



## CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF MORAL UTILITARIANISM AND COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

Mahdi Kia Kojoori<sup>1</sup> and Dr. S. Marigowda<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Vidyavardhaka Research Foundation , University of Mysore.

<sup>2</sup> M.Com., Ph.D., Principal of Post Graduate Centre, Vidyavardhaka First Grade College – Mysore.

### ABSTRACT :

*The present study is about commercial advertising in media from the view of moral utilitarianism in the field of applied ethics. Productive companies use any kind of instruments or methods – often false or unethical – to satisfy their audiences and advancing their goals, which would have undesirable effects of individuals. Commercial advertising has flourished with the advancement of technology and increased surplus-based products, and today few people are unfamiliar with it all over the world. The importance of this issue becomes apparent when we see the impact of commercial advertising on people, while it is using media and applying various sciences and arts, and what point it pull the society. The article is using conceptual method and deals with the issue of commercial advertising and its effects on media audiences, based on one of the famous theories of normative ethics in moral philosophy, it means moral utilitarianism. And it seeks to answer the following questions: according to utilitarianism, what kind of propaganda should be allowed by media companions? What is the decree of fraud and deception in any way in the advertising according to the utilitarianism? What are the true criteria of advertising according to the utilitarianism? Which type of advertisements are allowed or not allowed?*



**KEYWORDS :** Applied Ethics, Mass Media, Media Ethics, Commercial Advertising, Moral Utilitarianism

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Technology has prosperity for human from each side, and in this way, it struggles them with complex problems which its solutions require theorizing in different fields. The media - which is one of the most important products of technology – is the main resource of information, and because of its presence in any place, it collects, processes and publishes any kind of news, information, entertainments, and advertisements and therefore play a major role in changing social behaviors and norms in different fields. These days, there are many different media around us that affect all the aspects of our lives and determine our actions and behaviors; so that our dressing, eating, talking and all our choices and decisions, even the most private things in our life has been influenced by the media. The media are involved in everything and in their own words, they can guide us to not to take a decision by ourselves. Therefore, productive companies use them as a tool for introducing their product and satisfying the audiences to buy those products because of the power of the media and its influence on people's life. Increasing commercial advertisements has a long history in the society and it has flourished with the industrial revolution and surplus productions, today the vast majority of the people are familiar with this phenomenon, and they are connected and influenced by it. This is so important

and complex issue due to its variety of economic, cultural and media aspect, it affects people social and cultural behaviors such as housing, food, clothes and lifestyle choices.

Productive firms spend a lot of money to satisfy audiences to buy the products that they produce and package; so that, US spend \$ 140 billion on commercial advertising in 1993, in the same year, more than \$ 160 billion has been spent on this issue, which \$ 86 billion was in West Europe in general, in industrial countries advertising for commercial goods costs nearly \$ 300 billion in 1993 (Soltani, 2005). These statistics show the great importance of advertising in the persuasion and satisfying of media audiences, and, consequently, the increase in sales of products by manufacturing companies. Therefore, advertising companies use various ways which are sometimes false and unethical and also use various sciences and arts such as psychology, statistics, sociology, graphics, and economics to influence their message more and more. So, the impact of commercial advertising within media in society is an important question. Therefore, in this article, the emphasis is on commercial advertising and its effect on society based on moral utilitarianism, and finally, the study looks for the answers through the following questions, in the classification of utilitarianism: (a) what kind of propaganda should be allowed by media companies? (b) What is the degree of fraud and deception in any way- like using a logo look like the logo of popular companies - in the advertising according to the utilitarianism? (c) What are the true criteria of advertising according to the utilitarianism? (d) Which type of advertisements are allowed or not allowed?

## 2. NEED FOR ADVERTISING AND COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENT

The need of commercial advertising has been measured on a variety of criteria. Advertising recall, message comprehension, product awareness and knowledge, attitude toward and intentions to buy the advertised product are some of the more frequently classified as need for commercial advertising (Wind and Denny, 1974). These measures, being no purchase in nature, should ideally be related to the theoretically "optimal" criterion of commercial advertising - the present value of the relative profitability of advertising alternatives (Homer, Gross & Wind, 1968). Unfortunately, there is no sound theoretical (or even an empirical) basis for selecting any one measure as the single "best" criterion. This may suggest the need for advertising evaluation tests that utilize a number of relevant commercial and product related criteria. Moreover, most current commercial testing procedures, including those that are consistent with the Dagmar approach (Colley, 1961); determine the effectiveness of a given commercial advertisement based on its performance on a single criterion.

## 3. ETHICAL ADVERTISING

There have been comments about the difficult practicability of ethically behaving in the advertising world due to problems faced by private companies, marketing research and advertising agencies, media and government (Ferrell and Weaver, 1978; Safady, 1973). In many western countries, conflicts between ethical/moral and social/economic values can be observed. Many professionals see themselves disoriented concerning the correct attitude to take when facing the dynamic and diversified possibilities of their advertising campaigns (Arruda, 1986). Considering the freedom of every human being, the codes of ethics might not be enough for this task. It is necessary to know the essential principles of ethics about the human nature and the business life, reducing great uncertainties when selecting alternatives of business decisions (Malanga, 1976; Porrás and Weinberg, 1981; Arruda and Arruda, 1999).

## 4. CRITICISM AGAINST ADVERTISING

Ethics in Advertising is directly related to the purpose of advertising and the nature of advertising. Sometimes exaggerating the ad becomes necessary to prove the benefit of the product. For e.g. a sanitary napkin ad which shows that when the napkin was dropped in a river by some girls, the napkin soaked whole water of the river. Thus, the purpose of advertising was only to inform women about the product quality. Obviously, every woman knows that this cannot practically happen but the ad was accepted. This doesn't show that the ad was unethical. Advertising and promotion have a

significant influence on people, society in large, while shaping their attitudes, behaviors and priorities (Vidhya and Radhamani, 2016).

## 5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Advertisement is a one way mode of communication directed towards an intended audience to deliver information about a product or service (Wells, Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). In 2005 the spending done on advertisements globally amounted at \$ 300 billion (Lacznia, 2008). Advertisement is seen as a medium to increase the profitability of a company and hence many times companies ignore certain social aspects held close by the population at which the advertisement is aimed.

Improving the image is essential for each industry especially when it comes to advertising industry since it is one of the most visible industries and also at the forefront of the marketing of a brand. However, the vast evidence shows that the public at large is quite annoyed by the advertisements. The audience is of the opinion that the advertisements seem to talk down to them, the advertising managers too are concerned about such advertisements and are trying to enhance the image and curb the abuses (Wells, Burnett, & Moriarty, 1998). In this regard, to facilitate the brains behind the advertisements a standard has been set by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's). In the light of the standards set by the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the advertisements are not supposed to be misleading in terms of attributes or pricing of the product or service. No comparison is to be shown with the competitors, taste and decency is to be the most important aspect of the advertisement. No vulgar language is to be used or indecent scenes are to be shown in the Ads. Exaggeration is to be avoided to attract the consumers (Ahmed and Khan, 2017).

ASCI (The Advertising Standards Council of India) established in 1985 has adopted a Code for Self-Regulation in Advertising. It is a commitment to honest Advertising and to fair competition in the market place. It stands for the protection of the legitimate interests of consumers and all concerned with Advertising - Advertisers, Media, Advertising Agencies and others who help in the creation or placement of advertisements. ASCI has one overarching goal: to maintain and enhance the public confidence in advertising. ASCI seeks to ensure that advertisements conform to its Code for Self-Regulation, which requires advertisements to be: (a) Honest Representations, (b) Non-Offensive to Public, (c) Against Harmful Products/Situations and (d) Fair in Competition.

PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) too has set standards of advertising; in 2009 a notification to all the concerned bodies was issued by PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) elaborating the standards for advertising. Few points in that notification included that, no content promoting violence, anarchy and sedation. Moreover, promoting adultery, sensitive content not upholding the criteria of decency, influencing children to force their parents to buy certain products, content seen offensive by minorities, misleading information or price claim is to be advertised on any media channels as such advertisements do not uphold the sanctity of the constitution of Pakistan and Islamic principle (Ahmed and Khan, 2017).

The similar studies done by researcher on the review of literature part in the field of ethical advertising. How advertising can damage the society and how to build ethics in it. Most of the studies done by Haefner, (1991); Conna et al.,(1994); Childs & Maher, (2003); Tamburro, Gordon, Apolito& Howard, (2004), in this field are based on a central theme of how advertisements are being targeted at children and exploitation of children. Pollay, (1986); Henthorne&LaTour, (1994) did research on advertisements using sex appeals, Coltrane & Messineo, (2000); Chatterji, (2005); Schaffter, (2006) researched stereotypical advertising, Richins, (1991); Lavine et al., (1999); Fay & Price, (1994) researched the negative psychological effects of advertisements, the advertisements promoting materialism were studied by Richins, (1995); Roy (2006) and deceptive advertising was focused by Burns, Ferrell & Orrick, (2005); Drumwright& Murphy, (2009).

## 6. COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

Commercial advertising is placed against the word of (advertising) and the largest amount of advertising is belonging to it in the contemporary world. Despite the primitive clarity of this concept,

presenting a comprehensive definition for it is too difficult. Some people refer to the goal of advertisements in their definition and say “using communication tools to encourage people to buy goods or services” (Cohan, 2001). A group of people thinks commercial advertising is the art of convincing people to buy products; therefore, they use any methods and means to achieve this goal (Arend, 2014). Others have mentioned the method of advertising and said that the commercial advertising job is to replace conditional behavior with rational behavior, which leads to more income for the advertiser and by which the goods or institution credits are advertised.

The main role of the advertiser in this type of advertisements is the marketing of some goods and services. In fact, commercial advertising is an activity that wants to turn a dream into reality and convince the people that they can achieve what they want with the money (Sotude, 2011). Another definition says: commercial advertising means an action that provokes people’s attention to a good or trade, in other words, an attempt to produce and publish advertisements in order to show the positives of a good or service and consuming it (Sajedi&Nemati, 2012). However, it can be concluded that there are four bases in commercial advertising and in any kind of propaganda: communication, message, the messenger and receiver. Therefore, commercial advertising is the sum of profitable techniques which applied by economic institutions, advertising companies, and manufacturing companies to attract, maintain and increase buyers, and they use mass media or any other instruments without any time or space restrictions. It is obvious that the advertisement is inevitable, in other words, the society needs it and has no choice but to accept; in general, the advertisements should be done in the right way with the least are no damage.

### 6.1 The Importance of Commercial Advertising and Its Perspectives

Generally, there are two different views on commercial advertising:

A) Advocates: this group believes that advertising helps to increase the economy and employment by encouraging people to buy more, it boosts the power of consciously choosing of customers by presenting information and leads to improve the quality of goods, on the other hand, it decreases the cost and brings economic prosperity.

B) Opponents: This group believes that a huge amount of advertisements has nothing to do with real information and does not help customers to make informed choices. Despite the lack of profitability, people should pay the cost of advertising of the product; it is monopolized instead of encouraging competition, it is deceiving and seductive, and increase the sense of false need and the greed for consumption.

In general, this group says that advertisements will stop people from thinking about the basic issues of life.

According to the views of advocates and opponents, the reality is that society is forced to broadcast a commercial advertisement because of the following reasons:

- 1) The needs of media for the source of income
- 2) Creating an extensive and thriving labor market by the advertising industry;
- 3) The sales boom and the expansion of production, entrepreneurship and ultimately the country’s economic growth and development (Noorian, 2004).

In addition, some argue that the commercial advertisements can achieve one of the major goals of macroeconomics which is the clarity of markets by transferring information, and so the seller and consumer will be able to obtain a clear picture of the market situation (AfsharMohajer, 2008).

However, we are not seeking for advertising negativity in the current study, because the power of commercial advertising is inevitable and it is considered as an integral part of our society; we are trying to say that it is necessary for manufacturers and publishers to revise their advertising methods and tools and observe the related ethics.

## 7. ETHICS ADVERTISING

Ethics advertising means that where and how ethics and advertising connect to each other; in other word, ethics advertising means what is the position of ethics in advertising and what are the obligations imposed on advertisers by ethics?

In other words, what is the place of ethics in advertising that should be considered by media and their agents in media activities? Therefore, commercial advertising is concurrenceethics and the practice of advertising companies.

Some considered ethics advertising as two parts: descriptive ethics and normative ethics. In descriptive ethics, the ethical principles which are adopted by advertisers are expressed in advertisements and their effect are described.

In normative ethics, it is recommended to observe any principles, criteria and the values that are important in advertising. In general, the descriptive ethics of commercial advertising are "what is" and the normative ethics are "what should be" (Soltani, 2005).

So, ethics advertising means how we can decide about issues of commercial advertising by using ethical principles and rules and finally resolve the ethical conflict in them.

### 7.1 Explaining the Theory of Ethical Utilitarianism

Normative ethics is one of the branches of ethics philosophy, which identifies the criteria of ethical action and formulates imperative and requirement theories. Normative ethics gives us general principles and criteria for decision making (Bayles, 1968). Hence, based on the fact that what is the correct criterion of action, there are various views that each of them has tried to answer this question in different ways.

One of these views is consequentialism which emphasizes on the results and the best result in committing acts by moral agents. But at first glance, it can be questioned that whom should be the results good for? And in other words, whom should be considered in assessing the results of the actions? The answer to this question has been the fundamental issues in ethics philosophy and has always been the interest of ethical philosophers.

Consequentialism have always differenced in defining the kind of outcome that can be a criterion for moral value and ethics. Hence, there are different opinions on whether the result should be the subject itself or for others. One of the theories of Result-Oriented is Egoism Ethical which believes that human beings must act for their own benefit or goodness, whether they are self-dependent in their nature or not. For egoisms, ethics life is based on maximizing the good for ourselves. But in the contrast of this group, there are people who believe that we have responsibilities against others. There are two theories in this regard and in relation to the responsibilities that we have toward ourselves and others, one of them is Altruism and the other is Utilitarianism.

Altruism is the term introduced by Agustust Kennett and entered to England by Herbert Spencer, who believes that we should consider the interests of other for themselves and regardless of the good or benefits that we can achieve; even if we do not want to do that (Bunnin et al. 2003).

So, the altruism ignores ego for others and do not consider any good – except as a consequence of others - for itself.

But because of the critique came for deontology and the two other theories - egoism and altruism - there is a theory which is applicable and resistant to criticism and seemed to be more reasonable than the two theories. This theory is known as utilitarianism, took a moderate position in relation to other theories and considered both itself and others in evaluating the results of the actions.

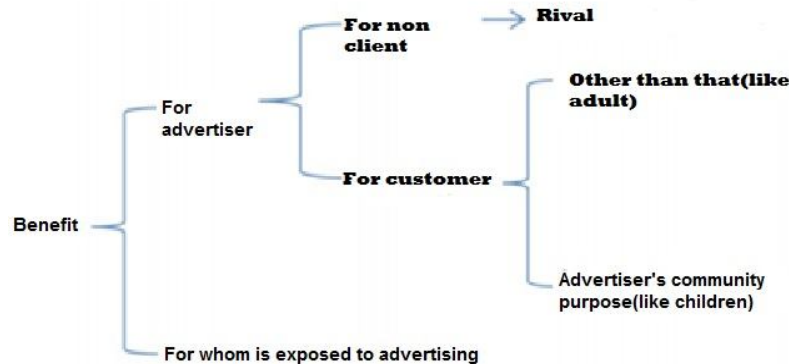
## 8. MORAL UTILITARIANISM AND COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING

Perhaps at first glance and with regard to the concept of utilitarianism, everybody thinks that it is the benefits of producer that should be considered in commercial advertising, and there is no need for discussion about it; because our goal in commercial advertising is to achieving the benefit and utilitarianism is based on maximizing the benefits and profits; therefore, this theory advocates any action that is the pursuit of this goal. In other words, it is assumed that utilitarianism is aimed at

increasing the sale of the product only to the benefit of productive companies, and does not count any obstacle to advertising by any means and in any way;

But – as previously stated – this is an Egoism notion and it is not defensible. What we consider about ethics utilitarianism is completely different from the mentioned one.

Before we start the discussion, we need to examine two issues; firstly, the considered utilization of utilitarianism theory in commercial advertising should be given to which individuals or society, in other words, in advertising, maximizing of whose interest should be our aim? The following diagram is presented in the form of secondary split and shows all the people who may be associated with the advertising of a good or service and benefit from or even can be damaged from it:



Source: (Valiasl, Jahed&Kavandi. 2017)

In the explanation of the above division, we can make out the following:

A) In advertising, if we only consider the benefit of advertiser, we totally excluded from the utilitarianism theory; because this is the result of moral egoism. So, in terms of utilitarianism, an advertiser should consider himself and others.

B) Sometimes the purpose of the advertiser is to be advertising a product –for example, a toy or a tablet - for children, but people other than children who are exposed to the advertising of the same toy or tablet, may benefit from those advertisements, so, the advertisers should pay attention to these matters.

The other thing is that, in advertising should not only rely on material or economic benefits and when it comes to utilitarianism, it is not just the material and economic benefits that we are seeking for; but in addition, we should consider the other results that come after advertisements. These benefits or damages can be social cultural, psychological or physical. Hence, we should consider these issues in estimating the results.

**9. MORAL UTILITARIANISM AND ADVERTISEMENT TOOLS**

Commercial commerce has surrounded the world in the present day, so that from mountains to desert, from drought to the sea, from the sports field, restaurants, hotels coffee houses public transport, trains, subways and athletes’ clothes, street and especially the media, are not safe from the invasion of advertising activities. But in this, media have a unique role, so that it has many works as the tools of advertisers on the economic, cultural and social fields. Advertising companies use any kind of tools and methods to conduct their advertising activities, and they know it allowed that it is often accompanied by harm to people or individuals, and on the other hand according to utilitarianism which aim in affirmative exposition is maximizing the benefit and in negative exposition is minimizing the unpleasantness of most people who are affected by our practice in advertising, some of these things are allowed which is inappropriate with our ethical and rational intuitions and Utilitarianism should be accountable to them. Here there are some of the most important tools that advertisers benefit from:

## 9.1 Art and Its Forms

One of the tools that advertisers use in the media is art, which includes movies, photos, cartoons, graphics, music and more. According to ethical utilitarianism and especially utilitarianism negative, if an advertisement leads to harming the mindset of the audience, but instead generate happiness and prosperity for the greatest number of people in society based on accurate calculations; it is ethically allowed; therefore, this can be analyzed as follow:

According to utilitarianism theory, if an advertisement can bring happiness and prosperity to the greatest number of people in society – after the calculations are done – in such a way that the damages from the advertisement (physical and mental) are less than its benefit (cultural and economic), that advertisement is allowed.

In criticizing utilitarianism, it can be said that the creation of advertising programs and placing them among the television films – each of which we experience several times – is one of the things that can be considered vulnerable to audiences, and this is the thing that acknowledged by communication experts, and advertisers have banned them. The prohibition of such advertisements in many countries also shows that they are aware of the harmfulness of this type of advertisements.

In this critique of this method, the advertisement is not neglected totally and can do its role in other ways and if it really seeks to bring benefits to society, it can use other tools and methods that do not or have less harmfulness, or it can modify the method in such a way that: 1) they do not place them in the sensitive place of film. 2) The time for the advertisements is short. 3) Specify the time of advertisements. 4) Assign the strip to the subtitles.

## 9.2 Children

Advertisers use children as tools in their advertising programs; so, according to utilitarianism, it can be analyzed that:

A) Any practices that have the most benefit to the most affected people by our actions according to assessment of the circumstances, is allowed ethically from the view of Act utilitarianism.

B) The use of children as tools by advertisers is such a thing.

c) Therefore, the use of children as tools on advertising is allowed.

But in criticizing this argument, it can be said that: this action (use of children as tools) can have a bad effect on children who watch these advertisements; because according to the research, they suffer from mental defeats when they compare themselves with children who play in advertisements, and this would jeopardize their future and the society (Moore 2004).

The pressure of children on parents to buy the advertising products and the refusal of parents to meet their desires will lead to conflict between parents and children (Rasooli, 2010). If parents refuse to buy the products, they will be considered as guilty parents to children, which will lead to some problems in the family; as a result, utilitarianism should be false in this case. Utilitarianism Rule which the act utilitarianism will be its base, response to this critique. According to the exposition of utilitarianism, the arguments is as follow:

A) If using children as tools be in the following ways, it is permissible: the advertisement will be allowed if using children as tools is not harmful to the greatest number of people who are affected by it.

B) But such advertisement – as we have seen – is accompanied with damage and it can be said that these damages come to the greatest number of people (especially in the not developed country) in the society for two reasons:

First, the vast majority of society are children who cannot buy every advertising goods; so, the mentioned problems will arise. Second, the society that is not the goal of the advertiser may also be a relative of the same children who despite the benefits that these advertisements will have, maybe they do not want their children to have damages.

c) So, using children as tools is not allowed in this case.

### 9.3 Women

Advertising is not done in a vacuum; it is done in a well-designed and pre-designed environment, which in the field of culture can have many positive and negative effects. Hence, advertising has the potential to be like a school and serve as a culture of a society or conversely, encounter a society with a cultural crisis. Some argue that commercial advertising has a multicultural impact on a wide range of people, it means women, which will affect them (Arend, 2014).

In advertisement relates to household appliances such as vacuum cleaner, washing machine and so on, they hardly use men to showcase work with the products, and this matter may put the idea into minds of men that only women should sweep, cook or wash the clothes and so on. Therefore if a woman cannot or does not have the time to do these and asks her man to do, with the thought that media put in his mind, he will not do that.

So, such disagreements will cause families to break down and will face the community with serious problems. In addition, men may even think that women's efficiency is limited at these things, and she cannot do any other social activity (Amini, 2010).

Hence, this will contempt the woman's identity and thus loses her vitality to fulfill her responsibility as a mother; so, she will fail in teaching healthy children and it is not desirable for the community. Thus, the utilitarian argument based on the negative utilitarianism will be as follow:

A) If doing an action leads to unhappiness for the greatest number of people in the community, it is not ethically allowed.

B) Using women as tools has many negative impact in women as well as society.

C) Therefore, using women as tools in commercial advertising is not allowed. According to this argument, if an advertisement uses women in a manner that promotes the right patterns in society so that society is led to prosperity, it is not inappropriate in the view of utilitarianism; like that they show both woman and man in an advertisement, while they are cooperating with each other and enjoy this collaboration.

## 10. ETHICAL UTILITARIANISM AND METHODS OF ADVERTISING

Advertising companies do not use a particular method to advertise; they examine different ways to increase their impact on the audience and as a result, they will increase the sales of their products. This way are as follows:

### 6.1 Logical and reasoning method

The first method that advertisers use is logical and reasoning method. The benefits of the product, its features and the reasons for its advantages over other products in the market, as well as the reasons that the products are useful to the audience and why they need it, are addressed in this method and refrains from pointing to the marginal issues. For example, in the refrigerator advertisement, it would say that this refrigerator has the capacity to consumes less energy and therefore save on domestic and national costs. According to utilitarianism, it is the best way of advertising; because it allows audiences to think and choose deliberately, and if they go wrong, advertising companies are not ethically responsible.

### 6.2 Use Frightening Advertisements

Another method of advertising is the use of frightening advertising. Sometimes marketers use fear in their advertising messages to make their audiences worry and provoke them to do or stop doing something. Basically, the advertising function with fear is negative; in this method, the advertisement warns that do not use a product or service or not to change the behavior or attitude towards an issue may lead to a variety of risks such as financial, social. Safety and etc. The frightening messages act in such a way that if someone does not behave properly, he may face bad consequences; for example, the consequences of not using sunglasses or toothbrushes may mention in advertisements (Soltani, 2005). In this case, it can be argued that:



A) According to utilitarianism, it's allowed to using any way in advertising which has the greatest benefit for the greatest part of people in the society.

B) It seems that there is such a situation in frightening advertisements.

C) Therefore, if the second introduction proved experimentally, this kind of advertisements are allowed, but if – after estimating the results of this kind of advertisements – it turns out that fear-base advertisements do not have the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people, it is not allowed according to utilitarianism.

### 6.3 Use the Feeling of Audiences

Another way of advertising is to use the feeling of audiences, which is the most frequent method among the various methods of advertising. In advertising with an emotional attraction, unlike rational attraction, the main goal of the advertiser is to stimulate the persons' emotions and provoking it to achieve the purposes. The goal of advertising with emotion attraction is to establish a relationship between the product and the consumer. The problem of such an advertisements is that enough information about product is not provided to the audience. Therefore, the audience may not find what he expected, after buying the product.

According to the act utilitarianism, this kind of advertisements will be allowed if it has the most benefit to the greatest number of people in society. But it may be the problem that abuse of the audiences' emotion is disgusting and is not consistent with our ethical intuitions. About this problem it can be said that: first. It is not abusing if the emotions used in the interest of the good and prosperity of society; secondly, if it is not in the line of the prosperity of the society, again it is utilitarianism that gives the sentence of the practice, and in other words, the utilitarianism is the reason of the condemnation (Graham, 2004). Because of this action, especially when the product does not meet the expectation of its audiences, it will increase the financial and psychological harm among them and so lead to make discounts for them. As a result of this, it is not ethically allowed if it does not in the line of increasing prosperity and be harmful to audiences.

### 6.4 Using Ethical Attraction

The other way that is used in commercial advertisements is using ethical attractions. This kind of attraction relies on audiences' determining about something is right or wrong. Ethical attraction is directed toward the audience's emotion about what is "right" and "appropriate". These attraction are used to persuade people to support social goals and aspirations such as a safer environment, equal rights for different social classes and help people with disabilities or people with specific illnesses. The advertising of the holding of festivals and cultural and sports competitions in favor of public projects is one of them too. So, this kind of advertising is allowed according to utilitarianism. Final consideration of ethical utilitarianism theory says that ethical utilitarianism with its unit principle (the most benefits for the most number of people) does not allow any kind of advertisement in media to be broadcast. Many kinds of products which are advertised in the media will not have the desired result in the future. Here are some example of this matter. A child who is influenced by a chips advertisement will accustom to eat it, he will be fed up soon and so he loses his appetite to eat the main and required food of his body, which results in malnutrition (Moore, 2004).

And this is not to create the greatest pleasure that is the main doctrine of utilitarianism; in addition to it, utilitarianism preference can come up here. According to utilitarianism preference, it is right that this action satisfies more desire and preferences of the people of society, but it is not in the line of the revised version of utilitarianism preference; since being right and unreasonable of preferences is important in revised revision. the other thing that we have already mentioned it in another way, is the children; they are agitated by the advertisement and force their parents to buy that product, and according to psychologists, if the parents do not buy that, the children will have psychological complexes (Moore, 2004), and nobody can expect any reasonable or normal behavior from them in future. Moreover, commercial advertising leads people to luxuries; so that people who make the majority of society and poor people bother themselves in accessing the advertised products

and they will be tired physically and spiritually and finally lose the vitality in their life. According to ethical utilitarianism, such advertisements seem to be allowed; since as Mandeville (Mandeville, 1991) believes it flourished the society on one hand, and in the other hand, people are forced to do more and achieve more prosperity based on its effect, therefore it has many benefits. But for the reasons mentioned above, our ethical intuitions are incompatible with utilitarianism; especially in our Islamic society where religious and spiritual values are at the top. This view will lead the individual's attention to focus on luxuries and prevent them from attention to spiritual values.

Advertising companies are aware that exciting advertisements – for example, violence – have more efficacy in stimulating audiences, so they use this method in some of their advertisements. It is true that the product may solve even one problem of society, but it promotes violence and abusive behaviors of people and especially children. “The child is sensitive to the new objects around him at every stage of his life because they attract his attention and provide his motivation. The child has a world for himself, and live among the stories and legends, with heroes of films and stories. He models the behavior of others in order to continue growing, learning and organizing his personality. As some psychologists believe, children learn to be aggressive by see aggression in other's behavior or by watching television and they show it in their behavior. Several kinds of research indicate consequences of violence that is shown by TV, a child who watches TV or violent video and cartoons too much, will have such aggressive behavior that if he did not watch that shows he will not have such violence”. Also, more than twenty years of laboratory research, field testing and analysis of natural behaviors have led to the conclusion that television's violent scenes have negative and definite consequences for behavior and beliefs of children. Therefore, such advertisement is not ethically allowed according to utilitarianism and the argument mentioned before about using children as tools.

The advertisement which displays by the internet, violate the audience's rights. So that a person faces with a lot of advertising frames when he is searching for something on the internet that he hardly finds his content among that advertisement and it will make him angry (Sama&Shoaf, 2002). In addition, many unwanted pop-ups of advertisement will open against him and it takes his time, and this is considered as a violation to audience's right, which advertisers should pay attention to it. Thus, in answer to the raised question, according to ethical utilitarianism and in general many methods used in advertising are egoism or consider the benefit of a small group of people. According to utilitarianism, the results should be considered in relation to the largest number of people in society and all the economic, cultural, physical, mental and psychological results should be considered. Therefore, it seems that using women and children as tools regarding mentioned materials, are not allowed despite the common perception of its permission (using women and children as tools). Because these group of society forms a wide range and, secondly they have social and cultural consequences for people and society, and finally other groups of people are not happy of these consequences because the women and children are their relatives. Also, ethical utilitarianism considers the most happiness for the largest number of people in society; therefore, it takes their mental and physical health so important. Therefore, according to utilitarianism and especially the exposition which known as negative utilitarianism, the kind of advertising methods that ignore them-except in cases where the benefits of advertising are more than those harms - will be denied.

## 11. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

A) Utilitarianism cannot generally sentence about what is allowed and what is not allowed in commercial advertising; because advertisers use complex ways that they are not united and do not have single results, and because of the complexity of method it is difficult to estimate the results. Hence, each method and tool should be explored separately by field and empirical research and it should be decided about whether they are allowed or not.

B) Ethical utilitarianism has a lot of shortcomings in this case. This theory sometimes ignores a wide range of people of society; so that for example if an advertisement has benefit for about percent community, they consider it as allowed; so it ignores the rest of 49 percent that they are human and have the sense of affection. This is more tangible in societies with more populations. For example, in

countries like China and India that each of them have more than one billion, 49 percent of them are about 500 million. Therefore, the indifference of utilitarianism towards this number of people in a community is considered as a critical ground for utilitarianism; a theory that claims to analyze all human actions and behaviors.

C) In advertising a product, it can be calculated how much that commercial advertisement has been effective in increasing sales of products, but it is not easy to calculate all the effects that an advertisement can have. Who can calculate how many people are injured by an advertisement or how many people are disappointed with it? Who can estimate cultural abuse's results that causes from advertising a product whose goal is only to increase the sales of commercial products? Utilitarianists seem to be silent in answering these questions.

D) In utilitarianism and especially in advertising that the concept of "benefit" is ambiguous; what kind of benefit should we take into account? And which have the priority between two types of benefits? Which people should be considered? Should advertiser consider his own society or other societies in the estimation of the results? These ambiguities will put the utilitarianism theory in a lot of trouble and wander the moral agent as a practitioner.

## 12. CONCLUSION

In the present study, commercial advertising was examined from the point of views of one of the theories of normative ethics in moral philosophy which is called ethical utilitarianism. Commercial advertising has a long history in the human study and has flourished with the industrial revolution and increasing surplus production, and it has influenced all aspects of human life. Ethical utilitarianism is one types of pragmatism that say action has validity if it has the best benefit for the most affected people. In commercial advertising in the media, ethical utilitarianism in negative exposition believes that advertisements should have the least harm for the audiences. According to researches and with regard to ethical utilitarianism, using women and children as tools is false and unethical because of the destructive effects in society. Therefore, media companions should allow broadcasting the advertisement that has the least harm both physical and mental for the audience and the least negative cultural and economic effects for the society. According to utilitarianists, and based on general utilitarianism, the obligation to fraud and deception is not allowed even its goal is good and general prosperity, because it provokes unpleasantness to the society.

In addition, in order to improve the ethics in advertising and reduce the adverse effects, the interaction of law and ethics is necessary but it is not enough, it requires executive agencies to supervise the behavior of commercial advertising practitioners.

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