

## Effects of TV advertisement on Cultural Norms: An analysis of viewer's insights in the Kurdistan region

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: March 19, 2020</p> <p>Accepted: June 23, 2020</p> <p><b>Keywords :</b> Advertisement, TV viewers, Cultural norms, and Kurdistan Region.</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.5281/zenodo.3905074</p>	<p><i>Any advertisement targets consumers (audiences) to influence their purchasing attitudes through specific messages. In many cases, the power and the continuous repetition of these messages exceed buying attitudes to affect other norms of the culture, since they eventually target society. In recent years, this has become a controversial topic in the Kurdistan region of Iraq since the advertisement market has seen an evolution and growth in quantity and to some extent in quality. This study focuses on the impacts in which TV advertisements have on the culture by analysing viewers' insights in the Kurdistan region and also explores the viewers' attitudes towards TV advertisement. The essential data of this present study were collected through conducting a survey, where a questionnaire form with relevant questions to the topic was distributed among 150 respondents (university students) and then the data were analysed and evaluated systematically by using SPSS.</i></p>

### Introduction

With the trend to a global economy, many organizations perceive their market to be unrestricted by national boundaries. As a result, organizations have increasingly been expanding their operations outside their domestic market in order to take advantage of growth and profit opportunities (Broderick and Pickton, D, 2005 P.169).

Advertising considered an exact image of the society's reality since it reflects our live in every aspect and strongly linked to the daily living of people. Business owners usually resort to advertise in order to promote the positive aspect and good characteristics of their products and services considering the common ethics and morals of the society while overlooking the harmful or useless characteristics of the same product. This will spoil the advertisements effects, which probably allows people to absorb different new values made by the advertiser as explained recently by Raza, Bakar and Mohammad (2017). Globalization is regarded as the consequence of growth in new technologies especially in the areas of communication and transportation. Technology has created opportunities for the movement of information, goods, services and techniques as never before (Carter,S and Lee, K, 2005, P.131).

For producing an advertisement, the advertiser should be very careful and precise in identifying the norms and values of the advertisement. These advertisement's values should match or should be tied to the society's norms and values, public belief, mores and even current regulations (Chan, Tsang, & Ma, 2015); however, it is also believed that media is still pose a threat to local values and mores.

Marketing infrastructures are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers (directly or indirectly) about the products they make and sell. Marketing communications signifies the "voice" of the brand and is a means by which it can establish a discourse and build relationships with consumers. Moreover, marketing communications allow businesses to link their brands to other people, places, events, brands, experiences, feelings, etc.

The texts and contents of modern mass media are challenging the generations' old customs, traditions, and religious beliefs, which are sacred and not compromise-able. Advertisement in the present lifestyle of a specific class of society that do not reflect the norms and values of masses, have nothing to do with this lifestyle, bandage and immoral presentation. Advertising deliberately and not deliberately influences our social norms and moral values (Okazaki, & Taylor, 2013). Specific dressing, pop culture and obscenity

severely destroy the social and ethical fabric of society as noted by Devedi, (2017). Advertisement of cellular companies have hugely affected the old social and cultural set up. In the Kurdistan Region, advertisements of cellular companies are changing the social and cultural values often at large levels. For example, a few years ago, a girl having contacts with a boy was a careful taboo of Muslim society, but at present day the commercials of cellular companies have signified this relation openly and as a common practice, and due to lack of advertisement regulation in the region, cultural damaging is becoming a phenomenon because of our advertisement industry. Not only the cellular companies' TV ads, but also different companies are openly harming the norms and values of the Kurdish society. In them mean time, the depressed image of the reality is that no direct measures are taken to limit such violations of the public values by some TV ads. This paper is therefore seeks to explore the audience's insight towards violating social values and norms in TV advertisements in the perspective of the Kurdish audiences.

#### **Justification of the study**

Concerns of TV advertisements are in general sacrilegious to many norms and values in our society and this touches our society and culture. Nowadays, many foreign televisions are promoting different foreign cultures values in the Kurdistan region through advertisements. As a result, there is an intense argument that television ads are a threat to our social values and that there is not any relevant regulations to protect people from the flows of foreign advertisements. For example, we need more studies about the role of the media with regard to upholding the social and cultural order of the society. As such, the study is significant and would be basic to do follow up research in this area.

#### **Objective of the study**

The main objective of this study is to examine the receivers' insight about the effect of television advertisements on social and cultural values.

#### **Definition of the concepts**

The most prominent concepts involved in this study can be explained as below:

**Insight:** in the form of perspective, understanding, or inference. Someone may come up with an insight after a long period of thought, or abruptly out of thin air as in an epiphany or sudden understanding.

**Culture:** the customs and social behavior of the society, and business culture is the model or style of business processes within a company. The business culture determines how different levels of staff communicate.

#### **Research question:**

What is the audience's insight towards violating social and cultural norms by television advertisements?

#### **Research hypothesis**

The hypothesis for the present study is: the Audience insight is that television advertisement affecting cultural and social values damagingly".

#### **Literature review**

Nikhil Khanna (2015) discusses various theories in the arenas of communication, culture, advertising and semiotics in order to establish how they are related. The relevant theories discussed are then applied to study the selected print ads of Nike Inc. from the United States and Japan. A comparative analysis between Nike's print ads from these two markets shall help reveal the cultural differences and similarities between both the cultures, American and Japanese. Furthermore, it will reflect the advertising strategy working by Nike to effectively communicate its product in these two markets. They discussed how "cultural element" can be used as a guideline when designing advertisements for local and international markets and thereby indulging in intercultural communication.

Déterminants, et al., (2010) by their turn, examined that urbane viewpoint of children lacks in literature showed on children television advertising. Moreover, many researches reveal that children watch television programs and advertisements of their interest with more curiosity than adults (Giles, Liang, Noels, & McCann, 2001).

Kirsten, K (2015) further contended that the advertisements displayed on television have a colossal impact on the minds of the children (girls), since people in general devote a considerable proportion of their time in watching TV. It is observed that most of the television children devote 1 to 2 hours daily in watching Television. As the result shows, out of 150 participants, 38.7% (58) devote 1 to 2 hours daily in watching Television. 24.7% (37) used to watch television 3 to 4 hours and 18.7% (28) spend only half an hour in watching TV. and 10% (15) have answered they spend more than 6 hours in watching television. While only 8% (12) spend 5 to 6 hours in watching television, which they sum up in their research, and that television

advertisements inspire anti-cultural and anti-social standards and it depends on the number of hours spent in watching TV.

#### **Method and material**

The comprehensive area of survey studies includes any measurement methods that comprise asking questions to the participants. A "survey" can be in whatever forms from a short paper-and-pencil feedback form to a concentrated in-depth interview.

Survey and Quantitative researches are usually used to investigate research questions. Thus, vast adaptations of experimental designs, called quasi- experimental and non- experimental projects have been industrialized. Survey research is one of the most significant areas of measurement in applied social research. As such, this study is a quantitative research.

#### **Result and discussion:**

In this section, an analysis of the results has been provided with necessary tables to give a clear understanding of the effects of television advertisements on the cultural norms in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

Table (1) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according AGE category

Age category	Occurrences	percentages
18 to 22 years	27	28.125%
23 to 26 years	22	22.916%
27 to 30 years	26	27.083%
31 years and above	21	21.875%
Total	96	100%

Table no.1 shows that the majority of the participants are young aged between (18-22) years with a proportion of slightly more than 28%. The second place goes to the category of (27-30) years with proportion of 27% of the participants, this due to the different range of the ages among students from the sample of the study.

Table (2) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according the gender

Gender	Occurrences	percentages
Male	57	59.375%
Female	39	40.625%
Total	96	100%

The data in Table (2) show that the majority with 59.375% of the respondents is and (40.625%) were female.

Table (3) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according to (TV viewing period per day)

How much time do you watch TV per day	Occurrences	Percentages
Less than one hour	14	14.583%
One hour	37	38.541%
Two hours	24	25.00%
Three hours	11	11.458%
Four hours	6	6.250%
More than four hours	4	4.166%
Total	96	100%

According to respondents' answers, the average of those who watch TV one hour per day comes at the first place with a proportion of 38.5%. Likewise, 25% of the respondents watch TV only two hours per day. This seems that 63.5% of respondents, which is the vast majority, watch TV only for one or two hours per day and instead have devoted a part of their daily time for study and to check and view the internet, especially their accounts on social media websites through smartphones or laptops.

The results from this table show that students nowadays do not spend too much time on watching TV programs. They

Table (4) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according to reasons of watching TV

Reasons	Most of time		Sometimes		Less of time	
	Occurrences	percentages	Occurrences	percentages	Occurrences	percentages
Get entertainment	18	18.750%	34	35.416%	44	45.833%
Gather information	29	30.208%	38	39.583%	29	30.208%
Getting new ideas & perspectives	9	9.375%	27	28.125%	60	62.500%
Learning new lifestyle	20	20.833%	28	29.166%	48	50.00%
Love stories	11	11.458%	23	23.958%	62	64.583%
Enjoy documentary films	33	34.375%	48	50.00%	15	15.625%
Economy reasons	27	28.125%	35	36.358%	34	35.416%
Emotional purpose	3	3.125%	18	18.750%	75	78.125%
Spending time	29	30.208%	55	57.291%	12	12.50%
Watch advertisement	17	17.708%	24	25.00%	55	57.291%

No one is immune to the effects of the power of advertisements. Corporations and firms do not spend millions of dollars in advertising for nothing; they do so hoping to influence the audiences. According to the results, audiences have different reasons for watching TV, for example as it is shown in the table above, most of the respondents spend their time watching TV programs to enjoy documentary films (34.3%), get information (30.2%), and (28.1%) for economy reasons. Smaller proportions have other reasons in watching TV such as learning new lifestyle (20.8%), get entertainment (18.7%) and (17.7%) for watching advertisement.

Table (5) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according to the time when participants watch TV

When do you watch TV	Occurrences	Percentages
At Night	51	53.125%
At Day	15	15.625%
Both of them	30	31.250%
Total	96	100%

According to the results, the vast majority of the respondents watch TV at night with a proportion of 53.1%. While in contrast only a small proportion of the survey participants watch TV at daytime. This shows that the majority prefer to watch TV at home when they relax and get some rest.

Table (6) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according the status of watching TV

with whom do you usually watch TV	Occurrences	percentages
Alone	39	40.625%
With family	37	38.541%
With colleagues	8	8.333%
With friends	12	12.50%
Total	96	100%

According to the results from this table (table no. 6), the majority of the participants with more than 40% watch TV alone, whereas slightly more than 38% prefer to watch TV with the rest of their family members. This result reveals that the proliferation of TV, considerable channels and programs, different needs, and the economic growth nowadays in the Kurdistan region has helped people to have the chance to watch TV individually. Nonetheless, the family is remains at the priority and people devote time to gather with family for different activities such as watching TV programs at home.

Table (7) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according to the places of watching TV

Where do you usually watch TV (place)	Occurrences	percentages
At home	66	68.75%
At work	9	9.375%
Cafes	19	19.791%
friend's house	2	2.083%
Total	96	100%

The table above (table no. 7) shows that the vast majority of the participants with more than 68% proportion watch TV from their own homes. This is because people usually watch TV after work when they are at home, in addition to the fact that most of the interesting programs are usually displayed at night and at this time most of the people are at home.

Table (8) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according to the types of programs

Which of the following programs do you watch	Most of time		Sometimes		Less of time	
	Occurrences	percentages	Occurrences	percentages	Occurrences	percentages
News	34	35.416%	38	39.583%	24	25.00%
Songs and music	26	27.083%	40	41.666%	30	31.250%
Interviews / discussion	31	32.291%	33	34.375%	32	33.333%
Documentaries	36	37.500%	47	48.958%	13	13.541%
Sport	27	28.125%	38	39.583%	31	32.291%
TV series	37	38.541%	36	37.500%	23	23.958%
Movies / Films	29	30.208%	39	40.625%	28	29.166%
Advertisements	18	18.7505	26	27.083%	52	54.166%
Education and learning	22	22.916%	41	42.708%	33	34.375%
Health programs	38	39.583%	38	39.583%	20	20.833%
Life style	19	19.791%	32	33.333%	45	46.875%

As the table No. 8 shows, TV programs of health, TV series, documentaries and news accordingly with proportions of 39.5%, 38.5%, 37.5% and 35% come at the first of the most popular types of programs from the perspectives of the respondents. In the same way, a proportion of almost 49% of the respondents as it is shown in the table, sometimes watch documentary programs while education and learning programs come at the second place with slightly more than 42% in this category, and movies programs come at the third place with 40%.

Table (9) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according the language is which participants view TV

Language	Most of time		Sometimes		Less of time	
	Occurrences	percentages	Occurrences	percentages	Occurrences	percentages
Kurdish	34	35.416%	38	39.583%	24	25.00%
Arabic	17	17.708%	42	43.750%	37	38.541%
English	44	45.833%	26	27.083%	26	27.083%
Turkish	20	20.833%	27	28.125%	51	53.125%
Persian	13	13.541%	35	36.458%	48	50.00%
Others	4	4.166%	22	22.916%	70	72.916%

In fact, this table (table No. 9) shows interesting results to the researchers. It turns out that the majority of the respondents with slightly more than 45% watch these TV programs, which are in English, most of the time. While in contrast the programs with the Kurdish language come in the second place, this is because this research was applied on the students of Public Relations and Marketing, where the study is in English.

Table (10) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according the effects of advertising on society

Title	Occurrences	percentages
Yes	34	35.416%
No	23	23.958%
Sometimes	39	40.625%
Total	96	100%

For the question whether the participants think the advertisements have impacts on the society or no, the majority's answer with slightly more than 40% was sometimes advertisements affect the society and 25% of them were sure of the impacts of the advertisements on the society. If we take a look at the table shown above, we see that the vast majority of them with a proportion of almost 76% think that advertisements have effects on the society whereas only nearly 30% do not believe that the society does not affected by the advertisements.

Table (11) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according to the type of advertisement respondents watch

type of advertising	Occurrences	percentages
International	55	57.291%
Local	17	17.708%
Both of them	24	25.00%
Total	96	100%

The results from table (11) show that the majority of the respondents with proportion of more than 57%, prefer to watch only the international advertisements, while in contrast, only 17% of them watch local advertisements. It seems that Kurdish audiences not only watch Kurdish TVs, but also non-Kurdish also and thus, they exposed to the advertisements on these TVs, where to some extents their quality is higher when compared to the locals.

Table (12) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according to negative effects of advertising on the cultural norms

Range of against	Occurrences	percentages
Very greatly	6	6.250%
Greatly	7	7.291%
To some extent	38	39.358%
Not at all	26	27.083%
Do not know	19	19.791%
Total	96	100%

Overall, 51% of the respondents believed that advertisements in the Kurdistan region are against culture norms, in a way that majority of the respondents, as its shown in the table, think that the TV advertisements are to some extent against the Kurdish cultural norms. In contrast, only 26% of the participants believe that advertisements are not against cultural norms. The result from this table shows that the effects of these advertisements are negative on the aspects of culture.

Table (13) The Number of occurrences and the percentages of the research sample according the type of the cultural norms that are more affected negatively by the TV advertisements

cultural norms are more affected negatively		Very Greatly	Greatly	To some content	Not at all	Do not know
Mother Language	Occurrences	17	19	29	15	16
	percentages	17.708%	19.791%	30.208%	15.625%	16.666%
Life style	Occurrences	20	32	13	21	10
	percentages	20.833%	33.333%	13.541%	21.875%	10.416%
Clothing	Occurrences	22	28	20	17	9

	percentages	22.916%	29.166%	20.833%	17.108%	9.375%
Social value	Occurrences	26	26	14	19	11
	percentages	27.083%	27.083%	14.583%	19.791%	11.458%
Religion	Occurrences	16	29	25	13	13
	percentages	16.666%	30.208%	26.041%	13.541%	13.541%
Politeness and Respect	Occurrences	11	18	23	18	26
	percentages	11.458%	18.750%	23.958%	18.750%	27.083%
Folkways and Custom	Occurrences	24	37	22	7	6
	percentages	25.00%	38.541%	22.916%	7.291%	6.250%
Gender and Equality	Occurrences	20	12	29	19	16
	percentages	20.833%	12.50%	30.208%	19.791%	16.666%
National Affiliation	Occurrences	15	18	32	5	26
	percentages	15.625%	18.750%	33.333%	5.208%	27.083%
Mores	Occurrences	26	33	20	6	11
	percentages	27.083%	34.375%	20.833%	6.250%	11.458%
prohibited	Occurrences	22	26	26	9	13
	percentages	22.916%	27.083%	27.083%	9.375%	13.541%
Laws	Occurrences	25	30	27	3	11
	percentages	26.041%	31.250%	28.125%	3.125%	11.458%

Cultural norms consist of many aspects of our life. When we watch TV programs, we learn new things that could affect our habits and perspectives in many ways. In the Kurdistan region, as anywhere else, advertisement targets people to change their buying attitudes; though in the meantime it influences people's decisions, thinking and behaviors. According to the results of this study, as shown in the table above, a high proportion with 27.08% think that advertisement negatively influences the social norms. Alike proportion of the respondents also believes advertisements influences negatively the mores. Clothing and taboos; both have same proportion with 22.9% of the respondents.

### Conclusion

In the light of the findings, the majority believe that advertisements affect the society and most of them were sure of the impacts of the advertisements on the society. The quality of national advertisements in the Kurdistan region is poor to some extent; however, viewers watch Kurdish TVs and non-Kurdish ones and thus, they are exposed to the advertisements on these TVs. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents have perception that advertisements in the Kurdistan region are generally against the culture norms, in a way that majority of the respondents, as it is revealed from the results think that the TV advertisements are to some extent against the Kurdish cultural norms. The results also show that a high proportion of the TV viewers think that TV advertisement negatively influences the social norms and mores such as habits, attitude and people's decision ,thinking and believes; especially clothing and taboos.

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