



## Effect of Television Advertisements on Pakistani Society and Culture

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**Abstract:** *The impact of traditional advertising and product placement on television audiences is still very limited. Every media platform's advertisement has a unique composition that engages customers in a unique way. As a result, a better knowledge of advertisements on various media platforms and their implications for their impact on culture and our ideologies is required. The research paper took a Qualitative approach to further persist the study and results show that Pakistani Media Advertisements undoubtedly affect the said trends directly or indirectly, influencing the minds of consumers. This paper explores the unethical appeals used by advertisers that are directly appealing to the customers and increasing the sale of the goods but indirectly destroying the ideology and culture of Pakistan. Advertising agents can take a cue from this study and evaluate the content being used to enhance the objectivity of the advertisements by investing in appropriate media procedures.*

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### Introduction

Television advertising plays a crucial role in shaping our thoughts, qualities, lifestyles, decisions and choices between moral and immoral. It contains audial, visual, and semiotic information to convey the message to the audience in order to create and construct a belief system of society. Local and multinational organizations heavily invest in advertisements that are unethical and deceptive in nature to promote their products. They ignore the harmful effects of advertising strategies that will be later adopted by society in large numbers. Media is becoming a threat to local culture and beliefs. The content used in television advertisements is challenging to old customs, beliefs and traditions which should not be compromised. Lifestyle

presented in television advertisements of a specific class is not directed at only elites, but they consciously and unconsciously influence the overall social values of the society ([Khubra, 2017](#)).

Highly developed countries are imposing their culture on less developed countries ultimately diminishing their identity, as they are economically and politically strong to conduct these propagandas. Thanks to mass communication, advertising became a better tool for ruling classes to spread cultural imperialism around the globe to reach massive and heterogeneous audiences. Western media is considered the biggest culprit of cultural imperialism that is targeting smaller countries like Pakistan to lessen their cultural identity. As

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a poor and weaker nation, western advertisements can easily target the minds through strategies involving poor exposure to a targeted audience and getting the best outcomes with the advertised product (Iqbal, 2018).

Media and advertising companies are lacking social responsibility and presenting content that is bringing anti-Islamic changes among the masses. Due to the competition among companies, they portray young models in a way that can help them attract consumers and maximize profit. Modern dressing, obscenity, popular culture, and vulgarity are destroying the ethics of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. There is a notable change in the way women carry themselves now. They used to wear scarves before appearing in front of males but now they are not concerned about the ethical and social values due to the strong effect of media advertisements. Cellular companies have broadened up the borders for women who were not allowed to stay in contact with males but now this is common in our society. Therefore, they are openly violating the ideology, norms and values of Pakistani society and foreign brands are introducing western patterns of life and glamour that do not exist in Muslims. They present a culture that is only commonly practised among a few elites and ignores many people belonging to the middle and lower classes of society. The products declared by media as fashionable and healthy are adopted by the masses gradually however goods are harmful to them. Hence, they are presenting an unrealistic picture of the country. The media is only busy making money rather than fulfilling the social responsibility to promote the culture and values of Pakistan. Sadly, no strict action is taken against these violations so advertisers themselves need to consider the ethics, norms, public opinion, and traditions of society (Rehman & Hamid, 2016).

## **Literature Review**

Today, in this contemporary world, women are no longer consolidated behind the walls, instead, they are inspired to come out of their houses and make efforts to make a considerable change in society with respect to the place of women. Media, on the one hand, has given women a chance to make themselves more valuable in our

society. However, on the contrary, it has used women as a tool to grab and catch the attention of women, making the portrayal of women in TV advertisements a big question. Portrayal of women in advertisements for beauty products is pointless and unnecessary. Physical features of a woman are highlighted, brutally criticized and objectified in the Advertisement which has a hand in degrading the morale of the women and has set up standards of beauty in our society with respect to fair and glowing skin. All Regulatory Authorities (PEMRA) does is to ban a specific advertisement for a certain period of time and after that many similar works are done but no one raises questions about it and the cultural norms, values and values of women keep degrading in the Pakistani Society (Ismail, 2019).

Undoubtedly, contemporary advertisements receive a lot of appreciation and acceptance from society, but the critiques of advertisements accuse them of promoting racism, sexism, harmful products and manipulating the minds of the young generation emotionally. TV advertisements have set a criterion for an ideal physical appearance of a person, i.e., a thin body for adolescents. Mainstream media has fantasized and highlighted thin and smart models in advertisements to the extent that the young generation is ready to do anything with their bodies just to look like them. Admiration is acceptable but the harm that comes along with it is alarming for our society as admirers are variously getting involved in different acts of cosmetic surgeries, beauty, and thinning products and much more just to fit in the criteria of beauty that mainstream media has set. Women are assumed to be more inspired by the messages portrayed in the advertisements and they compare it with themselves and then get a feeling of dissatisfaction with their physical features. Studies have revealed that whether the female is thin, or fat, they are found dissatisfied because of the increasing impact of mainstream media that has provided them with an image of a perfect figure. This dissatisfaction is not only found in Pakistani society but in every society. A comparative study of the US and China reveals that both men and women in the US are more concerned about their physical appearance than

Chinese since they are more inclined to the mass media world ([Iqbal, 2018](#)).

Media coordinates with society through its intense impacts on the audience, making them believe the system is coveted. Studies have been done in past to find out the impact of mainstream media on culture particularly and majorly in Movies and TV serials. To an extent, advertisements have been ignored in this connection. Advertisements play a very critical role in misleading and misinterpreting the cultural values of our society. Advertisements represent Alien culture to the audience and the producers do not give any consideration of their cultural values. They have all distorted the true image and use of media advertisements and are using it in a way that is totally misleading, fake, fantasy and makes no sense at all. Pakistan was formed for the Sake of Islam and the way of life that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) promoted throughout his life. *“Indeed, His personality and life are an ideal way to follow.”* Public all over Pakistan have confidence in their religion Islam and practice their life according to Islam. The Media advertisements are on a minute level, manipulating the trends of this society and are gradually increasing day by day. They know that the audience has no other source of information and culture, so they perceive everything projected on TV advertisements as their own culture and way of life. They admire and follow celebrities blindly, their ideologies are exceptionally distorted they get confused to distinguishing between the real, fake, and imaginary. The semiotic analysis of a few Pakistani TV advertisements highlighted that the hidden meanings in the signs which are represented through television advertisements, have made a huge difference in the way of thinking and life of our society. It undoubtedly is a hidden agenda and propaganda to meet the set goals and achievement of the objectives of media imperialists and dominants to make money and gold power. The moneymakers do not even bother to consider their values and culture whilst making the advertisement and turn a blind eye towards the impact that it is creating on society, culture and most importantly, humanity ([Khubra, 2017](#)).

The contemporary world has witnessed a rapid wave of cultural transformation that is particularly affecting youth and major credit goes to the media. Television Advertisements and commercials brought three times higher emotional connection as compared to that of radio and newspaper. The advancement in the field of advertisement is remarkable in Pakistan. People admit that advertising impacts social habits. Many have argued that it has made the young generation become displeased, dissatisfied, and materialistic. Thus, the current trends of advertisements have a tendency to harm society at a scale and are responsible for bringing negative change in culture and generating moral and ethical dilemmas. Westernization has been prevailing in society since the very beginning of mainstream media, but today's TV advertisements are even promoting it and dissolving their own cultural values and identity. Using Women as a tool and portraying them as sex objects, TVCs such as mobile networks and cell phones are bold in content and represent the chunk of the society which is compared to the dominant and elite class leading to an increased discrimination of gender and society. Enlightened Youth is conscious a little bit about the changing social and moral behaviour and the Western invasion of our culture due to the objectionable content of such TV advertisements. They are aware that it is solely for money, power, and dominance. On the other hand, passive youth are totally manipulated, and they take media as the only source of cultural information leading them to adopt everything they see being projected on screen and all the moral, and ethical codes of conduct that our society has a hard time to preserve is destroyed (Zia, 2019).

Children having different cultural backgrounds show different approaches towards televised advertisements. As they are valuable customers of food and snack brands researchers (Sitwat, Kashif, Usman) enhanced the literature on youngsters' attitudes towards brand commercialization in the context of Pakistani and Canadian children through qualitative approaches ranging from 8-13 years. The focus group session was conducted in a relaxed manner and researchers employed the principles of verbal

and non-verbal behaviour. Children try to buy what inspires them but there is a difference in making choices of products among cross-cultural groups due to cultural diversity e.g., Pakistani culture is collectivist while Canadian culture is individualist. Food advertisements target children because they are easily persuaded and their attitudes towards buying new products are major preferences (Waqas et al., 2014).

Pakistan has become an emerging market due to the establishment of multinational companies and blooming globalization. It has been found that advertising has gone through changes with the trends of globalization and multinational companies negatively change the lifestyles, cultural values, beliefs and buying patterns of people through appealing advertisements. Researchers analyze the favourable or unfavourable attitudes of customers towards shopping due to the effective advertisements of brands. The findings through surveys conducted in twin cities of Pakistan revealed that advertising increases knowledge about certain products and guides customers on which services and brands are suitable for them. If they bring pleasant and excitement in TV advertisements, it creates a positive buying attitude towards the product regardless of how they are worsening our culture and abusing customer intelligence (Tahir, 2020).

TV advertisements are now our everyday part in order to know whether TV advertisements are threatening our cultural and social values, the research was conducted in the Rawalpindi region and Islamabad sector the data was analyzed in the descriptive static tables and a chi-square test was applied on it. It was noticed by the research that the advertisements in Pakistan are mostly introducing the Western culture which means it is destroying our Pakistani culture, Pakistani society's norms and values plus threatening Islamic religion consciously and unconsciously. The perception about it was that in order to grow their business the companies were violating the rules of society and setting new trends which are not acceptable. Our young generation mostly tends to copy the themes, styles and fashion because of their favourite artists who were supposed to be in the advertisement. Major results revealed that the effect of advertisements

only lasts for a few hours or less so that is the reason why cellular companies tend to play their ads again and again within an hour or a day on television. This has been reviewed that it is not only happening in Pakistan but worldwide ([Malik & Yusaf, 2016](#)).

Advertisements in the 90s were black and white over a long period of time which made the interest less and left zero/little impact while today the advertisements techniques are better and create more impact so the situation from the past is now reversed. To create a good image companies, use advertisements and invest a larger amount of money in them because people reply to advertisements more whether it is on TV or on other social media platforms. The objective here is to have access to see the role advertisements have in TV industries which they play in changing our lifestyles. TV advertisements are totally dependent on our tastes, attitudes, moral values, and habits. Some advertisements have their impact for a lifetime while the result tells that TV advertisements in general have a huge effect on youth's lifestyle and some effects can be dangerous for our moral values, norms, and tastes (Zuberi et al., 2018).

## **Effects on Society and Culture**

### **Behavioral and Ethical Consequences**

Only a small amount of research has been done on the ethical challenges that advertising causes. While consumers are placing a greater emphasis on responsible and ethical advertising techniques, advertising professionals are failing to address the ethical issues that are causing consumer unrest (Ammar et al., 2015). The issue emerges when marketers appeal to the public by using problematic themes, sexist visuals, and inappropriate and immoral language. Any advertisement that includes any of the topics is considered unethical advertising causing severe behavioral and ethical consequences among the audience. Slangs are widely used in advertisements making it a cool way to express sarcasm among youth and they get so used to it that at a point they start using it in their home as well with their elderly. Abusive language promoted by several advertisements of Pakistan including 7up ads are some common examples of

this consequence. Not only in anger, but abuse is also now promoted in sarcasm, happiness, sadness, and even excitement (Qureshi, 2010).

Demoralization with respect to relatives has also become a common practice in advertisements. No doubt social media has played a vital role in insinuating the concept of hatred related to Aunt (Father's sister), memes are made, and people update them on statuses for fun unknowingly that this trend has led the advertisers to use such content in TV commercials as well because of trends. The audience will be catching the grasp of the content

as they are already aware of it. It leads to unethical behaviour and hatred with certain relatives in life. Flirting is another aspect having severe corollary on behaviours of youth. Ads highlighting college romance, flirting, and harassment have promoted its practice more than decreasing it. A common reason behind it is that celebrities are portrayed in advertisements practising unethical, non-Islamic and vulgar values. People instead of disregarding it, start getting influenced by such content and enjoy adopting and practising it in their real lives (Khan, 2017).

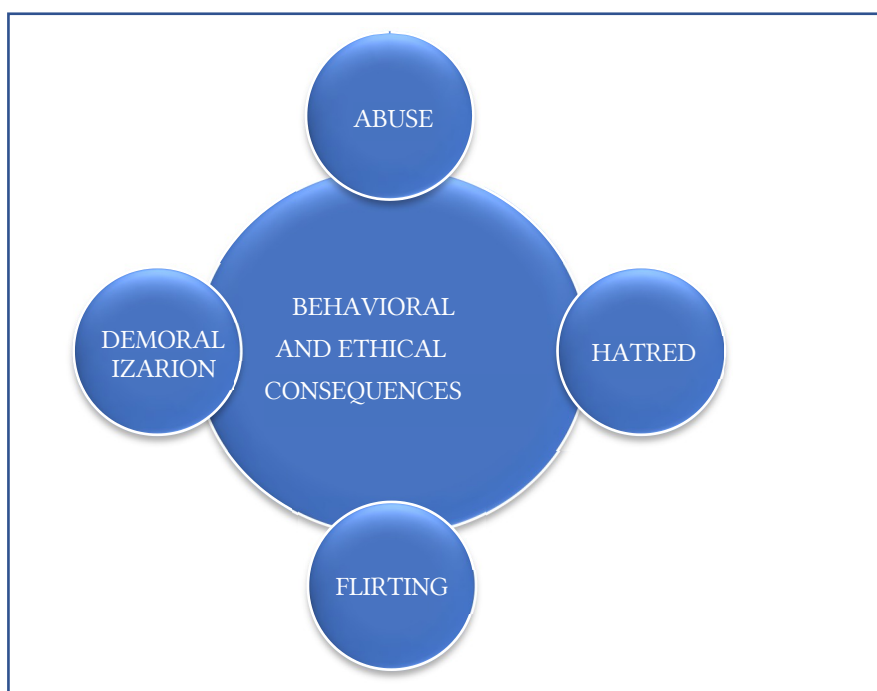


Figure 1

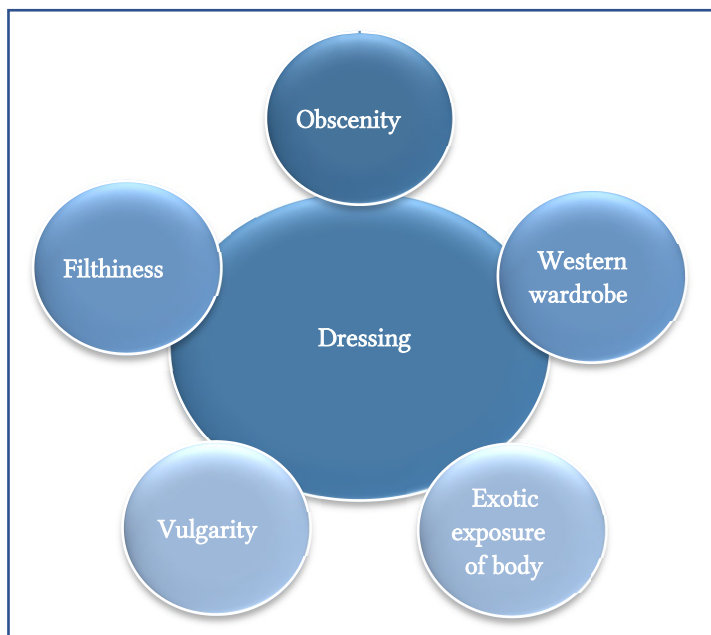
## Dressing

Television commercials have enormous persuasive and reinforcing powers. Human functioning patterns are heavily influenced by advertising, particularly the outward look, which is largely influenced by the trends shown in them. Advertisers employ a one-shot strategy to persuade people to accept and purchase what they see in ads. Everything has been advertised before, whether it is a restaurant product and special or a piece of clothing to be purchased.

Celebrities have a lot of influence on the minds of the audience (Ahmed, 2018). When celebrities follow Western culture and Western dressing, the audience will also follow Western culture. Advertisements have an impact on our social and cultural norms as well. Celebrities wearing short clothes that expose their bodies have a negative impact on our culture, and obscene clothing does not match our ideology. By showing vulgar dress Pakistani advertisers capture the attention of their target audience (Altaf, 2019). People have

wanted to adopt Western dress since it was made normal in various commercials, and they prefer to follow the Western culture over Pakistani culture. Celebrities wear Western clothing in most of the commercials, so it clearly shows that these types of dressing are trending, but most of our audience is middle class, so they can not

follow those kinds of trendy clothing, so it has created a difference in the classes. Teenagers in advertisements are shown to be very happy and fun-loving and to be living very lavish lifestyles, whereas most teenagers in middle-class society are struggling with various issues. This also creates cultural heterogeneity (Farooq, 2016).



**Figure 2**

### Psychological Consequences

Most of the Pakistani television advertisements are either racist or hateful and are causing serious damage to our society. Individuals are advised to stay quiet and ignore the situation when they highlight the anti-Islamic beliefs violating our ideology (Ansari, 2020). Marriage is shown as a business transaction in which dowry is obligatory and a matter of grace. Food-commercialized advertisements are using marketing strategies in a way that disrespecting women can help to increase their sales. Beauty brands increase their sale by solidifying the belief that only 'fair' is 'lovely' however our religion claims that there is no superiority to white over black. Even men are in a fair race to confirm the beauty standards of

society. Some advertisements give the impression that a boy's diet is more important than a girl's as they are shown taking food supplements and drinking milk while girls are shown enjoying fizzy drinks. Most of the ads portray women's role as only staying inside their houses and always pleasing their men endorsing the marginalization of women. On the other hand, famous celebrities are giving rise to Western beliefs like feminism and fondness toward women as men are either serving tea to their partners or being beaten by women in televised advertisements. Furthermore, advertisements are only promoting unrealistic content about women's bodies and the roles they play which is increasing problems such as discrimination, harassment, and violence (Ijaz, 2020).



**Figure 3**

### **Beauty Stereotypes**

Beauty types have been one of the major issues in our society from the start and it was further enhanced by TV commercial ads for beauty and whitening creams. Many Pakistani advertisements have clearly promoted Racism in terms of skin colour and have always promoted white or fair colour skin which automatically led to the weakening of women in our society, Daily many TV advertisements are shown on tv that related to promoting white skin colour and deny dark skin tones and this directly effects to the women who have dark skin tones and it leads them to mental torture, Almost every advertisement of fairness creams and whitening products clearly indicate toward unacceptance of dark or dull skin and these kinds of adds should not be promoted because it is clearly a sort of mental torture of women having dark skin tone. As stereotypes are created women in our society try to make their skin tone fair just because they have a fear of that specific isolation because of their skin tone but we should break this chain and these ads should stop promoting racism which leads to many social issues.

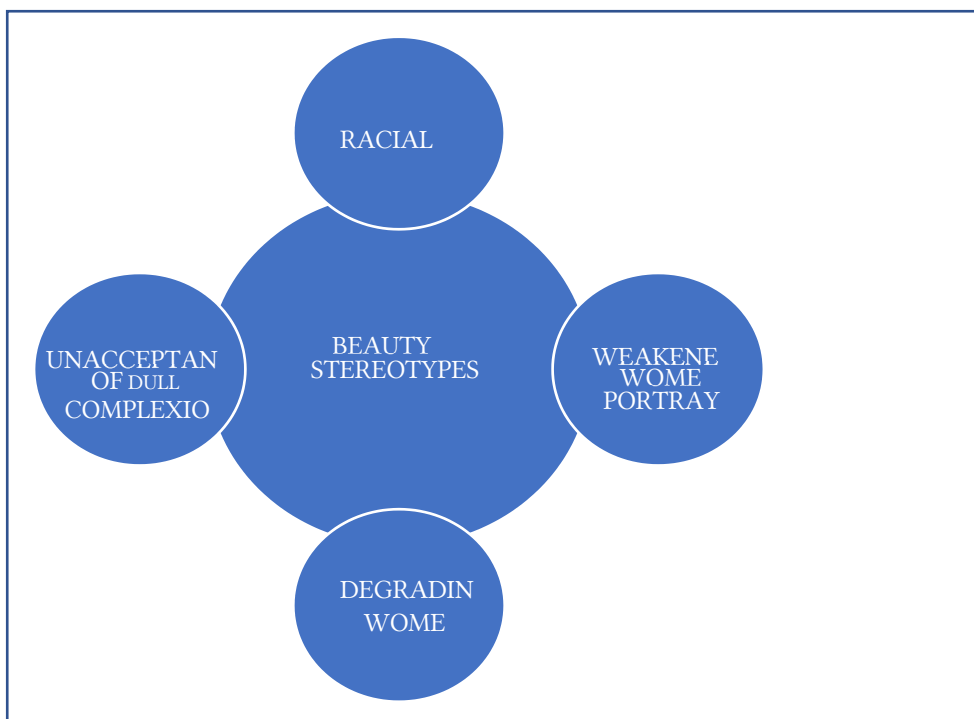
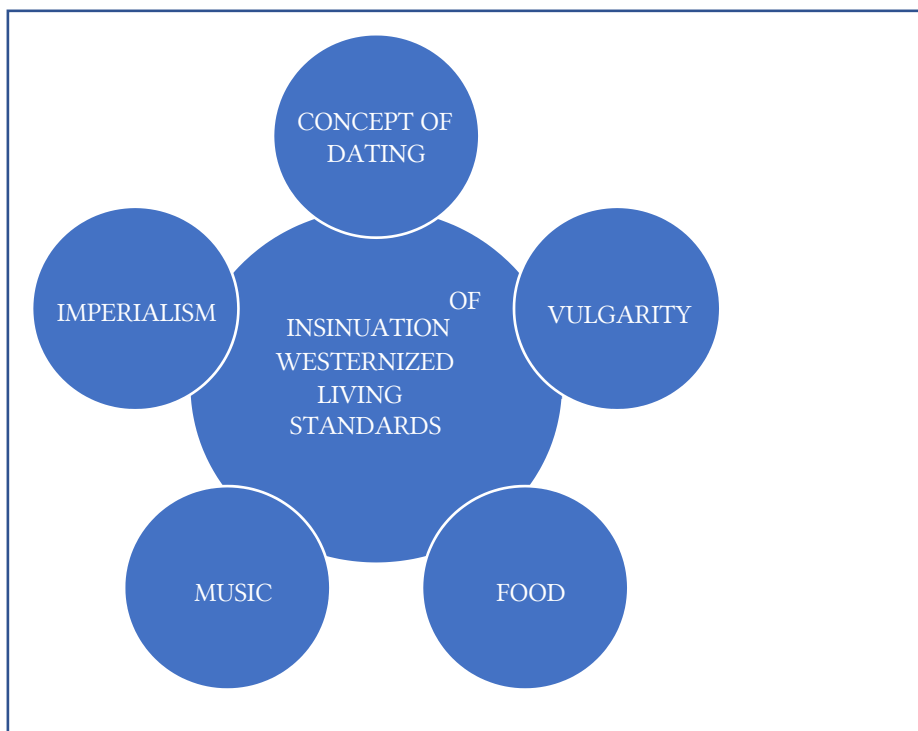


Figure 4

### Insinuation of Westernized Living Standards

Dating notices are the literary items of a talk of commodification and marketization. Pakistani culture does not allow such events, but they are certainly a prime location for seeing the literary development of self and other characters with the benefit of creating modern connections. Near examination of such advertisements that are composed and talked dating promotions uncovers the advertiser's assets. Pakistani advertisements make you accept that individuals are dressed in brightly coloured clothing with a characteristic ability for moving who are fair holding up for a prompt to appear their dancing moves. Open does not appear persuaded by these moving subject notices. For a normal Pakistani, ethical values and ethics are vital. The emotions of Pakistani families are harmed by such notices (Langrial, 2014). The roots of devout lessons have developed profoundly among the common man,

and they dismiss anything that breaches them. Western foods are being advanced in any case, it is not shocking that the slightest nutritious and hurtful nourishment items have the biggest publicizing budgets. How numerous notices do you see for the sound of new vegetables? It is all continuous potato chips, chocolates, burgers, and browned chicken that embellish all the bulletins and daily papers and show up unendingly on the TV. We will witness Western music in our daily routine Pakistani advertisements which are to be used for more viewership because a specific idea has been made that Western music would bring more views in the name of modernization. Pakistani youth are impacted by such refreshment advertisements. most of the youth are pulled in towards western promotions and they consider that consuming such notices will make them more cutting edge and civilized; consequently, they are more slanted towards it (Usman, 2020).



**Figure 4**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the data, we can conclude that most TV viewers believe that commercials violate social and cultural values and promote anti-Islamic culture. Advertising firms skew values in order to promote their products. Every aspect of life in Pakistan is marked by a lack of social responsibility. Media and advertising corporations are also to blame because they air any kind of program or commercial for the sake of money making. Advertising agencies create commercials that combine Western and Indian cultures. They are displaying glamour and gloss that do not exist in Pakistan. According to the results, most TV viewers believe that the impact of any TV advertisement lasts in the last few hours. As a result, the majority of advertising companies, particularly cellular corporations, repeat their adverts multiple times each day, and often multiple times per hour, in order to keep their product or message fresh in the minds of viewers. It has been noted that most television

commercials have a negative impact on our cultural and social values, promoting anti-culture and anti-social attitudes. Advertisers, for the most part, do not portray a true picture of our society. The culture depicted in commercials is unrepresentative of reality. Whose culture is portrayed in TV advertising is a major source of worry. Advertising corporations and the media are establishing a new culture that goes against our social and cultural values and does not conform to our conventions. TV advertising portrays a culture that is only practised by a small number of wealthy Unbans, neglecting the vast majority of rural people. The media is failing to uphold its obligation to follow the prescribed pattern. The human mind begins to lose sense as a result of the constantly changing values of what the media declares as fashionable, healthy, and even what is needed or not. Another harmful tendency of clever advertising transmitted in unprecedented numbers by the electronic media is the rise of depression. Media outlets are more concerned with making money than with

fulfilling their social responsibilities, and they make no effort to preserve or promote cultural and social values. This growing concern nationwide is getting severe with the passage of time, the insinuation is gaining more and more

negative impact on society and this needs to be addressed as soon as possible, this research article should be taken as a motivation for TV advertisers to pay attention to their content and alter it for the benefits of society and out nation.

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