

A Study of Pakistani Advertisements With respect To PEMRA's Guideline on The Use Of Nationalistic And Religious Symbols

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Abstract

Advertising industries all over the world operate under some form of regulations. These may be ethical guidelines formulated by industry professionals themselves or by governments to set a uniform standard for the content produced by advertising practitioners, to govern the advertising industry and to keep a check on the content. The focus of these guidelines is on ensuring fair practices in advertisements. In Pakistan, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority is responsible for regulating and monitoring the content shown on the electronic media which includes advertisements. Rule 14(8) of PEMRA's Code of Conduct prohibits the exploitation of religious and nationalistic symbols in advertisements. This study establishes that despite this clear rule, advertisers have been continuously using both symbols in advertisements, especially those shown on a national occasion, such as the Pakistan Day or the Independence Day of the country, or on a religious occasion for instance, the month of Ramazan.

Introduction

The advertising industry all over the world functions under some set of regulatory framework (Desmarais, 2014). In some countries, the regulations are formulated by the government and enforced upon the industry while in other countries the advertising industry itself designs a set of rules to operate under it (Gupta & Lad, 1983). The common factor between government and self-regulations for the advertising industry remains that advertisements, regardless of what they are promoting, should be honest and fair (Boddewyn J. J., 1981). In order to ensure advertising that follows the qualities mentioned earlier, it is important to make rules and ensure their compliance. In this way, the regulations serve as agents of public policy (Streeck & Schmitter, 1985).

Whenever the issue of regulating the media is discussed, another factor that plays an essential role and is always highlighted by media practitioners is self-regulation. The reason behind this discussion is that by its very nature, the media is deemed a free entity, that is, it has the freedom to provide a platform to a number of views on any given subject. Traditionally regarded as the fourth estate, the media presumably enjoys the freedom to show the masses what they want to see and, better, what is in their interest. However, given such unbridled freedom, there is always a chance of corruption. In order to keep a check on the authority vested in the media, the concept of self-regulation was introduced. The rationale behind this concept being since media acts as a watchdog for society, serving no one but the public, the government cannot muzzle its freedom by regulating it and hence the concept of self-regulation: the responsibility to safeguard public interest rests on the shoulders of the media (Fisher, Horsley, & Yang, 2012). It is its own watchdog as no external entity would regulate it. In fact, the media itself is entrusted with making a set of rules, ethical guidelines as they are popularly known, and adhere to them. However, in today's digitized era,

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despite the fast and unrestricted flow of information from one part of the world to another, the condition of the media being its own regulator remains an ideal situation with the exception of a few countries where such freedoms are indeed given to it. The advertising industry, being a part of the larger media world, faces the same dilemma. While advertising associations in all parts of the world have made codes of ethics to be followed by all players in the industry, in many countries it is the government which solely regulates the advertising industry.

In Pakistan, under the military government of General (r) Pervez Musharraf the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) was formed in 2002 to regulate and oversee the newly emerging electronic media of the country. Among other responsibilities the body was assigned with was the formulation of comprehensive rules for the electronic media. As the advertising industry is also a major player of the electronic media, the code of conduct contains guidelines for advertisements as well. In 2015, the PEMRA issued the Electronic Media (Programmes and Advertisements) Code of Conduct, 2015, under the directives of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Rule 14 (8) of the PEMRA Code of Conduct, which relates to advertising, states that: Exploitation of religious or nationalistic symbols and anthems purely for the purposes of promotion of a product or any quality in such product shall be prohibited. This paper studies a number of advertisements which have been aired on national television channels in Pakistan during the occasions of the Pakistan Day (March 23, 2017) Independence Day of Pakistan (August 14, 2017) specifically, and during the month of Ramazan (2018) to gauge whether the guidelines mentioned in the PEMRA Code of Conduct have been followed.

Research Objective

The aim of this study is to establish whether Rule 14(8) of PEMRA's Electronic Media (Programmes and Advertisements) Code of Conduct 2015 which prohibits the use and exploitation of religious or nationalistic symbols and anthems purely for the purposes of promotion of a product or any quality in such product is being followed in advertisements especially those which are broadcast during or around occasions which have national and religious importance.

Research Methodology

A total of 13 advertisements were reviewed for this study. The advertisements belonged to the category of edible items, cellular networks and the services sector with a focus on banks. In each category, a minimum of two advertisements are reviewed. The reason for selecting these categories is that they are among the biggest spenders in terms of advertising budget in Pakistan (Aurora, Television advertising spend, 2017). The time period selected is on and around March 23 and August 14 in 2017. March 23 is celebrated as Pakistan Day in the country while August 14 is the Independence Day of Pakistan. The other time period chosen is of Ramazan 2018 (May 17-June 15). Being a religious occasion – a month in which Muslims around the world fast for a month that ends with Eidul Fitr, one of the biggest celebratory occasions for Muslims -- many, if not all, advertisers use religious themes in the advertisement and since the aim of this study is to find whether advertisement are in violation of the PEMRA Code of Conduct with respect to nationalistic and religious symbols, these two time periods are deemed suitable. In order to establish that whether or not the advertisements belonging to the

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categories mentioned above complied with PEMRA’s Code of Conduct, the nationalistic symbols have been divided into five broad categories which are the Flag, Attire and Accessories, Structures, Rituals and Practices and Discourse. All the images, themes and gestures which are deemed to be representative of nationalistic symbols have been included in these categories which are explained further in Table 1 which is given below.

Table 1: Coding of Nationalistic Symbols

Categories	Classification
Flag	The flag of the country
Attire and Accessories	Symbols which have patriotic connotations such as the crescent, the colour green, the Jinnah cap, the dress Sherwani in the context of evoking memories of the Quaid, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, pictures of leaders of the Pakistan Movement
Structures	Mausoleums of leaders of Pakistan Movement as well as other structures which are representative of Pakistan’s national history such as the Minar-e-Pakistan, the Flag Staff House, the Mohatta Palace, the Wazir Mansion, the Ziarat Residency, the Faisal Mosque, the Habib Bank Plaza

Rituals and Practices	Images of the armed forces and the paraphernalia related to them such as weaponry, fighter planes, warships, march past, military salute, military gear
Discourse	Poetry, songs, verses of patriotic nature

The category of religious symbols has also been divided into four sub-categories which are Structures, Attire and Accessories, Rituals and Practices and Discourse. In the category of religious symbols, the study takes into consideration religious symbols of all major religious groups of Pakistan including Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis etc since the PEMRA Code of Conduct does not identify any specific religion whose symbols are not to be exploited in advertisements. The coding of religious symbols used in advertisement is given below in Table 2.

Table 2: Classification of Religious Symbols

Categories	Religious Symbols
Structures	Religious places such as mosque, churches, temples, gurdwaras, shrines
Attire and Accessories	Images of religious symbols such as minarets, rosary, headscarf, skullcap, holy scriptures, the cross symbolic representation of any religion

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Rituals and Practices	Religious rituals such as fasting, praying, saying prayers, recitation of the Quran, prostrating, people eating at sehri or iftar time or preparing for sehri or iftar, people going towards a mosque or any other religious place, dance of the whirling dervish or other rituals associated with Sufism
Discourse	Quranic verses, holy scripture of any religion, azaan, verses and words which have religious connotation, qawwalis

As the main objective of this study is to establish that whether PEMRA’s guidelines are followed or not by advertisers, the advertisements are studied with a focus on the mere presence of religious and nationalistic symbols in them. It is not the scope of this study to quantify the magnitude of violations which may be done in a future study.

Confusion in PEMRA’s Guideline

The Rule 14(8) of PEMRA’s Code of Conduct stipulates that exploitation of religious or nationalistic symbols and anthems purely for the purposes of promotion of a product or any quality in such product shall be prohibited. An objection may be raised on this study with respect to the phrase ‘purely for the purposes of promotion of a product or

any quality in such product' in the sense that the advertisements shown on television that use religious or nationalistic symbols do not do so with the objective of 'purely' promoting the product. The author of this study believes that the inclusion of the phrase 'purely for promotion' in the said rule is counterproductive because if an advertisement is shown on television, its only objective is to sell the product being shown to the masses watching the advertisement unless the advertisement is promoting a non-profit entity such as a hospital or an orphanage. In fact, advertising is historically called the craft of selling in print (Richards & Curran, 2002). According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, the term 'to advertise' means to tell the public about a product or a service in order to encourage people to buy or to use it. The American Heritage Dictionary describes it as the activity of attracting public attention to a product or business, as by paid announcements in the print, broadcast, or electronic media. Therefore, to state that using a certain quality in advertisements 'purely for the purpose of promotion' does not mean anything per se because whatever is shown in an advertisement is shown with one specific intent: to promote a product in order to sell it.

Religion and Marketing

Both religion and patriotism are recurring themes in advertising around the world. During the First World War, the advertisement of several products, even those which were not related to war in any way, openly used the themes of nationalism and patriotism. An ad for smoking pipes compared the aroma of a wife's baking with her husband's tobacco as the caption mentioned: She's doing her bit. A shoe brand emphasized on the need for fitness "in a time of national crisis". The Merriam-Webster Dictionary asked, "Are You and Yours Equipped to Win? Do the new words...Bolsheviki, barrage, Boche...convey their true meaning to you?" To sum up, the

war brought about a reassessment of what advertising could and should do. It emerged as much more than just a subsidiary service to business by assuming a unique mission to convince people to buy a certain product while upholding their morale in a democratic society undergoing a war situation (Pope, 1980). In the post-9/11 America, many advertisers embraced the notion of patriotic appeals to attract consumers (Stearns, Borna, & Oakenfull, 2003). National symbols such as the Statue of Liberty, the American flag and popular phrases such as 'God bless America' and 'United we stand' appeared quite frequently in the media. The sentiment resonated in the advertising industry as well and Chrysler's 'Imported from Detroit' ad campaign, for example, appealed to patriotic emotions of the Americans by hammering in the idea of America's greatness (Yoo & Lee, 2015). All these are examples of advertisements that manipulate national or cultural symbols and narratives to persuade consumers.

Similarly, religion is a key cultural force and its relevance to the advertising industry has been established by many scholars. Religiosity level also affects consumer behavior to a great extent and research suggests that consumers with minimal religious tendencies are more likely to experiment with new products (Essoo & Dibb, 2004) whereas consumers with strong religious beliefs are generally more conservative and disciplined in their buying choices (McDaniel & Burnett, 1990).

Advertising Regulations

In this era of globalization, when it has become quite hard, if not impossible, to stop the flow of information, ideas and products from one country, one continent to another, to safeguard the interest of consumers and maintain fair market conditions have become a

serious challenge for governments, which, as a result, react by enforcing regulations (Gao, 2005). Regulating the advertising industry, in the similar vein, has been recognized as an important factor that leaves wide-ranging effects on the industry as well as consumers around the world (Duncan & Ramaprasad, 1995). Being a part of the broader media industry, it is principally implicit that like the media, the field of advertising should be self-regulatory. However, there are a number of forms in which advertising regulations exist, from laissez-faire to self-regulation as well as under the rules defined by government (Boddewyn J. J., 1985). While many studies have focused on the phenomenon of self-regulation in the advertising industry, the rules imposed by governments and the commonalities between such regulations in different countries have only received limited attention by scholars (Boddewyn J. J., 1985) (LaBarbera & Mazursky, A Longitudinal Assessment of Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction: The Dynamic Aspect of, 1984).

Whether self-regulations or made by governments, advertising regulations are a product of the social milieu of a society and are dictated by the cultural, religious and legal practices of that society, and economy (Rotzoll & Haefner, 1996). Some other factors that may influence regulation formation are fair market practices and consumers rights and ethics. Another noticeable aspect of advertising regulations is that they are constantly changing in line with the changes occurring in society and government systems as cultural values transform gradually; one form of government replaces another and economies experience new growth (Priem, Love, & Shaffer, 2000).

Some common grounds between countries on the formation of advertising regulations are those related to deceptive advertising, advertising meant for children and tobacco advertisement. However, most advertising regulations in a number of countries differ from each other on issues of taste and decency (Petty, 1996). Unique to the

circumstances of each country, advertising regulations take on a variety of corresponding forms, including communitarian, laissez-faire, regulatory, and self-regulatory (Boddewyn J. J., 1985) with each form having its own strong suits and constraints. It is believed that government regulations of advertising have their own merits and are crucial, particularly in areas where violation of regulations can have devastating effects, such as consumer health and safety. To what extent are advertisers influenced by legal bindings related to advertising is evident by a survey conducted by (Davis, 1994) which shows that most advertising professionals are dissuaded by legal consideration and not code of ethics while making advertising decisions. This proves that government regulations are more effective in ensuring compliance.

There is a lack of research studies on the comparison of government regulations in different countries perhaps because as compared to codes of conducts for advertising agencies, legislation in this area is a far more complex issue. Some studies which compare government regulation in different countries have been done by (Harker, 1998) who compares the legal frameworks in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. (Hoek & Sparks, 2000) examine the international regulations on the promotion of tobacco while the research of (Shao & Hill, 1994) focuses on regulations on advertising with respect to socially sensitive products in 15 countries.

National Symbols and Their Importance

To a great extent, the identity of a nation is defined by its national symbols, especially its national flag and national anthem. Historically, signs and symbols, in the form of

totems, have been used by tribes and nations as a means to clearly demarcate their boundaries and create distinction from one another (Durkheim, 1912). For any nation in the modern world as well, national flag and anthem hold special meaning as they represent the nation in terms of symbols that unite people and forge a bond between them (Cerulo, 1993). Due to this importance assigned to national symbols by nations, they are used by many agencies in various aspects of life of an individual to achieve a number of results. The masses in general use national flag and anthem to assert their love and loyalty to their nations. National institutions of any country use national symbols to forge unity among the various components of a polity. In most countries, national flags are displayed prominently inside and outside all government buildings. The ruling elite in any set-up, be it democratic or otherwise, use national symbols to give legitimacy to their own authority and reinforce loyalty among the citizens (Cerulo, 1993). Politicians tend to use national flags and anthems to arouse patriotic feelings. Manufacturers' use of national symbols rather selectively is for financial gains as they use it in retail and both domestic and international sports events (Kimmelmeier & Winter, 2008). In the military too, the flag and other national symbols hold significant meaning and are invoked regularly as representations of honor and sacrifice (Marvin & Ingle, 1999).

There are no set parameters that define how meanings are assigned to national symbols but there are a number of historical and religious inspirations through which national symbols attain their symbolic meaning. For instance, the colors green and white in the Pakistani flag represent the Muslim majority and minorities respectively while the crescent and the star trace their origin to Islamic history wherein both the symbols were used by the Ottoman Empire (Ridgeway, 1908). Similarly, national symbols are likely to achieve their meaning through metaphorical qualities. For instance, on the US flag,

the 50 stars represent the 50 states of the country (Kemmelmeyer & Winter, 2008). Additionally, national symbols are given meaning through the ways in which they are observed and practiced in various nations (Marvin & Ingle, 1999).

Pakistan's National Symbols

As a result of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Pakistan, the national flag of the country, which largely retains the same design and form of that of the pre-1947 flag, represents the history of the nation-state, constantly reminding its citizens of the struggle behind the formation of Pakistan (Ahmed, 2008). It is for this reason that the Pakistani flag stands for much more than a national symbol for the Pakistani nation. By the same logic, the national anthem of the country invokes feelings of patriotism and pride. Laden with words borrowed from Arabic, Turkish and Persian, the national anthem of Pakistan recalls the glories and grandeur of Islamic history and predicts a bright future for the country which is repeatedly claimed to have been blessed by God. Since national symbols serve as reminders of various aspects of national history and culture for their nations, it has been experimentally demonstrated that individuals, in keeping with their exposure to such symbols, are prone to think and act in ways consistent with the worldviews and values associated with the symbols (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet, 2000). These notions are reinforced throughout an individual's life. In Pakistani schools, with the exception of a few, the national anthem is collectively recited by students and teachers in morning assemblies every day. Similarly, in cinemas, the national anthem is played before the start of every film and a message requests the people present in the cinema hall to stand up in respect of the national

anthem thus forging a link between the national anthem and the act of respect which is standing up while it is played. In the texts books prescribed to school students, the icon of the flag is associated with central national and political ideas to strengthen the connection between the individuals and their nation (Martin & Moss, 1996).

Religious Symbols in Advertising

The practice of inclusion of religious rituals and symbols while pursuing commercial gains has been around for a long time (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989). Records show that in medieval times, merchants at religious fairs would sell souvenirs and other commercial wares to pilgrims at the site of, or on their way to, holy lands (Turner & Turner, 2011). In some places in the United States, the use of Christian symbols in advertising has become a common phenomenon. As noted by Taylor, Halstead and Haynes, in one southern U.S. city, messages and symbols promoting Christianity, such as Bible verses, crosses, doves, and most frequently, the Christian fish symbol (Ichthus), regularly appear in the local telephone directory ads. In the same locale, such symbols and messages are frequently seen in outdoor advertising, signs for retail stores, on packaging of various products and even in the daily newspaper. Similarly, the Heritage USA in South Carolina, a now-defunct religious theme park, was a prime example of amalgamation of religious and commercial forces with the aim of earning revenues while providing religious avenues such as a church, a Christianity-themed shopping mall, television studios, hotels and a number of other similar facilities (O'Guinn & Belk, 1989).

The use of religious symbols in advertisement is common because businessmen know that consumers can readily identify these symbols and can also connect with them. As discussed above with respect to national symbols, marketers also understand the

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meaning and reaction religious symbols, which frequent a nation or community's broader culture, evoke in the consumers (Taylor, Halstead, & Haynes, 2010). Consumer behavior researches demonstrate that decision making, especially with reference to purchasing, is subjective to religious affiliation and religiosity to such an extent that some researchers have even suggested that religion is a possible basis for "marketing segmentation"(Delener, 1990).

In her research on the consumer behavior of American Jews, (Hirschman, 1981, 1982, 1983) observed that religious affiliations significantly influences consumers' buying patterns. She established that Jewish consumers were more experimental and less brand-loyal than Catholic or Protestant consumers. Hirschman's research was replicated to examine the influence of religious affiliations of those belonging to the Hindu, Islam, and Buddhist religions on consumer behavior (Bailey & Sood, 1993)and the result of these studies suggested that following a religious faith considerably dictates the shopping behavior of consumers. Exploring the evangelical Christian subculture, (La Barbera, 1987) noted that despite their relatively conservative moral outlook, evangelicals showed a more conducive buying attitude towards advertising as compared to other consumers.

Another study (Kamaruddin, 2007)comparing the shopping patterns of Malaysian Muslims and Thai Buddhists demonstrated that religious affiliation has a considerable effect on shopping orientations of consumers, noting that the Muslim consumers were more brand and quality conscious while the Buddhist consumers were considered impulsive and at times confused with the choices offered in their decision making process. (Arli & Tjiptono, 2014) introduced the angle of consumer ethics on buying

behavior of consumers in light of religiousness, establishing that an intrinsically religious buyer's consumer ethics are positively affected by his religious belief while extrinsic social religiousness negatively affected consumer ethics of a buyer in Indonesia. Religious values signify the most basic elements of a consumer's cognitive world, and can be meaningfully related to lifestyles.

Analysis of Advertisement

Nationalistic Symbols and Messages in Advertisement

In the category of religious symbols or symbolism used in advertisements studied for this article, the symbols or artifacts considered as symbols are mosques, minarets, churches, temples, shrines, rosaries, skullcap, scarves for women, religious rituals such as fasting, attire that reflects religious values such as covering of head by men and woman, religious attire of Christians, Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs etc, the act of praying or saying prayers, the visuals of the Quran or any other holy book, recitation of the Quran or the practice of other rituals or visuals that fall in the category of Sufism such as qawwalis and the dance of the whirling dervish.

The patriotic symbols considered for this study are the flag, pictures of leaders of Pakistan Movement, mausoleums of the leaders of Pakistan Movement or their memorabilia of any kind, weaponry, fighter planes, warships, armed forces, salute and poetry, songs and verses of patriotic nature.

It is observed that all of these symbols are shown in advertisements on different occasions. For instance, in the advertisement especially made on Independence Day and other nationally significant occasions, patriotic symbols were repeatedly used. In the Habib Bank Limited (HBL) advertisement made on the occasion of August 14, 2017, a famous patriotic song 'Wattan ki Mitti' originally sung by Mehdi Hasan, is played in the background with the addition of new lyrics invoking the love for the

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motherland. The same advertisement shows one visual each of the Quaid's Mausoleum and the Shahi Qila in Lahore as well as the Habib Bank Building in Karachi which has gained the status of a national monument.

The Allied Bank Limited (ABL) advertisement of August 14, 2017 has shown the Pakistani flag a total of 37 times during the 3 minutes 26 second long advertisement. It can be termed a classic example of how patriotic symbols are incorporated in an advertisement as it shows the mausoleum of the Quaid, the Minar-e-Pakistan, a military parade with soldiers performing the military salute, fighter jets and the lowering of the flag ceremony at the Wahgah Border while a song with patriotic lyrics is played in the background. Incidentally, this advertisement shows visuals of the bank's branches and ATM as people use it.

The song used as the background score of the United Bank Limited (UBL) August 14, 2017 advertisement is titled 'Rahbar-e-Taraqqi-o-Kamal', words which are derived from the country's national anthem. It is heavy on patriotic imagery as it shows pictures of the Flag Staff House, Jinnah cap, a book titled Kalam-e-Iqbal, pictures of recipients of the Nishan-e-Haider, miniature fighter jets, flying jets, navy ships, the Pakistan Air Force regalia, tanks, pilots in their gear, pilots readying to fly their jets, multiple shots of pilots flying the aircraft and release of a missile by an aircraft. The advertisement also shows the Khunjerab Pass, which connects Pakistan and China through the Silk Road. In addition to all this, the advertisement also shows national cricket hero Younus Khan.

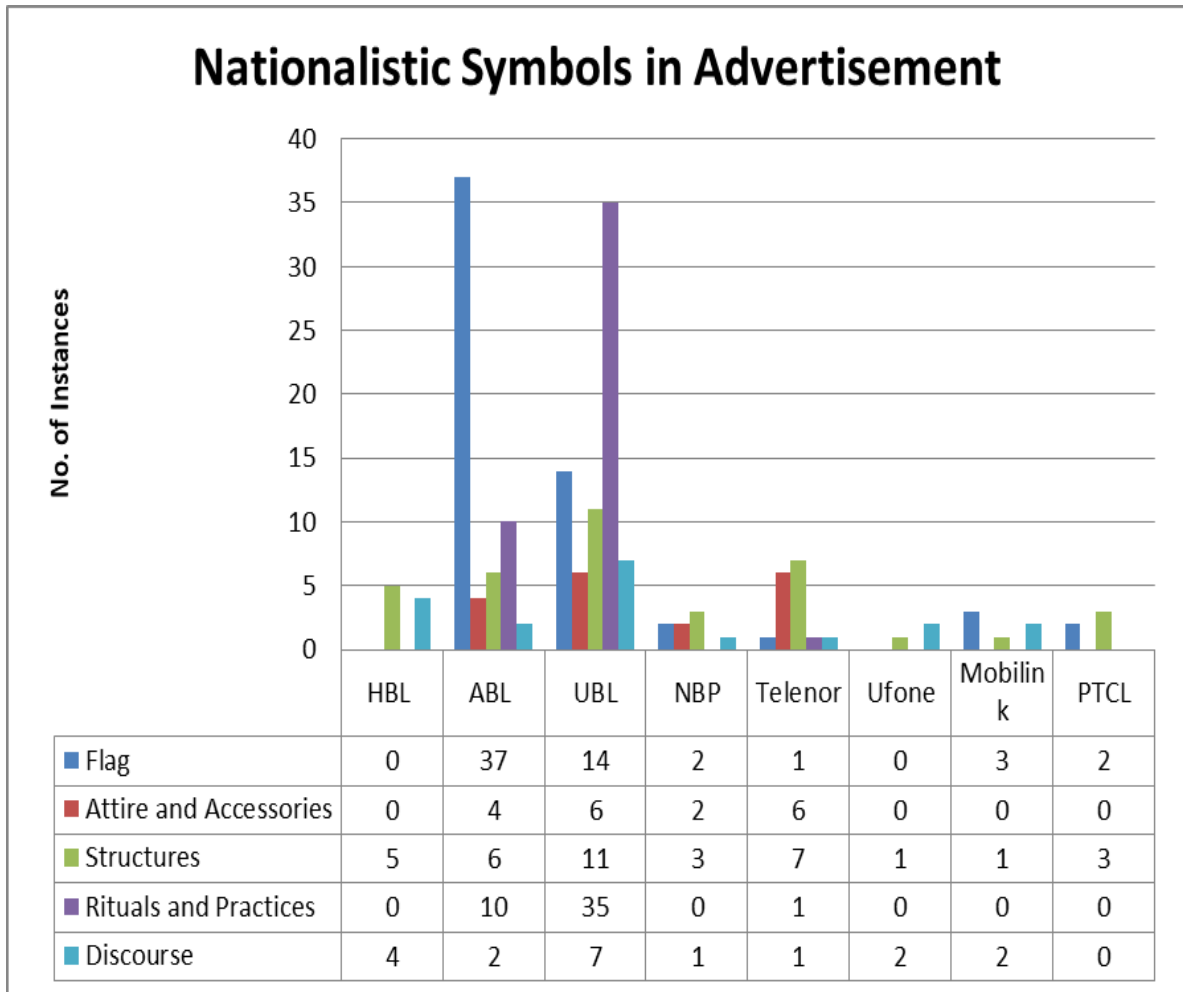
The National Bank of Pakistan's advertisement of August 14, 2017 shows the flag, the mausoleum of the Quaid, a female fighter pilot and patriotic verses recited by Zia

Mohiuddin, a famous Pakistani artist who wears a sherwani in the advertisement and looks strikingly similar to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

In the telecom advertisements, it is found that telecom companies also exploited special occasions to convey patriotic messages through their advertisements. In Telenor's advertisement on August 14, 2017, the flag of Pakistan is repeatedly shown along with other imagery associated with Pakistan while a patriotic message is used in the background. In the Ufone advertisement for the same occasion, patriotic verses extolling the virtues of the motherland are used. The Mobilink advertisement invokes patriotism by using a nationalistic message. In the PTCL's advertisement on Pakistan Day (2018), the flag of Pakistan is shown on two occasions while the background message says that on this Pakistan Day, we join the hearts of Pakistanis through PTCL.

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Table 3: Occurrence of Nationalistic Symbols in Advertisement



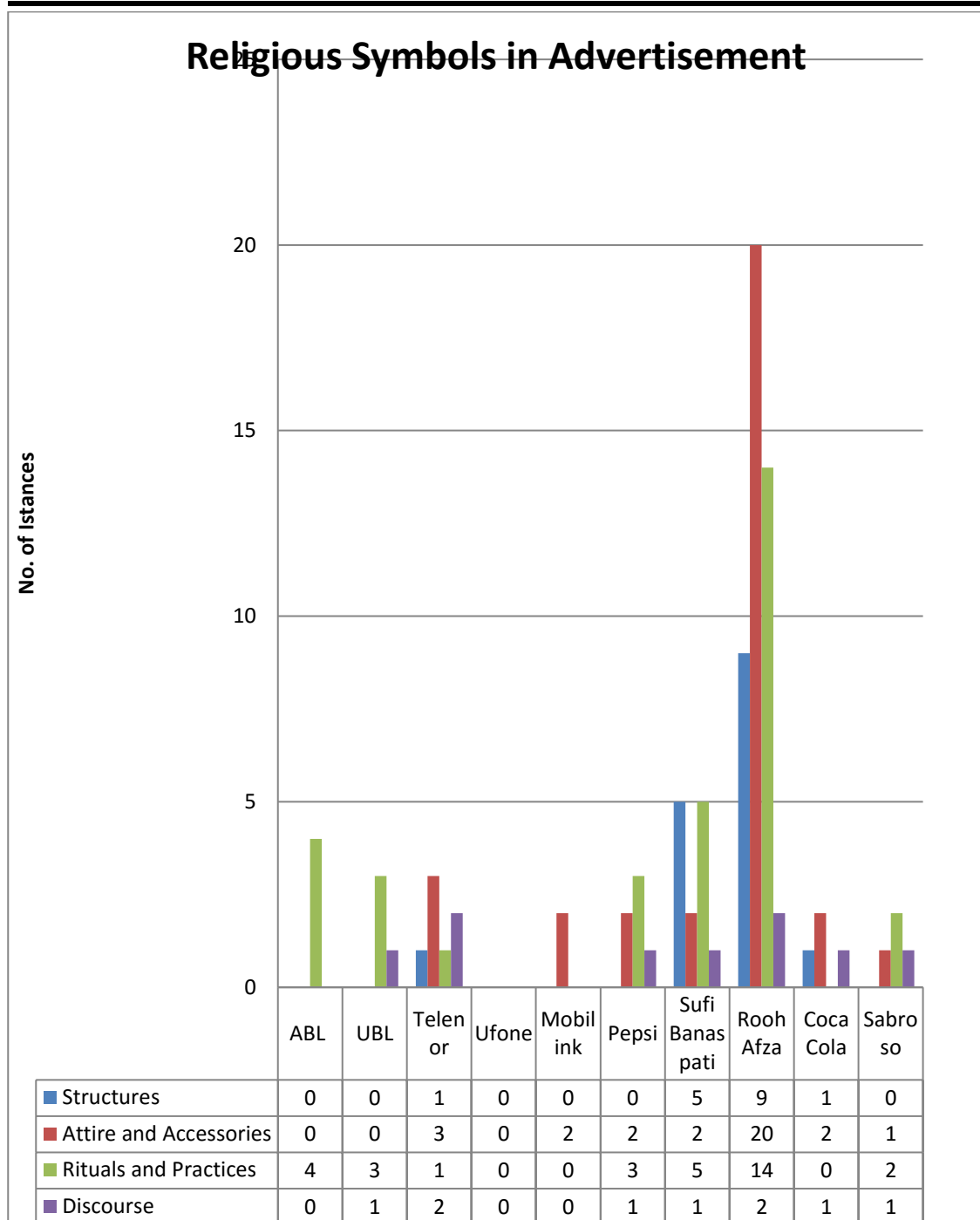
Religious Symbols and Messages in Advertisement

In the ABL August 14, 2017 advertisement, the religious visual imagery includes shots of the Badshahi Mosque, the Faisal Mosque, a man performing ablution and men saying prayers collectively. The UBL August 14, 2017 advertisement shows the Ka'aba, the shrine of a sufi saint and men performing qawwali.

In the Telenor advertisement, a Sikh Gurdwara and a shrine of a Sufi saint are shown as well as multiple images of Sikh men wearing their religious turban. In the category of edibles, the Pepsi Ramazan 2017 advertisement shows a woman covering her head with a headscarf , a couple is shown eating sehri/iftari and people are saying their prayers collectively as bottles of Pepsi surround them. The Sufi Banaspati Ramazan 2018 advertisement shows the Sofia Mosque in Turkey, a woman praying at a mosque and images of the whirling dervish while the background score of the advertisement consists of a Sufi kalam that repeatedly uses the Quranic verse Bismillah. The Rooh Afza Ramazan 2018 advertisement shows repeated shots of the Badshahi Mosque, the Sofia Mosque, women and small girls covering their heads with a scarf, men wearing skullcap and kefayah, a family having iftar and whirling dervish. In the Coca Cola Ramazan 2018 advertisement, a man is shown wearing a Sikh turban while the background song is a rendition of Allama Iqbal's famous poem 'Lab pe aati hai due ban ke'. The Sabroso's Ramazan 2018 advertisement shows different stages of preparation of an iftar meal and a family having iftar as the sound of Azaan resonates in the background.

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Table 4: Occurrence of Religious Symbols in Advertisement



Findings

After the content analysis of advertisements, it is established that advertisers do take advantage of special occasions to promote their products by using nationalistic and religious symbols in order to gain a favourable opinion of their target market and to sell their products. As the literature review amply shows, this tactic of exploiting the religious and patriotic tendencies of buyers by showing them advertisements laden with nationalistic and religious themes has proved successful around the world, the study of Pakistani advertisements shown on important national days of the country such as the Pakistan Day and the Independence Day and on religious occasions such as the month of Ramazan and Eid also suggests that advertisers here are using this strategy on their audience to garner a positive response. In some cases, the advertisers come up with specially made songs to commemorate an occasion, for instance the ABL August 14, 2017 advertisement, the Coca Cola Ramazan 2018 advertisement and the UBL August 14, 2017 advertisement. Some of these advertisements are heavily laden with the prohibited imagery. The ABL advertisement uses the image of the Pakistani flag a total of 37 times in the advertisement. In fact, the national flag is the most repeated symbol used in almost all advertisements with a patriotic message. The UBL advertisement uses the phrase 'Rahbar-e-Tarraqi-o-Kamal, which is actually a phrase out of the national anthem of the country. The PEMRA guideline specifically prohibits the use of the national anthem in advertisements.

The changing definition of what constitutes patriotism is also evident in advertisements. The UBL advertisement shows multiple images of Chinese nationals and the Khunjerab Pass that connects Pakistan and China by road. This is significant in view of China's mega-billion dollar One Belt One Road project of which Pakistan with its China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a part. China has assumed substantial importance in the national discourse of the country and criticizing the CPEC project is at times deemed harmful to Pakistan's national interest and thus unpatriotic (Ebrahim, 2017).

In the advertisements which convey a religious message or depict religious symbols, the Badshahi Mosque is shown frequently, followed by visuals of shrines of Sufi saints. Another mosque which is shown in at least two advertisements is the Sofia Mosque of Turkey. It has also been noted that when it comes to advertisements which celebrate the foundation of the country or the country itself, the representation of minorities is minimal. Out of the 14 advertisements studied, only two depicted minorities in some roles. Interestingly, both representations are of the Sikh community. One interpretation of showing Sikhs as the Pakistani minority may be that it is safe to depict them in advertisements as their general acceptability may be more as compared to Hindus, who are ignorantly considered an extension of India, or Christians who do not enjoy a strong financial position in the country and are mostly hired in menial jobs such as sweepers and janitors.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The responsibility of an advertiser is to present the product given to him in the most enticing manner to the consumer of that product. According to some advertising practitioners, the job of an advertiser is to sell a product to a consumer who does not

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even need it (Richards & Curran, 2002). To practice their craft, advertisers use innovative methods and sometimes they use the tried and tested formula of appealing to some of the most basic emotions of humans: their love for their motherland and attachment to the religious values they practice (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989).

The practice of using religious and nationalistic symbols to attract the attention of consumers towards a product and to integrate a product with nationally or religiously importance occasions is found in many countries of the world. In most societies, these practices draw favourable reviews, however, there are exceptions as well (Delener, 1990). Advertising industries around the world have formulated certain guidelines, or code of ethics, in order to streamline the advertising industry and monitor the content shown in advertisements. The various codes of conduct governing the advertising industry, as well as the regulations formed by governments, mention guidelines which have to be followed by the practitioners in the field. These guidelines emphasize on honesty, fair depiction and non-deceiving content in advertisements for most parts. The presence of rules with respect to depiction of religious or nationalistic symbols is not found in the codes of conduct considered for this study and hence the use of such material in advertisements is not surprising.

Therefore, it is difficult to understand the logic behind the PEMRA's guideline with respect to prohibition of religious and nationalistic symbols in advertisements. This rule seems redundant because of its inherent invalidity. Moreover, despite its presence in the Code of Conduct, it is clear that the said rule is not practiced by the advertising industry which continues to use religious and nationalistic themes on occasions which demand such themes. In fact, the presence of this rule and its flagrant and continuous

violation in advertisements point towards the inefficiency of PEMRA to ensure implementation of its own guidelines and a lack of reprisal in case of violations. Considering the apparent ineffectiveness of the said rule, the authority may consider removing it from its Code of Conduct since it does not hold any value.

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