

# ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES RELATED TO ADVERTISEMENT AFFECTED BY GENDER DIFFERENCES OF CONTROVERSIAL PRODUCT IN KOTA CITY

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**Abstract :** In today's bloodthirsty world, accomplishment of any association depends on the success of its advertising practices. That's why local as well as MNC's extremely invest in advertising campaigns to promote their products and increase profits. Advertising agencies use diverse kinds of attractive advertising appeals such as sexist images, adventures, romantic scenes and words etc. to attract the consumers and capture maximum market profits. In doing so, they frequently create utilize of such advertising appeals which do not conform to the norms and cultural values of a particular country. Such advertisements are considered controversial as general public cannot freely and openly discuss them. This creates a sense of offensiveness in the eyes of consumers towards that particular advertisement and connected product. This Research design is exploratory in nature and shall contain surveys and the study is undertaken in KOTA city. Both primary and secondary data's are used. Primary data are collected through fill questionnaires and secondary data are collected through books, journals, magazines, articles, papers, internet old survey reports etc. The researcher has used Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, Z-test, ANOVA test for analysis purpose. Population of study students included male and female in equal ratio (professional and non professional students). . The survey was carried on around 300 respondents from different graduates' student from Kota city, Rajasthan and the investigation was completed to study the analysis of social and ethical issues related to advertisement affected by their gender differences of controversial product. It aims to make sense of the ethical decision making (EDM) that emerges from the interplay between practitioners engaged in the creation, clearance and regulation of controversial advertising campaigns. The problem of controversial advertising differs according to diverse stakeholder perspectives. Parents are concerned about, the use of violent or highly sexualized images to which their children are exposed.

**IndexTerms - Advertising, Advertising standards, Advertising effectiveness, Consumer attitudes**

## I. INTRODUCTION

In topical years there has been a mounting numeral of advertisements being transmit, printed or exposed to the public that are for products measured by various to be controversial, or socially sensitive, and the description of controversial descriptions in advertisements. Advertising is used for communing business information to the present and prospective customers. It frequently presents information concerning the advertising firm, its product qualities, place of accessibility of its products, etc. Advertisement is indispensable for both the sellers and the buyers. However, it is more important for the sellers. In the modern age of large scale production, producers cannot think of pushing sale of their products without advertising them. Advertisement supplements personal selling to a great extent. Advertising has acquired great importance in the modern world where tough competition in the market and fast changes in technology, we find fashion and taste in the customers.

Various types of products, both goods and services, have been suggested by past studies as being controversial when advertised. This includes cigarettes, alcohol, contraceptives, underwear, and political advertising. Academic research in this area has described these products as: "unmentionables", "socially sensitive products", "decent products", or "controversial products"

The issue of controversial or offensive advertising has been raised in western countries (Wilson and West, 1981; Rehman and Brooks, 1987; Shao, 1993; Fahy et al., 1995; Barnes and Dotson, 1990; Crosier and Erdogan, 2001), but little has focused on Australasian countries (Waller, 1999; Waller and Fam, 2000).

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**2.1 Why Ethics in Business:** Ethical crisis is quite evident in both private and public sectors : Politics, governance, management services, finance, banking, manufacturing, advertising, selling etc. There are three reasons to justify ethics in business because many times laws are insufficient and don't cover all aspects of a problem. How could tobacco companies in US have been protected by the law for decades until the settlement in 1997, when the industry agreed to pay \$368.5 billion for the first 25 years and then \$15 billion a year indefinitely to compensate US for the costs of health care for tobacco related illnesses?

### **2.2 Business Ethics in Social environment:**

Ethics may be defined as a set of moral principles that distinguish what is right from what is wrong. It is a normative field because it prescribes what one should do or abstain from doing; the term most closely related to ethics in the social environment. There are several terms closely related to ethics in a social system as: goodness, righteousness, justice, truth and right, piety and so on.

### 2.3 Contemporary Advertising and Social Ethical System:

In the twenty first century, the world has experienced two major economic systems i.e. Capitalism and Socialism. Capitalistic system emphasizes on free market economy where actions are governed by individuals' own efforts. Where profit maximization is the central objective and economic development is the ultimate goal of human life. On the other hand, communistic system empowers the state and bureaucracy and gives rise to unequal allocation of resources and results in individual inefficiency.

### 2.4 Advertising of Controversial Products:

Controversial products are the products which, when advertised, create a sense of offence, disgust in the eyes of the customers. They are also called "un-mentionable" and "socially sensitive products".

**2.5 Attitudes towards Offensive Advertising:** There is increasing interest of researchers to assess the attitude of the consumers towards advertising practices. Researchers and scholars have conducted studies related to offensive attitudes of consumers towards advertising campaigns that do not conform to the norms and values of the society. A study on Malaysian Muslim attitudes towards offensive advertising found that religiosity significantly affects the views of respondents on those advertisements which are religion sensitive and controversial in nature.

This study will attempt to identify factors that are responsible for offensive attitude of consumers towards various advertising campaigns of controversial products. It is based on the insights taken from previous studies. On one hand, it attempts to assess the level of offensiveness of consumers towards advertising campaigns of various controversial products; while on the other hand, it attempts to measure their religious perceptions and nature of advertising appeals that create offensiveness in the minds of the consumers. It also aims to see whether gender differences exist in the level of offensiveness and religious perceptions of consumers.

## III. RESEARCH PROBLEM

This paper attempts to explore the ethical issues in the contemporary advertising campaigns of some of the controversial products in India (Kota city). The research aims to see the offensive behavior of consumers towards advertisements of some selected controversial products and how it is affected by their gender differences and the nature of advertising appeals used in the advertisements of controversial products.

### 3.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To explain that males and females significantly differ in their perceptions towards nature of advertising appeals.
2. To explain that males and females significantly differ in their level of offensiveness towards controversial products.

### 3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

#### 3.2.1 Aim

This research aims to investigate how level of offensiveness towards controversial advertisements is affected by the religious perceptions of the consumers, their gender differences and the nature of advertising appeals used in advertisements.

#### Hypothesis Development:

- H1: Males and females significantly differ in their perceptions towards nature of advertising appeals.  
H2: Males and females significantly differ in their level of offensiveness towards controversial products.

### 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 3.3.1 Type of Research Design

This Research design is exploratory in nature and shall contain surveys and detail findings and inquiries from different students included male and female in equal ratio (professional and non professional students).

#### 3.3.2 Universe

The Universe in research study is finite. In finite universe, the number of items is certain. In this research study, the Universe is Kota.

**3.3.3 Sample type:** - under this study I used probability based Stratified sampling type.

**3.3.4 Sampling unit:** - Out of the finite universe the researcher has selected 300 graduates' students.

#### 3.3.5 Data collection:

**Primary data** are collected through fill questionnaires and **secondary data** are collected through books, journals, magazines, articles, papers, internet old survey reports etc.

### 3.3.6 Data Analysis

Data was coded into SPSS software and tested for its validity and reliability. Descriptive statistics as well as correlation and t-tests were applied to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics contain frequency distribution of each item, its mean, standard deviation (S.D.) and co-efficient of variation (C.V.).

## IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

**Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents**

Gender	N	Percentage
Male	150	50.0
Female	150	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.2: Age of Respondents**

Age (In Years)	N	Percentage
7 to 20 Years	132	44.0
21 to 24 Years	168	56.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.3: Respondents' Preferred Media to Access Advertisement**

Preferred Media	N	Percentage
Television	32	10.7
Newspaper/Magazines	6	2.0
Internet	21	7.0
All	241	80.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.4: Respondents' View about Level of Offensiveness towards Controversial Products Advertisements**

Product	Not at all Offensive	Slightly Offensive	Somewhat Offensive	Moderately Offensive	Extremely Offensive	Mean	S.D.	C.V.
Alcohol	6	33	168	78	15	3.21	0.78	0.24
Cigarettes	33	78	96	81	12	2.87	1.057	0.37
Condoms	0	0	171	129	0	3.43	0.496	0.14
Female contraceptives	39	99	105	57	0	2.6	0.94	0.36
Female hygiene products	18	6	138	138	0	3.32	0.787	0.24
Female underwear	24	123	150	3	0	2.44	0.654	0.27
Male underwear	0	0	105	132	63	3.86	0.736	0.19
Political parties	0	0	159	120	21	3.54	0.624	0.18
Sexual diseases (AIDS, STD prevention)	9	54	174	63	0	2.97	0.715	0.24
Weight loss programs	9	63	123	90	15	3.13	0.903	0.29

Religious Denominations	0	9	183	108	0	3.33	0.531	0.16
Beef & Allied Products	3	33	174	90	0	3.17	0.65	0.21

The respondents were presented with the list of products for which they indicated their level of offence. With a midpoint of 3 on the Likert scale, almost all the products were perceived to be offensive, except Cigarettes, Female contraceptives, Female underwear and Sexual diseases. Male underwear was perceived to be most offensive when advertised, followed by Political Parties, Condoms and Religious Denominations. Co-efficient of variation (C.V) is an important measure to assess the relative variation in the variable. Its value was found to be the least one in case of Condoms (0.14) while highest one in case of Cigarettes (0.37). It means that responses have highest concentration across the mean value in case of condoms.

**Table 4.5: Gender wise Respondents' View about Level of Offensiveness towards Controversial Products**

**Advertisements**

Product	Males		Females	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Alcohol	3.66	0.767	2.76	0.473
Cigarettes	3.58	0.83	2.16	0.733
Condoms	3.46	0.5	3.4	0.492
Female contraceptives	1.94	0.735	3.26	0.596
Female hygiene products	3.1	0.947	3.54	0.5
Female underwear	2.22	0.703	2.66	0.516
Male underwear	3.94	0.707	3.78	0.759
Political parties	3.6	0.635	3.48	0.61
Sexualdiseases (AIDS, STD prevention)	3.08	0.629	2.86	0.777
Weight loss programs	2.82	0.844	3.44	0.855
Religious Denominations	3.44	0.498	3.22	0.542
Beef & Allied Products	3.2	0.568	3.14	0.724

The results were further categorized according to the gender of respondents as presented in table shows according to male respondents the most offensive advertisements are of Male underwear (Mean Score=3.94) followed by Alcohol (Mean Score=3.66), Cigarettes (Mean Score=3.58) and Condoms (Mean Score=3.46). As per the female respondents advertisements of Male underwear (Mean Score=3.78) are most offensive followed by Female hygiene products (Mean Score=3.54), Political parties (Mean Score=3.48) and Weight loss programs (Mean Score=3.44). As per males the advertisements of Female contraceptives (Mean Score=1.94) are least offensive while according to females advertisements of Cigarettes (Mean Score=2.16) are least offensive.

**Table 4.6: Respondents' Overall perception about Offensiveness of Controversial Products Advertisements**

Level of Offensiveness	N	Percentage
Not at all Offensive	0	0.0
Slightly Offensive	6	2.0
Somewhat Offensive	246	82.0
Moderately Offensive	48	16.0

Extremely Offensive	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean</b>	37.87	
<b>S.D.</b>	2.485	

The table shows that, according to majority of respondents (N=246, Percentage=82) the advertisements of controversial products are somewhat offensive while rest of the respondents (N=48, Percentage=16) have considered these advertisements moderately offensive. The mean score (37.87) projects that respondents have perceived these advertisements offensive.

**Table 4.7: Gender Wise Respondents' Overall perception about Offensiveness of Controversial Products Advertisements**

Level of Offensiveness	Males		Females	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Not at all Offensive	0	0.0	0	0.0
Slightly Offensive	0	0.0	6	4.0
Somewhat Offensive	129	86.0	117	78.0
Moderately Offensive	21	14.0	27	18.0
Extremely Offensive	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean</b>	38.04		37.7	
<b>S.D.</b>	2.288		2.664	

The table shows the level of offensiveness perceived by male & female respondents towards advertisements of controversial products. It can be observed that males have considered the controversial products advertisements more offensive as compared to female respondents.

**Table 4.8: Gender Wise Respondents' Perceptions towards Nature of Advertising Appeals**

Advertising Appeals	Males		Females	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Racist Image	3.38	0.598	3.5	0.502
Violence	3.24	0.62	3.3	0.576
Indecent Language	4.06	0.735	4.34	0.622
Sexist Image	4.52	0.501	4.2	0.635
Nudity	4.04	0.75	3.92	0.719
Anti-Social Behavior	3.46	0.5	3.54	0.5
Western/US Images	4.24	0.652	4.2	0.777
Use of Unethical Practices	3.84	0.733	3.76	0.766
Health & Safety Issues	2.96	0.601	2.72	0.667

The results were further categorized according to the gender of respondents as presented in table show according to male respondents the most offensive advertisement appeal is Sexist Image (Mean Score=4.52) followed by Western/US Images (Mean Score=4.24), Indecent Language (Mean Score=4.06) and Nudity (Mean Score=4.04). As per the female respondents Indecent Language (Mean Score=4.34) is the major reason of offensiveness followed by Sexist Image (Mean Score=4.2), Western/US

Images (Mean Score=4.2) and Nudity (Mean Score=3.92). As per all the respondents the least offensive advertisement appeal is Health & Safety Issues.

#### 4.1 Hypothesis Testing

**H<sub>01</sub>: Males and females do not differ in their perceptions towards nature of advertising appeals**

**H: Males and females significantly differ in their perceptions towards nature of advertising appeals**

In this section discussed the perception of respondents towards the nature of advertising appeals, where it was found that according to respondents these advertisement appeals are causing the offensiveness in the advertisements of controversial products. To measure the difference in the opinion of male & female respondents' -test was applied and results received are presented in table given below:-

**Table 4.9: t-test Result to measure significant difference in Males and Females perceptions towards nature of advertising appeals**

Advertisement Appeal	Males		Females		t-value	p-value	Significance
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			
Racist Image	3.38	0.598	3.5	0.502	1.882	0.061	Not Significant
Violence	3.24	0.62	3.3	0.576	0.868	0.386	Not Significant
Indecent Language	4.06	0.735	4.34	0.622	3.562	0.000	Significant
Sexist Image	4.52	0.501	4.2	0.635	4.846	0.000	Significant
Nudity	4.04	0.75	3.92	0.719	1.415	0.158	Not Significant
Anti-Social Behavior	3.46	0.5	3.54	0.5	1.385	0.167	Not Significant
Western/US Images	4.24	0.652	4.2	0.777	0.483	0.63	Not Significant
Use of Unethical Practices	3.84	0.733	3.76	0.766	0.924	0.356	Not Significant
Health & Safety Issues	2.96	0.601	2.72	0.667	3.275	0.001	Significant

Level of Significance = 5%

The results reveal that significant difference exists in the perception of males & females for three advertisement appeals i.e. indecent language, sexiest image and health & safety issues however for all other appeals the difference in the opinion of males & females is insignificant. As in majority of cases the t-statistic is insignificant so it can be said that Males and females do not differ in their perceptions towards nature of advertising appeals.

**H<sub>02</sub>: Males and females do not differ in their level of offensiveness towards controversial products**

**H: Males and females significantly differ in their level of offensiveness towards controversial products**

In a same line to measure significant difference in Males and Females level of offensiveness towards controversial products, t-test was applied as presented in table given below:-

**Table 4.10: t-test Result to measure significant difference in Males and Females level of offensiveness towards controversial products**

Product	Males		Females		t-value	p-value	Significance
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.			

Alcohol	3.66	0.767	2.76	0.473	12.231	0.000	Significant
Cigarettes	3.58	0.83	2.16	0.733	15.706	0.000	Significant
Condoms	3.46	0.5	3.4	0.492	1.048	0.295	Not Significant
Female contraceptives	1.94	0.735	3.26	0.596	17.091	0.000	Significant
Female hygiene products	3.1	0.947	3.54	0.5	5.034	0.000	Significant
Female underwear	2.22	0.703	2.66	0.516	6.177	0.000	Significant
Male underwear	3.94	0.707	3.78	0.759	1.89	0.06	Not Significant
Political parties	3.6	0.635	3.48	0.61	1.67	0.094	Not Significant
Sexual diseases (AIDS, STD prevention)	3.08	0.629	2.86	0.777	2.694	0.007	Significant
Weight loss programs	2.82	0.844	3.44	0.855	6.32	0.000	Significant
Religious Denominations	3.44	0.498	3.22	0.542	3.661	0.000	Significant
Beef & Allied Products	3.2	0.568	3.14	0.724	0.799	0.425	Not Significant

Level of Significance = 5%

In majority of cases the t-statistic is found to be significant at 5% level of significance which leads to the rejection of hypothesis and it can be concluded that Males and females significantly differ in their level of offensiveness towards controversial products.

## V. FINDINGS:

Firstly students were asked to disclose their demographic profile. Equal numbers of respondents from both the genders as well as from both types of courses (professional & non-professional) were selected. On the basis of age respondents were divided into two categories i.e. 17 to 20 years (44%) and 21 to 24 years (56%). It was found that maximum numbers of respondents were living with their families.

For this study 12 controversial products were taken i.e. Alcohol, Cigarettes, Condoms, Female contraceptives, Female hygiene products, Female underwear, Male underwear, Political parties, Sexual diseases(AIDS, STD prevention), Weight loss programs, Religious Denominations and Beef & Allied Products. All the respondents of the sample have seen advertisements of all these controversial products.

The respondents were presented with the list of above mentioned products for which they indicated their level of offence. With a midpoint of 3 on the Likert scale, almost all the products were perceived to be offensive, except Cigarettes, Female contraceptives, Female underwear and Sexual diseases. Male underwear was perceived to be most offensive when advertised, followed by Political Parties, Condoms and Religious Denominations. The results were further categorized according to the gender of respondents. According to male respondents the most offensive advertisements are of Male underwear followed by Alcohol, Cigarettes and Condoms. As per the female respondents advertisements of Male underwear are most offensive followed by Female hygiene products, Political parties and Weight loss programs. From the mean score it can be concluded that males have considered the controversial products advertisements more offensive as compared to female respondents.

From the hypotheses testing following results were drawn:-

1. Offensive nature of advertising appeal is positively associated with the level of offensiveness towards controversial products.
2. Males and females do not differ in their perceptions towards nature of advertising appeals.
3. Males and females significantly differ in their level of offensiveness towards controversial products.

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