

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFICACY OF
SELECTED ADVERTISING CLIPS ON ETV: CULTURAL
CONSIDERATIONS**

BY

WUBSHET WALELIGN

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
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WUBSHET WALELIGN

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ABSTRACT

Advertising is part of everyday culture in the same way that television programs are part of culture. Advertising is recognized as being a source of entertainment as well as giving information. It is a media in its own right. As such it provides people with another subject to talk or gossip about. However, advertisement can be effective when the values in the message directly correspond with the values of the target audiences. It was the main objective of this study to investigate the extent to which advertisements aired on ETV give due concern to the cultural values of the audiences for whom the advertisements are produced.

The study basically employed qualitative content analysis which was designed to answer the research questions raised and to attain objectives of the study. Moreover, four focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews have been used to further tighten the data obtained from the qualitative content analysis segment of the study and to explore the audiences' perception towards advertisements. A total of 15 commercials broadcasted during five months period were purposefully selected. The selected commercials were analyzed and interpreted thematically to find out their apparent content. Furthermore, relevant literatures were also reviewed.

The results found out that most of the advertisements disregard the dominant cultural values of the society for whom they are advertising. Advertisements appeared fall far short of localizing foreign advertisement messages that can suit audiences' expectation. The advertisements are produced in some others' context and thus the framework of which the advertisements produced do not match the cultural context of the target audiences. Moreover, some of the advertisements lack the genuine and vivid cultural representation. They are observed employing 'alien' cultural elements which do not coincide with the audiences' cultural and intellectual knowledge. The study further revealed that western cultural values are the most recurrent values often observed in the advertisements aired on ETV. The advertising agencies criticized advertisers for this ill treatment of local cultural values because they assume that employing western values is the best way of approaching and pleasing their target customers.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Advertising is considered to be one of the oldest forms of media. It can be seen as an essential part of a modern day, consumerist society and it is very effective way of informing us about new products. Now people live in the world surrounded by advertisements. Straubhaar and Robert (2006) contemplate that although the goal of advertising has always been to inform and persuade, it is undergoing dramatic changes as a form of communication.

Today, it has been an established fact that advertising is the main source of revenue for many newspapers, magazines, TV and radio broadcast. Without it, they hardly exist to practice what they are doing now.

The phenomenon of advertising has long been a subject of research in several disciplines such as mass communication and cultural studies especially in many western societies. Although that is being the case, cultural advertising research is a relatively new area of study.

Advertising's role in influencing our attitudes, lifestyles, and culture is beyond dispute. According to Wilson and Roy (2001) the advertising industry is often on the cutting edge of new cultural developments and trends in our society.

Advertising is also becoming a popular means of communication in Ethiopia. It tries to sell products and services for a wide variety of audiences. As a result, a multitude of advertising agencies came in to existence in the last two decades.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest over the issue of how advertising reflects, reinforces, and affects cultural values. One of the most important debates surrounding it is the influence that advertisements may have

both on us, the audience, and on those who rely on advertising for their income, namely the media producers (Rayner et al., 2004).

Some say advertising is a wise teacher, providing useful and relevant information, others think it is overly intrusive. Common criticisms focus on issues of eroding credibility, manipulation, exploitation and the promotion of materialist social values. However one thing is certain: advertising is a ubiquitous part of the modern life (Enzensberger, 2001).

From a cultural standpoint, advertising reflects the society of the times .The influence of culture on communication is well documented by researchers in many disciplines (Quinn and Vincent, 2005).

Early academic work suggested that advertising could be standardized across cultures however, more recently, that argument faces strong challenge. Enzensberger (2001) showed that there is a growing body of evidence that suggests practitioners take a cautionary view of the possible cultural sensitivities when developing standardized campaigns.

Especially in country like ours, where there exist a wide variety of multi ethnic societies, the task of advertising seems demanding. In order to attract and hold the attention of the potential consumers and create a favorable attitude towards the product, advertising must reflect the cultural norms and values of the society.

Ahmed (2000) states:

One of the most difficult challenges for advertising practitioners is communicating to people of diverse cultures because the values, systems, attitudes, perceptions and communication of individuals and groups are all culturally shaped or influenced.

As the most dominant advertising medium, television was the most likely to be remembered and talked about. The reason for television's dominance comes from its ubiquity, its entertainment value and the generally important role that television plays in people's lives.

ETV is the only national television station which airs audiovisual advertisements in Ethiopia. Despite the dominant role advertising plays in our society, people disagree as to whether advertisements are as effective enough as it thought to be. Some people and advertising practitioners argue that, for one thing, the advertising agencies which produce the advertisements are not qualified so that it faces difficulties in addressing their audiences. And secondly, the cultural values, norms, and trends have been neglected. Ahmed (2000) argues that advertising must reflect the cultural norms and values of the society to attract and hold the attention of the potential customers and create a favorable attitude towards a product.

Although advertising is the subject of study in the western world, so far, only little research has been done to exhibit the practice of advertisement in Ethiopia. One researcher conducted a study on the portrayal of women in billboard advertisements with the intention of showing the extent to which women are depicted in billboard advertisements and pinpointing their assigned role by advertisers. The other researcher tries to analyze the cross cultural reception of advertisements in ETV though the research lacks a comprehensive explanation of how audiences received advertisements.

However none of those researches gave room for the existing relation between culture and audiences perception towards advertisements. Therefore, needless to say, there is a great need for doing a study which entirely intends to fill this gap.

This study therefore tries to study whether cultural values are considered in the making of advertisements and whether these advertisements in turn threaten local values. It will further investigate whether people from various cultural

understandings experiencing certain advertisements portrayed in the same environment will have a deviating attitude towards advertising.

This study suggests a need to focus on the cultural considerations advertisers have to employ and looks in to the consumers' perception towards advertising in general.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Obviously advertising is an important element of our culture because it reflects and attempts to change our life styles. Advertising affects our perceptions and values so much that what we have in the shape of culture today is simply an advertisement-induced version of culture that lacks authenticity and gives rise images which are anything but genuine (Juhiam, 2008).

As Cheung (2007), the way consumers use advertising supports the statement that people are not blank sheets on which communication messages are indelibly printed; they interact, whether consciously or not. Advertising offers an opportunity to engage in this negotiation and construction of meaning and relevance that consumers perceive to be of value to them.

Therefore, knowing Consumers perception of advertisements is as equally vital as producing them. Advertisers are part of the culture to which they are advertising. Thus they need to research the consumer's overall attitudes towards advertising and their values since this behavior is shaped to a larger extent by social factors such as culture, family relationship and other aspects of the external environment. Culture shapes peoples' behavior and personality, and further how individuals express themselves; the way they think and how their economic system functions.

The cultural values underpinning the society must be analyzed carefully. Is there a religion that is practiced by the majority of the people? Is the society collectivist or individualist? Is it family oriented? Is it hierarchical? Is there a dominant

political or economical ideology? All of these will impact an advertising campaign if left unexamined (Enzensberger, 2001).

Understanding the way in which other cultures communicate allows the advertising campaign to speak to the potential customer in a way they understand and appreciate (ibid).

The emergence of television as a dominant means of communication paves the way to meet the public's demand of advertisements. As a result, quite a multitude of advertisements has been aired in ETV daily. However, most of these advertisements have become the focus of considerable criticisms in recent years. It has been said that these advertisements lack professional quality for they haven't reflect the various existing cultures of the nation. And moreover the issue of designing advertisements that aimed at target audiences seems neglected.

Therefore this research critically explores whether cultural aspects are considered in the advertisements under investigation and as to how consumers perceive these advertisements.

It further focuses on public's perception towards the broad institution of advertising by exploring the relationship between diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs towards advertising.

The study throws light up on examining the relation consumers perception have with advertising in its general form by taking some selected advertisements from ETV as a best means of illuminating the case under study.

1.3. Objective of the Study

This research has the following general and specific objectives:

1.3.1. General Objective

This research generally aimed at exploring the extent to which cultural elements are considered in the advertisements aired on ETV and consumers' perception towards advertisements.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study however are:

- ❖ To explore whether advertisers give concern for the cultural elements in the advertising messages they design.
- ❖ To find out the basic cultural areas (if any) in which advertisements are failed to achieve to meet their target audiences.
- ❖ To study whether advertising will be influenced by culture and whether advertising in turn threatens local values.
- ❖ To investigate the consumers' attitude towards advertising in general within the bounds of culture.
- ❖ To elucidate the major cultural factors that shape consumers perception of advertisements.

1.4. Research Questions

Introducing the research question is intended to accomplish two basic purposes. Firstly, to provide a clear view what the research entails and, what the thesis will cover. Secondly, it outlines a clear connection with the research objectives (Juhiam, 2008).

Therefore, in order to meet up the research objectives, the following research questions have been set.

1. Are indigenous cultural values manifested in the advertisements aired on ETV?
2. To what extent advertisements on ETV, specifically those targeting consumers reflect its indigenous cultural values?
3. What are the peculiar cultural values reflected in these advertisements and how they are interpreted in relation to the social context (i.e. cultural background)?
4. How the different elements of an advertising campaign are impacted by culture?
5. Does advertising threaten the local culture and values of consumers?
6. What do consumers' think and feel about advertising and what are their attitude towards advertising in general?

1.5. Methodology of the Study

It is obvious that appropriate research methodology enables the study to achieve the objectives of the research as well as to answer the research questions. According to Burton (2000) and Creswell (2007), developing an effective research design or strategy can be seen as fundamental to the research process

This study will adopt mainly a qualitative methodology of data collection .The researcher believes that the application of this particular methodology is of great relevance to this study. Wimmer and Joseph (2006) justifies that qualitative techniques can increase a research's depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (p.49).

Kamhawi and Weaver (2003) as cited in Wimmer and Joseph (2006) document the importance of qualitative methods in the field. They report that the percentage of articles published in mass communication journals that used qualitative technique increased (116).

A qualitative content analysis will be taken as a major research design for this study. Fifteen advertising clips will be chosen from the advertising packages of ETV in order to illuminate the study under investigation. Deacon (1999:79) states that qualitative content analysis adopts an interpretative approach that seeks to explore the ways in which language and image are presented, combined and used in complimentary fashion. This involves exploring the meanings that are embedded in the representations as opposed to looking at the frequency of particular themes as reflection of popular phenomena which is characteristic of quantitative content analysis.

This study will also basically employ two complimentary basic research techniques so as to answer the research questions. Firstly, Focus group discussion will be used to explore consumers' perception towards selected advertisements. Wimmer and Joseph (2006) states that the data from focus groups are used to enhance understanding and to reveal a wide range of opinions, some of which the researcher might not expect (p.129).

Focus group discussions offer dynamics and ways –not available in individual interviews-of eliciting, stimulating, and elaborating audience interpretations (Hansen et al., 1998).

In depth Interview is another mechanism of data collection the study intends to employ. Interviews will be conducted with selected advertising practitioners to get their perspective and further comprehend the idea under investigation.

According to Wimmer and Joseph (2006), in depth interviews provide detailed backgrounds about the reasons why respondents give specific answers. Elaborate

data concerning respondents' opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences and feelings are obtained (135).

More over the researcher believes on the relevance of semiotic analysis to get deep in to the cultural underpinnings that are reflected in the advertisements.

Berger (2000) supports the use of semiotic analysis in Media research: an extremely useful research tool that can be used to analyze texts found in the mass media as well as communication in everyday life (151).

Finally the data collected through the aforementioned techniques will be carefully analyzed and interpreted.

1.6. Significance of the Study

Generally, this study contributes to the knowledge in three important areas of advertising and communication research. Firstly, it enhances the understanding of how culture be considered in the advertising messages designed by advertisers. Secondly, it increases the comprehension of how cultural understandings influence general attitudes towards advertising and, finally, it advances to a better understanding of consumers attitudes of commercials aired in ETV.

Yet until now, there has been no comprehensive analysis to understand consumers' perception towards advertising especially in relation to culture in Ethiopia. Therefore, this research is the first to provide a critical cultural approach to the understanding of advertising and will intend to fill the gap in this arena.

The cultural affect of attitude towards advertising in a general context on advertising effectiveness, is an important area of study. Thus, the results of this study will have implications for the advertising industry and will also be of particular interest to advertising practitioners.

This study will also be used as a basis for any future study that will examine the relationship between culture and advertising, and for those who further needs to explore on some other concerns of audiences attitude towards television advertising.

Moreover, the results of this study are expected to provide a cultural understanding and insights in to the natures of ETV advertisements.

1.7. Scope of the Study

This research entirely focuses on the cultural considerations exhibited in the advertisements aired in ETV. It is also a study into the consumers' perception and attitude towards those advertisements .Therefore no attempt will be made to take any other aspects of advertising in general.

This study further limits itself to those commercial aired only on Ethiopian Television/ETV/ and particularly on those aired during the Amharic program. Thus any form of advertisements appeared in other forms of media are not the concern of this study. Besides, the study has no intention to focus on any kind of public service advertisements (announcements).

Moreover only some commercials are selected due to the fact that it is quiet intricate to include all advertisements in the entire study. The commercials are chosen carefully up on their relevance to dictate the study under investigation and to show the existing reality which bounds the controversy.

It is worth mention that this research project is not entirely about culture; however it contains parts of culture, it is predominately about advertising. Culture here is being treated from a communication perspective and only in relation with advertising.

1.8. Limitation of the Study

The study has its own limitations. The following were some of the major factors that contributed to the limitation of the study.

First, the study involved only Television advertisements, not including advertisements air in other mediums. This was done because conducting the research inculcating those mediums was impossible due to time and budget constraints. This might be taken as limitation.

Second, lack of the related review literatures, due to the recentness of the concept, especially in Ethiopia. Thus, locally written literatures on the advertising practices in Ethiopia are highly scarce. This has limited the researcher not to supplement the study with literature review on the Ethiopian context exhaustively.

Generally because of the above mentioned shortcomings and limitations the study by no means claims to be conclusive. It would rather serve as a spring board to study the practices, production and cultural considerations in a more detailed and comprehensive approach.

1.9. Organization of the Study

The study is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introductory section, which embraces the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study ,scope of the study, limitations of the study and organization of the study. The second chapter presents the review of related literature and chapter three deals with research methodology, design and procedures. Chapter four focuses on analysis and interpretations of data. The last chapter deals with the conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Advertising: an overview

Many scholars have attempted to define advertising. However most of them agreed on the notion that it is a paid form of communication.

'Advertising is a paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action now or in the future.' (Nan and Ronald, 2004: 5).

However, for Starkey (2004) Advertising is the art of arresting the human intelligence just long enough to get money from it.

Advertising can be considered a medium on its own because its function and format set it apart from the other vehicles of communication in which it appears (Unwin, 1974:24).

Pontifical Council (1997:3) suggests that advertising also has an indirect but powerful impact on society through its influence on media. As Starkey (2004:143), advertisements are arguably the most important elements in a commercial radio/TV station's output. Without them, such stations would be deprived of their main source of income, and the news and programming departments would soon cease to exist.

Ever since mass media became mass media, companies have naturally used this means of communications to let a large number of people know about their products. There is nothing wrong with that, as it allows innovative ideas and concepts to be shared with others.(Shah,2008) However, as the years have progressed, the sophistication of advertising methods and techniques has advanced, enticing and shaping and even creating consumerism and needs where there has been none before, or turning luxuries into necessities(ibid).

Schramm (1973) claimed that persuasion is primarily a communication process, and most definitions of advertising classify it as a form of communication (Richards and Curran, 2002 as cited in Nan and Ronald, 2004:6).

While some scholars have forcefully argued that persuasion alone may be too limiting a view of advertising (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998 as cited in Nan and Ronald, 2004:6), it is difficult to deny that a good deal of the focus in advertising is to persuade (or reinforce attitudes).

Burton (2005:241) states that there is a disjunction between the world of adverts and the lives we live. The work of advertising is to conceal this difference, to construct representations which so permeate our consciousness that they affect our perception of what is really going on.

So far a considerable literature has been published on advertising and its relation with the larger public. It has been suggested that many people have misperceptions about the process of advertising and what it is supposed to do, what it can do, and what it can't do. The general public's attitude toward advertising is ambivalent; most people like individual ads, while they may hate advertising in general. Many think advertising deceives others, but rarely them (O' Guinn et al., 1998:4).

At worst, advertising is seen as hype, unfair capitalistic manipulation, banal commercial noise, mind control, modern voodoo, or outright deception. Some of these descriptions of advertising reflect suspicions that have long surrounded the industry, and some of these descriptions are, on occasion, regrettably precise.

At best the average person sees advertising as amusing, informative, helpful, and occasionally hip. It can help consumers see possibilities and meanings in the things they buy and the services they use. It can connect goods and services to the culture and liberate meanings that lie below the surface (ibid.)

Burton (2005:225) further states that the conduct of the advertising industries, and the materials that they produce, has sometimes given rise to fierce differences to opinion over the functions and effects of advertising in society. Some might see certain television adverts as little creative master pieces. Others might damn advertising as condescending in its representation of social groups,

trite in its view of human behavior, and even as pernicious in being a creature of capitalism and its ideology.

Many researchers raised a critical question on this aspect saying are we really immune? They go on to say that a lot of evidence suggests that we are influenced. Think about the nationally-advertised products we buy, the style of our clothes, the kinds of food we eat, the attention we give to our appearance, and our encyclopedic knowledge of brand names. In these ways and others, our lives reflect the ads around us.

Much of advertising's power comes from this belief that it does not affect us. As Joseph Goebbels said:

This is the secret of propaganda: those who are to be persuaded by it should be completely immersed in the ideas of the propaganda, without ever noticing that they are being immersed in it.' Because we think advertising is trivial, we are less on guard, less critical, than we might otherwise be. While we're laughing, sometimes sneering, the commercial does its work (Kilbourne, 2006).

According to Nan and Ronald (2004:6), Ads are seen as requiring multiple exposures to influence the audience. Advertising is also the primary form of communication where one will be repeatedly exposed to exactly the same message. Therefore, repeated exposure is an important, and somewhat exceptional, characteristic of the way advertising influences attitude change.

In support of this idea, Unwin (1974:24) also states that advertising is more overtly persuasive, more goal oriented and more frequently repeated than other media.

In advertising communication, the message becomes a stimulus designed to obtain a certain response from the receiver-the purchase of a product or the acceptance of an idea (Wright et al., 1982:242).

When the consumer is viewed as an information-processing, decision-making entity, it is important to understand how needed information reaches this entity. In other words, how does the information communicated reach the consumer? (ibid. 241)

Bovee et al. (1995:14) suggest that reaching an audience may sound simple, but it isn't: as an advertiser, you have to identify and analyze your audience so that you can encode your message in a way your audience will understand and so that you can choose the media most likely to reach your audience.

2.2. Why Television Advertising?

To many, television is the medium that defines what advertising is. With its multi sensory stimulation, television offers the chance for advertising to be all that it can be. The breadth of communication possibilities allow for outstanding creative expression of a brand's value. Dramatic color, sweeping action, and spectacular sound effects can cast a brand in an exciting and outstanding light (O'Guinn, et al., 1998:426).

In support of this idea, Bovee et al. (1995:402) assert that in more than four decades of television advertising, advertisers and agencies have proved over and over that the immediacy of television's sight, sound, and motion offers endless creative opportunities to reach viewers' hearts and minds.

In their major study, 'the localization of foreign commercials in China,' Ding, et al. (2005) state that TV commercials in China as well as in other countries have become so pervasive that nobody can avoid them in our lives. But ad makers, marketers or scholars have studied empirically the fact that only in a given cultural environment TV commercials can be successful. One advertising slogan works in America may sound confusing in China.

Starkey (2004:144) emphasizes that one irony for a commercial station in deriving the greatest income from selling its airtime to advertisers is that too much advertising, or the wrong kind of advertising, might drive away the very listeners the station is 'selling'. Advertising cannot, however, be unobtrusive, because if it is not noticed, it is unlikely to be effective.

In general, TV commercials inevitably mirror its cultural environment at least for two reasons. In the first place, they employ cultural element such as cultural expectation and cultural capital, as it is an important strategy for ad makers to carry out a successful campaign. In the second place, how consumers interpret a TV commercial is unavoidably influenced by the culture which he or she belongs to, and in a TV commercial it is often reflected in an implicit way. Thus, questions such as "Why the TV commercials use this background music," "Why this brand name can lead to the success of the promotion of the product," "Why the foreign commercial choose a certain man/woman as its spokesman?" can be answered from the cultural perspective (Ding et al., 2005).

2.3. Theoretical Framework

2.3.1. Culture Defined

Before treating the existent relation between advertising and culture, it is essential to explain divergent interpretations of culture. In the English language, as in many other languages, culture is a complicated word. There are, indeed, various definitions of it.

Culture is the human made part of human environment; the sum total of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society. 'Culture is everything that people have, think and do as members of their society' (Cateora and Pervez, 2000:104).

Parekh (1995) as cited in Alozie (2003:165) also states that, if defined broadly, culture refers to the body of beliefs and practices governing the conduct of the relevant area, be it a specific activity, an aspect of human experience, an organization or human life was whole, but when used in an unqualified way, it may refer to beliefs and practices regulating all or major areas of human life, and have broadly the same meaning as the older term 'a way of life.

According to Hofstede (1980) as cited in Cateora and Pervez (2000:104), Culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partially shared with people who live or lived within the same environment, which is where it was learned. It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.

Culture is also defined by Carey (McQuail,2005:113) as a process, but it can also refer to some shared attribute of a human group/such as their physical environment, tools, religion, customs, and practices, or their whole way of life. Culture also can refer to texts and symbolic artifacts that are encoded with particular meanings by and for people with particular cultural identifications.

Gudykunst (2003:260) takes another dimension to define culture. He writes: “culture is a historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men and women communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitude toward life.”

However, for the purpose of understanding the word of marketing and advertising, culture can be defined as:

The values, attitudes, beliefs, artifacts and other meaningful symbols represented in the pattern of life adopted by people that help them interpret, evaluate, and communicate as members of society (Mooji and Keegan, 1994: 42).

Culture reflects the belief that people acquire values through experiences in specific situations and that behavior cannot be understood or predicted in the context of a specific environment (Jarratt, 2009).

According to Perner (2008), Culture comprises the common meanings and socially constructed values accepted by the majority of members of a society or social group. It includes such things as shared values, beliefs, norms, and attitudes, as well as affective reactions, cognitive beliefs, and patterns of behavior.

Mooji (2005:36) suggests that there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture. We are incomplete or unfinished animals who complete or finish ourselves through culture. Our ideas, our values, our acts, and our emotions are cultural products. We are individuals under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning.

Central to any culture is a common set of values which determine what is considered socially acceptable behavior. These learned values also determine the forms of social organization such as the family, education and social class system which characterize a society (Jarratt, 2009).

On the contrary, McQuail (2005:113) emphasizes communications role in culture. He argues: "Perhaps the most general and essential attribute of culture is communication, since cultures could not develop, survive, extend and generally succeed without communication."

Stating the paradoxical nature of culture, Cateora and Pervez (2000:116) argue that culture is dynamic in nature; culture is not static but a living process. That change is constant seems paradoxical in that another important attribute of culture is that it is conservative and resists to change.

In addition, adapting those perspectives, contemporary researchers argue that culture is learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation to the next (Juhiam,2008).

These definitions lead to two broad conclusions. Firstly, culture is not static and rather changes with the passage of time. Secondly, there are no good or bad cultures defined as culture reflects the identity of people within a specific group.

2.3.2. Advertising and Culture

A large and growing body of literature has become available on the correlative or sturdy relation between advertising and culture.

Although an impressive number of studies have examined the impact of culture on advertising in some way, as Taylor put it, 'we are still lacking a usable comprehensive theoretical framework on its role in advertising' (Taylor, 2005: 12).

As one of the most visible products of culture industries, advertising in both print and electronic forms can be shaped by the culture within which it is practiced. Existing studies of comparative advertising suggest that cultural values either influence the production and execution of advertising or are reflected in the content itself. As documented in the literature, the interplay between culture and advertising is essentially a two-variable model (ibid).

The model underscores, either directly or indirectly, a causal relationship behind two separate, but related, processes: culture affects advertising or advertising reflects culture. In the ladder of abstraction (Chang et al., 2009:672), because culture stands at the highest and hence most abstract level, the occurrence of almost anything in a given society can be somehow attributed to its influence or considered a reflection of its values(ibid).

Mooji and Keegan (1994:42) explicates that there seems to be little doubt that culture plays a central and complex role in advertising. International advertisers have to build strategies for communicating with consumers who have different values, attitudes and buying behaviors. It appears that the knowledge of the basic aspects of culture is essential in order to understand why people in different countries behave differently.

Make no mistakes, culture is real, and it affects every aspect of human behavior, including consumer behavior and response to advertising. Culture surrounds the creation, transmission, reception, and interpretation of ads. Advertisements are cultural products. Even general acceptance of advertising can vary dramatically between cultures (O'Guinn et al., 1998:137-38).

Advertising is believed to act as a mirror reflecting culture by transferring current cultural meanings. In other words, advertisements are considered a form of social communication that resonate the cultural values of a society (Hoan et al., 2004:6). At the same time, advertising creates and produces new cultural values and meanings by influencing group identities and reinforcing stereotypes. So advertising is not only influenced by cultural values but also acts as an agent influencing cultural values. From a marketing perspective, advertisers have been more interested in the effects of culture on consumers' response to advertising.

Furthermore, according to Juhiam (2008) some aspects of local culture and values can be directly affected by advertising, increasing the materialistic behaviors, which is one of the cultural aspects that can be influenced by advertising.

Mooji (2005:39) strongly argues that we are prisoners of our own culture. Consumers are, and so are creative directors who follow their own cultural automatic pilot when developing advertising. This phenomenon enables them to develop effective advertising for their own culture, but it limits their ability to develop effective advertising ideas, including meaningful values, for other

cultures. Advertising in which the values do not match those of the culture of the receiver will be less noted or misunderstood and thus less effective.

Advertisers who overlook the influence of culture are bound to struggle in their attempt to communicate with the target audience (O'Guinn et al., 1998:152). In support of this idea, the anthropologist McCracken points out: "Ideally, effective advertising means that the values in the message match the values of the receiver. It is the culture of the consumer that should be reflected in advertising."

Advertising is a cultural artifact. In order to build relationships between consumers and brands, advertising must reflect people's values (Mooji, 2005:28).

2.3.3. Cultural Values in Contemporary Advertising

The search for a standard operational set of value dimensions which can be used to describe culture or subculture groups was hindered by the lack of a common definition of the concept of culture itself (Henry, 1976:122).

While culture refers to the total pattern of human behavior in society, values are often defined as a set of "an enduring belief that one mode of conduct or end-state of existence is preferable to an opposing mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Catherine, 2003: 5). A value system is, according to Richards et al. (2000), "a learned organization of principles and rules to help one choose between alternatives, resolve conflicts, and make decisions." Cultural values are thus, regarded as "the governing ideas and guiding principles for thought and action" in a given society and a powerful force shaping consumers' motivation, lifestyles and product choices (ibid.).

Values are the core of not only culture but they are also essential components of advertising since they determine whether the message in the advertisements is well communicated to consumers. Cheng (1994) as cited in Catherine (2003:4)

also supports the idea that as a type of mass communication, advertising has also proved to be influential with regards to the portrayal and transmission of cultural values

Thus, according to Richards et al. (2000), advertisements are an important focus of a study of cultural values because they are suffused with it. Indeed, advertisements have become 'perhaps the most dynamic and sensuous representations of cultural values in the world.'

In support of the aforementioned idea, Pollay and Gallagher (1990) also noted that cultural values are the core of advertising messages and typical advertisements endorse, glamorize, and reinforce cultural values.

Most researchers agree that cultural values in advertising should be studied mainly due to the influence one has over the other. Some stress the influence of cultural values on advertising. "...social values of a particular target audience may limit an advertiser's choice of themes" (Hoan et al.,2004:31), while most focus on the influence advertising has on cultural values in terms of influencing and changing consumer behaviors and values (Richards et al.,2000) "Advertising, more than any other institution, may alter consumer values" (Pollay and Gallagher,1990).

According to Catherine (2003:4), Cultural values are transmitted through institutions such as family, religion, school, court and nowadays, mass media.

Cultural values conveyed through advertising messages are considered powerful forces shaping consumers' motivations, lifestyles, and product choice. Advertisers must understand cultural values of a given society to be able to select effective and appropriate advertising messages. Thus cross-cultural studies are crucial in understanding different cultural values (Kilbourne, 2006).

Therefore, in order to attract and hold the attention of the potential customers and create a favorable attitude towards the product, advertising must reflect the cultural values and norms of the society (Ahmed, 2000:25). This is the reason why it is possible to gain an insight into the current social values and norms by analyzing the structures of meaning found in advertisements.

Values of both consumers and marketers are defined by their culture and marketing, and advertising will only be effective if these values match (Mooji, 2005:72). Several empirical studies found that advertisements reflecting local cultural values are more persuasive than those that ignore them (Pollay and Gallagher, 1990).

Mooji (2005:101) explains that understanding that the values of one culture can not be used indiscriminately in another culture should lead toward more refined value studies for developing effective global marketing and advertising strategies.

This preceding literature shows that there is a strong relationship between cultural values and advertising content. Cultural values play a central role in the advertising content and advertising content plays an integral role in transmitting and shaping cultural values. Therefore, the study of advertising content makes it possible for academic researchers to gain insight about the cultural values of a particular society.

2.3.4. Culture specific values

According to Mooji (2005:84), some important values are culture-specific. Relevant values of one culture may not exist in another culture. Relevant, culture-specific values can be found by looking at the important cultural concepts that appear to be untranslatable in to any other language, or only translatable in to the languages of similar cultures.

A culture's core values, those pervasive and enduring values shared by the people in that culture, define how products are used, determine whether products are seen negatively or positively, and delineate market relationships (Bovee et al., 1995: 93).

In addition, culture is a dynamic continuum and tends to be influenced by many factors along with the nation's development, and the values in a given culture will not stay the same forever (Han and Jingxin, 2006:38).

It has been suggested that cultural values shift (Clow and Donald, 2004:79). Some of the attitudes and values shifting at a cultural level include those associated with:

- Sexual orientation
- Use of profanity in public arenas /television programs/
- Tolerance of nudity
- Living arrangements/unmarried couples/
- Views about the end of life, including assisted suicide and "do not resuscitate" orders
- Racial tolerance and acceptance of diversity in society

However, the restructuring of values in society presents three challenges for marketing experts. The first is to monitor for changes so that the company is aware of what is happening in society. The second is to create products and services compatible with changing values. The third is to design advertising messages that reflect and build on the values target markets and individual consumers hold (ibid: 80).

As Bovee (1995:198) tries to suggest, advertisers have to recognize a culture's values and shifts in those values in order to connect emotionally with their audiences (198).

Hence, advertisements must be consistent with the values of a people. If they are not, they will likely be rejected. Many argue that the best (most effective) ads are those that best express and affirm core cultural values (O'Guinn et al., 1998:139).

2.3.5. Standardization vs. Localization Debate

The debate whether or not marketing, and advertising in particular, can truly be standardized has divided both practitioners and researchers in the field. However, there is an increasing body of research which casts serious doubts over the claims made by Levitt and which suggests that advertising is strongly influenced by (local) culture (Dahl, 2008:1).

In Levitt's view, globalization is transforming the world into a 'homocultural' market place where all customers can be persuaded by the same advertising appeals and values, irrespective of the culture they belong to (ibid). However, although this view was popular at first, it was quickly challenged by a number of authors in the field. There was also empirical evidence to contradict it.

According to Taylor (2005), research to date has tried to make the case both for as well as against standardization across cultures.

Juhiam (2008:77) noted that another area where culture can affect advertising is when advertisers decide on whether to localize their advertising message in every market or to standardize their advertising message across markets of diverse cultures. Researchers have pointed out that the successful advertising should mirror the culture of the targeted consumer, rather than reflecting the advertising original culture.

Commenting on this perspective, Mooji (2005:3) argues: "Think global, act local" is a paradox. Thinking and behavior are equally influenced by culture. Someone who thinks globally is still a product of his or her own culture. Global thinking by a person of one culture may easily result in what is perceived as cultural imperialism by people of another culture. The way people think and perceive is guided by the framework of their own culture."

He went on to argue that watching young people worldwide drinking Coca-Cola or wearing jeans may result in thinking they are becoming the same, but there is ample evidence that to consumers the local is more meaningful than the global (ibid).

Most studies and the extent of cultural differences in their findings have cast significant doubt on the theories, and the applicability, of standardized, global advertising. This suggests that localizing advertising messages to suit consumer expectation in each market is still the most important aspect in campaign planning across cultures (Albers-Miller, 1996, as cited in Dahl, 2008:5).

In an age of increasing communication overload, people's selective perception mechanism will work harder (Mooji, 2005:7). Add to that an increased amount of advertising reflecting cultural values that are not theirs, and not much imagination is needed to understand why advertising effectiveness is decreasing. On the one hand, advertisers know that advertising must be understood quickly, that instant recognition is necessary because there generally is little time to convey a message.

The eternal dilemma of advertising is whether to follow the conventions of advertising for a particular product category in a particular culture or to be distinctive in order to raise awareness and find a place in people's memories. Within countries, the danger of using distinctive, unusual information in advertising to attract attention is that it will not fit in consumers' schemata and will be discarded. This risk is even greater across cultures than within cultures because people's schemata vary (Mooji, 2005:145).

On this regard, Ahmed (2000:13) writes: from the stand point of international marketing and advertising practitioners, such cross cultural understanding is imperative in order to be able to formulate effective localized advertising that would appeal to or reflect the cultural values and norms of its intended audience.

2.3.6. Intercultural Communication and Advertising Messages

Advertising is first and foremost a process of communication. At its simplest, the advertiser has a message to communicate, and it wants a response such as higher sales or more votes. Whether the message involves words or pictures, education or persuasion, it is important to understand the communication process (Bovee, 1995:13-14).

Keegan (2002:412) asserts that the message may reach the target audience and may be understood but still may not induce the recipient to take the action desired by the sender. This could result from a lack of cultural knowledge about a target audience.

According to Ellingsworth (1983) as cited in Gudykunst (2003:174), all communication involves some degree of cultural variability. He suggests that explaining intercultural communication needs to start from interpersonal communication and cultural factors needs to be incorporated.

It is commonly accepted that differences in cultures of different nations, ethnics or groups may turn out to be barriers in intercultural communication, and cultural misunderstanding or failures in intercultural communication may lead to cultural collisions or conflicts (Han and Jingxin, 2005:38).

In support of this idea, Cateora and Pervez (2000:378) contend that the problem of communicating to people in diverse cultures is one of the great creative challenges in advertising. Communication is more difficult because cultural factors largely determine the way various phenomena are perceived. If the perceptual framework is different, perception of the message itself differs.

In the context of intercultural communication, companies attempt to accommodate their targeted audience by adapting their messages to the receivers' culture. They often go beyond merely matching their target's speech or language styles, however, and use many aspects of cultural symbols to become more similar to and gain the approval of their audience (Holland and James, 1997).

It has been stated that the parallel trends of globalization and multiculturalism make it increasingly important to develop a deeper understanding of culture and its various manifestations (Douglas and Samuel, 2005). Cultural influences are changing dramatically, as cultures are no longer dependent on local resources to formulate their characteristic tastes, preferences and behavior and are increasingly linked across vast geographic distances by modern communication media.

Bovee et al (2003:62) has argued that recognizing cultural differences helps to avoid sending inappropriate signals and helps to correctly interpret the signals from others-an important step toward improving intercultural sensitivity. But simple recognition isn't the whole story. Being aware of cultural differences is only the first step in improving your intercultural communication. To achieve intercultural sensitivity, you need to balance cultural awareness with cultural flexibility.

Successful intercultural advertisers recognize and respect cultural differences. This doesn't mean that cultural missteps in advertising are always the result of ethnocentrism, however, lack of contact with cultural and ethnic groups, and the ignorance that can result from such isolation, is probably one of the major sources of cultural advertising error (Bovee et al., 1995:200).

Thus, as Bovee et al (1995:193) put "identifying cultural segments and understanding their implications for advertising strategy has become both a significant challenge and a promising opportunity for many of today's advertisers."

Consumers are increasingly selective in what receives their attention. Culture reinforces this selective process (Mooji, 2005:39). No two national groups see the world in exactly the same way. Perceptual patterns are learned and culturally determined. We perceive what we expect to perceive. We perceive things according to our cultural map. We become confused when things appear to be different from what we expected, and we may draw the wrong conclusions.

According to Bovee et.al(2003:63), to communicate effectively with people from other cultures, you need to study other cultures, overcome language barriers, and develop effective intercultural communication skills, both written and oral.(Cateora and Pervez ,2000:104-105) also noted that when a promotional message is written, symbols recognizable and meaningful to the market (the culture) must be used. When designing a product, the style, uses and other related marketing activities must be made culturally acceptable(i.e. acceptable to the present society)if they are to be operative and meaningful.

In line with this, Keegan (2002:420) writes: “knowledge of cultural diversity, especially the symbolism associated with cultural traits, is essential when creating advertising. Local country managers will be able to share important information, such as, when to use caution in advertising creativity. Use of colors and man-woman relationships can often be stumbling blocks.”

It has been an established fact that cultural knowledge is firmly essential to accomplish this purpose. Cateora and John (2005:112) identify two kinds of knowledge about cultures. One is factual knowledge about a culture; it is usually obvious and must be learned. Different meanings of colors, different tastes, and other traits indigenous to a culture are facts that a marketer can anticipate, study, and absorb. The other is interpretive Knowledge-an ability to understand and to appreciate fully the nuances of different cultural traits and patterns.

2.3.7. How advertising transmit Cultural Meaning

Numerous studies have attempted to explain that the link between culture and advertising is crucial (O'Guinn et al., 1998:140). To understand advertising as a meaning transfer is to understand a great deal about advertising. In fact one could legitimately say that advertisers are really in the meaning transfer business. Meaning is thus moved from the world to the product (via advertising) to the individual. When the individual uses the product, that person conveys to others the meaning he or she and the advertisement have now given it. Their use incorporates various rituals that facilitate the movement of meaning from good to consumer.

In line with this, the anthropologist McCracken points out that advertising works as a method of meaning transfer by bringing the consumer good and a representation of the culturally constituted world together within the frame of a particular advertisement (Mooji,2005:5). In the words of McLuhan, "the advertisements of our time are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities" (Unwin, 1974:24).

Kilbourne (2006) states:

Advertising performs much the same function in industrial society as myth did in ancient societies. It is both a creator and perpetuator of the dominant values of the culture, the social norms by which most people govern their behavior. At the very least, advertising helps to create a climate in which certain values flourish and others are not reflected at all.

As a form of social communication, advertising reflects these wider systems of meaning: It reflects the way people think, what moves them, how they relate to each other, how they live, eat, relax, and enjoy themselves. All manifestations of culture, at different levels are reflected in advertising. In order to analyze advertising as a manifestation of culture at the broader level, it must be understood that culture is expressed in several ways (Mooji, 2005:36).

Advertising often appeals to what is lacking in society. Where family values are lacking, advertising will show happy families.

At the same time, advertising creates and produces new cultural values and meanings by influencing group identities and reinforcing stereotypes (Hoan et al., 2004:6).

It is also well documented in many disciplines (e.g., sociology, cultural anthropology, mass communication, marketing, semiotics, cultural studies) that advertising reflects and reinforces many of the social values, norms and stereotypes of its audiences. Two well known semiotic researchers, Fiske (1980) as cited in Ahmed (2000:25) noted that advertising does not represent the “manifest actuality” of the society, but rather symbolically represents the social values. The researchers pointed out that advertising insists on an idealized goal of achieving personal happiness, success, and security, and it does this by first depicting a world-overrepresented by young, beautiful, successful, happy, wealthy people, and then creating a desire in the audience to better their lives or to achieve the desirable attributes of in the advertisement, and finally it portrays the product (explicitly, implicitly, or symbolically) as a bridge toward achieving that goal.

In terms of a kind of passivity and arguments about what the media do to people, researchers assert that: It is through advertising and marketing that commodities acquire certain cultural meanings or “sign value” and it is thus that advertising participates in the social construction of our needs (Burton, 2005:236).

Advertising is a symbolic artifact constructed from the conventions of a particular culture. The sender crafts the message in anticipation of the audience’s probable response, using shared knowledge of various conventions (Mooji, 2005:139). Receivers of the message use the same body of cultural knowledge to read the message, infer the sender’s intention, evaluate the content, and formulate a

response. Cultural knowledge provides the basis for interaction. If advertising crosses cultures, it lacks the shared conventions.

Consequently, a consumer's understanding of a message in an advertisement occurs consciously or unconsciously, and is influenced by a group's socially shared values, but not necessarily by individual traits (Alozie,2003:12). However, the meaning consumers ascribe to advertising might not be the intended message an advertiser planned to convey. The conflict between the goal of advertisers and consumers' interpretation of advertising messages may account for the controversy regarding the role advertising plays in many societies.

Explaining the disparity on the goals of the advertiser and consumers, (Leiss, 1990 as cited in Alozie, 2003) states that advertisers use the medium to manipulate and persuade consumers to purchase, while consumers use it as a source of information about goods and services that help them make informed purchasing decisions. This process allows advertisers and consumers to participate in the creation, production, and consumption of advertising

Cateora and Pervez (2000:369) have further stated that consumers respond in terms of their culture, its style, feelings, value systems, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions .Because advertising's function is to interpret or translate the need/want-satisfying qualities of products and services in terms of consumer needs, wants, desires and aspirations, the emotional appeals, symbols, persuasive approaches and other characteristics of an advertisement must coincide with cultural norms if it is to be effective. Because advertising is mainly based on language and images, it is influenced by culture.

O'Guinn et al. (1998:150-151) claimed that textual meaning is created through the interaction of sociological, cultural and individual factors. So it is for ads. When advertisers include social and cultural factors in their analysis of consumer behavior, they dramatically enhance their chances of anticipating the meaning consumers will draw from advertisements.

2.3.8. Cultural Harms of Advertising

Over the last many years, the body of literature that explores the cultural impact of advertising has grown exponentially.

According to Juhiam (2008), some aspects of local culture and values can be directly affected by advertising, increasing the materialistic behaviors, which is one of the cultural aspects that can be influenced by advertising. Criticizing its cultural role, Pollay and Gallagher (1990) argues that advertising is not just a mirror that reflects and exposes existing cultural values and behaviors, but it is a 'distorted Mirror'.

The problem with advertising isn't that it creates artificial needs, but that it exploits our very real and human desires (Kilbourne, 2006). Advertising promotes a bankrupt concept of relationship. Most of us yearn for committed relationships that will last. But we are surrounded by advertising that yokes our needs with products and promises us that things will deliver what in fact they never can. "In the world of advertising, lovers are things and things are lovers."

In another way, Pontifical Council (1997) firmly pointed out that in the competition to attract ever larger audiences and deliver them to advertisers, communicators can find themselves tempted in fact pressured, subtly or not so subtly to set aside high artistic and moral standards and lapse into superficiality, tawdriness and moral squalor.

As a vehicle for promoting social modernization, the impact of utilizing advertising to promote consumerism in developing societies remains a subject of intense debate.

Aozie (2003) points out:

The debate about the influence of advertising in most societies, especially developing nations, revolves around one primary issue ;do advertising messages reflect the cultural values of the developing and traditional societies within which they are communicated, or do they seek to introduce Western values that reinforce the consumption habits of the capitalist-industrial world? (Roberts, 1987 cited in Aozie, 2003:1)

Consider also the cultural injury done to the developing nations and their peoples by advertising whose content and methods, reflecting those prevalent in the first world, are at war with sound traditional values in indigenous cultures. Today this kind of "domination and manipulation" via media rightly is "a concern of developing nations in relation to developed ones," as well as a "concern of minorities within particular nations"(Pontifical Council, 1997).

In addition, another aspect is escalating Western values in local culture (Juhiam, 2008). Previous studies indicate that this affect can be seen throughout, using foreign words in the advertising, or through using foreign celebrities as a model in advertising, which will make the younger consumers, try as much as possible to copy their behaviors and styles.

The indirect but powerful influence exerted by advertising upon the media of social communications that depend on revenues from this source points to another sort of cultural concern (Pontifical Council,1997). Moreover the conduct of the advertising industries, and the materials that they produce, has sometimes given rise to fierce differences to opinion over the functions and effects of advertising in society (Burton, 2005:225).

As a result, O'Sullivan (2004) argues that a serious dialogue between advertising and its critics is important. Advertising has a responsibility. It must be possible to sell goods without devaluing cultural symbols or the values held by a culture.

2.3.9. Core Cultural Theories in Advertising

The successful development of an effective communication campaign should begin with an in-depth understanding of cross-cultural differences in socio cultural values and behaviors. This in-depth understanding of sub cultural differences will help advertisers understand how these differences affect marketing activities and communication patterns, and it will help identify important attitudinal and behavioral characteristics that constitute distinctive sub cultural markets (Hoan et al., 2004).

People tend to live within their cultural boundaries; i.e., people have their own cultural values and norms, which influence the way they think, feel and act. People in the same ethnic groups tend to share the language, customs, values, and social views. These shared values (i.e., culture) influence people's cognitive (beliefs and motives), affective (emotion and attitude) and behavioral (purchase and consumption) processes. Based on this notion of "advertising as a mirror," cultural values and standards are implanted in ads in such a way that consumers can "see themselves" and identify with the characters in the ads and feel affinity with the brands (Han and Jingxin, 2006).

Thus, Hoan et al. (2004:7) offers two basic cultural theories which advertisers need to give much emphasis while writing advertising messages. According to these key cultural theories (distinctiveness theory and accommodation theory), ethnic audiences feel more affinity for culturally accommodating messages and respond more favorably to culturally targeted ads.

One of the underlying theories of multicultural marketing and advertising is "distinctiveness theory." The theory postulates that "a person's distinctive traits in relation to other people in the environment will be more salient to the person than more common traits" (ibid: 8).

Similarly, "speech accommodation theory" postulates that communicators can improve communication by making themselves more similar to message receivers (Giles et al., 1991). Applying this theory to advertising, we can postulate

that advertisers can improve marketing communications by making themselves more similar to message receivers (consumers) or by accommodating themselves to consumer cultures.

According to Holland and James (1997), this accommodation effort can be manifested in marketing communications in various ways: using ethnic spokespersons in ads, hiring ethnic salespeople, employing ethnic language, art, music, national flags, or other cultural symbols, placing a retail outlet in an ethnic community, supporting ethnic community events, etc.

However, if advertising messages are insensitive, unacceptable or even offensive to significant portions of the target audience (e.g., high cultural affinity consumers), advertising could prove to be ineffective or even detrimental (Hoan et al., 2004). This is how cultural sensitivity and acceptability of advertising stimuli play important roles for multicultural marketing.

The bottom line is that culturally sensitive marketers should know themselves, understand their customers, and create a marketing atmosphere where every market segment receives attention, respect, and appropriate messages (ibid).

2.3.10. Cultural Elements and Advertising

In his seminar article on 'Globalization and Popular Culture,' Kumar (2000) asserts that every society has its unique set of folklore, popular idioms, customs, myths, cultural practices and conventional empirical knowledge associated with its immediate environment.

This view is supported by Juhiam (2008) who writes: "successful marketing requires an understanding of the culture of those consumers. Therefore, advertising should incorporate symbols that will be viewed as meaningful and

appropriate by the target culture. Products may have to be customized to be accepted within the target market's culture.”

According to Bovee et al (2003:243), for any idea to be transmitted effectively from source to receiver, whether the source is personal or non personal, the message must meet these three qualifications:

1. It must be so designed and delivered as to gain the attention of the receiver.
2. It must use signals that are understood in the same way by both source and receiver.
3. It must arouse awareness of needs in the receiver and suggest some way of satisfying these needs that is appropriate to the receiver's group situation when moved to make the desired response.

These three requirements are often combined to form the first rule of effective communication: know your audience (ibid)

As a form of mass media artifact, Alozie (2003:10) observes that an advertising text is culturally contextualized (cultural-based principles of meaning); that is, its meaning is based on a consumer's interpretation or perception (when it is decoded). Advertisers tend to encode their messages by adapting the cultural values, languages, ideas, and norms shared by a group.

Reliance on this aspect could be attributed to the notion that advertising is reflective of societal values. Members of a specific society tend to adhere to their norms, including their style of thinking, language, religion, attitudes, and perceptions (ibid).

Therefore a knowledgeable communicator needs information about the people, the communication rules, the context, and the normative expectations governing the interaction with the member of the other culture (Gudykunst, 2003:195). Without this information, the communicator will invariably make

misattributions, choose incorrect communication strategies, violate rules of etiquette, or cause the loss of face for self or other.

In order to understand the importance of considering cultural elements in advertising, it is by far essential to deal with some of the basic elements of culture that can best be regarded as essential in advertising.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics refer to the cultural interpretation of the symbolic meanings of various methods of artistic expression, color and standards of beauty in each culture (Cateora, 1990 as cited in Juhiam, 2008). Artistic expression includes graphics, plastic arts, folklore, music, drama and dance. In addition, a culture's uniqueness can be identified through symbols that embody specific meanings.

Therefore, understanding the folklore and music of a culture will allow an advertiser to choose appropriate symbols, metaphors, colors and ideas that can be used throughout the campaign (ibid).

Advertisers adapt the images they portray to whatever is more widely accepted by the society (Keegan, 2002:76). It is a mistake to make assumptions about what is culturally proper or incorrect based on ones own experiences.

Generally, it is apparent that the successful marketer must be a student of culture (Cateora and John ,2005:94). Similarly, much of the success of advertising depends up on getting the right advertisement in front of the right audience (Rayner et al.,2004:272).

Cateora and John (2005) believes that when deigning a product, the style, uses, and other related marketing activities must be made culturally acceptable (i.e., acceptable to the present society) if they are to be operative and meaningful.

Commenting on the challenges of advertising in this concern, Wright et al. (1982:243) pointed out that lack of feedback, interference, and translation of advertiser language in to consumer language are important problems in advertising, but they do not alter the basic requirements for successful advertising.

Language

Language is a key component of communication since it provides a mechanism for encoding and decoding messages (Douglas and Samuel, 2005). A shared language is thus a key factor unifying members of a common culture. Language provides an organizing schema for interpreting and understanding the world.

Language is shown to be an important thread of culture not only in communication within a culture, but also in categorizing cultural content and in retaining information relating to that culture (ibid).

According to Pollay and Gallagher (1990:29), language is of vital cultural significance because it provides society with a set of words and concepts with which people structure their perceptions and judgments and define, to a large extent their conception of reality. However, advertising debases language and uses it in ways that promote its own ends. Advertising gives some words and concepts greater emphasis. It uses language to 'amplify ambiguities,' 'distort thought' and 'bury reality. In short advertising uses language to lie.

There are two ways of looking at the language-culture relationship (Mooji, 2005:42): Language influences culture, or language is an expression of culture. The other view point is that language reflects culture. The approach is to realize that only the ability to speak is universal for humankind. Which language a person speaks is part of the culture in which he or she grows up. The language reflects all manifestations of culture, the expressions and the values. Language illustrates culture. Expressions of culture are particularly recognizable in the use of metaphors.

This "language of advertising ,"although less apparent to communicator and audience alike, is firmly anchored to cultural norms and often says more about a society's psyche than the more obvious stereotypes of content(Unwin,1974:24).

However as Juhiam (2008), the results of prior studies demonstrate that advertising can induce the local language through augmented use of foreign words within the locally made advertisement, or through using international advertisements.

Moreover translations do not uncover the different world views, different ways of thinking, and different intellectual styles. Mooji (2005:5) says, “Translating advertising copy is like painting the tip of an iceberg and hoping the whole thing will turn red.” Advertising is more than words; it is made of culture.

Cateora and Pervez (2000) has finally outlined that language is arduous to be mastered, but it is the most important element of culture.

Music

According to Mooji (2005:48), Music is another aspect of culture. Although many types of music have proved able to travel (Classical music, jazz, pop music), cultures tend to have their own rhythm. A people’s music is inseparable from their lives, and songs represent an important part of their identity. Music represents a sort of rhythmic consensus, a consensus of the core culture.

Keegan (2002:70) has also supported this idea on saying music is part of all cultures, accepted as a form of artistic expression and source of entertainment. Although background music can be used effectively in broadcast commercials, the type of music appropriate for a commercial in one part of the world may not be acceptable or effective in another part.

Rituals

According to O’Guinn et al. (1998:139), rituals are “often repeated” formalized behaviors involving symbols.” Cultures participate in rituals. Cultures affirm, express, and maintain their values through rituals. Rituals are core elements of

culture. They are a way in which individuals are made part of the culture, and a method by which the culture constantly renews and perpetuates itself.

If a product or service can not be incorporated in to an already existing ritual, it is very difficult and expensive for advertisers to effect a change. On the other hand, an advertiser can successfully incorporate the consumption of its goods and service in to an existing ritual, then success is much more likely (ibid).

2.3.11. Fundamental Cultural Dimensions

Classifying cultures on dimensions has proved to be the most constructive method (Mooji, 2005:72). It helps in vocalizing and labeling cultural differences and similarities.

Many advertising strategies and expressions /e.g., direct or indirect comparative technique; individualistic stance or collective stance or collective stance in visuals) may be influenced by important cultural values such as individualism, collectivism, rational reasoning, emotionalism, and low context culture vs. high context culture (Ahmed, 2000:12-13).

According to Unwin (1974), the most common cultural values manifested in advertising include individualism-collectivism, high and low context cultures and language, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and cultural preference for written versus oral communication.

However for the purpose of this study, only those cultural dimensions which can best represent an Ethiopian culture have been included.

High Context Culture

In high context cultures people are used to contextual messages, they will read more on pictures and derive “hidden” meaning from a visual image (Mooji, 2005:151). Even for simple visual images with highly explicit information, the high-context audience may try to construct metaphorical meaning that is not intended by the sender of the message.

Mooji (2005:49) further attempted to elaborate that in a high context communication or message, most of the information is part of the context or internalized in the person; very little is made explicit as part of the message. To the observer, an unknown high-context culture can be completely mystifying, because symbols that are not known to the observer play such an important role. Thus high-context communication can also be defined as inaccessible.

Collectivism

Members of collectivistic cultures emphasize goals, needs, and the views of the group over those of the individual; the social norms of the in-group are favored over individual pleasure and shared in-group beliefs over unique individual beliefs (Mooji, 2005:62).

In collectivistic cultures, people are “we” conscious. Their identity is based on the social system to which they belong, and avoiding loss of face is important (ibid: 56). Collectivistic cultures are “shame” societies. Having or losing “face” is the expression used by people of collectivistic cultures. He went on explaining that when one has done something wrong, it reflects not on oneself but on the group to which one belongs, and one therefore feels shame.

In the other way, Bovee et al (2005: 72) entertains the idea that people from collectivistic cultures accept that different groups have different values. In collectivistic cultures, corporate brands are favored over product brands. One can

build a relationship between a company and consumers better than between (abstract) brands and consumers.

Generally, Hofstede (1980) as cited in Mooji (2005:56) suggested a correlation between collectivism and high context in cultures. He goes on to say that in collectivistic cultures, information flows more easily between members of the group, and there is less need for explicit communication than in individualistic cultures.

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the detailed design and methodology that were used to conduct this research and fulfill the research goals. It further discusses the various data gathering instruments and the methods of data analysis. It also tries to inculcate the pertinent philosophical underpinnings that surround the methodology.

3.1. Research Method

In order to address the research questions and objectives of this study, a qualitative research approach has been employed as the major approach.

Qualitative method allows a researcher to view behavior in a natural setting without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds the experimental or survey research. In addition it can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of the

phenomenon under investigation. It is flexible and allows the researcher to pursue new areas of interest (Wimmer and Joseph, 2006:49).

According to Creswell (2009:194), the intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction. It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of the social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and classifying the object of the study

Qualitative methods of research have long been considered the most appropriate for an in depth understanding of beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, motivations, views and behaviors of people in particular social contexts.

Thus, in attempting to generate an empirical data to find out the extent to which the advertisements on ETV give concern to the cultural elements, this study predominantly used a qualitative research design. This kind of study, which entirely focuses on investigating the manifested content of the commercials, the methodology preferred to be used is a qualitative one because this methodology, in contrast to quantitative research which takes a phenomenon in to parts, strives to understand the meaning of an experience (Gray, 2004).

More over, semiotic analysis is also used to get deep in to the cultural underpinnings that are reflected in the advertisements. According to Berger (2005:7) Semiotic analysis is concerned with meaning in texts and that meaning stems from relationships in particular, the relationship among signs.

Berger (2000:151) supports the use of semiotic analysis in Media research: an extremely useful research tool that can be used to analyze texts found in the mass media as well as communication in everyday life.

3.2. Research Design

Developing an effective research design or strategy can be seen as fundamental to the research process (Creswell, 2009). As a result, qualitative content analysis has been selected as the central research design in this study. As Miller and John (2003:243), Content analysis involves the description and analysis of text in order to represent its contents.

In line with this, Deacon (1999:79) states that qualitative content analysis adopts an interpretative approach that seeks to explore the ways in which language and image are presented, combined and used in complimentary fashion. This involves exploring the meanings that are embedded in the representations as opposed to looking at the frequency of particular themes as reflection of popular phenomena which is characteristic of quantitative content analysis.

Therefore, qualitative content analysis allows a scholar to explore the ideological mind-set, themes, topics, and symbols revealed in an artifact such as advertising. This method utilizes techniques that identify and explain patterns within a collection of texts.

Alozie (2003) also notes that in recent years, scholars have begun to show their impatience with the mere counting of symbolic objects, an approach typically employed in content analysis. Instead, scholars have turned their attention to critical analysis to study advertising texts holistically. Moreover hidden values embedded in an advertisement can be brought to the forefront by qualitative critical analysis.

3.3. Data Gathering Instruments

As to the purpose of this study, two basic instruments have been used to collect data: individual in-depth Interviews and focus group discussions.

3.3.1. Individual in Depth Interviews

Individual in-depth Interviews have been conducted with two advertising agency managers who have been in the advertising business for long years. Therefore the researcher believed that their insight would be helpful to further analyze the study under investigation.

According to Gray (2004:214) Interviewing is the powerful way of helping people to make explicit things that have hitherto been implicit-to articulate their tacit perceptions, feelings and understandings. Interviews are the method used most frequently for generating in-depth personal accounts, understanding the personal context and exploring issues in depth and detail

Individual interviews are perhaps the most widely used method in qualitative research and as Burton (2003: 36) note “their key feature is their ability to provide an undiluted focus on the individual.”

Wimmer and Joseph (2006:135) also state that the most important advantage of in depth interview is the wealth of detail that it provides. Interviews can thus lead to the development of new ideas and hypotheses and throw up new dimensions to be studied. (Miller and John, 2003:167).

Individual in-depth interviews let respondents articulate their own answers in their own terms, providing thus answers that are richer and more sensitive insights into the personal views of respondents.

Specifically, I employed a semi-structured interview guide that enabled me to raise questions that came in to existence during the actual interview (see the

appex) because “every interview is an interpersonal drama with developing plot” (Hermanns 2004).

Wimmer and Joseph (2006) assert that semi structured interviews seek to promote an active, open-ended dialogue where the interviewer controls the discussion by referring to an interview guide that sets out the issues to be covered during the exchange.

The semi-structured interview allows for probing of views and opinions where it is desirable for respondents to expand on their answers. Such probing may also allow for the diversion of the interview in to new pathways which, while not originally considered as part of the interview, help towards meeting the research objectives (Gray, 2004:217).

The interview questions were prepared so as to elicit interpretative information which can support the findings obtained from the content analysis part of the study.

It is worth mentioning that the interview took place in the local official language, Amharic, in order to allow interviewees express their feelings as comfortably as possible.

3.3.2. Focus Group Discussions

As to the view of many researchers like Burton (2000:195) focus groups are rich sources of qualitative data for the social science researcher and as such are an interactive and popular method of data collection.

Robson (2002:284) also supports the notion that group dynamism help in focusing on the most important topics and it is fairly easy to assess the extent to which there is a consistent and shared view. Advantageously a real benefit of this

interaction is the sharing of views, experiences and stories between participants, and the insightful and rich data which is often produced. (Miller and John, 2003:120).

As Burton (2000) suggests, focus groups are useful when it comes to investigating what participants think, but they excel at uncovering why participants think as they do. Focus groups can achieve this because the participants not only articulate their views and experiences about a particular topic, but also explain to the other members of the group why they hold those views.

The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in group (Flick, 2002). The data are used to enhance understanding and to reveal a wide range of opinions, some of which the researcher might not expect (Wimmer and Joseph, 2006:129).

Although focus groups can provide an insight into the experiences of individual participants, their value lies in the opportunity to analyze the interaction between participants (Burton, 2000:186).

Group discussions are used where the “group process will itself illuminate the research issue” , encouraging creative thinking in a social context and displaying and discussing differences within the group ; indeed, focus groups or group interviews have been used widely as a research method for studying media audiences for many years.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, focus group discussants were chosen based on their ability and willingness to offer information and to be representative of the population of interest.

In order to meet the objectives of this study, different focus groups have been employed. This data gathering tool has been believed helpful to find out whether

audiences' perception of commercials may vary according to their cultural orientations and understanding of basic cultural values. Moreover it is believed that the discussion paves the way to investigate the extent to which their culture is considered in the commercials.

Hermanns (2004) states that the number of groups to be conducted depends on the research question and on the number of different population subgroups required. In line with this, four focus groups have been used to shed light on the study under investigation and represent the different subgroups.

Concerning the formation of the groups, homogeneous groups have been used in this study. This is because homogeneity creates a common sphere for the discussants to elicit a lively and coherent discussion.

Moreover the selected commercial clips were played to the discussants in the discussion session so as to make the discussion lively and to help the discussants further articulate their understanding of the specific issue under study.

3.3.3. My Role as a Researcher

As an interviewer during the research, my primary task was creating a friendly atmosphere with the informants through informal conversation. This conversation is believed to pave the way in maintaining a lively chat. Through out the interview sessions, I was tolerant and interested to listen to their ideas even when they deviate from the topic of discussion with only a little interruption to remind them of the questions.

However, some of the participants were reluctant to speak out. Thus I made a deliberate effort to encourage them to take part in the discussion by asking them specific questions. Part of my role was therefore to try to make sure that the dynamics of the interaction in the interviews and discussions contributed to the progress of revelation that the research process requires.

In order to minimize the risk of steering responses to the direction which fits the researcher's preconceived expectations, one assistant moderator who is oriented on points of the discussion worked with the researcher during the discussion.

I employed two types of recording for the appropriate documentation of the data: writing notes during the interviews and tape recording. This is to use the written notes as a backup document in case the tape failed to operate. The recorded data was then transcribed and translated in to English.

3.3.4. Ethical Considerations

Robson (2002) put the assumption underlying ethical consideration in qualitative research in the following fashion: Because the objects of inquiry in interviewing are human beings, researchers must take extreme care to avoid any harm to them. Traditionally, ethical concerns have revolved around the topics of informed consent (receiving consent by the subject after having carefully and truthfully informed him or her about the research), right to privacy (protecting the identity of the subject), and protection from harm (physical, emotional, or any other kind).

With regard to informed consent, I have no single research participant who was unaware of his/her involvement in this study. All of them were also told that they have every right to withdraw from the research in any circumstance. Moreover tape recording was also made with their due consent and knowledge. Concerning right to privacy, an utmost effort was made to achieve it.

3.4. Sampling Techniques

Scholars argued that the primary focus of qualitative research is not to generalize results and thus to have a representative sample is not crucial (Deacon, et al.,

1999:50).They further note that having representative samples in qualitative research may be neither necessary nor desirable because the objective of the study is simply to test a particular hypothesis and not to generalize ones findings.

The national Television of Ethiopia (ETV) was chosen for the purpose of this study. This is because Ethiopian Television is the only television station in the country which broadcasts large number of commercials and it is also the only station which has a nation wide coverage.

Sampling Universe

Those commercials broadcast on ETV between the periods of five months (from January 1, 2010 to May 12, 2010) constitute the sampling universe.

A total of 15 commercials broadcasted during the aforementioned time frame were selected. This is due to the difficulty in handling a relatively large amount of data within the time limit and hence qualitative research design tends to work with small number of cases. Moreover the researcher believed that the size helped a lot to carryout an in depth, focused and meaningful analysis of the selected commercials. The selected commercials were then videotaped and viewed and re-viewed to find out the apparent content.

In order to meet the research objectives, only those commercials which have direct or indirect relationship with culture of the society have been used. Thus a purposive sampling technique was applied to select the commercials. Gray (2004:217) argues that the researcher selects the subjects against one or more trait in a purposive sampling to give what is believed to be a representative sample. This approach may, in deed, succeed in achieving a true cross-section of the population.

Creswell (2009) also states that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study.

In case of the focus group discussions, the groups were selected using two non random sampling methods: purposive and snowball. All the groups excluding the first group were selected using purposive sampling. Only those people who have the experience of watching commercials were included. Thus to acquire the data, attempts were made to identify appropriate informants who can best produce the desired empirical information. Deacon et al. (1999:79) notes that the selection of participants in a purposive sampling is made on the basis of their ability to provide relevant data on the area under investigation.

Snowball sampling method was also used to assist the purposive sampling in certain groups. According to Miller and John (2003), it is a research technique for finding research subjects. One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on. He further notes that snowball sampling can be considered as an alternative or as a complimentary strategy for attaining more comprehensive data on a particular research question.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The data obtained have been analyzed using the theoretical foundations discussed in the previous chapter so as to shed light on the research objectives. Thus the selected commercials have been thematically analyzed to uncover the manifest content.

Analysis of data gathered through interviews and focus group discussions was based on the transcripts of the recorded materials and those on my own notes. Then the data was transcribed and translated from Amharic (the language in

which the interview and focus group discussions have been conducted) in to English. Though the task of translating the materials in to English was demanding, I made every effort to be perceptive to the need of capturing the same sense of the meaning of the respondents discourse in the translation.

More over every effort has been made to identify and bring to light interesting findings and recurring themes in the in-depth interviews and discussions, relating these back to the theoretical issues and concepts reviewed and linking them to the research objectives of this paper.

Finally the data were presented in a descriptive form and quotations were used whenever necessary in order to further toughen the major findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This chapter is the heart of the entire research work, in which the data gathered from qualitative content analysis, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews are presented, analyzed and interpreted by referring the points mentioned in the literature review. All the themes of the discussions were presented and analyzed and the elements that are significant for the study are discussed. As such, it forms the fundamental ground for the entire research.

This chapter starts with a qualitative content analysis of the selected commercials to provide a broader sketch of the nature and characteristics of the commercials. Following the content analysis, findings from the four focus group discussions and two in-depth-interviews were thematically analyzed. The findings will be illustrated and substantiated by the narrations of the discussion from the focus groups as well as the in-depth interviews. Taking into account the dynamics of culture, the researcher has tried to narrow down the concept to values applicable to the issue under study.

Accordingly, the data gathered and analyzed in this chapter include the following major themes: the problem of localizing advertising messages, inculcation of indigenous cultural values in the advertisements, localization of the setting, background music, language, and spokesman of advertisements on ETV, advertisements exhibiting foreign cultural values, and advertisements endorsing Ethiopian traditional culture .

4.1. Qualitative Content Analysis of Selected Advertising Clips

4.1.1. The problem of Localizing Advertising Messages

Localizing advertising messages to suit consumer expectation in each market is still the most important aspect in campaign planning across culture (Albert Miller, 1996, as cited in Dahl, 2008:5).

It is quiet observable to see some advertisements which have neglected the fact that they are conveying message to local audiences. In fact, one may not argue that international advertisements must be kicked out of the advertising domain, but it is a sound argument to say advertisements have to be localized to meet their target easily.

Researchers have pointed out that the successful advertising should mirror the culture of the targeted consumer, rather than reflecting the advertising original culture (Al-Juhiam, 2008:77).

However this is not the case in advertisements like 'Western Union'. This advertising spot shows people from various age groups and people from all walks of life indulging themselves in their own way of living. Yellow balloons have seen flying in the air to express hopes of the people and thus they attempt to catch them. The setting used in the advertisement looks somewhere in Africa, and the characters do not represent Ethiopians. Towards the end of the advertisement, the narrator speaks "daily millions of people in our world dream to be successful, and their vision will also come true. The commercial finally reads 'Yes Western Union fast, worldwide money transfer.'

This kind of advertisements is hardly understood by the target audience. For one thing, the advertisement is produced in some others' context and thus the framework of which the advertisement produced does not match the cultural

context of the target audiences. Moreover, the advertisement has made no attempt of adding local color to familiarize audiences. It rather presents the advertisement as it appeared in the culture where the advertisement was produced. Secondly, there is no any language spoken within the advertisement except the few phrases uttered by a narrator at the end of it. Therefore, it remains difficult for the viewers even to guess what the advertisement is all about till they heard the Amharic words spoken towards the end of the advertisement. All these factors reduced the tendency of the advertisement being understood.

One of the focus group discussants (FGD 2(B)) who is asked about his perception on this advertisement responded the advertisement took him long time even to guess what it advertise. He adds in Ethiopia, most of the advertisements broadcasted are usually foreign alike. Surprisingly, they are aired with out any modification to make the theme simpler for the audiences

The absence of localization is also easily exhibited in another commercial of soft drink branded 'Fanta'. This commercial sets its setting in a night club somewhere looks in Africa. Everybody in the pub is dancing. Most of them are acting seductively and dressed in a manner that can easily be interpreted as erotic. Three young guys seem looking girls for dating and one of the guys sees a beautiful girl at one corner of the night club and approached her. While he was standing with her, he saw a 'Fanta' placed near her. He sensationally picked it up ignoring his interest for her. The girl looks astonished and the advertisement reads 'what is your flavor.'

It is not difficult to guess from this advertisement that the setting where the commercial was produced, the persona included, and their dressing style are not quiet well-suited with the original indigenous culture of the society. Similar with the aforementioned commercial, language is barely used throughout the commercial and the narrator only speaks some phrases in Amharic which appears to be the exact translation of 'Informal expressions come out in the screen at the end of the spot 'What's yo flava!' let alone speakers of other

languages, those who can comprehend English language may get staked to understand the phrases. Thus, the commercial can be claimed for giving less concern for localization.

Mooji's argument can best explain the previous idea. He argues that the way people think and perceive is guided by the framework of their own culture. Watching young people worldwide drinking Coca-Cola or wearing jeans may result in thinking they are becoming the same, but there is ample evidence that to consumers the local is more meaningful than the global (2005:3).

4.1.2. Inculcation of Indigenous Cultural Values in Advertisements

In fact, much has been said on the importance of employing cultural values in advertisements. Cultural values help audiences to create a psychological link with the advertisements. With this regard, some advertisements are critically analyzed focusing on the inculcation of these cultural values.

'Pioneer Tanker' is a good case in point. This commercial begins by showing people rushing for a certain business meeting. Instantly the meeting began disturbed with different views reflected between the discussants. A man rise as an opponent of the issue rose by others. The disagreement get worse when he refuses to accept the idea that 'Pioneer Tanker' began distributed in Ethiopia. In the mean time all the discussants get angered because they thought that he is marginalizing the nation and thus throw papers on him with rage shouting 'how dare you said so? What is impossible in Ethiopia?'

This advertisement devaluates some local cultural values. The discussants of the meeting in the advertisement could not come to consensus and no attempt has been made by them as a solution to help the man believe the report. Rather they shouted on him with rage as if entertaining one's own idea is illegal. The advertisement even seems to give a lesson that disrespecting a person is right as

long as his/her idea deviates from the majority. In Ethiopian culture, however, it is unthinkable to behave like this, let alone in a meeting, even in personal contacts. Respecting people is regarded as one of the basic cultural values in Ethiopian society.

Moreover, the foreign music used at the beginning and end of the advertisement may take audiences away from the message because it would not be understood easily by the majority of the target audience. Thus, it is observed here that advertisers' do not give much concern to contextualize the background music so as to suit the particular advertisement best without disregarding the cultural values of the society for whom the advertisement is produced.

Alozie (2003:10) observes that an advertising text is culturally contextualized (cultural-based principles of meaning); that is, its meaning is based on a consumer's interpretation or perception (when it is decoded). Advertisers tend to encode their messages by adapting the cultural values, languages, ideas, and norms shared by a group.

Another case in point to be treated here is the advertisement for 'LM International Hotel and Tourism Institute,' which was aired a number of times in ETV. The advertisement shows men from different walks of life and age groups in a certain gathering. They are chatting and tweeting, pointing their fingers towards a smiling lady with a graduation dress and flowers. Instantly, one strange man come to the gathering looking confused with the situation he is observing and asked the people what the gathering was all about. They told him that it is a request for a marriage. The strange man looks puzzled by their idea but he instantly change his thought and join the gathering when he hears the fact that the girl is a graduate of 'LM International Hotel and Tourism Institute.' Finally, the narrator speaks 'her talent calls a multitude of people.'

There may exist hundred and one ways to produce an advertisement that can go inline with the culture of the people for whom it is advertised. However, this

advertisement lacks the genuine and vivid cultural representation. The advertisement poorly devaluates the role of women as wives by raising an issue which confines them entirely to perform tasks like cooking. Many were seen gathered with the notion that the girl in the advertisement was graduated from a well known Hotel and Tourism Institute, and thus she is capable of being a wife. More importantly, it is unethical even to see a multitude of people asking a lady for marriage in the Ethiopian culture to take advantage of her potential to cook. This advertisement can be a lively example in which advertising makers did not take cultural expectations and presuppositions into account when they produce the advertisement. As a result, target audiences have every rationale to take no notice of this kind of advertisement.

Therefore, in order to attract and hold the attention of the potential customers and create a favorable attitude towards the product, advertising must reflect the cultural values and norms of the society (Ahmed, 2000:25).

'Amole Table Salt' is another advertisement which was frequently appeared on screen. The commercial begins by showing a man eating his lunch in his home. Instantly, he doesn't like the taste of food he is eating. He is so up sated with the situation and calls the servant and tells her to bring him a fine salt. He is not still contented with the type of salt she brings. By the time he is arguing with the servant, his wife come and asks what was happening to him. But he couldn't appropriately respond to her rather he shouts at her and express his annoyance over the taste of the food in which no salt was added. She calmly told him that she bought 'Amole Iodized Table Salt' which she believe favorite for him. He finally looks satisfied and began eating joyfully.

Strong family link is one of the common cultural values in the Ethiopian society. Usually caring, love, and togetherness and dependency of extended family in their relations are quite observable. However this advertisement doesn't include anything which entertains this value. Even the language the person used is not polished in a way to reflect the kind of language we used in our daily engagement

with the family. The advertisement lacks the reality and authenticity of exhibiting the existent cultural set up of the society. Therefore, it would not be wrong if audiences slum this kind of advertisement which disrespect their typical cultural values and only assumes its business interest.

In this regard Al Juhaim (2008) states that successful marketing requires an understanding of the culture of those consumers. Therefore, advertising should incorporate symbols that will be viewed as meaningful and appropriate by the target culture. Products may have to be customized to be accepted within the target market's culture.

4.1.3. Localization of the setting, background music, Language, and spokesmen of advertisements on ETV

The right choice of setting, background music, language and spokesperson are the key to the success of an advertisement. In one way or another, these elements bear the culture of the society and they can be used as a means to endorse them. Therefore, advertisers' center of attention should be on using those elements in their advertisements so as to illuminate the existing culture of the society if they want to reach their audiences best.

In line with this, Gudykunst (2003) writes: a knowledgeable communicator needs information about the people, the communication rules, the context, and the normative expectations governing the interaction with the member of the other culture (2003:195). Without this information, the communicator will invariably make misattributions, choose incorrect communication strategies, violate rules of etiquette, or cause the loss of face for self or other.

Daily, it is common to see countless advertisements transmitted in Ethiopian Television in which most of the aforementioned elements are reduced to the

minimum. For instance, 'Lorado Milk' advertisement is the one that must be treated within this domain.

This TV spot begins by showing packed 'Lorado milk' set in order. Immediately, a boy and a girl, in their middle twenties, begin dancing with an English music. And later a young boy and girl join them having 'Lorado Milk' in their hands. Towards the end of the scene, a mother appears in the screen and explains that she first tested the milk in Europe and she wonders when she finds it here because she used to dream it. From the beginning to the end, the advertisement is wholly accompanied by the music in which one leads the song and the other follows it. Here is the verse of the music:

*I got my drink
Lorado milk
You got your choice
Let's do it cheers
 To my baby
 To my family
You feel healthy
It is tasty*

This advertisement can be easily judged for employing foreign rudiments. To begin with, the characters are found to perform and dress in a way that can not be termed as Ethiopian. Furthermore, within the entire advertisement, any language is hardly spoken with the exception of music that accompanies the video. This would be a threat for the audiences to follow the advertisement. It is a mere fact that most of the Ethiopian society is illiterate, but the advertisers' effort to address this particular society by using a foreign language, which is a bit far from the society's intellectual and cultural knowledge, remains a puzzle. Even though the message of the music is to appreciate the good taste of the milk, only few audiences can easily understand why it is meant for. Having seen this advertisement, audiences may even think that it is not made for them because it is not presented in a manner that can be harmonized with their expectations.

Pollay states that language is of vital cultural significance because it provides society with a set of words and concepts with which people structure their perceptions and judgments and define, to a large extent their conception of reality (1990:29).

It is quite elemental to see here an advertisement for 'Fuabel Flour'. The commercial shows a family gathered in a home celebrating a certain festivity. A mother ordered her young girl to serve a cultural bread of Ethiopian's called 'Difo' for the guest, who is a foreigner. He then picked a loaf of it and looks pleased with the taste. The man bubbles some phrases in Amharic to ask the reason what makes the bread tasty. The mother explained to him that 'Fuabel Flour' is the mystery behind the taste of it. In another scene, the foreigner has observed asking a waiter in a café to bring him a 'Fua Cake' in which he means a cake made from fuabel flour. He enjoys eating the cake and says 'this is my choice'. In their way back from a cafeteria, they met a guy who wants something from them. A girl with the foreigner assumed the guy is asking for money and picks birr note to give him, but he refuses and says he wants a piece of cake they have. As they give him a piece of it, he begins eating rapaciously.

In contrary with the previously mentioned advertisements, this commercial to some extent give a little bit concern to the Ethiopian traditional culture. However, the commercial could not maintain this consideration throughout the entire scene. Towards the beginning of the scene, it tries to use a setting which reflects a traditional way of celebrating a holiday. The costume the characters wore, the feast prepared, and the ceremonial celebrations entirely represented an Ethiopian traditional culture. The music used as a background also harmonized with the event.

But later, the commercial couldn't adopt the appropriate approaches and techniques to satisfy its customers' tastes and aesthetics. It employs a foreigner as a character with the assumption that his inclusion would add a certain value. He speaks Amharic in one time and English in other time, which may lead the

audiences in to confusion. Moreover, the sound track has changed in to western style in which most of the audiences are not accustomed to. The action of the chap and his style of dressing is something that can be easily interpreted as western. Thus, this commercial lacks the local color that can arouse the psychological and cultural recognition of its audiences.

It should not be forgotten that the successful choice of a character can stimulate and persuade consumers to purchase. Moreover, it can enhance the reliability and credibility of a product. A foreign spokesman can hardly arouse Ethiopian consumers' cultural recognition. Therefore, the advertising maker should choose those characters or individuals who can best convey their concepts.

Another example, which employs a stranger as a character, is an advertisement for 'Cool Ice cream'. The advertisement depicts a 'far east' look man who is seen enjoying a 'Cool Ice Cream' and articulates some phrases in Amharic which testifies the greatness of 'Cool Ice' He says 'Cool Ice, konjo betam konjo' which literally means 'sweet, tasty'.

Localization is almost neglected in this commercial. Here, the audiences can't be easily influenced by the advertisement because it doesn't necessarily arouse their psychological and cultural recognition. The character used in the commercial represents some others culture and the audiences may feel ignored for their culture is not reflected. Only through localization can this kind of advertisement shorten its distance with the consumers. In so doing the TV commercial can stand out and become a household name over night.

4.1.4. Advertisements Exhibiting Foreign Cultural Values

Western or foreign cultural values have been found the recurring themes of some of the selected advertising clips for analysis. This shows the extent as to how advertisers predominantly rely on foreign values in their campaigns to advertise products or services.

'Mass Soap' advertisement is a good case in point in which foreign values are predominantly occurred within it. The commercial shows a girl in a well furnished salon speaking through a mobile phone .She instantly left for a bath room smiling and leaving her clothes at the gate of the bath room. She picked 'Mas Soap' while she was taking bath and seems pleased with the flavor of the soap as well. In another scene, a man is seen enjoying a bath with a 'Mas Soap'.

This advertisement predominantly uses sex appeal, which is a western cultural value, to advertise its products. The female character speaks and acts seductively and dressed in a manner that can be easily interpreted as erotic. A foreign music is also used as a background to accompany the motion. These values, in one way or another, do not reflect the indigenous culture of the society for whom the advertisement is produced. Besides, the commercial brings into play luxurious home as its setting and high standard life style that can not represent the wider audiences which exist in different social classes. Thus, it will be a big trouble for audience's to feel right with this advertisement.

In this regard, Kilbourne (2006) argues that advertisers must understand cultural values of a given society to be able to select effective and appropriate advertising messages. Thus, cross-cultural studies are crucial in understanding different cultural values.

One of the focus group discussants (FGD 4(D)) said that advertisements are not expected to humiliate the audience at any level. Most of the time; however, the setting used in the advertisements reflects the interest of a certain strata of the society. I don't think that soap is only used by the well to do peoples, and it is not also a must to have sophisticated bathrooms. Therefore, it is better if advertisers at least presuppose what thrill at least the majority of the audiences.

Similarly, western cultural values are predominantly occurred in an advertisement for 'Awash Wine'. The advertisement depicts a beautiful girl

playing a piano enthusiastically in front of many people in a certain pub and the people enjoy drinking the wine and dancing with a beat of music. Apparently the situation seems to have taken her away back to her previous times where she used to enjoy drinking 'Awash Wine' with her lover. With a flashback scene, the girl and her boyfriend are shown laughing and enjoys drinking 'Awash Wine'. The girl is seen dancing with a West African beat of music and enjoys 'Awash Wine'.

The dominant introduction of western cultural values in to this advertisement signifies that the advertising makers didn't make substantial considerations of the consumers' specific psychological and cultural recognitions. The way the characters act, the rhythm of the music used, and even the setting where the advertisement was produced do not basically reflect the culture of the Ethiopians. For example, the girl in the advertisement wears a dress that exposed most part of her lower body which is regarded as unethical in the Ethiopian society.

It is by far essential for advertisers to consider the insurmountable barriers there exist between them and their audiences such as cultural differences and taste. Given these considerations, it becomes necessary to design specific advertising programs to achieve impacts.

Hence, advertisements must be consistent with the values of a people. If they are not, they will likely be rejected. Many argue that the best (most effective) ads are those that best express and affirm core cultural values (O'Guinn et al., 1998:139).

As a matter of fact, beer advertisements are commonly criticized for disregarding traditional cultural values. They are typically observed promoting some alien cultural elements in which audiences get stalked to catch their message. ' Bedele Beer' advertisement can be a good case in point to be treated in this sort.

In the advertisement, a refrigerator dramatically opened and three animated 'Bedele Beer' bottles observed dancing in the refrigerator with a western bit of

music which can be termed as 'rap'. Finally, the narrator speaks 'Bedele Beer entertains, quenches your thirst and makes you happy'.

Ideologically, the advertisement is telling viewers that drinking 'Bedele Beer' makes them entertain and also brings them happiness. Though, the animation may contribute its own share to the success of the advertisement, the absence of local color and the inclination of the advertisement in promoting alien cultural values may lengthen the distance with audiences. Thus, audiences hardly feel at ease and even unable to understand the advertisement easily because of the foreign music and the performance of the 'beers' exhibited in it.

According to Ding et al. (2000), advertising makers should exploit the value and mode of thinking which is in accordance with the consumers' way of thinking. In so doing, their commercials can enter the consumer's hearts and arouse their empathy.

4.1.5. Advertisements endorsing Ethiopian traditional Culture

Throughout the entire section of this research, attempts have been made to uncover the extent to which indigenous cultural elements are reflected in the advertisements through analyzing the selected advertisements under different themes. This is believed to be helpful to comprehend the existing archetype used by advertisers. In most of the analyzed advertisements, the importance of inculcating cultural values of the society seem either neglected or mistreated and they are observed giving much emphasis to the foreign cultural values, which are mostly regarded as alien to the society. However, it is quiet elemental to see those which can be esteemed for endorsing traditional cultural values of the society.

An advertisement for 'Abyssinia Bank' can be taken as a master piece in which the traditional cultural values of Ethiopians are exclusively used throughout its entire scene. The advertisement begins by showing beautiful scenery of sunrise

along the lake side. Instantly, with a flash back, people are seen marching on horses and donkeys backs accompanying a man who carries money in 'sack' which was the practice at early times before modern banking was introduced to Ethiopia. The whole action of the people is taking place with a constant and rhythmic beat of a drum (which was used in previous times to awaken people for a certain message). In another scene the picture of a small hat which represents the first modern bank in Ethiopia was shown. The people are chanting by saying 'Abyssinia, Abyssinia, early historical bank in Ethiopia' and dancing traditionally around the man who carries the money having their stick up.

There is no any doubt about this advertisement for its thoughtfulness of traditional cultural values that can be easily acceptable by the wider audiences. It portrays the dominant and existent societal cultural values in a natural and genuine manner. The episode used by the advertiser is preferred to be a place that is closely linked to the natural setting. As a result, the audiences wouldn't face any obstruction to get across the message. The traditional dresses and styles of dressing used in the advertisement typically represent an Ethiopian culture in which most of the Ethiopians are accustomed to in their day to day activities. More over, the music used, and the performance of the characters are also culture oriented and correspond with the motion picture. Generally, the advertisement in every respect tries to depict the traditional cultural values of the Ethiopians.

Several empirical studies found that advertisements reflecting local cultural values are more persuasive than those that ignore them (Pollay and Gallagher, 1990).

Most of the focus group discussants agreed on the notion that 'Abyssinia Bank' advertisement is appealing in a way that it reflects their culture. They said that all the local colors included in the advertisement are quiet pleasant to them, and all the time, they are very eager to watch it again and again whenever the advertisement appears on Television screen.

Indigenous cultural values are also revealed in a 'Diamond Soap' advertisement. The advertisement portrays a father running after his young child to punish him for the reason that the child gets his clothes flawed with dirt. Instantly a mother, holding her child, who seeks protection from her, appears to be defensive on the father and told him that he can give a lesson for the child through telling him a story. Later in the advertisement, a father is seen reading a fable to awaken his young child to protect his clothes from dirt. The fable narrates the story of 'Aleka Gebrehana', a character who is well known especially by younger children for his wisdom reflected in countless fables. Here flash back is used to demonstrate the story in the fable.

Cultural values are easily observed in an advertisement like this. Telling a story to children is a common practice by many of the Ethiopian families especially in order to help their children raised well mannerly. In so doing, the advertisement raises the issue that can be easily comprehended by the larger target audience. In addition, the right choice of setting and characters would arouse the audiences' sense of understanding. Thus, this advertisement is observed complimenting the traditional cultural values of its audiences.

4.2. Data Analysis and Development of Themes

It has been stated in the previous chapter that focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews are among the basic data gathering tools in this particular study. They were employed with a due rationale that they would help to uncover some of the basic objectives of the study. Thus, they attempted to reveal audiences perception of advertising in general within the bounds of culture and to divulge the extent to which their traditional cultural values have been reflected in the advertisements they encounter daily.

This section, therefore, thematically presents the findings obtained from the four focus group discussions. Results from the experts' in-depth interviews are also

incorporated in order to further strengthen the findings attained from the qualitative content analysis part of the study.

Below are the discussants participated in the Focus Group Discussions (for their detailed profile see the Annex).

- FGD 1 Students from different academic qualifications
- FGD 2 Business people from different areas of Addis
- FGD 3 Housewives and retired people
- FGD 4 People from other walks of life

Importance of advertisements

Some of the focus group discussants points out that they make use of advertisement on the Ethiopian Television for various purposes:

FGD 2(C) “I usually see advertisements on ETV with the purpose of knowing cinema schedules.”

FGD 3(A) “Some people may use advertisements to participate in trade fairs, exhibitions, and tenders.”

FGD 1(D) “For me advertisements are quiet important because they give me valuable information to know more about products and services.”

FGD 2(A) “Sometimes I am confused with what to buy and not to buy. As such times, I begin watch television advertisements for they at least pinpoint me the existing and up to date products in the market.

The various views reflected by the Focus Group Discussants reveal that advertisements aired on ETV have their own importance particularly in serving the audiences with pertinent information that they are in need of.

Local Vs Western Cultural Values in Advertisements

Most of the Focus group discussants support the view that western cultural values are the most recurrent cultural values often observed in the advertisements aired on Ethiopian television. Here are some of the extracts of respondents' views on this notion:

FGD 2(B) "Most of the advertisements broadcasted on Ethiopian Television are usually foreign alike. They are not in a position to illuminate our traditional cultural values. Even sometimes foreign advertisements are aired without any modification to make the theme simpler for the audiences."

FGD 1(B) "The foreign culture has influenced the production of local culture oriented advertisements. In most advertisements the foreign culture are dominating the local ones. They do not give that much credit to the existing culture of the society.

FGD 1(A) "The uses of alien cultures seem dominant in the advertisements than those which exhibit our local cultural values. In fact we shouldn't get rid of others culture as a whole. It is good to use them unless they are a threat to our own original culture. However, elements that do not fit our culture must be discarded.

From the views of the discussants, it is quiet easy to figure out that dominant use of foreign cultural values are exhibited in the advertisements than those promoting the local cultural values of the society.

With regard to this point, one of the advertising agencies' managers blames advertisers for the ill consideration of the traditional cultural values in the advertisements. He states that advertising is not solely produced with the good will of the advertising agency; it primarily inculcates the view of the advertisers. Thus, employing traditional cultural values may not gratify them .As a result advertisers are obliged to produce advertisements that are analogous with those produced outside our culture. Moreover, in Ethiopian context market is basically the one that guides advertising and the market needs 'Modernism' which implies the dominant employment of western or alien cultural values in the advertisements.

Meanwhile, the researcher came across a pertinent finding while conducting an in depth interview with another advertising agency manager. It emerges that advertisements that manifests cultural elements in Ethiopia are rare for two basic reasons. For one thing, advertisers are very ambitious. They only think everything in terms of the benefits that they can get through advertising. They hardly know the exact framework as to how advertisements are being produced. Secondly, culture is becoming an arduous issue in the Ethiopian context. Even the existence of multi cultures makes the task of producing culture-friendly advertisements demanding. Thus, advertisers are obliged to restrict themselves in producing advertisements which entirely reflect common cultural values.

As the interviewee points out:

“In fact we have to know others’ culture because it has something to do with the success or failure of ours .If we take some western values with a purpose to further illuminate our own indigenous culture, it will not be a threat to our culture at all.”

Advertisements must be consistent with the Cultural Values of a People

The focus group discussants strongly support the idea that disrespecting local cultural values in the advertisements will possibly lessen the effectiveness of advertisements. The following excerpts can best enlighten this idea.

FGD 4(A) “Some advertisements perceived wrongly due to their ill treatment of the societies indigenous culture. This annoys me whenever I watch commercials on ETV. I hope advertisements can meet their target if they focus on our cultural values. It is better if advertisers give much emphasis to the local values. Otherwise it wouldn’t lure me if it deviates from my own culture.”

FGD 3(B) “ The message of the advertisements which predominantly embrace the local flavor are appealing to me rather than those which entirely promotes others culture. How can one understand an advertisement entirely produced in other’s

culture? Advertisements must be localized in the context so that they can be easily grabbed.”

It is pretty interesting to infer from the discourses that advertisements can be effective if they give due concern to the indigenous cultural values of the society. People usually need to observe their culture reflected in the advertisements aired on television. Otherwise they feel alienated whenever they watch advertisements which are mostly regarded as alien or foreign. These cultural values often clash with people’s own original culture. More over it would be difficult for audiences to understand the messages of the advertisements produced in a context where they are not totally accustomed to.

With regard to this, the advertising agency managers have strongly support the notion that instilling local cultural values contributes a lot to the success of the advertisements especially in the eyes of the target audiences. It has been found from the interview that advertisements have to employ those cultural values in order to be effective and please their target audiences as they are also a means to exhibit the people’s identity. The role of advertising is not only to increase sales; it has also a social responsibility in promoting those cultural values.

One of the interviewees also shares this fact by expressing his reaction to the introduction of local color in to the advertisements. “As an advertiser, it is best if we depend on traditional values. Incorporating values which are not favored by the society in the advertisements is like firing gun on ourselves.”

Therefore, it is not hard to imagine that a certain advertisement can be effective when the values in the message directly correspond with the values of the target audiences for whom the advertisement is produced.

The task of giving due concern to local values seem demanding due to the existence of two types of audiences who have completely different taste of

advertisements. This pertinent finding resulted in an interview held with one advertising agency manger.

“ There are two groups of audiences in Ethiopia. The first group condemns much of the advertisements on ETV for not considering the typical culture of the society. They argue that the costume characters dress, the performances they employ and the style of their hair do not reflect the existing dominant culture. More than half of the audiences on the other hand like the way advertisements emulate what they call ‘Modernism’ which entirely depend on western values. So the very essence of producing television advertising in Ethiopia lays in conciliation of these two basic views.”

The majority of focus group discussants posit that researching people’s taste is by far essential to come up with advertisements that can easily please target audiences. They note that advertisers must research the messages, knowledge of the people, culture of the society, and many more other things before they put advertisements on air.

Most importantly, it was also revealed that employing both foreign and local cultural values in which the one may not impinge on the other can have at least the tendency of enticing the target audiences. The following excerpts from the focus group discussion can best elaborate this concept.

FGD 4(A) “It would be appropriate if foreign cultural values are used in combination with the local cultural values as far as the local values are not dominated by the alien ones. In so doing, the advertisement will have good acceptance among the society.

FGD 2(E) “I hope amalgamating both the foreign and local cultures in a balanced way is better to make the advertisements appealing to all strata of the society.

FGD 3(A) “It is better if emphasis is given to the local cultural values. In fact, there is no any problem in incorporating those cultural values, which are not ours, in advertisements unless they contradict with our original culture.

The views reflected by the discussants necessitate the need for employing both the local and foreign cultural values so as to please the larger public. It has been

also found that the introduction of foreign cultural values in to the advertisements is not a threat by itself, problems begin arise if these values can not go in harmony with the indigenous culture of the society for whom the advertisements are being produced.

Apparently, this view is also shared by the advertising agency managers who have been interviewed. One of them posits that the influence of western media has becoming immense in Ethiopia. These days' people have got satellite dishes in their homes which brings them lots of 'modern' advertisements produced anywhere else in the world. Thus amalgamate both the traditional and western values in the advertisements would be good to better reach audiences.

Another Interviewee however expresses the fact that an advertisement may not thrill all audiences: "Advertising is an art and art may not please everybody. But advertisers need to awake if audiences are not satisfied with the way cultural values have been revealed in the advertisements. Advertisements shall use values of which the larger public can accept it without doubt. "

Mean while, it was also found out from the interview that only little has been done in considering cultural elements in the production of advertisements. Cultural sensitivity is not as such a basic demand in the Ethiopian advertising industry. The basic thing here is inspecting whether the advertisements please the audience and has a message to forward.

Here it is pretty easy to observe that cultural values have been neglected even by the advertisers with emphasis is given only to the aesthetics and message of the advertisements. However, advertisers and advertising agencies should come to know that employing culture of the society can shorten the distance to reach the intended audiences and even to achieve the desired effect. Moreover, it is valuable to think that aesthetics and message of an advertisement are also bound with culture of the society in which they are operating.

The Impact of Advertisement on Culture

A significant result was emerged during the discussions held with the focus group discussants. The following are some of the meanings constructed:

FGD 2(D) “Since some of the advertisements do not consider culture of the society, they present themes far from the existing reality. Even the characters are not captivated in a way to represent people in the real life. Moreover; the setting, costume, and other things used in advertisements on ETV are mostly representing the well to do members of the society leaving the majority citizens aside.”

FGD 4(C) “In most of the advertisements aired on ETV, the narrations used are not ethical that it spoils the other components of the advertisements. Their language in general and word usage in particular do not exactly go with the norms of the society. I have come across some advertisements on ETV which mock at the local cultures though it is difficult to term it intentional or unintentional.”

FGD 1(C) “The performances of the characters, the costume they use, and even the language they employ are not sensible to all age groups. It has rather a deteriorating effect on the audiences. Especially it is common to see advertisements on ETV that can threaten children. I hope advertisements are not expected to humiliate the audiences at any age level.”

FGD 2(A) “Cultural negligence is often observed in some of the advertisements. For example, I have seen a ‘Beer’ advertisement in which a character is seen taking ‘Beer’ as a gift to congratulate a mother who gave birth to a baby. However this is paradoxical with the existing culture of the society for which it is uncommon to do so.”

It can be deduced from the above discourse that there exist a strong relationship between advertising and culture. There is a tendency for advertisements in influencing the existing culture of the society. Most of the discussants support the idea that most of the advertisements on Ethiopian Television/ETV/ are not sensitive to culture. Thus, they tend to use irrelevant methods which can not suit the need of their target audiences. Moreover, the message transmitted through

such advertisements could be wrongly interpreted by the people since they are produced without considering the values of the audience for whom the advertisements are being produced.

It was also revealed that the aesthetic elements used in the advertisements do not complement with the values of the larger public. Thus, performances of characters, setting, and even the language use are more inclined to western cultural values.

Inline with this, a remarkable result emerged in the interviews held with the advertising agency managers. It emerged that some advertisements might damage the psychoanalytic of the society by default. This is resulted in the advertisers' tendency of adoring western values as a best means to reach the audience. In fact taking some foreign elements in our advertisements is not a problem by itself. The problem begins to arise if we don't know what to take.

In seeking to know why the task of producing culture-friendly advertisements is demanding in Ethiopia, three main reasons were underscored by the advertising industry managers during the interview. Primarily, there are only few professionals in the advertising industry. Thus, they hardly know how to produce advertisements of that sort. Secondly, the existence of multi cultures in Ethiopia makes producing advertisements difficult. Even some cultures are more difficult to attain and use them in the advertisements due to their enormity. Here the interviewee illustrated:

“When we want to inculcate cultural elements in our advertisements, we usually march for the countryside, where we believe ideal at least to catch the attention of audiences. Most of the time we have the trend of changing costumes so as to address the various cultural groups of the society.”

In order to alleviate the difficulty arises due to the existence of multiculturalism, one of the advertising agency managers suggested his agency's experience that it

created diversity in its agency by hiring advertising specialists who come from different cultural backgrounds. He further noted that it attempts to consult those people who are a member of the original culture.

The third important impediment raised by the interviewees was the exclusive power of the advertisers in shaping the advertising messages. Advertisers always want to think advertisements in terms of the benefit they provide for them without even knowing the basics of advertising.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION

This last section of the research attempts to wind up the findings of the research and thus the following conclusions have been drawn on the basis of these major findings of the study that has been undertaking so far.

This piece of research has tried to investigate the extent to which advertisements aired on Ethiopian Television/ETV/ consider cultural elements in their campaign. It further tried to uncover audiences' perception towards them adapting a more qualitative approach and focusing on the analysis of the selected advertisement clips. The purpose of the qualitative methods used was to probe the manifested content of the advertisements and to make sense of these controversial media texts.

Through, the analysis of the manifested content of the commercials broadcasted on ETV, this study revealed that most of the advertisements do not critically consider the dominant cultural values of the society for whom they are advertising. This can be seen easily through use of values in the advertisements that contradict or negate the salient values of the society.

Firstly, the advertisements are fall far short of localizing foreign advertisement messages that can suit audiences' expectation. As a result, audiences have got hard time to understand the messages conveyed by those advertisements. The advertisements are produced in some others' context and thus the framework of which the advertisements produced do not match the cultural context of the target audiences. Moreover, the advertisements have made no attempt of adding local color to familiarize audiences. It rather presents the advertisement as it appeared in the culture where the advertisements were produced.

Findings suggest that some of the advertisements lack the genuine and vivid cultural representation. They use foreign music to accompany the motion pictures which may take audiences away from the message because it would not be easily understood by the majority of the target audience. Thus, it is observed here that advertisers' do not give much concern to contextualize the background music so as to suit the particular advertisement best without disregarding the cultural values of the society.

The study also revealed that the advertisements in one way or another are more opt for the western culture .They are observed employing these 'alien' cultural elements which do not coincide with the audiences' cultural and intellectual knowledge. This is expressed in employing setting and characters that wouldn't arouse the audiences' sense of understanding. Therefore, it is right to conclude that the importance of inculcating cultural values of the society seem either neglected or mistreated in most of the advertisements chosen for analysis.

Though disregarding indigenous culture values are mostly observed in many of the advertisements, there are still some pioneers that give due respect for the traditional cultural values of the society. The results indicated that two of the analyzed advertisements were esteemed for endorsing traditional cultural values of the society because they portray the dominant and existent societal cultural values in a natural and genuine manner.

From the results obtained through focus group discussions, the study further revealed that western cultural values are the most recurrent values often observed in the advertisements aired on ETV. This has created difficulty for audiences to understand the messages of the advertisements produced in a context where they are not totally accustomed to. Audiences usually need to observe their culture reflected in the advertisements aired on television.

Advertising agency managers, on the other hand, criticize advertisers for their ill treatment of local cultural values because they assume that employing western

values is the best way of approaching and pleasing their target audiences. The advertising agency managers noted that a certain advertisement can be effective when the values in the message directly correspond with the values of the target audiences for whom the advertisement is produced.

It was also found out that employing both the local and foreign cultural values in which the later may not dominate the former can easily please the larger public. Problems begin arise if this value can not go in harmony with the indigenous culture of the society for whom the advertisements are being produced. However, the findings revealed that only little has been done in considering cultural elements in the production of advertisements.

Finally, the results suggested that the existence of few professionals in the advertising industry, the difficulty of some cultures to attain and incorporate them in the advertisements, and the exclusive power of the advertisers in shaping the advertising messages are the basic factors that make the task of producing culture-friendly advertisements demanding in Ethiopia.

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Appendices

Appendix I

In-Depth Interview Guide for Advertising Specialists

1. How long have you been in the advertising business?
2. How do you measure the effectiveness of your advertising campaign?
3. Have you attempted to know about cultural sensitivity and cultural acceptability of advertising messages? If so why? If not why not?
4. How should advertisers approach multicultural markets?
5. To what extent does your advertising reflect indigenous cultural values?
6. Should the advertising message be customized to reflect the local culture?
7. In your opinion, which values/traditional, western or combination of them/ do you think is best to make the commercials effective in the eyes of your audience?
8. What are the difficulties you are facing to launch a culture friendly advertising campaign?
9. Do you think that using western values in a commercial can be a threat to the culture of the society? Why or why not?
10. What is your general impression about the advertising industry in Ethiopia and peoples perception towards it?

Appendix II

Thematic Questions for Focus Group Discussion

I. Biographical Information

1. Name/Code: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. Level of Education: _____

II. General Awareness about commercials

1. Have you got commercials that are important to you? In what way?
2. What do you think is the special advantage of commercials on TV over other media?

III. Perceptions towards Commercials

1. Are the commercials appealing to you? What is the most appealing element in the commercials? Why?
2. Which commercials are difficult to understand? Why?
3. Which commercials are easy to understand? Why?

IV. Culture and Commercials

1. Do you think commercials should focus on cultural values? Why or why not?
2. What do you think is the most recurrent cultural values/traditional or western/ manifested in the commercials?
3. What are the most commonly used traditional cultural values in TV commercials?
4. Do you think that disrespecting traditional cultural values affect the effectiveness of the commercials? How?
5. Do you think that employing alien cultural values in a commercial will be a threat to the culture of a society? Why or why not?
6. Are the commercials reflecting your indigenous culture easy to understand? Why or why not?

V. General Impression about Commercials

1. What is your perception towards commercials in general?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses you have observed in the commercials?

Appendix III

KTel·mÁ vKS<Á ¾}zÖË nK-SÖÃp

1. uTel·mÁ e^ LÃ Y}cT\ U'' ÁIM Ñ>2? J''-f;
2. uTel·mÁ e^ <eØ ¾^e-''' ¾É'f-'' <Ö?T'f []Èf ÃÑSÓ<[]M;
Yf~Y}nvÃ'f'' ¾[]cuKf'' >LT YTd'f >'è
3. ¾Tel·mÁ SM°i,,< uVM ÁLf< }kvÃ'f'' YVM eck'f >'è ÁLf<' T>'
KSÑUÑU Vi[°M(Ø'f >ÉÑ°M); Ø'f "YH@Æe KU"; "L"H@Æe
Uj'Á,#+) ÆØkc<;
4. ¾Tel·mÁ vKS<Á-< ¾VM ewØ''' uU'' SMY< Tej'ÑÉ >Kvt''< wK''<
ÁevK<;
5. ¾Tel·mÁ Æz,,< GÑ^@ []c?,,<' T'çv[p >Kvt''< wK''< ÁevK<; KU'';
6. u[]`e- ¾Tel·mÁ É'f ¾T>c\ f Tel·mÁ-< GÑ^@ []c?,,<' YTej°p >'è
¾T>Y'~f T>' U'' ÆseLM;
7. []'Á Tel·mÁ vKS<Á'f- Tel·mÁ-<' uT>c\uf ''pf Ylw[]cux z''É
¾fÑ<U Ø'cf []'çÃÑØU U'' ÁIM Ø''no ÁÁ`ØK<;
8. u[]`e- >SK''Yf ¾}SM''#'' òLÔf KT''f ¾f-''< ¾Tel·mÁ Æz'f <Ö?T''<
wK''< ÁevK<; GÑ^@' ¾''Ü'' ÆU G<K~''U uØU[f;

9. Te[m]mÁ uT>c\uf Ñ>? Te[m]mÁ<” ŸvHM Ò` KT^aGE“ ãz~” K}SM"<
U# ŸTE[Ó >ÉÁ ÁÖÖS-f <Ó` >K; "K u=2[^\

10. uTe[m]mÁ-< “<eφ ¾“<β GÑ` vHM ãzf ÁL+“” [c?,,< SÖKU ¾lw[}cu<”
vHM KSu[’ >e}^ê* ÁÄ`ÖM wK“< ÁevK<; ŸJ'e uU” SMŸ<;

11. u°`e- °Ã [¾>=fÄäÁ ¾Te[m]mÁ >=”Æef] U” Å[Í LÃ ãÑ-M;
¾}SM“#e }kvÃ’f;

Appendix IV

ŸTel¨mÁ }SM"OE< Ò` KT>Á[Ó¨<ÃÃf ¼}zÒì S] ØÁσ-<

G. ÓK S[Í

1. eU/†É _____
2. ¶ÉT@ _____
3. ü _____
4. ¼fUI† Á[Í _____

K. eK Tel¨mÁ-< ÁKI/i ÖpLL °¨<kf

1. Tel¨mÁ-< K¨`e- ÖnT> J¨¨< >Ó}ªªM; ŸJ'e uW¨ SMŸ<;
2. u,K??y=>>¨ ¼T>k`uK Tel¨m-< uK?KA< T>Ç=Á-< ŸT>}LKñ u}hK
¼T>·ª†< öÃÇ (ÖKT@) U¨É¨¨¨< wK¨< ÁevK<;

N. uTel¨mÁ-< LÃ ÁKI/i >SK¨Ÿf

1. u,K?y=>>¨ ¼T>}LKñ Tel¨mÁ-< du= (eT@f Ñ,) ¨¨<; ŸJ'e ¼f-¨¨<
¼Tel¨mÁ¨¨<e æ¨M ŸK?KA< u}hK ¼Sdw>pU >K¨<;
2. ¼f™† Tel¨mÁ-< KSÑ¨¨w (KS[Çf) >ÇÒ< ¨¨<; KU¨;

3. ¾f™#”e ukLK< KSÑ”²w Ñ%LM; KU”;

S. vM“ Te”mÁ-<

1. Te”mÁ-< uvIM °X@,,< LÑ T}f` >Kv`< wK”< ÁevK<; KU”;

2. u}çÒÒT> Te”mÁ-< “<eø ¾T>”çv[Lf ¾vM °c?,,< ¾f™# “f”< wK”< ÁevK<; GÑ^@ “Ñe ¾”<Ü ¾vM °c?,,<; KU”;

3. u,K?y=>” Te”mÁ-< uv¾f ¾T>”çv[Lf GÑ^@ ¾vM °c?,,< ¾f™# “f”<;

4. GÑ^@ ¾vM °c?,,<” uTe”mÁ-< “<eø >KT”}f uTe”mÁ-# “<Ö?[]T”f LÑ >K[]@ }ê°• Ñ^aM wK”< ÁevK<; []”Èf;

5. ¾”<β vM °c?,,<” uTe”mÁ-< “<eø SÖKU ¾TI[çuk” vM K=ÔÇ Ñ<LM wK”< ÁevK<; []”Èf;

6. ¾^e” vM ¾T>Á”çv>L Te”mÁ-<” SM°jf KS[çf kLM ”< wK”< ÁevK<; KU”;

W. uTe”mÁ-< LÑ ÁKI/i ÖpKM ÁK >e}Á¾f

1. vÖnLÑ uTe”mÁ-< LÑ ÁK-f >SK”ÿf U” ÑSeLM;

2. $uTe \cdot m\dot{A} - \ddot{L}\tilde{A} \frac{3}{4} \cdot z u \dot{A} \dot{t} < \ddot{O} \wedge U J' \dot{A} \dot{T} \hat{O} \cdot < U \dot{E} \dot{t} < ;$

Appendix V

List of the Selected Advertising Clips

1. Cool Ice Cream
2. Western Union
3. Fuabel Flour
4. Fanta Soft Drink
5. Bedele Beer
6. Diamond Soap
7. Abyssinia Bank
8. Lorado Milk
9. LM International Hotel and Tourism Institute
10. Pioneer Tanker
11. Awash Wine
12. Amole Table Salt
13. Mass Soap
14. Crystal Plastic Shoe
15. Optima body Cream