

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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ADVERTISING ETHICS AND SURROGATE ADVERTISING PRACTICES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

MONIKA BANGARI
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
UTTARANCHAL UNIVERSITY
ARCADIA GRANT


ABSTRACT

Advertising increases awareness about products as well as also enhances the choices for taking rational decisions for consumers. It leads to all sorts of healthy and unhealthy practices by distributors and marketers. Marketers use surrogate advertisements and brand extensions for propagating the banned products like alcohol and tobacco. Ethics in advertising means a set of well-defined principles which govern the ways of communication taking place between the seller and the buyer. The survey was conducted to gauge the extent of damage done through surrogate advertising. The study helps in exploring the minds of consumers, their attitudes about this kind of advertising and their response to it. Hence with this inspection the required data was collected from 82 respondents using a questionnaire method undergoing a judgmental sampling. To test the objectivity of the data collected Karl Pearson's Chi Squared test was used to arrive at possible suggestions required for the study. The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Research (SPSS). It has been observed that the consumers those are highly educated are aware with the concept and pros and cons of surrogate advertisements. Hence there is a strong association between the education and awareness of the impact of surrogate ads. Almost the respondents think that the surrogate ads are unethical.

KEYWORDS

surrogate advertisements, banned products, awareness, unethical, advertising ethics.

INTRODUCTION

 surrogate advertising is one of the emerging ethical issues in advertising now days. Advertising is the mirror to the society in which it works; it reflects the ethics and values of that society. Advertising improves our standard of living. Advertising protects the consumers by provide them information about the products and forcing the manufacturers to maintain the quality. Ethics means a set of moral principles which govern a person's behavior or how the activity is conducted. And advertising means a mode of communication between a seller and a buyer.

Thus ethics in advertising means a set of well-defined principles which govern the ways of communication taking place between the seller and the buyer. Ethics is the most important feature of the advertising industry. Though there are many benefits of advertising but then there are some points which don't match the ethical norms of advertising.

An ethical ad is the one which doesn't lie, doesn't make fake or false claims and is in the limit of decency.

Now days, ads are more exaggerated and a lot of puffing is used. It seems like the advertisers lack knowledge of ethical norms and principles. They just don't understand and are unable to decide what is correct and what is wrong.

The main area of interest for advertisers is to increase their sales, gain more and more customers, and increase the demand for the product by presenting a well decorated, puffed and colorful ad. They claim that their product is the best, having unique qualities than the competitors, more cost effective, and more beneficial. But most of these ads are found to be false, misleading customers and unethical.

The advertisements of alcohol, tobacco products, cigarettes are opposed by majority of the people in the society. Hence the Government had imposed a ban on advertisements of these products in the media in the year 2002. As a reaction to the directive of Government, the liquor & tobacco majors sought other ways of endorsing their products. They have found an alternative path of advertising through which they can keep on reminding their liquor brands to their customers. They have introduced various other products with the same brand name. In order to promote alcohol drinks, tobacco products, cigarettes etc. duplicating of brand image is done to promote another product. It is done by complementary products such as soda, fruit juice, music cd's, mouth fresheners etc. The advertisements like this comes under **SURROGATE ADVERTISING**.

SURROGATE ADVERTISEMENT

Surrogate advertisement resembles the original product or could be different product altogether but using the established brand of the original product. The sponsoring of sports and cultural events and other activities are also coming under surrogate advertising. Such advertisements and sponsorships helps in brand recall.

The opinion of consumer is very important for all kinds of research associated with surrogate advertising. It's the consumer who ultimately decides whether to act upon being exposed to a particular type of advertising or not. Thus, I have undertaken this study in the field of surrogate advertising by exploring the minds of consumers, their attitudes about this kind of advertising and their response to it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr. Abhijeet Agashe, Ms. Harleen Vij in his article—Ethical Issues in Surrogate Advertisement & its Impact on Brand Building indicated that—Direct marketing of surrogate products are totally unethical and hence been prohibited by the government. But it's the companies are now following the newest trend called the 'surrogate advertisements' i.e., marketing unethical products ethically'.

Varalakshmi.T in her article A Empirical Study On Surrogate Advertisements: A Pioneering Trend indicated that Surrogate advertisements are boon to the marketers and surrogate ads emerging itself as a loophole challenge to the Government's action.

Dr. S. G. Khawas Patil, Laxmikant S. Hurme in the article Surrogate Advertising: A Successful marketing strategy for liquor and whisky products indicated that intention behind this ad is to popularize the main products that are banned to shown directly.

Dr.M.Nagamani, Mrs.S.Asha in their research paper Advertising Ethics-An Indian Perspective reveals that the ethical aspect of Indian advertisement is extremely important for restoration of our culture, ethics, norms and heritage. The lack of implementation of the laws are pouring in more and more unethical and obscene advertisements. Hence proper implementation of laws is highly required in our country.

ASCI (Advertising Standard Council of India) has clarified "that as per the State Governments code, the mere use of the brand name or co-name that may also be applied to a product for which advertising is restricted or prohibited is not reason to find the advertisement objectionable provided the ad is not objectionable and the product is produced and distributed in reasonable quantities and the objectionable advertisement does not contain direct or indirect sale or consumption for the product which is not allowed to be advertised"

Pheraphol Kherathithanakann in the article IS ADVERTISING ETHICAL? Studies the impact of advertising in the society and suggest that if the accountable people as advertisers and the governors work cooperatively and think about the consequences of what they are doing, these problems will be diminished in the future.

Sanabatappa says opening of retail (MSIL) outlets and campaign against brewing of country liquor have led to the hike in sales. But de-addiction experts beg to differ. "Going by the sheer number of cases we are getting, alcohol consumption has increased over the years and is no longer considered taboo. Most people, especially youth, like to hang out and celebrate with a drink," said N Ramamurthy, a de-addiction counselor.

The Delhi government has collected excise revenue of over Rs 3,150 crore from sale of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) in the year 2013-14, which is an increase of 10 per cent compared to the previous fiscal. "We have collected a total of Rs 3,151.63 crore in the year 2013-14 from sale of IMFL," Excise Commissioner J B Singh said.

LJ Andes, S Asma, PC Gupta, K Oswal, KM Palipudi, DN Sinha in the research paper Influence of tobacco industry advertisements and promotions on tobacco use in India: Findings from the Global Adult Tobacco Survey said that in India, evidence strongly suggests that exposure to marketing for tobacco leads to the initiation and progression of tobacco use among children and adolescents. Exposure to the marketing of tobacco products, which may take the form of advertising at the point of sale, sales or a discounted price, free coupons, free samples, surrogate advertisements, or any of several other modalities, increased prevalence of tobacco use among adults. An increasing level of exposure to direct and indirect advertisement and promotion is associated with an increased likelihood of tobacco use.

Laboni Bhakta, in the article Surrogate advertisement of Liquor in India: How Indian liquor companies game the rules reveals that this will remain to be a never ending debate when it comes to surrogate advertisement and its control. On one hand where there is inducement of having liquor, on the other hand it's all about the certain upcoming international brands which can't be stopped at all. What we need is proper regulation and not just mere regulations but also the 'fine system' must be introduced and proper licensing must be brought into the phase to regulate the ad agencies and in case if there is any portrayal of "surrogate products" one can always go to consumer forum and later the matter can be taken up by any Board and decide it accordingly.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the consumers attitude towards surrogate ads and products.
2. To know the consumers awareness towards surrogate ads.
3. To study the consumers perception towards surrogate ads as ethical or unethical.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SAMPLING PLAN

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE: Judgmental sampling.

SAMPLING TYPE: Target audience comprises those respondents who are literate & who are above the age group of 18 years.

SAMPLING SIZE: 82 Respondents.

SAMPLING AREA: Dehradun City.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research study focuses upon the advertising ethics and attitude of respondents towards surrogate advertising, and their perception towards the surrogate ads. Hence quantitative data is collected and analyzed to meet the objectives and justify the hypothesis. Percentage analysis was done to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents and Karl Pearson's Chi Square Test was used to test the objectivity of the framed hypothesis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

	Categories	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	82	100
Age	18 To 25 Years	13	15.9
	26 To 35 Years	52	63.4
	36 To 45 Years	12	14.6
	46 To 55 Years	5	6.1
Marital Status	Married	53	64.6
	Unmarried	29	35.4
Education Level	Graduate	15	18.3
	Post-Graduate	56	68.3
	Professional	11	13.4
Income Level	Below Rs 15000	4	4.9
	15000-25000	29	35.4
	25000-40000	32	39.0
	40000-60000	12	14.6
	60000 and Above	5	6.1

Demography studies the population based on factors such as age, gender, economic status, level of education, income level. The analysis presented in the above table is done carefully because the demographic characteristics helps to understand the attitude of the respondents towards surrogate advertisements. The analysis presented in the above table reveals that sample is dominated by the young category respondent ranging in the age group of 26-35 years as it contributes 63.4% in the sample. All the respondents are male and majority of them belongs to married category as it comprises of 64.4%. The sample is composed of post-graduated person earning monthly income of Rs. 25,000 to 40,000.

TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS SEEN TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL ADS

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
YES	80	97.6	97.6	97.6
NO	2	2.4	2.4	100.0
TOTAL	82	100.0	100.0	

Advertising denotes a specific attempt to popularize a specific product or service at a certain cost. It is a method of publicity. It always intentional openly sponsored by the sponsor and involves certain cost and hence is paid for. It is a common form of non- personal communication about an organization and is transmitted to a target audience through a mass medium. Survey reveals that almost all the respondents in the sample have seen the tobacco and alcohol ads.

TABLE 3: ADVERTISEMENTS OF ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE REQUIRED

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
YES	41	50.0	50.0	50.0
NO	41	50.0	50.0	100.0
TOTAL	82	100.0	100.0	

Alcohol advertising is the promotion of alcoholic beverages by alcohol producers through a variety of media. Along with tobacco advertising, it is one of the most highly regulated forms of marketing. Survey reveals that half of the respondents agree with the requirement of the advertisements of tobacco and alcohol half of them are disagree.

TABLE 4: EVALUATION OF SURROGATE ADVERTISEMENTS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BORING	1	1.2	1.2	1.2
MISLEADING	60	73.2	73.2	74.4
DISTURBING	15	18.3	18.3	92.7
PROVOKES TO RESULTING IN HIGH CONSUMPTION	6	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

From the above table it is clear that most of the respondents are evaluating surrogate advertisements are misleading in nature. False advertisements have engulfed all the sectors and the customers are getting trapped and becoming a prey to such advertisements. Though surrogate advertising are misleading it affects the consumer decision.

TABLE 5: IMPACT OF SURROGATE ADS ON CONSUMER'S CONSUMPTION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
INCREASES THE CONSUMPTION	67	81.7	81.7	81.7
NO EFFECT ON CONSUMPTION	15	18.3	18.3	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

Surrogate advertisements resemble the original product or could be a different product altogether, but using the established brand of the original product. Hence the surrogate ads always remind the core products therefore with the help of the survey we find out that surrogate ads increase the consumption of the original products.

TABLE 6: APPROPRIATE MEDIA FOR SURROGATE ADS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
TV	17	20.7	20.7	20.7
RADIO	1	1.2	1.2	22.0
BANNERS AND HOARDINGS	40	48.8	48.8	70.7
MOVIES	9	11.0	11.0	81.7
MAGAZINES	15	18.3	18.3	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

Advertisements have a strong influence in our life. We like them because they provide information and create awareness about the market. Our decisions whether to buy a product or not, is often completely influenced by the promotional activities of the companies concerned. Therefore, selection of appropriate media is one of the most important task here the Survey reveals that the appropriate media for surrogate ads are banners and hoardings.

TABLE 7: PERCEPTION TOWARDS SURROGATE ADS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
UNETHICAL	79	96.3	96.3	96.3
SHOULD BE BANNED	3	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the respondents are familiar with the concept of surrogate advertisements & hence show high level of awareness towards such ads. This surveys clears that almost all the respondents perceived that the surrogate ads are unethical and somehow harms the society.

TABLE 8: SHOULD THE AD BE BANNED

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
IS A RIGHT STEP BE BANNED	67	81.7	81.7	81.7
NO NEED OF BANNING SUCH ADS	2	2.4	2.4	84.1
NO COMMENTS	5	6.1	6.1	90.2
PRODUCTS SHOULD	8	9.8	9.8	100.0
Total	82	100.0	100.0	

Since alcohol and tobacco products are impulsive buys most of the respondents thinks that the ad for such products should be banned. If the ban on surrogate advertising comes into effect, could be a new challenge for liquor and cigarette brands. Brands will have to re-look at their advertising budgets, and maybe seek other avenues to promote their brands.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

PART-1

H₀ – Highly educated people are not familiar with the concept of surrogate ads.

H₁ - Highly educated people are familiar with the concept of surrogate ads.

EDUCATION BY CLASSIFICATION * ALCOHOL and TOBACCO PRODUCTS ADVERTISEMENTS

CROSS TABULATION					
			Awareness towards ALCOHOL and TOBACCO PRODUCTS advertisements (surrogate ads).		
			YES	NO	Total
EDUCATION BY CLASSIFICATION	GRADUATE	Count	13	2	15
		Expected Count	14.6	.4	15.0
	POST GRADUATE	Count	56	0	56
		Expected Count	54.6	1.4	56.0
	PROFESSIONAL	Count	11	0	11
		Expected Count	10.7	.3	11.0
Total		Count	80	2	82
		Expected Count	80.0	2.0	82.0

CHI-SQUARE TESTS			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.157 ^a	2	.010
Likelihood Ratio	7.025	2	.030
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.822	1	.016
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .27.

The above table shows that the respondents those are highly educated are familiar with the concept of surrogate ads. Chi square table shows that:

$$\chi^2_{cal} > \chi^2_{tab} \text{ (i.e. } 9.157 > 5.991)$$

Hence null hypothesis is rejected at 2 degree of freedom and 5% level of significance.

PART-2

H₀ – Highly educated people thinks surrogate ads are unethical.

H₁ - Highly educated people thinks surrogate ads are ethical.

EDUCATION BY CLASSIFICATION * PERCEPTION TOWARDS SURROGATE ADS

		YOUR THINKING TOWARDS SURROGATE ADS		Total	
		UNETHICAL	SHOULD BE BANNED		
POST GRADUATE	Expected Count	14.5	.5	15.0	
	Count	53	3	56	
PROFESSIONAL	Expected Count	54.0	2.0	56.0	
	Count	11	0	11	
Total	Expected Count	10.6	.4	11.0	
	Count	79	3	82	
		Expected Count	79.0	3.0	82.0

CHI-SQUARE TESTS			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.446 ^a	2	.485
Likelihood Ratio	2.341	2	.310
Linear-by-Linear Association	.023	1	.879
N of Valid Cases	82		

a. 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .40.

The above table shows that the respondents those are highly educated are familiar with the concept of surrogate ads and think that these ads are not required and unethical for the society. Both the chi square table shows that:

$$\chi^2_{cal} < \chi^2_{tab} \text{ (i.e. } 1.418 < 5.991)$$

Hence null hypothesis is accepted at 2 degree of freedom and 5% level of significance.

DISCUSSION

Pros & Cons of surrogate advertising are just like a two sides of a coin. There is no doubt that advertising attracts us in number of ways but there are also a number of controversies associated with advertising. Generally, this controversy is concerned about the impact of advertising on economy, society and ethics. In this study the impact of surrogate advertising on the consumer’s mind and their perception towards alcohol and tobacco ads are observed. Almost all of the respondents are aware with the concept of surrogate ads and thinks that these ads are unethical.

CONCLUSION

As long as tobacco and alcohol brands have a presence and are allowed to retail, they will surely seek ways to promote their products to the masses, through surrogate ads or otherwise. The survey clearly suggests that respondents are aware with the surrogate ads and their motive to remind the core product. Therefore, it up to the customers to deal with these unethical ads so that these ads should not escalate in number and start decreasing and lasts no impact on the consumption rate of alcohol and tobacco.

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