an Eigen value greater than 1. Each factor has a quality score called an Eigen value. Only components with high Eigen values are likely to represent a real underlying factor. This table shows three actual factors with Eigen values greater than 1 were extracted. The percentage of variance column explains how much of the total variability in all of the variables can be accounted for by each of these factors. The factor 1 accounts for 30.983% of the variability in all 13 variables and so on.

Scree Plot



The scree plot shows the Eigen values on the y-axis and the number of factors on the x-axis. It displays a downward curve. The point where the slope of the curve is clearly leveling off (the “elbow”) indicates the number of factors that are generated by the analysis. In the above table, a cut-off of an Eigen value ≥ 1 gives seven factors. Out of 13 variables, the scree plot shows three variables with an Eigen value of more than 1.

Table 7
Correlations

		Culture	Emotions	Control	Advertisements
Culture	Pearson Correlation	1	.455**	.320**	.604**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N		183	183	183
Emotions	Pearson Correlation		1	.253**	.453**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.001	.000
	N			183	183
Control	Pearson Correlation			1	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000
	N				183
Advertisements	Pearson Correlation				1
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	183	183	183	183

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The researchers investigated the relationship among the variables concerning the culture, emotions, and control of advertisements using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The analysis revealed that there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedascity.

Table 8
Summary of Results

H1: Western culture is negatively influencing Pakistani culture through advertisements from an Islamic perspective.	Accepted
H2: Advertisements inspire negative emotions in young women from an Islamic viewpoint.	Accepted
H3: Governmental control is essential for guiding Pakistani advertisements from an Islamic view point.	Accepted

Discussion

The researchers intended to draw results clearly showing gendered opinion about the impact of advertisements on young Pakistani women and culture, and the need for the control. The study finds that respondents think it is essential to implement controls on the advertising agencies. The Islamic principles would add

local value to advertisements and give an ethically correct message to young women to follow the norms of eastern culture, and not the trends of western culture. Advertisements strongly influence the minds of youth and acculturation is seen in young Pakistani women. Thus, the respondents believe advertisers should strive to make their advertisements more suitable for Pakistani culture and the country.

Conclusion

The independent factors such as culture, emotion, and control were used to analyze the impact of advertising on young women and youth against the perspective of Islamic values. The results show that the state shall take into consideration the responses of youth who are not comfortable with how advertising agencies and companies promote the sale of products through advertisements that are not in line with the Islamic principles they have been taught since birth. The youth seems concerned that there is no impact of local culture on advertising campaigns or their makers. In Pakistan, there are a total of 138 advertising agencies and not one of them is following the Islamic guidelines which should have been their priority. Advertisers have the support of the film and media industries. Together, they can have a huge impact on young women and youth by not emphasizing westernization in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Advertising is one of the largest industries in the country that is generating lots of revenue to finance itself and to contribute to Pakistan's economy. The local culture is very rich yet ignored, and any control by Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, Pakistan Advertising Association, or other department of government will be useful.

The development and expansion in the urban areas has brought cultural invasion that has reduced the importance of the religious values and Islamic culture in young women's lives. It has merged local culture in western culture in a manner that no one can recognize the new culture as their own. The advertising industry should focus on bringing change at every level, and seriously consider the needs of youth in Pakistan. The organizations and companies that pay for the advertisements should invest less in western style modernization and more in preserving and updating the local culture, keeping in view the effects of advertisements on the local community.

This research on culture, emotions and control shows celebrities convey emotional messages to both genders through advertisements but not promote local culture which is an ethical responsibility of marketers. The control is needed to the extent of providing guidelines for the production of advertisements by the agencies. This study adds the Islamic perspective to research on the impact of advertising on culture, and its relationship to the ethical controls. Many other aspects can be added to the study of the ethical dilemma in advertising in Pakistan. A study of the response on the limits Islam puts on the exaggeration of product attributes beyond reality, or a study if the divine principles provide the best guide as to the use of truthful information in advertisements would be worthwhile. Some true information advertisements of Jam-e-Shirin by Qarshi Industries Private Ltd. Pakistan created cash register ring in its early days, which indicates that the true information is equally good or sometimes produces better advertising. Pakistani youth thinks Pakistani advertisements should look different from

the western advertisements and maintain the local identity that should not get lost in the western cultural invasion.

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