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Determining the main factors affecting consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising: A review of the Jordanian market

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ABSTRACT

Studying consumers' acceptance of the main ethical issues in communication and mainly in advertising has recently been receiving much attention from scholars. It is especially noteworthy when the advertising is seen as a technology-driven communication process and should be prepared based on a sense of consumers' social responsibility and moral assent. Using a self-reported questionnaire from 450 parents, this study examines the effects of children abuse, sexual appeals, fear appeals and deceptive advertisements on Jordanian parents' acceptance of ethical advertising. After using the Structural Equation Modeling test, path analysis was used to test the hypothetic relationships employing the Multivariate Regression Models. The study found that sexual appeals and children abuse are the main factors that affect parents' acceptance of ethical advertising in the Jordanian market.

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Ethics; advertising; ethical advertising; children abuse; sexual appeals; fear appeals; deception

1. Background to the study

How organizations communicate ethically with their customers is a fundamental issue these days. That is because ethical communication is an important element in consumers' decision-making process and establishing a responsible relationship with them. Thus, some organizations start using and practising the ethical communication in advertising to reach their target customers successfully. However, at the same time, unethical advertising has been realized as a large element that some firms use to intentionally or unintentionally mislead consumers in the sale of unnecessary products/services (Ogechukwu, Ndubueze, and Uche 2011).

Organizations spend billions of dollars on promoting products and services and on building their brands yearly. Such spending is increasing at a rate day after day. It must be kept in mind that advertising is considered one of the focal business and economic aspects and represents the life blood of all business organizations (Devi, Kanchana, and Sebastina 2010). Matching advertising and ethics is currently a popular issue attracting scholars' interest. This interest is sparked by large number of scholars and even practitioners such as

Nwachukwu et al. (1997) evaluating advertising strategy from ethical and social responsibility perspectives. Zabid and Alsagoff (1993) examined the perceived ethical values of Malaysian managers. The study findings showed that the Malaysian managers have expressed high ethical values. One of the noteworthy findings is that 53% of the managers and respondents believed that the current ethical standards are lower than those of 15 years ago. This denotes the availability of unethical business practices in today's modern business world.

Unethical advertising is considered one of the most unethical businesses practices, especially that related to mass media and Internet selling and advertising (Zabid and Alsagoff 1993; Austin and Reed 1999). Ullah and Hussain (2015) studied the effect of unethical advertising on consumer behaviour within the Pakistan setting. The study found that unethical misleading advertising and even stereotyping advertising are negatively influencing consumers' buying behaviour and even customers' intentions.

One of the possible reasons for the low status of ethical practices in advertising is what might be labelled as the 'unholy trinity' in advertising as Murphy (1998) claimed. This trinity comprises advertisers, advertising agencies and the media representatives. Among these main three parties, it appears that no one is willing to take any responsibility for raising the ethical standards of advertisements. This issue raises a clear warning regarding highlighting the importance of discussing the dilemma of both ethical and unethical advertising, not just from scholars' perspectives but more importantly from customers' perspectives. Thus, this paper focuses on the issue of ethical advertising by exploring the parents' perceptions of ethical advertising and evaluating their level of acceptance within the Jordanian setting. That is because little is known about the perceptions of those parents who allow their children to be exposed to thousands of advertisements each day. Consequently, understanding the consumer point of view is important for both practical and theoretical reasons considering that consumers decide what is acceptable or appropriate in advertising, either directly through purchase behaviour or indirectly through demands on regulatory agencies or media.

In addition, advertisers and their agencies often expend considerable effort in achieving consumer acceptance and trust. Thus, practices that violate this trust may have a practical, as well as a moral loss. In this study, the aim is to fill this gap through investigating the Jordanian consumers' level of acceptance and views of some of the ethical issues in advertising. The advertising industry is growing at a fast rate, especially the digital advertising. It has been claimed that

... digital ad spending is projected to reach \$72.1 billion in 2016, growing at a rate of 21% and now comprising almost 37% of the overall market, according to eMarketer. Social media accounts for \$15.4 billion of this! (Biers 2016)

Hence, advertising has been charged with a number of ethical breaches; most of which focus on its apparent lack of societal responsibility. Pollay (2000) and other scholars such as Severn, Belch and Belch (1990); Kotler et al. (2001); Rößner, Kämmerer and Eisend (2016) and Luk et al. (2017) indicated that advertising has profound consequences due to its pervasiveness, stereotypical portrayals, manipulative and persuasive nature, preoccupation with materialism and consumption, frequent use of sex appeals and lack of information of some of previous study.

This study first presents the research problem and objectives. Afterwards, a brief review of the relevant literature is mentioned, supported by a set of hypotheses that have been developed and accordingly tested. Next, the methodology presents the main data collection methods that were used to collect the primary and secondary data that were then analysed

and presented. Finally, the practical implications of the research and recommendations are discussed, along with a number of suggestions future research could follow.

2. The research problem and importance

The scope of this study focuses specifically on investigating the main factors that affect a consumer's acceptance of ethical advertising in the Jordanian market setting. The study adds new value to the literature by tackling the effect of four factors: child abuse, sexual appeals, deception in advertising and appeals to fear. Using children in advertising and advertising for children are controversial issues and are still used by organizations to attract customers (Arslan 2015; Shahzad and Kausar 2016). Based on this, the present study is guided by the following research question: "What are the main determinants that affect consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising".

This study has the following important aspects: firstly, by reviewing the interrelated literature that links to the issue of ethics, it has been noticed that there are four common factors that affect consumers' acceptance of ethics advertising, namely child abuse, sexual appeals, deception in advertising and fear appeals. This type of study is pioneered within the Jordan setting, especially when targeting new factors such as sexual appeals. It also explains its effect on consumers' acceptance. Focusing on the research question, this study tries to achieve the following objective: to determine to what level the four variables which are children, abuse, sex appeal, fear appeals and price deception affect the consumer's acceptance of ethical advertising in the Jordanian market. This study is designed to test the effect of some variables on the consumer attitudes towards ethics in advertising. Moreover, the study plans to offer a link between some ethical dimensions and their applications in the field of advertising by investigating and explaining the main perceptual variables of ethical advertising.

3. The literature review

Ethics are defined as '... a set of principles a person uses to determine whether an action is good or bad' (Collins 2011, 4). Collins (2011) differentiated between two terms, the code of ethics and code of conduct which are often mistakenly used interchangeably. A code of conduct more broadly describes acceptable behaviours for specific situations that are likely to arise. A code of ethics briefly describes wide ethical aspirations. A code of ethics usually states the principles that outline an organization's moral essence. The following six values were stated in the code of ethics: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Ethical marketing refers to the application of marketing ethics in marketing processes. Marketing ethics refers to applying ethical standards and principles which underpin the function and regulation of marketing (Alshurideh et al. 2016; cited in Majtán and Dubcová 2008). Marketing ethics are upheld by organizations that are socially responsible and employ ethical business practices (Becker-Olsen and Guzmán 2017).

A study by Treise et al. (1994) endeavoured to examine the consumer perceptions of unethical advertising practices, including advertising regarding children, women and minorities; the appeal to fear in advertising; advertising with a sexual appeal; and offensive advertising. The researchers' study assessed perceptions of controversial advertising practices of diverse college respondents, finding that ethical judgments of advertising practices varied fundamentally according to the respondents' ethical ideology. Using a similar approach,

Hyman, Tansey and Clark (1994) identified 33 'prime topics' which are of significant concern to researchers who are examining advertising ethics. Based on a survey of 124 'Journal of Advertising' reviewers, the researcher reported that the seven most important topics for the future study of advertising ethics related to the use of deception in advertisements, sexual advertising, appeals to fear, child abuse, advertising to minorities, political advertising and alcohol and smoking advertising. This study examines four variables of those seven on the Jordanian market. These variables are price deception, sexual appeal, appeals to fear and child abuse. The remaining three ethical topics are not included in the scope of this study scope for various reasons.

Initially, this research was conducted within the Jordanian setting and advertising to minorities is not possible, especially when such minorities are few in numbers and are unique to this particular the society. In Jordan, young people eat the same food, listen to the same music and even practise similar sports without there any being any difference in their ethnic or families' backgrounds. However, some countries (e.g. the USA) have witnessed growing diversity and multinationalism, and there is a need to better understand minorities' consumers' behaviour (Perkins, Thomas, and Taylor 2000). According to the Economists (2011), it has been claimed that by 2045, 'America's minorities will eventually be a majority of the population'. Because of the diversity and multiculturalism, there is a need to better understand the consumer behaviour of minorities (Perkins, Thomas, and Taylor 2000). Thus, the issue of advertising to minorities is not applicable for research in this study. Moreover, smoking and tobacco advertising is banned in Jordan, according to the Ministry of Health regulations – law number 47 which was issued in 2008 and discussed by Ma'ayeh (2003). Such prohibition is in the line with the reports of World Health Organization, especially those that were issued in 2013. In addition, alcohol is forbidden in Islam (Johnson and Vriens 2011) and for this reason, any kind of alcohol promotion is barred on religious grounds. Additionally, political advertising is not allowed on the national Jordanian TV channels. To sum up, advertising related to minorities, alcohol and smoking and politics is not in the scope of this study which focuses instead on studying the parents' point of view of what is acceptable to be viewed by their children on TV advertisements.

3.1. Child abuse in advertising

Hobbs (1998) questioned what happens when high school students have the opportunity to create and analyse advertisements as part of their curriculum in English language arts education. The question can also be applied in Jordan as well as in many other classrooms such as those in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. Advertising is a topic of investigation and both print and TV advertisements can be used in classrooms as 'texts' to be studied. This work is commonly conducted under the framework of 'media literacy', which is known as an expanded conceptualization of literacy and learning that includes print, audiovisual and electronic 'texts' from contemporary culture (Jewitt 2008 cited in Kress, 2002). Regarding using advertising in the classroom, teachers emphasize the skills of analysing and evaluating advertisements to identify the message purpose, target audience, point of view and persuasive techniques used (Buckingham 2003).

A history of the first stage of applying 'critical viewing skills' instructions in the 1980s showed that most evaluation models have examined the programme's outcomes on a limited numbers of students, e.g. a single classroom, using intervention programmes designed and implemented by scholars (Anderson 1983). Dorr, Graves and Phelps (1980) have examined

whether an eight-session course on media literacy improves students' knowledge of media production and editing techniques (Singer, Zuckerman, and Singer 1980), or whether a six-hour exposure to media stimuli affects children's ability to distinguish between the fictional and real elements of a programme and whether a three-hour per week curriculum designed for elementary school students helped students detect both syntactical and genre structures (Anderson 1983). More recently, some studies such as that conducted by Baron (1985) have explored whether students have the ability to learn the facts, vocabulary and information that are delivered as part of the instruction, or whether a media video broadcast literacy affected either cognitive or critical analysis skills (Vooijs and Van der Voort 1993). Health researchers have examined the effect of media literacy instruction on elementary school students' attitudes about alcohol (Austin and Johnson 1997).

Advertising to children involves using a set of tools such as advertisements, radio, magazines and television, the latter being the most powerful instrument as it is watched by the youth and all generations. A study by Al-Dmour, Alshuraideh and Salehih (2014) was conducted to explore the Jordanian television viewers' habits. The study classified the viewers into three groups: viewers of terrestrial channels only, viewers of satellite channels only and viewers of both. It was found that all three groups had similar preferences towards watching children, family, movies, religion and news channels but there were differences in terms of the preferences towards watching sports, music and business channels. Therefore, this study produced interesting information about the watching patterns of the Jordanian society. For the most part, television must respect the parental authority with its messages to children. Because children are exposed to high numbers of televised advertising messages, critics have mentioned many concerns regarding advertisements targeting children.

A primary criticism focused mainly on the issue of fairness: fairness regarding targeting practices towards those who apparently are less able to evaluate the commercial persuasion (Kunkel 1988). The most obvious of these criticisms include the claims that advertising to children encourages the sale of products such as sweets and candies that are harmful to children (Gore 1989). In addition, it manipulates and disappoints children with exaggerated claims; creates conflicts between children and their parents on the purchases; has the potential to tempt children to try the alcoholic beverages and/or drugs (Atkin 1987); and creates confusion over product and commercial distinctions (Kunkel 1988). Based on the previous discussion, the child abuse effect in advertising can be stated as:

H1: There is a negative effect of child abuse in TV advertising on consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising in the Jordanian market.

3.2. Sexual appeals in advertising

Sex appeals are based around the appearance of nudity and the use of sexual attractiveness or suggestiveness (Bello, Pitts, and Etzel 1983). Reichert, Heckler and Jackson (2001) described sex appeal as messages, whether as brand information in advertising contexts or as persuasive appeals in marketing contexts that are associated with sexual information. The prolific use of sex appeals in advertising suggests a number of potential advantages if used appropriately. First, it is used to attract attention (Reid and Soley 1983). Liu, Cheng and Li (2009) cited in Taflinger (1996) talked about the 'grabbing value' of sex appeals that comes from the fact that sex is the second strongest of the psychological appeals directly after self-preservation. Secondly, using sexual appeals in the advertising helps to remember the advertising better; it enhances the audience recall of the advertising (Reid and Soley 1981). Thirdly,

sexual appeals in advertising can activate more emotional responses (Meade and Zhou 2017) and even produce more positive thoughts about the execution of the advertisements (Reichert, Heckler, and Jackson 2001). Finally, some researchers (Thiyagarajan, Shanthi and Naresh 2012) believe that sexually appealing advertising can be seen to be more persuasive and acceptable than non-sexually appealing advertising.

There are uncertainties associated with using sexual appeals in advertising. Firstly, Reid and Soley's (1983) previous studies documented that it distracts the audiences from the main message; secondly, using sexual appeals in advertising lie in the gender differences in processing sex in advertising, for example, using female nudity in advertising may attract men's attention but may offend women (Liu, Cheng and Li 2009, cited in Taflinger 1996). Finally, the effectiveness of sex appeals depends on its appropriateness to the advertised product. Reichert (2002) cited in Richmond and Hartman (1982) indicated that sexual stimuli might enhance the recall of the brand/product if it is of appropriate relevance.

Culture is one of the most important factors that affect consumer responses towards sexual appeals in advertising (Boddewyn and Kunz 1991) and it differs between collectivism/individualism and low/high context countries. Gregory and Munch (1996) indicated that consumers in individualistic-oriented countries seek more variety and favour stimulation than the consumers in collectivistic-oriented countries. One area of interest in advertising ethics has been the roles portrayed by women in advertising. Of particular concern has been the portrayal of women as sex tools, in dependent situations or as being powerless and incompetent. Over the years, women defenders have been dissatisfied with these stereotypes. They have even threatened demonstrations against the advertising companies and boycotts of the advertised products. The main concern of the criticisms is that advertising tends to stereotyping women into limited roles such as housewife/mother or attractive adult (sex object) and that this stereotyping enforces the viewpoint that these are the only appropriate roles for women (Schneider and Schneider 1979).

Since the 1970s, feminists and other critics have raised the topic of using women in advertising (Aaker and Bruzzone 1985; Pollay 2000). Issues most often focused on the failure to reflect the changing roles of women, the misrepresentation of professional women, unrealistic and limited portrayals of women interacting only in relation to men and their families (Tuchman 1979) and presenting of women as 'happy home wife' or as unqualified (Courtney and Whipple 1983; Ferguson, Kreshel, and Tinkham 1990). Especially what bothers women the most is the focus on women as sex objects (Wyckham 1987; Boddewyn 1991) 'For at least some of the public, sexual advertisements represent a challenge to standards of decency and are in a real sense pornographic' (Pollay 2000, 28). Sexually advertising was used for a number of products, negatively representing women solely in terms of one narrow aspect of their gender roles: as sex tools. Based on previous discussions, the sexual appeals effect in advertising can be stated as:

H2: There is a negative effect of using sexual appeals in TV advertising on consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising in the Jordanian market.

3.3. Fear appeals in advertising

Generally this is the concept that denotes advertising messages containing some kind of threat that effects persuasion by arousing anxiety in the hopes of increasing interest in and attention to messages being discussed (Hastings and Scott 1987; Hill 1988). The use

appealing to fear in advertising has continued over the past three decades despite the debate behind its efficacy (Chapman 1992; LaTour and Pitts 1989; Rotfeld 1988). It was used to change behaviours such as smoking (Sutton and Eiser 1984; Leventhal and Watts 1966), safety of driving (Tannenbaum et al. 2015), alcohol and drug abuse (King and Reid 1990; Treise and Schumann 1992) and recently the unsafe sexual practices associated with the transmission of AIDS (LaTour and Pitts 1989; Bush and Boller 1991).

Fear is an effective state which protects us against danger. Therefore, fear appeals are used in advertisements to induce the recipients to change their attitudes and behaviours (Witte 1992) or as a persuasion technique (Morales, Wu, and Fitzsimons 2012). Because people are using fear to reduce the likelihood of future consequences, marketers used it to manipulate the level of fear to create a threat, anxiety and tension and the customers believe in it. LaTour and Pitts (1989) suggested that there are some cases in which fear appeals are beneficial for both the advertiser and the consumer, such as alerting people to the dangers of drunk driving or the depletion of natural resources. In these instances, the public good and the advertiser's interests are mutual. However, the ethical questions arise when advertisers involve excessive amounts of fear appeals (e.g. graphic depictions of consequences), thereby producing high levels of anxiety, discomfort and insecurity which are not necessary if the consequences are not fatal. Based on the previous discussion, the fear appeal effect in advertising can be stated as:

H3: There is a negative effect of using fear appeals in TV advertising on consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising in the Jordanian market.

3.4. Deception in advertising

Another breach of marketing ethics has to do with the use of deceptive advertising. This form of advertising is not specific to one target market, and can sometimes go unnoticed by the public. There are a number of different ways in which deceptive marketing can be presented to consumers. One of these methods is accomplished through the use of humour (Shabbir and Thwaites 2007). In a study conducted by Shabbir and Thwaites in 2007, 238 advertisements were assessed and 73.5% of them were found to have used deceptive marketing practices. Of those deceptive advertisements, 74.5% of them used humour as a masking device in order to mislead potential customers. Part of what drives this study is the idea that humour provides an escape or relief from some kind of human constraint, and that some advertisers intend to take advantage of this by deceptively advertising a product that can potentially alleviate that constraint through humour. Through the study it was also found that all types of humour are used to deceive consumers, and that there are certain types of humour that are used when making certain deceptive claims. It is important to understand that humour is not the only method that is used to deflect consumers' minds from what a product actually offers.

Before making important purchases, one should always conduct one's own research in order to gain a better understanding of what it is one is investing in. Advertising credibility is '...the degree to which the consumer perceives claims made about the brand in the advertising to be truthful and believable' (Lutz 1985, cited in Prendergast, Liu, and Poon 2009, 5). Advertisements which are unbelievable or over-dramatized can irritate or tease the consumers, and their claims frequently are not accepted (Obermiller, Spangenberg, and MacLachlan 2005). It is generally agreed that deception by marketers is not a rare occurrence

(Andreasen 1991). Russo, Metcalf and Stephens (1981) suggest that an advertisement is deceptive if it creates increases or exploits a false belief about a product, service or performance.

Most countries employ both self-regulation and governmental controls to reduce the marketers' false claims, especially those related to the advertising and media usage and applications. One of the main advertising acceptance and perception determinants is the advertising medium credibility (Um 2017). Advertising's credibility relates not only to the product but also to the medium through which the message is being delivered. So the advertising medium credibility is defined in terms of the consumers' perceptions of the average believability of a channel's overall advertisement content (Kioussis 2001). Another issue that was highlighted is advertising deception (Barbour and Gardner 1982). Carson, Wokutch and Cox's (1985) definition of deceptive advertising was chosen as the basis for discussion in this study while it seems to be the most frequently cited in the literature. The deception in advertising is defined as follows:

If an advertisement or advertising campaign leaves the consumer with an impression(s) and/or beliefs different from what would normally be expected if the consumer had reasonable knowledge, and those impressions and beliefs are factually untrue or potentially misleading, then deception is said to exist. (12)

Many scholars such as Naquin and Paulson (2003) and Masip, Garrido and Herrero (2006) indicated that deception lowers the levels of transparency, trust and even confidence. Also, it has been confirmed by Naquin and Paulson (2003) that deceptive messages lower the level of confidence in the quality and even lower overall satisfaction. Thus, it is important to express honesty in doing business among any two parties and even with customers. Based on the previous discussion, the price deception effect in advertising can be stated as:

H4: There is a negative effect of price deception in TV advertising on consumer's acceptance of ethical advertising in the Jordanian market.

It seems that it is important to take the main ethical standards into consideration when organizations try to deliver promotional and advertising messages to customers within the acceptable level of responsibility and morality. Such ethical issues should be addressed particularly when they come to promotion application and execution. That is because it has been claimed that 'Morality is the oil as well as the glue of society and business' (De George 2009). Accordingly, the previous section presents the literature review that relates to the main study constructs. Four independent variables and one dependent variable have been discussed in more detail and each constructs' section ends with a proposed hypothesis. The next part presents the methodology section that explains the main data collection approaches and methods.

4. Research theoretical framework

Based on the literature review of this research and the study objectives, a theoretical research model has been developed. Figure 1 below displays the theoretical proposed relation between the study variables:

5. Methodology

This section details the main data collection procedures and steps taken by analysing and discussing how the study factors are defined and employed to design the study survey

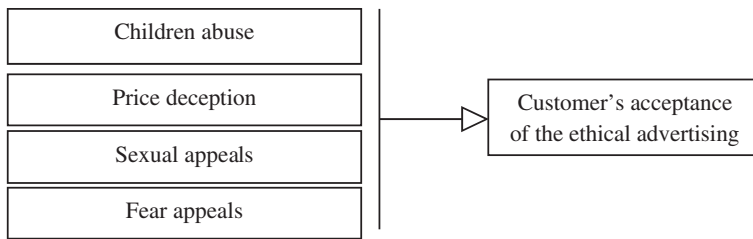


Figure 1. The research theoretical framework.

instrument which was used to collect the primary data. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is the main statistical method of analysis that has been used in the behaviour analysis to explore the customer acceptance drivers of ethical advertising.

5.1. Scales of measuring the study items

Table 1 below explains the study items that have been used to design the study survey to collect the primary data which at a later stage have been tested properly.

5.2. Sample size and response rate

The response rate consists of the number of completed and returned questionnaires divided by the total number of questionnaires sent out (Rada 2005). It is an indicator of the confidence that may be derived as a result of the legitimization of the survey. Two different arguments have been presented on this issue. Some researchers have indicated that a low response rate can affect the reliability of any study (Church 1993), while others argued that the response rate does not necessary increase the precision of the survey results (Dillman 1991). Nevertheless, researchers should follow a set of methods to increase the response rate. Thus, to maximize the response rate, many sequential steps have been followed: First, the respondents were briefed about the research objectives and aims (Alshurideh 2010); second, participants were informed that ethical considerations regarding privacy and confidentiality in data collection, analysis and that publication would be taken into account (Al Kurdi 2016); third, although the survey was distributed personally, some respondents were provided with fully addressed and postage-paid envelopes to give them more time to complete the questionnaire and return it when they had the chance (Lavelle, Todd, and Campbell 2008); fourth, to overcome the geographical dispersion of study sample, some respondents were asked to complete the survey electronically by email (Foo and Hepworth 2000); finally, many emails were sent to non-respondents to help them to fill in the questionnaire in order to minimize response attrition (Boys et al. 2003).

The main goals achieved through calculating and defining the response rate indicator in this study were that it has helped in assessing the survey results' accuracy and evaluating the self-reported questionnaire as a data collection instrument in investigating mutual relationship marketing. Four hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed and the survey response rate in this study was 91.1%, which is considered very good compared to other studies in the same field.

Table 1. Scale of measuring the study items.

Code	Construct	
CA	<i>Child abuse in advertising</i>	
CA1	Forbidding using children in advertising affects acceptance of ethics in advertising	Hobbs (2004); Alshurideh,
CA2	Considering using children in any kind of advertising as unethical behaviour affect its acceptance for consumers	Shaltoni, and Hijawi (2014)
CA3	Using children in advertising will raise a conflict with parents which will affect their acceptance of that advertising	
CA4	Legally monitored effect	
CA5	The ability to influence the parents affects their acceptance to ethics in advertising	
SA	<i>Sexual appeals in advertising</i>	
SA1	Culture effect	Liu, Cheng and Li (2009); Reichert, Heckler and
SA2	The need to use such appeals effect	Heckler and
SA3	Considering woman abuse in advertising is a sexually appealing unethical act affecting its acceptance	Jackson (2001); Graham and Shelton (2013)
SA4	Considering using any kind of sexual appeals in advertising unethical act affects its acceptance	
FA	<i>Fear appeals in advertising</i>	
FA1	Considering fear appeals' unethical behaviour affect its acceptance by consumers	Hastings and Scott (1987); Alshurideh et al. (2015)
FA2	Monitoring and controlling by parents effect	
FA3	Psychological effect	
FA4	The advantages versus advantages effect	
FA5	Legally monitoring effect	
PD	<i>Price deception in advertising</i>	Hill (1988)
PD1	Legally monitoring effect	
PD2	Ethically monitoring effect	
PD3	Defining the perception affects its acceptance by the customers	
PD4	The ease of recognizing the deception effect	
PD5	Credibility of the buyer effect	
CA	<i>Consumer's acceptance of ethical advertising</i>	
CA1	Cultural standards effect	Prendergast, Liu and Poon (2009); Alshurideh,
CA2	Social standards effect	Nicholson, and Xiao (2012)
CA3	Positive experience with commercial advertising affect its acceptance	
CA4	The level of accepting majority of advertising plays effect	

6. Data collection

6.1. Sources of data and data collection means

In this research, mainly primary data have been collected based on a specific questionnaire developed for the purpose. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first one comprised demographic questions related to the participants, such as gender, age, marital status, education and income. Categorical variables include the viewing channel to which customers subscribed, and the type of advertisements they were affected by. The second part of questionnaire involved many items that were submitted to measure the study variables as shown in (Table 2), which also provides the factor analysis, the number of items, total variance explained and number of components.

6.2. Measurement validation and reliability

The measurement validation for the study constructs was done using the Exploratory Factor Analysis test through employing the Principle Component Analysis and the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) tests. Factor analysis is a test that is usually used with a set of study items to choose a smaller number of items that are closely interrelated in a clear pattern (Zikmund 2003). Some scholars such as Field (2009) explained that there is a need to look at the Kaiser–Meyer–Oklin (KMO) measure of adequacy which is preferred to be more than

0.6, and check whether the Bartlett's test of sphericity value is sufficient (Sig. value should be 0.05 or less). The KMO values for all constructs are more than 74% and the Bartlett's test values for the all constructs were also statistically significant, while the p values were 0.00. In addition, all study components showed good total levels of variance as shown in (Table 2) as well.

The factor analysis was performed to test all the study constructs' validity as well. The KMO value for all study items was 0.902 and the Bartlett spherical test showed significant results with $\chi^2 = 4224.45$ which indicated the appropriateness of using the factor analysis. Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs were more than 0.7 (Using children in advertising = 0.876; Sexual appeals = 0.831; Fear appeals = 0.857; Deception in advertising = 0.826; Consumer's acceptance of ethical advertising = 0.818), indicating a very good reliability.

The survey instrument was evaluated for face validity. The items used in the questionnaire have been assessed and tested by a panel of arbitrators who are experts in the field. Potential remarks and directions were taken into consideration. To provide evidence that the instrument produced the data for which it was designed, a reliability test was conducted. The value of Cranach's alpha produced was $\alpha = 0.956$ for all questionnaire statements. The reliability value for all variables was greater than 80% which was very good (Sekaran 2003) as seen in (Table 3).

The CFA was also used to validate the constructs' measurements and verify the used model (Cole 1987) using the SPSS (20.0) and the structural equation model was employed using AMOS 20.0 software. The analysis output indicated a good fit while all indices came within the accepted ranges. The χ^2 statistics for the model are 486.15, with 301 degrees of freedom. In particular, the relative χ^2 /degrees of freedom value of 1.62 is less than the recommended maximum value of 3.00 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Kline 1998), which represents a good fit.

The CFA outputs showed that the CMIN/DF value was 1.860 and the p-value was 0.0 which indicated that the model has an acceptable fit while the CMIN/DF value was less than 3.0

Table 2. Components of the second part of the questionnaire.

Variable Name	Question Number	After using the factor analysis	Component number – Cumulative total variance explained and KMO
<i>Independent variables</i>			
Child abuse	1–6	4 items (1, 2 and 4, 5)	1 – %67.369 – 76.4
Sexual appeals	7–13	5 items (1–3 and 5, 6)	1 – %66.705 – 83.9
Fear appeals	14–19	6 items (1–6)	1 – %76.644 – 87.2
Deception in advertising	20–25	4 items (1–4)	1 – %70.333 – 81.6
<i>Dependent variable</i>			
Consumer's acceptance of ethical advertising	26–31	4 items (2–5)	1 – %74.518 – 74.82

Table 3. Reliability test.

Variables	Cranach's Alpha
All variables	0.956
Using children in advertising	0.876
Sexual appeals	0.831
Fear appeals	0.857
Deception in advertising	0.826
Consumer's acceptance of ethical advertising	0.818

according to Hair et al. (2010). Regarding the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) which indicated that latent constructs are not correlated with each other and usually as much as the CFI value is close to 1 as much as better fit (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen 2008). For this study, the CFI value is 0.914 and it seems that the model fits and ranges within the acceptable level (Hu and Bentler 1999). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) relates to unexplained variance (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen 2008) which indicated that the smaller the RMSEA value, the better and it should preferably be below the recommended maximum of 0.08 as suggested by Browne and Cudeck (1993). The RMSEA value was 0.041 which indicated that the model fits well.

The General Fit Index (GFI) is another approach to calculate the proportion of variance that is accounted for by the estimated population covariance and it is preferred to be upward in value in relation to sample size, and range from 0 to 1 (Rahim 2015). Analysis results indicated that the GFI value was 0.911 and the AGFI value was 0.899, which were both within the acceptable levels and conveyed a fitted model (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1989; Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen 2008). This research also used IFI and CFI to measure the goodness-of-fit of the model, since IFI and CFI are more appropriate to measure goodness-of-fit when the sample size is small (Byrne 2013). In this study, the IFI (0.96) and CFI (0.96) index values for the measurement model both exceed the recommended level of 0.90 (Byrne 2013), which indicates an adequate fit of the model (Hu and Bentler 1999). The NFI value of 0.90 also indicates a reasonable fit. From all of the values obtained above, it is clear that the structural model represents an acceptable fit. In addition, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) represents the square root average of the residuals (Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen 2008) and it is preferable to have a value less than 0.06 to have a well fitted model (Schreiber et al. 2006). The analysis output showed that the SRMR value was 0.056 which came within the acceptable level (Hu and Bentler 1999).

7. Data analysis

7.1. Demographic analysis

The main demographic items that were investigated in this research were: gender, age, marital status, education and income levels of Jordanian parents. Regarding the sample's gender analysis, it has been noted that 48.9% of the study sample are males, and 51.1% are females. Regarding the sample's age analysis, it has been found that 91.1% of the study sample ages are less than 45 years old. This indicated that the target group comprises young families and what level they care about planning the viewing of advertisements by their children. Regarding the sample's education level analysis, about 56.7% of the study sample hold a bachelor's degree and 28.4% of the study sample have postgraduate qualifications. Regarding the total average income for the families targeted, it has been found that 81.6% of the study sample's average income is less than 2000JD. This indicates what level the families of the middle and lower classes in Jordan care about the contents of advertisements in the programmes that their children watch.

This study also gives an idea of how many hours a family spends watching TV programmes. Results show that about 83.8% watch less than three hours per day but about 16.2% watch TV programmes for more than three hours a day. Regarding the main types of advertising that the study sample is exposed to, it has been found that TV advertising is mainly seen by about 27% of the parents in Jordan and radio advertising accounts for about 26%.

Table 4. Distribution of sample members by variable whom do you think is the most affected category among consumers by TV advertisements?

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Children	13	2.9
House wives	122	27.1
Both parents	124	27.5
Teenagers	115	25.5
Adults	70	15.5
Elderly	6	1.3
The total	450	100.0

Table 4 denoted that 2.9% of the study sample who are affected by TV commercials are children, 27.1% of the study sample who are affected by TV commercials are housewives, 27.5% of the study sample who are affected by TV commercials are parents, 25.5% of the study sample who are affected by TV commercials are teenagers, 15.5% of the study sample who are affected by TV commercials are adults and only 1.3% of the study sample who are affected by TV commercials are the elderly. Based on that, it can be noted that the highest percentage of individuals who are influenced by watching television are parents.

7.2. Hypotheses testing

After using the SEM test, path analysis was used to test the hypothetic relationship employing the Multivariate Regression Models.

To test the structural study model, it was important to check a set of indices such as the statistical significance of Standardized Regression Weights (for example, *t*-value) of all research hypotheses and the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) for the study's Endogenous Constructs. Regarding the child abuse factor, it has been found that the coefficient was statistically significant and its *p*-value was 0.001 (which was less than the 5% level of significance). Thus, 'the child abuse in TV advertising negative affects consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising' was confirmed statistically. As shown in the path analysis test outputs in (Table 5), the child abuse hypothesis result indicators (path coefficient value = 0.147, *t*-value = 3.752 and *p*-value = 0.001) denoted that child abuse influences family acceptance of ethical TV advertising negatively.

Regarding the sexual appeals factor, it has been found that the coefficient was statistically significant and its *p*-value was 0.003 (which was less than the 5% level of significance). Thus, the negative effect on consumers' acceptance of sexual appeals in TV advertising was confirmed statistically. As shown in the path analysis test outputs in (Table 6), the sexual appeals hypothesis result indicators (path coefficient value = 0.147, *t*-value = 3.752 and *p*-value = 0.001) denoted that sexual appeals influence family acceptance of ethical TV advertising negatively.

Regarding the fear appeals factor, it has been found that the coefficient was not significant statistically while its *p*-value was 0.375 (which was more than the 5% level of significance). Thus, the negative effect of fear appeals on consumer's acceptance of ethical advertising in TV advertising was not confirmed statistically. As shown in the path analysis test outputs in (Table 7), the fear appeals hypothesis result indicators (path coefficient value = 0.336, *t*-value = 4.645 and *p*-value = 0.375) denoted that fear appeals does not influence family acceptance of ethical TV advertising negatively.

Table 5. The analyses outputs for the children abuse use in TV advertising independent variable.

Research proposed paths	Coefficient value	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Empirical evidence
Children abuse in TV advertising → consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising	0.147	3.752	0.001	Supported

Table 6. The analyses outputs for the sexual appeals use in TV advertising independent variable.

Research proposed paths	Coefficient value	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Empirical evidence
Sexual appeals in TV advertising → consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising	0.277	3.943	0.003	Supported

Table 7. The analyses outputs for the fear appeals use in TV advertising independent variable.

Research proposed paths	Coefficient value	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Empirical evidence
Fear appeals in TV advertising → consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising	0.277	3.943	0.375	Not supported

Table 8. The analyses outputs for the price deception use in TV advertising independent variable.

Research proposed paths	Coefficient value	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value	Empirical evidence
Price deception in TV advertising → consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising	0.416	5.521	0.371	Not supported

Regarding the price deception factor, it has been found that the coefficient was not significant statistically while its *p*-value was 0.371 (which was more than the 5% level of significance). Thus, the negative effect of price deception on consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising in TV advertising was not confirmed statistically. As shown in the path analysis test outputs in (Table 8), the price deception hypothesis result indicators (path coefficient value = 0.371, *t*-value = 5.521 and *p*-value = 0.371) denoted that price deception does not negatively influence family acceptance of ethical TV advertising.

8. Theoretical implications and research findings

This study has been carried out in a Jordanian advertising setting in order to provide a clear picture of how customers perceive a set of ethical advertising issues. Four factors have been identified in this study, namely child abuse, sexual appeals, fear appeals and deception in advertising.

It has been found that the main two factors that were found to affect consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising are child abuse and sexual appeals. The main element of children abuse that has been highlighted by participants was that using children in advertising is not acceptable to parents and even using sexual appeals in any kind of advertising is considered unethical behaviour. This might be referring to the fact that the culture of the Jordanian consumers, which is considered a conservative society, rejects the use of sexual appeals or children in all types of advertising. Based on such analysis outputs, the study puts forward a set of recommendations to enhance the ethical aspect in advertising. Initially, it is important to afford enough support from legal authorities to offer more control in the use

of such types of advertisements, especially those targeting the families and their children. In addition, more responsibility should be exerted from the marketing managers and marketers who should aim at reinforcing religion, social and cultural values in designing and producing advertisements. Also, to add more meaningful interpretation to findings, similar studies are needed using compound research methodology (qualitative and quantitative) to explore more antecedents and consequences that relate to the main ethical bases that affect families' acceptance of ethical advertisements.

Targeting children as audiences or using children in advertising remains problematic. Thus, it is important to use ethical considerations in terms of the marketers' business behaviour that respect the moral use of communication media. . Consequently, it is important to use ethical guidelines in conducting business ethically, especially in all marketing campaigns. That, in turn, enhances serving the target market and audiences ethically and gaining their acceptances and trust.

It has been claimed that ethical advertising is still a controversial topic in literature and some scholars such as Hyman, Tansey and Clark (1994) argued that advertising ethics has been and continues to be a mainstream topic in advertising research and there is a need to have a better measures in dealing with ethical advertising issues such as advertising deception, advertising for children and child abuse and even stereotyping in advertisements. Thus, this study plans to provide some help in guiding the applications of ethics in advertising as confirmed by Murphy (1998) and Darke and Ritchie (2007) who mentioned that even today there is a set of moral dilemmas confronting advertising and its practices such as using sexual appeals, advertising deception or fraud, defensive processing and distrust.

Whenever an organization considers a set of ethical roles and moral standards for good marketing practices it seems that it practises sound ethical marketing. In addition, when an organization applies some moral principles in designing their promotional campaigns to reach customers, it seems that they practise ethical promotion. Such efforts need to be researched, analysed and measured properly. As this study determined, that sexual appeals and child abuse variables are the main factors affecting consumers' acceptance of ethical advertising. Thus, those two dimensions need to be researched in more detail, especially with regard to how they are planned and practised ethically from both customers' and practitioners' points of view. It is not enough to practise ethical promotion as much as it is important to impose an ethical culture and create a moral environment for those companies that promote goods and services. One of the main approaches to minimizing unethical advertising practices is to make managers commit to ethical practices (Zabid and Alsagoff 1993). By doing this, companies should try to practise ethical marketing that satisfies all parties involved: customers, suppliers and all other business stakeholders.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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