11 The Intersection of Culture and Advertising Ethics in a Global Marketplace

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This chapter addresses the ethical complexities that arise when promotional messages developed for one culture are then translated to another. With so many corporations becoming multinationals, the questions about cultural differences in the ethics of persuasive messages are more important than ever. In fact, the ethics of persuading people about products and services is differently perceived in different countries and cultures. First, there is the question of whether ethics refers just to what is legal or if its meaning goes beyond legality. Next, there are questions about how fundamental values such as the relative importance of individuals compared with groups influence what is perceived to be ethically acceptable. The author argues that three important philosophical/religious perspectives must also be taken into account (Western individualism, Confucian philosophy, and Islam). Finally, there is a discussion of if, out of all of these differences in belief and emphasis, some universal cultural ethics of advertising can be derived.

Introduction

As economies around the world become increasingly interdependent, marketing communication commentary focuses on the globalization of markets, brands, consumers, and media (de Mooij, 2014; Cateora & Graham, 2007; Levitt, 1983; Smith, 2011). Advances in communication technologies have broken down previous geographical barriers (Levitt, 1983), encouraging discussions of similarities and differences between cultures to flourish. Marketers are looking for common markets and audiences to benefit from economies of scale in both production and marketing communication.

As companies expand their global reach, it is imperative that cultural understanding is at the forefront of marketing and advertising decisions. Specifically, the environment within which people experience advertising differs greatly from country to country (Cateora & Graham, 2007). Often historical, geographical, political, economic, and demographic variations as well as maturity of the advertising industry are cited as key uncontrollable variables to assess for market viability and creating effective advertising (Cateora & Graham, 2007; de Mooij, 2014; Mueller, 2014).

Cultural expectations in relation to ethical advertising practices are often ignored but nevertheless can significantly influence the success or failure of a brand (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009; Hovland & Wolburg, 2010; Moon & Franke, 2000). This is particularly true when cultures differ greatly from each other, such as Asian cultures in comparison to Western or Muslim cultures. As China continues to take its place in the world market along with other strong non-Western countries, it is critical for multinational advertisers to have a clear understanding of business ethics from a variety of perspectives.

Accepted ethical practices in one country are often at odds with culturally accepted business and marketing practices in another. Gift giving between business associates is required to do business in some cultures, but for others it can raise ethical questions in relation to bribery (Donaldson, 1996). Nudity in ads is seen as offensive in most Muslim countries but has varying degrees of acceptability in others (Day, 1997). Unfortunately, ethical concerns in advertising tend to arise as a reaction to a complaint, and most advertising agencies have yet to incorporate ethics into their everyday practices or to see the profitability associated with ethical behavior (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009; Griffin & Morrison, 2008; Snyder, 2011). This is problematic because ethical practices are at the heart of garnering consumer trust along with offering quality products. As Wally Snyder (2011) has stated, "Companies that follow high ethical principles in their ads will 'do well by doing good.'" Advertising professionals need to consider ethical behavior and cultural knowledge as key ingredients to building successful brands in today's diverse marketplace.

The goal of this chapter is to encourage ethical sensitivity in global advertising. First, the chapter presents a discussion around ethics and the role of ethics in advertising. The author distinguishes between ethics and the law, and provides an overview of philosophies that influence ethical beliefs. She then elaborates on culture in terms of its pivotal influence on attitudes and behavior as they influence ethical decisions. Further, the chapter explores global values and cultural dimensions relevant to ethical decision making as means for assessing similarities and differences between countries. The chapter concludes with suggestions advertising practitioners can take toward implementing ethical practices in their everyday work, as well as ideas about building a global advertising community with shared ethical values.

What is Ethics in Advertising and Why Is This Behavior Important?

Ethics can be defined as "a set of prescriptive rules, principles, values, and virtues of character that inform and guide . . . the conduct of people toward each other and the conduct of people toward themselves" (Spence & Van Heekeren, 2005, p. 2). Using Cunningham's (1999, p. 500) definition, Drumwright and Murphy (2009) defined ethics as "what is right or good in the conduct of the advertising function. It is concerned with questions of what ought to be done, not just what legally must be done" (p. 83). Martinson (2001) distinguishes

between ethics and law, stating that ethics is about "doing right" and "oughtness" not just "obeying the law" which only sets minimal standards. He further suggests that ethical behavior in advertising is about providing truthfulness. Preston (2010) concurs that ethical behavior in advertising begins where the law ends and with an emphasis on being truthful and not self-serving.

Spence and Van Heekeren (2005) state that professionals follow ethical behavior if they perform the task they are meant to undertake for the profession (role morality). Often in advertising practice, ethical behavior can be interpreted as doing what is necessary to make the client happy, even at the expense of ethical practices and societal benefits (Sheehan, 2014; Spence & Van Heekeren, 2005). If advertising objectifies women in an attempt to garner attention, advertisers may argue that they are morally fine within the profession's role morality of providing well for the client while not breaking the law. However, Spence and Van Heekeren (2005) remind us that universal public morality takes precedent over role morality and "is said to be based on principles that apply universally to all human agents by virtue of their common humanity" (p. 2). Role morality in advertising is therefore constrained by universal public morality, which requires that people are treated with dignity. Treating people as things to sell products violates human rights and would be deemed unethical.

From a Western perspective, one of advertising's main roles is to provide honest and truthful information for consumers to make decisions while giving advertisers the right to convey information about their products and in the process maintain a competitive marketplace (Hovland & Wolburg, 2010; Rotzoll, Haefner, & Hall, 1996). Beyond providing brand information, the social information conveyed is equally entrenched in advertising's role morality. Therefore, it should be within the industry's obligation to the public to treat people with dignity and fairness as well as providing honest and truthful information in the advertising created (Christians, Fackler, Richardson, Kreshel, & Woods, 2012; Pollay, 1986; Spence & Van Heekeren, 2005). Snyder (2011) has shown how consumers see real benefits from ethical behavior and will reward ethical advertisers with their business.

However, Drumwright and Murphy's (2009) research assessing advertising practitioners revealed that most professionals interviewed did not entertain ethical concerns in their work or the industry in general. The authors' attributed the results to a lack of focus on ethical issues (moral myopia) and a lack of opportunity within the advertising environment to discuss ethical issues (moral muteness). From the previous discussion, several key problems arise for international advertising ethics.

First, advertisers do not have a strong enough understanding of or appreciation for ethical issues in advertising, nor the belief that ethical behavior can positively influence the client's bottom line (Beltramini, 2011; Frith & Mueller, 2010; Snyder, 2011). Second, although in the U.S. advertising industry an awareness and desire for ethical behavior does exist, differences in laws, political systems, and especially culture influence the specific principles and values

that people use to decide between what is right and wrong in international business (Ferrell, Fraedrich, & Ferrell, 2013). With these issues in mind, the focus of the discussion will now turn to an overview of ethical issues specific to advertising followed by a discussion of culture and how individual moral philosophies can vary by culture. Both sections will lead to a more robust understanding of the intersection of culture and ethics in global advertising practices.

Ethical Issues in Advertising

Due in part to scandals in business and politics over the past decade from Lehman Brothers and AIG to Martha Stewart and Bernard Madoff (Keith, 2009), the issue of ethics has started to gain more interest across a wide range of organizations (Resick, Martin, Keating, Dickson, Swan, & Peng, 2011). Marketers have increasingly embraced corporate social responsibility practices to garner goodwill and build relationships with consumers (La Ferle, Kuber, & Edwards, 2013; Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). Business schools have started to add ethics into their curricula (Ferrell et al., 2013). The American Advertising Federation (AAF) has been developing the Institute for Advertising Ethics under the leadership of Wally Snyder (2011). Top industry executives and advertising academics have commented and published papers on the need for more ethical considerations in the advertising industry (Beltramini, 2011; Drumwright & Murphy, 2004; Preston, 2010; Snyder, 2011; Taylor & Rotfeld, 2009). Even the Vatican has been involved with the release of a report in 1997 by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. The report focused on the ethics of advertising where advertising practitioners were challenged to uphold truthfulness, dignity, and social responsibility (Foley, 1997). This document has repeatedly been referenced over the years as highlighting areas for advertisers to continue to work on (Can Business Be Catholic, Zenit, 2008).

Ethical issues in global business tend to focus on risks, bribery, Internet security, and privacy, as well as more fundamental issues, such as human rights, health-care issues, labor, and compensation (Ferrell et al., 2013). Within advertising, ethical issues touch on similar areas of privacy and human rights, but there are also further specific concerns in regards to the images and messages conveyed to the masses. In a review of key ethical issues related to advertising, Drumwright (1993) cited a number of research studies and categorized them into those that were legally focused issues such as advertisers' rights and deceptive advertising and those more morally focused such as the social impact of advertising on society.

In the United States, researchers have undertaken numerous studies to assess consumer attitudes toward morally controversial practices in advertising (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009). Advertising that perpetuates stereotypes, promotes societally controversial product categories, such as alcohol, tobacco, and condoms, marginalizes groups of people or objectifies women as well as encourages consumption as the path to happiness are all areas of potential

problems when it comes to ethics in advertising and the societal impact of advertising (Pollay, 1986; Sheehan, 2014; Spence & Van Heekeren, 2005). Typically these topics are considered "soft" issues in the United States and are not regulated by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which oversees "hard" issues, such as deceptive or misleading advertising. The main self-regulatory body in the United States, the National Advertising Division (NAD), also does not usually get involved in issues of taste and decency. However, this is not true of all countries, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, where regulators examine hard issues along with some soft issues.

While laws exist in most countries practicing advertising and common areas of advertising regulation can be found from nation to nation (Mueller, 2011), there are few international organizations overseeing advertising regulation (Frith & Mueller, 2010). The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations (UN), and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) are the most prominent. These organizations typically provide voluntary guidelines and do not have legal authority to mandate compliance among member countries. Nonetheless, the ICC does support self-regulatory efforts through a comprehensive set of guidelines that are currently in use across many countries.

The organization started in 1919 to encourage positive business environments with and between governments. From an initial representation of 5 countries to over 120 today, the ICC works to provide ethical standards and guidelines for businesses, including marketing and advertising practices around the world (www.iccwbo.org). According to the ICC website, the most recent code from 2011 is intended to help businesses demonstrate responsibility in advertising and marketing practices, enhance public confidence in the industry, maintain freedom of expression for marketers, and provide flexible solutions to minimize government regulation (www.codescenter.com).

While the guidelines are quite thorough and created with input from multiple countries and cultural backgrounds, they are voluntary and not legally binding. However, they do stress the importance of both hard and soft issues. Specifically, the code states that all practices should demonstrate respect for human dignity and standards of decency. This fact highlights the importance for advertisers to become versed in ethical issues, because the effectiveness of the guidelines depend first on the belief that ethics are important and second on being able to recognize the varied ethical issues in play, both within and across cultures. It is important for advertisers to understand cultural differences and similarities of ethical practices so as to better navigate the waters in international markets and potentially find common ground.

The use of stereotypes in advertisements is an example of a soft issue where ethical concerns often arise. A stereotype is a generalized way to categorize a group of people and is used in advertising to convey meaning quickly (Sheehan, 2014). Stereotypes can be unethical if the images conveyed degrade or diminish a specific gender, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, religious, or other group, thereby disrespecting them and their right to human dignity (Donaldson, 1996; Spence & Van Heekeren, 2005). In the United States, some brands

have used the image of a Chinese or Asian Indian consumer along with a strong accent to create humor with the intent to garner attention and enhance recall for the brand. Unfortunately, this type of ad exploits the different ethnic and racial groups by using inherent characteristics as a tool for humor to sell a product rather than respecting their value as humans. These types of ads also encourage an "us versus them" mindset in the United States when many Chinese people with accents are in fact American citizens. Spence and Van Heekeren (2005) support this point by suggesting that beyond violating individuals' rights, ads like this further work against society by maligning or misrepresenting the group to the detriment of society as a whole.

This type of advertising is not always recognized as unethical and is not limited to the United States, but cultural understanding is necessary to see where ads may cross the line of norms and be perceived as offensive. Historical events between China and Japan explain the tension and negative reaction by Chinese consumers to a series of ads by Toyota Japan. The ads showed lions and dragons, important symbols of strength in Chinese culture, as weak and being mocked. Chinese consumers were outraged and considered the ads offensive, disrespectful and hurtful (Peopledaily.com, 2003; Americansifu, 2013). Islamic leaders have raised concerns with several American companies such as Nike and Coke for offending religious Islamic beliefs. A Nike logo displayed an image that looked like the word "Allah" in Arabic script (Mueller, 2014). Allah means God in cultures practicing Islam, and typically references to anything related to God or religion for commercial purposes is forbidden (Mueller, 2014).

The *Journal of Advertising Research* published a special issue in 2011 devoted to ethics in advertising. Beltramini (2011) was the guest editor and provided three thought-provoking reasons why ethical problems still plague our industry. He suggested that these reasons included an inability to measure a one-to-one relationship between advertising and consumer behavior as well as a lack of ads being challenged, resulting in a status quo mentality. The third reason, seen as the largest problem, focused on what he perceived as a lack of desire to engage in ethical advertising practices. His hope was that the special issue would ignite real ethical action. However, Griffin and Morrison (2008) have argued that in order to engage in ethical behavior, one must first have an ethic of care. But to have an ethic of care one cannot have moral myopia but must be able to recognize potential ethical issues in advertising, such as those discussed to either avoid them or resolve them as they arise. This becomes even more problematic when advertising is undertaken outside one's native culture within which individual values and moral philosophies were first developed.

Culture and Ethics

Culture has been defined by Hofstede (1980) as the collective mental programming of a group of people. The impact of cultural orientation on behavior has

been studied by researchers across multiple disciplines (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Marsella, DeVos, & Hsu, 1985; Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991; Triandis, 1989). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), the construction of self is influenced by the context within which it exists; self in turn then affects cognitions, motivations, and emotions. Ethical behavior and individual moral philosophies are therefore learned within the context of culture.

Advertising cannot be successful without understanding cultural context, including awareness of the culture's assumptions and beliefs about ethics. The beliefs, values, and customs of a culture influence how people engage in daily life, including consumer behavior processes and responses to advertising. National cultural orientations help in shaping individual values (Gudykunst, 1998; Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomy, Nishida, Kim, & Heyman, 1996). Therefore culture, as it shapes values, also influences consumer ethics.

Values are what Hofstede (1980) has called the core of culture. According to de Mooij (2014), a value is an enduring belief causing us to prefer one choice over another. Values are typically learned by the age of 10 and are quite stable (de Mooij, 2014). For these reasons, values are highly important for advertisers and marketers to understand to build brands and advertising messages that are personally relevant to consumers. However, values also drive ethical beliefs and can vary, if not in type, in order and strength, from one country to another (de Mooij, 2014).

Take for example a comparison of the top values among the United States, Belgium, and China. The majority of values for the Chinese are rooted in Confucian beliefs of obedience, harmony, and respect for others. In contrast, many of the top values for Belgium focus on safety and security, which de Mooij (2014) attributes to Belgium's high uncertainty avoidance or dislike for ambiguity and change. The United States' top values are heavily related to historical events and Hofstede's Individualism dimension with a focus on freedom, fairness, democracy, and equality (de Mooij, 2014).

International advertising requires advertisers to be culturally sensitive to their target audience when encoding advertising messages, because messages are being decoded by targets who may have very different values, life experiences, and perspectives (Cateora & Graham, 2007; de Mooij, 2014). De Mooij (2014) expands on this idea by suggesting that Western communication styles tend to be sender oriented. She argues that collectivistic cultures, especially those from East Asia, value communication with more of a dialogue, where having empathy and harmony with the receiver are critical to the communication process. Zhu (2009) suggests, for example, that the differences found in Chinese marketing and business communication styles such as being more circular, indirect, or ambiguous can be explained by Confucian ethics. Even ideas about advertising in Japan where building relationships through entertaining is the norm rather than hard-sell persuasion tactics (de Mooij, 2014) can be understood from this alternative ethical lens. Both point to the importance of understanding one's self-reference criterion (SRC), an unconscious reference to one's own values and culture in assessing situations, which can lead

to cultural blindness and be responsible for ethical conflicts (Cateora & Graham, 2007; Ferrell et al., 2013).

Donaldson (1996) describes business ethics of the Japanese as being focused on loyalty to company, business networks, and nation, while Americans focus on liberty and rights with an emphasis on equality, fairness, and individual freedom. He goes on to highlight that Confucian and Buddhist traditions are not based on the notion of a right, which evolved for Europeans and Americans during the rise of democracy (Donaldson, 1996). This distinction can explain several different reactions to the same ethical conflicts and suggests the need to understand different world philosophies driving ethical beliefs. In contrast to Chinese moral philosophies rooted in Confucian ethics (Chan, 2008; Resick, Martin, Keating, Dickson, Kwan, & Peng, 2011; Zhu, 2009), Western cultures and business ethics textbooks often include references to moral philosophies and theories based on deontology, teleology, virtue ethics, and relativism (Ferrell et al., 2013). Awareness of these common Western philosophies is important not only to understand how ethical decisions are arrived at but also to contrast with decisions made, and why they were made, from other philosophies.

Western Philosophies in Business Ethics

Chan (2008) defines business ethics as "a discipline which explores the proper conduct of businesses and businesspeople" (p. 349). He goes on to argue that the study of business ethics tends to be Western-centric driven by Western-origin ethical theories and moral philosophers. Many of these theories function from a general premise of rules being absolute. The rules guide action as to what is ethical or not, even though the specific rule followed may differ for each theory. Teleological philosophies deal with the consequences of a behavior, while "deontological" philosophies are focused more on individual rights or absolute rules with no regard for the outcome (Ferrell et al., 2013; Spence & Heekeren, 2005). The action of accepting a bribe could be morally acceptable from a teleological perspective if the consequence is favorable and usually for the greatest number of people, but it would be considered unethical, regardless of the outcome, from a deontological viewpoint. In the former case, the rule followed was to achieve the best outcome for the greatest number of people regardless of how it was achieved. In the latter case, the rule followed was simply that bribery is not acceptable. In contrast, Confucian ethics is not as much about rules as it is a process of achieving social harmony by growing a person's moral character.

Another Western philosophy is moral relativism and is often discussed in relation to differences in cultural practices because it suggests there is no universal standard, as each culture has its own moral compass (Day, 1997). The problem with this theory is that it assumes any and all behavior is acceptable if it is accepted by a particular culture or subculture. Following this idea of "when in Rome, do as the Romans" may sound reasonable, but it does come with consequences. Most in the U.S. press do not allow practitioners to pay journalists

to place favorable stories about clients in publications (Day, 2005). However, in some countries this practice is legal and ethical lines are not crossed. Currently, China is attempting to clean up this problem by arresting reporters/editors who collect money for favorable stories (World Bulletin, 2014). The overall harm of the practice is that it undermines consumers' decision-making processes and therefore disrespects their human dignity. Consumers will attribute greater credibility to the so-called "journalist's" story than to the same information in an advertisement. Day (2005) further argues that participation by advertisers in this type of practice provides no incentive for regulatory sources to step in and change the practice, even though the outcome for society as a whole is negative.

As another example, Hong Kong allows preemption in media buying based on supply and demand. In this system, advertisers bid a price for a slot they want and the highest bidder wins (Lam, 2014). In some cases, an agency can bid for the space for a campaign with a negotiated rate, but right up until about an hour prior to the airtime, the station can sell the space to a higher paying client or demand more money from the original agency. While this practice is legal and considered ethical in Hong Kong, it is not legal or ethical in the United States. With a focus on human dignity, the practice harms the consumer, the agency, and the market system, as it undermines predictability and wastes money that will negatively influence consumers in the name of excessive profits for the media organizations. So while moral relativism allows for each culture to practice what it sees as acceptable, the concepts of universal public morality (Spence & Van Heekeren, 2005) and human dignity (Day, 1997) would suggest that these practices are ethically questionable because they violate the human dignity of treating people fairly and are also not in the best interest of society as a whole.

Ethical imperialism is at the other end of the continuum of Western philosophies, with an emphasis on people complying with the same cultural norms and ethics that they follow at home no matter where they are (Donaldson, 1996). Obviously this moral compass has its flaws, too, in that it ignores potential differences in cultural norms. As an example, comparative advertising is a form of advertising used quite extensively in the United States and by U.S. multinational companies overseas. However, comparative advertising is against the law in some countries, while in others it is not used because it is considered rude and unethical to stand out and say you are better than another (de Mooij, 2014; Mueller, 2011).

Virtue-based theories such as Aristotle's Golden Mean are different from other Western philosophies, as they focus on building one's character and in this sense share similarities with Confucian ethics (Christians et al., 2012; Day, 2005). Aristotle's theory of the 'golden mean' focuses on building a virtuous character over time through actions taken, as well as learning to avoid the extreme of any position. This theory is used in American advertising with the idea of content-neutral regulation where the time, the place, or the manner of the message is limited in some way as opposed to banning the speech

completely (Trager & Dickerson, 1999). Day (1997) gives the example of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) regulation of indecency where they limit "indecent" content to hours outside of child viewing times.

It is important to have an understanding of Western philosophies, but they are not sufficient in the 21st century global economy in which China is a rising power and has become the second-largest economy in the world (Smith, 2011). As noted, many East Asian cultures such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong along with China are rooted in Confucian philosophy (Chan, 2008: Hofstede & Bond, 1998), while Muslim countries are largely immersed in Islamic beliefs. Therefore we turn now to several other dimensions helpful in identifying, comparing, and assessing values and ethical beliefs across cultures. Our tools are Hofstede's cultural dimensions, along with Confucian ethics and the Islamic religion.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Ethics

Hofstede & Bond's (1998) model, which differentiates Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Power Distance, and Uncertainty Avoidance, is one of the most widely used in providing a framework explaining cultural differences among consumers (Albers-Miller & Gelb, 1996; de Mooij, 2014; Swaidan, 2012). The framework has been used to show differences in consumer behavior, advertising techniques, and consumer responses to advertising (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997; de Mooij, 2014; Han & Shavitt, 1994; Matsumoto, 1989). It has further been used in studies focused on cultural differences in ethical beliefs, decision making, and behavior (Swaidan, 2012; Singhapakdi, Vitell, & Leelakulthanit, 1994).

Collectivism involves belief in group harmony and well-being of the group over the individual, where one's identity is tied to the group through loyalty, obligation, and dependence (Hofstede, 1980; Gudykunst, 1998; Mueller, 2011). The United States is the most individualistic country in the world, while many Asian and Latin Region countries are more collectivistic. This dimension influences aspects of the self (Singelis, 1994) and directly affects interpersonal relations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Masculinity relates to competitive behavior and concepts of winning as well as a clear distinction between male and female roles. In contrast, cultures higher on femininity typically are the opposite, demonstrating preference for being humble and modest where relationships between people, and equality between male and female roles, are more common (de Mooij, 2014; Hofstede, 1980). Uncertainty avoidance is an index of how much comfort people have with ambiguous situations, while power distance involves how much a culture expects and/or accepts inequality between people (de Mooij, 2014; Hofstede, 1980).

Many studies have utilized one or more of Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions for classifying cultural behavior patterns and assessing ethical perceptions (Davis, Bernardi, & Bosco, 2012; Moon & Franke, 2000; Vitell,

Nwachukwu, & Barnes, 1993). Often the findings suggest ethical beliefs and behavior are stronger in cultures higher on collectivism and uncertainty avoidance, while lower in cultures characterized by power distance and masculinity (Moon & Franke, 2000; Getz & Volkema, 2001). In a study examining the role of culture on managerial ethics, Paul, Roy, and Mukhopadhyay (2006) showed how people low on collectivism and uncertainty avoidance but high on masculinity and power distance were less concerned with ethics in business than their counterparts.

Swaidan (2012) used Hofstede's dimensions on a sample of African-Americans to show the impact of culture on consumer ethics. The findings were similar to the previous study, revealing that unethical behavior is less acceptable for consumers higher on collectivism and uncertainty avoidance and lower on masculinity and power distance.

A fifth dimension, long-term versus short-term orientation was developed later in the context of Asian cultures and with Confucian undertones (Hofstede, 1991). Asian cultures tend to score relatively high on long-term orientation and have a greater appreciation for longer-term thinking, thrift, virtue, and pragmatism than short-term oriented countries such as the United States (de Mooij, 2014). Short-term cultures tend to focus more on truth than virtue and on religiously based issues of what individuals believe to be right and wrong (Moon & Franke, 2000). It is clear that these cultural dimensions can help to understand variations in culture and subsequent ethical beliefs and are a good starting point for advertisers as they enter various countries. It is also evident that several of these cultural differences are rooted in Confucian principles and not Western philosophies.

Confucian Ethics

As the Asian region continues to grow in importance, and especially with China forging its mark in the global marketplace, it becomes imperative for Western corporations to understand ethics from an Eastern perspective. Although it is debatable to pinpoint one influence on ethical philosophies of a country or region, as we have seen, researchers discuss Confucian ethics as a driving force within Chinese business and interpersonal relationships, as well as in other East Asian–region countries such as Korean and Japan (Chan, 2008; Zhu, 2009).

Hofstede and Bond (1998) explain that Confucianism is based on the teaching of Confucius, who provided values for everyday life based on observations of Chinese historical events. Confucius (551–479 BCE) believed a person was not necessarily born as good or bad but rather through learning virtuous habits, related to understanding one's responsibility to the community, ethical behavior was cultivated (Chong, 2007; Christians et. al, 2012). Confucian ethics places a high value on family, connections (*guanxi*), harmony, thrift, obligation, and interdependence, which are at the heart of today's Chinese culture and business practices (Chan, 2008; Zhu, 2009). Social harmony is the goal of Confucianism and is believed to be achieved

by individuals knowing their dual roles as superior and subordinate, as well as the duties and obligations associated with each across five key relationships: ruler-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder-younger brother, and friend-friend.

According to Hofstede and Bond's (1998) summary of Confucius beliefs, these unequal relationships between people create a stable society because each person knows his or her place in society, is held accountable, and depends on others to do the same for society to function well. In this type of an environment, if one does not fulfill his or her expected role, the well-being of the entire group is diminished, and people are motivated to avoid feeling this type of guilt, shame, and possible expulsion from the group (Chong, 2007; de Mooij, 2014). The importance of unequal relationships offers an understanding of the existence of hierarchical relationships in many Asian cultures and provides context for Hofstede's (1980) power distance dimension.

Confucian beliefs also suggest that the family is the prototype of all social organizations (Hofstede & Bond, 1998) and this helps to understand the widespread presence of collectivism among many Asian-region cultures, as well as the origin of "saving face." It is the idea that people are connected to family and have no individual identity outside of the group. An individual gains dignity and respect by fulfilling what is required for the group and maintaining face for all parties (Hofstede & Bond, 1998).

According to Triandis (1995), morality comes to an individual in a collective society from the welfare of the collective in-group, in contrast to following the rights of an individual as would be morally correct in an individualist culture. This difference in ethical behavior is used by Moon and Franke (2000) to suggest why American practitioners had less tolerance toward *fees for favors* than Korean practitioners, but Korean respondents listed kickbacks to clients as the second most common ethical concern in Korean advertising. The researchers attributed the findings to collectivistic thinking by Koreans who might not like to be asked to provide kickbacks by clients but found the practice more acceptable than their American counterparts and much more common. American practitioners did not even list kickbacks as an ethical issue facing them. The authors attributed the findings to the strong legal and ethical norms in the United States against bribery that are not as clear for Korean practitioners in a group reciprocity culture rooted in Confucian beliefs (Moon & Franke, 2000).

Other examples of Confucian teaching affecting behavior in business include Hofstede and Bond's (1998) work examining the economic success of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. They uncovered a set of values that were common to each country, including persistence, hierarchical relationships, thrift, and having a sense of shame. They named this dimension, Confucian Dynamism and found it "strongly associated with economic growth over the period between 1965 and 1985 across all 22 countries, rich or poor, that were covered" (p. 16). Zhu (2009) was also able to show different reactions in business based on Confucian beliefs. He studied differences in reactions to a Chinese Expo invitation between a manager from China and one from New

Zealand. The Chinese manager found the invitation to be polite and appropriate, while the New Zealander thought it was unethical with hints of pressure and intimidation.

Moon and Franke (2000) used Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions to show cultural influences on reactions to ethical scenarios between South Korean and American advertising practitioners. In an example ethical scenario of hiring away an account executive to another agency, Moon and Franke (2000) found the Korean sample to be more negative. They attributed this to the Confucian beliefs related to collectivism, higher power distance, and high uncertainty avoidance, a context in which lack of loyalty to the group is unethical, as is encouraging others to avoid their duties to the in-group and to superiors.

Religion

Similar to the impact of Confucian teachings on East Asian cultures, religion can also have a strong impact on ethical behavior. As Bartels (1982) has noted, religion is equally as important as philosophic beliefs in determining social and business behavior. According to Mueller (2011), there are five major religions in the world: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Shinto.

A variety of studies have used religion to examine reactions to advertising and ethical beliefs (Frith & Mueller, 2010; Saeed, Ahmed, & Mukhtar, 2001), with some countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Malaysia being unusually heavily influenced by religious teachings. This suggests that knowledge of Islamic beliefs shaping culture and ethical decisions is critical in today's global marketplace. Indeed, Muslim consumers make up 25% of the world's population and are a majority in more than 50 countries (Saeed et al., 2001).

In examining Egyptian consumers' attitudes toward ethical issues in advertising, Mostafa (2011) found that Muslims' attitudes toward ethical issues in advertising were not as positive as non-Muslims. The author outlined several of the rules regarding advertising based on the teachings of Islam as explanations for the more negative attitudes and those found in previous studies regarding Malaysia (Deng, Jivan, & Hassan, 1994). Specifically, Mostafa (2011) stated that sexual, emotional, fear, and pseudo-research appeals along with false testimonies and encouraging extravagance cannot be used in advertising under Islamic teaching. He goes on to explain that "to exploit the basic instinct of consumers with a view to gain profit" is unethical within Islamic beliefs (p. 54). This belief parallels the earlier discussion regarding some Western philosophies rooted in trying not to treat people as a means to an end along with Spence and Van Heekeren's (2005) concept of universal morality. Mostafa's (2011) findings also support Kotabe and Helsen's (1998) earlier research in 22 countries. They found Egyptians holding the most negative attitudes toward advertising and attributed this to the religious influence of Islamic law. Saeed et al. (2001) suggest "At the heart of Islamic marketing is the principle of value-maximization based on equity and justice for the wider welfare of the society" (p. 127). A common thread, therefore, across the various philosophies

examined is the belief in the importance of considering the welfare of the society and upholding the dignity of the individual in business practices, which advertising is not seen as doing.

Ferrell et al. (2013) argue that while many differences exist across country values, the major religions share enough to suggest some global common values exist. Specifically, they suggest integrity, family and community unity, equality, honesty, fidelity, sharing, and unselfishness are desirable common values that transcend cultural differences. Similarly, ignorance, pride and egoism, selfish desires, lust, greed, adultery, theft, deceit, lying, murder, hypocrisy, slander, and addiction are listed as common undesirable values across the different religious groups (p. 278). With these similarities in mind, several researchers in the study of business ethics and advertising have tried to conceptualize common ethical beliefs across cultures to help formulate shared ethical values that would be globally consistent (Saeed et al., 2001; Day, 2005; Ferrell et al., 2013; Zhu, 2009). The goal is to help advertisers with global campaigns where common ground in ethical issues might transcend cultural differences.

Shared Ethical Values in Global Advertising

Day (2005) suggests that the world today, with the interdependent nature of countries, technology connecting people with content generated from outside national borders, as well as global problems in need of international solutions (e.g., threats to the environment), demands we search for a moral common ground. Ferrell et al. (2013) have also discussed the need for global business codes of ethics within the context of individual global corporations if they want to survive and thrive. Nationally and internationally the advertising industry and agencies within it would also benefit from guidelines for navigating ethical issues that influence the effects of advertising messages.

In the 21st century, we are seeing that Western philosophies traditionally dominant in business ethics and ethical models are being joined increasingly by powerful ideas from other regions, especially the Asian and Muslim countries. Advertisers cannot create effective ads and build relationships between brands and consumers in cultures different from their own without being aware of the cultures' values and attitudes toward ethics. Several articles have presented guidelines for working toward better ethical practices both in the home market and in foreign markets.

Day (1997) suggested that along with universally agreed upon 'hard' issues found in relation to the law, such as false advertising or exaggerated product claims, a universal standard for advertisers to follow covering both hard and soft issues is to have respect for consumers and their cultural norms in terms of human dignity considerations. Toward seeking ethical practices in advertisements, Griffin and Morrison (2008) suggest practitioners should ask themselves if the advertising is responsible and, further, to take into account potential consequences of the messages on society and/or to look for opportunities to effect positive social change with the messages. Donaldson (1996)

recognizes the impact of culture in global business practices and provides help in suggesting we should distinguish between practices that are simply different versus those that are just wrong. To make this delineation, he recommends corporations should be guided by the following three principles: 1) respect for core human values, 2) respect for local traditions, and 3) a belief that context matters such as would be the case in a situation between a developing versus a developed nation (Donaldson, 1996). While Donaldson's (1996) article focused on how business corporations could respect basic rights, certainly his core ideas could be applied to the practice of advertising.

Specifically, Donaldson (1996) suggests that despite the variety of ideas across theologians and philosophers worldwide, and differences between Western and non-Western cultural and religious traditions, there is an *overlapping consensus*, as Rawls would argue, converging at "shared attitudes about what it means to be human" (p. 311). He defines this idea as having 1) respect for human dignity where people are not treated as tools or as a means to end, 2) respect for basic rights such as to health, education, safety, and an adequate standard of living, and 3) good citizenship where companies support societal institutions (Donaldson, 1996, p. 311).

Applying Donaldson's (1996) focus to advertising, it is argued here that a focus on respect for human dignity and good citizenship fit well in striving for a common ground in global ethics that transcend cultural differences. These concepts are shared with many other belief systems from Western philosophies, to Confucius teachings and Islamic laws, to also being acknowledged within the International Chamber of Commerce guidelines used at least in part across 120 countries.

Within an advertising context, the concept of human dignity means consumers should be valued as people first and not as a means to an end. Therefore, providing false or misleading information simply to sell a product at the expense of treating someone with dignity would be unethical and would not benefit the greater good of society. Issues related to fair representation in advertising such as size of models, accents of a group used to create humor, or questionable images based on ethnicity, gender, age, and religious symbols or objectification and marginalization of a group would also be considered as treating people as means to an end to convey a message about a product. But how can we actually implement these ideas in agencies across the globe?

Wally Snyder (2011) has provided some important guidelines for agencies today to be proactive in their approach toward ethics. He states that 1) advertising employees need to proactively discuss potential ethical consequences of ad claims and images, 2) certain devices such as stereotypes should be avoided, 3) concepts should be tested with focus groups to uncover ethical issues before a campaign runs, 4) case studies should be reviewed with similar products or claims, and 5) clients should provide their own ethical guidelines to agencies. In the end though, it is up to each individual, agency, and the industry as a whole to be motivated to engage in ethical behavior.

Conclusions

Multinational marketers and global advertising agencies will be more successful with an understanding of the varied cultural influences affecting ethical issues in the markets they enter. Specifically, ethical concerns, ethical decision-making styles, and consumer ethics are all influenced by culture and need to be researched in order to avoid many potential problems. This is particularly true to help avoid the creation of offensive advertisements. Cultural knowledge about ethical issues is not only beneficial for Western companies and agency practitioners as they work globally, but also for non-Western companies wanting to do business overseas. Industry-specific and even agency-specific ethical codes of conduct and guidelines need to be created to help agency practitioners navigate ethical waters in cultures different from their own.

The difficulty in today's world is understanding that ethical behavior in advertising matters, agreeing on what constitutes upholding the dignity of a person within an advertising context, and ensuring that many different cultural perspectives are incorporated in the assessment. It is hoped that the chapter has helped to provide issues to consider in advertising ethics across cultures. Advertisers first need to understand that advertisements do more than sell products. They also convey dominant ideological beliefs, social norms, and cultural values, which all demand responsibility in using the tool (Frith, 1998; Pollay, 1986). Therefore, a shift in defining advertising's professional role morality (Spence & Van Heekeren, 2005) from only servicing clients and the market with information to also treating the audience with respect and human dignity is required (Day, 1997; Donaldson, 1996). In making this shift, the gap between values of advertising professionals' role morality and universal public morality decreases and the potential for more laudable ethical practices in advertising rises. Similarly, it is critical for advertisers to believe the trend that consumers value ethical behavior and advertisers' doing good, whereby consumers will reward ethical companies with their business more than other brands (Snyder, 2011).

As recognition of the need to respect consumers becomes a universal norm, a rise in appreciation for ethical practices should ensue with a desire to better understand the impact of culture on ethical beliefs. Zhu (2009) suggests that moral principles or philosophies can include both Western and Eastern beliefs, such as Confucian ethics and virtue ethics. Zhu (2009) and Chan (2008) both stress the importance to integrate Confucian ethics into today's business ethics. Others would argue for the inclusion of Islamic teachings, such as the concept of value-maximization for the benefit of the wider society, along with an appreciation that consumers will reward this behavior (Saeed et al., 2001).

By reviewing the various dimensions, philosophies, and ethical principles, advertising professionals can be better prepared to recognize ethical issues in order to create effective advertising campaigns in a culturally diverse global marketplace.

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