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Understanding Female College Students' Mind-set towards Television Advertising in Pakistan

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Purpose: This study examined the consequences and impact that television advertising has upon the general attitude of female college students towards television advertising in Pakistan. The data was collected from randomly selected 299 female college students. **Methods:** The respondents from five metropolitan cities like Peshawar, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Quetta and Karachi were asked to answer a self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive, t-statistics, correlation and regression statistical tools were used to analyse data. **Results:** The results of the study reveal that these students have negative judgment about the ethical and social consequences of television advertising. However they have positive judgment about the economic impact of television advertising. The students demand more regulation to control the television advertising. The results indicated that there is a significant positive general attitude of female college students towards the television advertising in Pakistan. The study predicted a positive relationship between the consequences/impact and general attitude of female college students towards the television advertising. **Recommendation:** The study recommends that marketers and the regulatory bodies have the responsibility to pay proper attention to the rising ethical, social and regulatory concerns of the female college students' about the television advertising. Moreover the study provides a useful benchmark for future research studies.

Key words: attitudes, television advertising, female students, Pakistan

1. Introduction

It is a fact that television is the major and leading communicator of our era. Television is the most reachable media in Pakistan. Television coverage in Pakistan is about 87-90 percent (Parveen, 2009). Advertising is the major earning source of television and a powerful tool to penetrate into different segments of the society. Regardless of the fact that advertising is a su-

ccessful tool for business, along with being a vital element of the modern age and a fast growing industry, the public fondness of advertising is still a matter of great concern (O'Donohoe, 1995). It has a great power to influence the consumers' vision about values, ethics and norms. Advertising is also criticized for presenting misleading information, promoting adverse values, fake claims, depiction of females as "erotic objects" and persuading people to buy things they no longer

need (Katona, 1964; Pollay, 1986; Pollay and Mittal, 1993). Again, this industry is blamed for spreading unsustainable consumption patterns around the world and encouraging excessive consumption. All the foregoing aspects are apt to hinder its effectiveness as well as efficiency as a marketing tool (Beales et al., 1981; Calfee and Ringold, 1987; Pollay and Mittal, 1993; Wright, 1986). Therefore, it is critical for advertising concerns to follow the public opinion on advertising and its reaching impact on economy, cultural values and on business itself (Wills and Ryans, 1982).

Youth is the most excited consumer of television entertainment. Among the youth, female students represent a sizeable segment of the society. They have a dominant role in opinion-making in the modern age. That is why exclusive studies on female students' attitude towards advertising are being carried out in different parts of the world today. Understanding female college students' attitudes towards advertising in Pakistan is also very important for several reasons. The female population is 53% of the total population in Pakistan. In the last decade, this largest cohort has come out of the shell they have been covered in for many centuries. The changing role of women will have an impact on the family purchasing decisions. They can influence the purchasing decisions of their peers and parents, establish brand loyalties that continue long after college days and ensure a higher standard of living after their graduation (Morton, 2001; Russell, 1996; Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2000). They are the important segment for product and service sellers.

2. Problem Statement

This study aims at investigating the consequences and impact that television advertising has upon the general attitude of female college students in Pakistan.

3. Research Question

This study aimed at investigating the mind-set of female college students towards the consequences and impact of television advertising. The study also examines the impact of the students' judgments about television advertising on their general attitude. Keeping in view the ever growing need for understanding female college students, as they are an important segment of the customers, purchasing the products and services, the following research questions were

posed:

Is television advertising creating any ethical, social and regulatory concerns among the female college students in Pakistan?

Do judgments of female students about the consequences of television advertising predict their general attitude?

4. Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are following:

- (1) To study the judgment of female students about consequences and impacts of television advertising
- (2) To examine female college students' attitude towards television advertising in general
- (3) To determine the impact of different consequences and impacts of television advertising on female college students' general attitude towards television advertising.

5. Significance of Study

1. The study provides an adequate guideline for the regulator, the advertisers and media alike to reformulate their strategies in the light of the prevailing trend with the view to making television advertising more effective.

2. The study will provide a benchmark for future studies with regard to female college students' attitude towards advertising.

6. Literature Review

6.1. Ethical Consequence

The findings of Chung-Chuan Yang (2000) suggest that advertising has negative effects on college students' attitude towards advertising. They found that college students in Taiwanese colleges consider advertising as a waste of national resources, which encourages people to waste and persuades them to buy things they should not buy. The college students also agree that advertising is misleading and deceptive.

Penny M. Simpson, Gene Brown and Robert E. Widing II (1998) proposed that unethical perceptions of the advertisement significantly and negatively affect all advertising response variables like ad credibility, attitude toward advertising, attitude toward the advertiser, pleasure

and ethical judgment.

Reid and Soley (1983) found that despite of doubtful effectiveness, sex appeals in advertising is still thought-out as a useful method to draw attention of consumer to an ad.

Muhammad Shahbaz Shabbir, Shabana Kirmani, Hafiz Faiz-Ul-Hassan (2008) conducted a survey on children' attitudes towards TV advertisement in Pakistan and found that a greater percentage of respondent children disagree to the claim that TV ads tells the truth.

6.2. Economic Impact

Nicholas J. Ashill and Ugur Yavas (2004) suggest that advertising attitudes consist of social and economic dimensions. The target audience judges advertisements on the basis of its social and economic impact.

Chung-Chuan Yang (2000) has found that Taiwanese college students agreed that advertising helps a nation's economy; advertising promotes competition and benefits consumers and raises their standards of living. Chung-Chuan Yang (2000) also identified that students consider advertising as an important source of fashion information and helps them keep up with the products and services available in the market place.

Beard (2003) replicated Larkin's study and found that college students recognize advertising as performing an important economic role.

6.3. Social Consequences

Ramaprasad and Thurwanger (1998) studied Malaysian university college students and found that they had average to negative interactions with and beliefs about advertising. These female college students also rated the social impacts of advertising more negatively than its economic impacts.

Children in Pakistan feel the annoying qualities of advertisements and agree that most TV advertisement is poor in taste and annoying (Shabbir, Kirmani, Hassan, 2008).

Dan Petrovici, Svetla Marinova, Marin Marinov and Nick Lee (2007) found out the perceived socio-economic effects of advertising and consumer beliefs and attitudes toward advertising in Bulgaria and Romania. According to them, there is a common belief (more than 80 percent) that advertising promotes undesirable values and messages. Beard (2003) found that college students of today strongly believe that advertis-

ing persuades people to buy things which they do not need.

According to the Harvard Law Review Association (1967), most of intellectuals, since Aristotle, had disliked the materialist aspect of the marketplace. The critics consider advertising being a source of vulgarity and focused on sensual values.

6.4. Advertising Regulations

As the intricacy of marketing communication techniques is amplified, the insufficiency of existing general and statutory law to deal with the evils of false and deceptive advertising become more important. In the advent of the marketing arena it is desirable that new regulation must be considered to have complete and useful control over advertising. The regulation must be open to public assessment and condemnation to be more effective (Harvard Law Review, 1967).

6.5. Attitude towards Advertising

Sandage and Leckenby (1980), Rettie, Robinson and Jenner (2001) and Zhang (2000) suggested that using meddling tactics in advertising while competing for consumers' attention can be frustrating to the audiences and can lead to affinity of generally negative public attitude towards advertising.

Attitude is defined as an individual tendency to assess some body, thing or feature around him in an approving or disapproving manner. One way to express an attitude is the verbal opinion of the individual (Katz, 1960).

According to Bauer and Greyser (1968), attitude toward advertising is affected by audience behaviour toward advertising. If the decision-maker's behaviour is positive towards advertising, he/she will be inclined toward advertising (Pollay and Mittal, 1993). The advertising dimension that was researched extensively was attitude towards advertising (Ramaprasad and Thurwanger 1998).

Nicholas J. Ashill and Ugur Yavas (2004) suggest that advertisers in Turkey and New Zealand should create advertisements that are believable. The positive relationship between believability and overall attitudes towards advertising also suggests that advertisers should be sensitive to tactics that generate consumer disbelief.

A literature search revealed that, so far, no study on female college students' general at-

titude towards television advertising has been carried out in the Pakistani context. It is a fact that female college students in Pakistan represent a large segment of the market and also have a dominant role in opinion-making in the modern age. The segment also has a good deal

of "purchasing power" and influence; they deserve serious attention by marketing researchers.

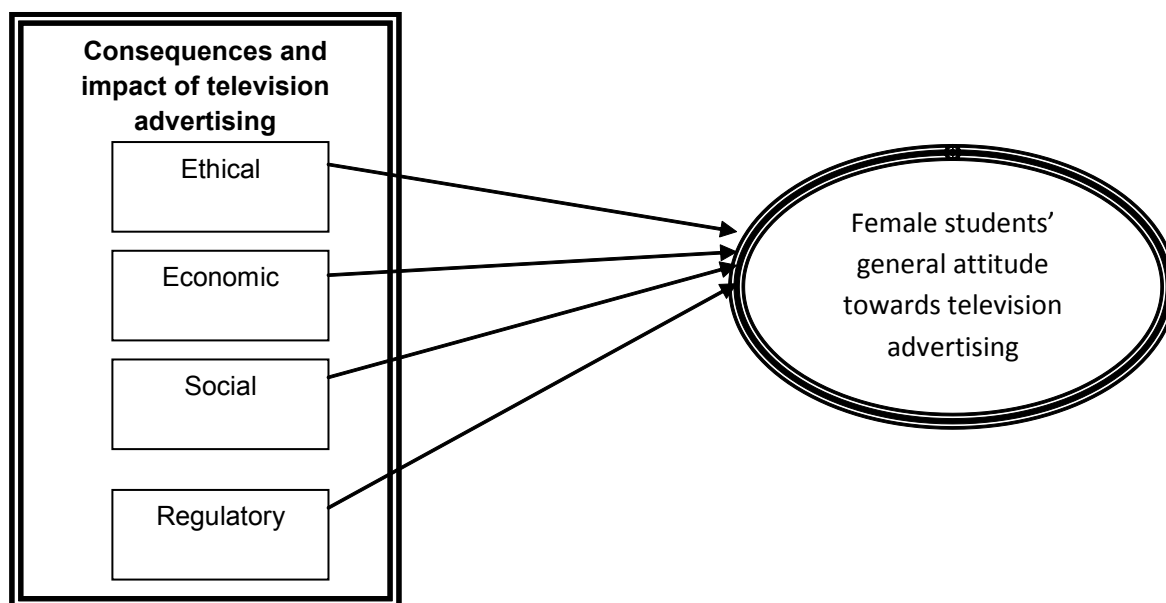
7.1. Hypothesis

Keeping in view the purpose of the study, following hypotheses were developed:

- H₁:** Television advertising has ethical consequences for college students in Pakistan.
 H_{1a}: Television advertising is considered to be deceptive by female college students.
 H_{1b}: Female college students feel that television advertising has been greatly exaggerated.
 H_{1c}: They perceive television advertising as pornographic.
- H₂:** Television advertising has economic consequences for female college students in Pakistan.
 H_{2a}: They consider television advertising being a source of economic growth.
 H_{2b}: They feel that television advertising is a major factor of improving the standard of living.
 H_{2c}: They perceive that television advertising ensures quality products.
- H₃:** The television advertising has social consequences for the college female college students.
 H_{3a}: Female college students feel that television advertising encourages people to buy things which they do not need.
 H_{3b}: They feel that excessive television advertising confuses people.
 H_{3c}: They argue that television advertising degrades the value system by promoting a materialistic way of life.
 H_{3d}: They criticize television advertising for promoting undesirable values among the youth.
- H₄:** Female college students demand new comprehensive advertising regulations.
 H_{4a}: They demand banning of advertising of products which are harmful to society.
 H_{4b}: College female students recommend regulations to control deception and puffery in television advertising.
 H_{4c}: College female students recommend regulations to control proliferation in television advertising.
- H₅:** The female college students have generally positive attitude towards the television advertising.
 H_{5a}: They believe that the television advertising is generally good.
 H_{5b}: They believe that the television advertising is generally helpful.
 H_{5c}: They consider the television advertising to be generally believable.
- H₆:** Ethical consequences of television advertising are positively correlated to the general attitude of female college students.
- H₇:** Economic effects of television advertising are positively correlated to the general attitude of female college students.
- H₈:** Social consequences of television advertising are positively correlated to the general attitude of female college students.
- H₉:** Feelings about television advertising governing regulations are positively correlated to the general attitude of female college students.

7.2. Research Model

It is apt at this stage to develop a model of the study which is discussed hereunder:



The judgment of students about the consequences and impacts of the television advertising (ethical, economic, social and regulatory) are taken as the independent variables, while the general attitude of female students towards the television advertising is taken as the dependent variable.

8. Research Methodology

8.1. Sample

The targeted population was limited to female college students, with the aim of understanding the mind-set of female college students towards television advertising. A national investigation was performed in colleges of the six metropolitans (Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Islamabad). A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 299 questionnaires were retrieved. The response rate was 75%.

8.2. Measurement of the Variables

Bauer and Greyser (1968) adapted Larkin's (1977) items to study attitudes toward advertising. Consequently, several other studies (Anderson et al., 1978; Andrews, 1989; Greyser and Reece, 1971; Haller, 1974; Schutz and Casey, 1981; Triff et al., 1987) used the same scale. The study has considered measures to judge the following three attitudinal areas using Larkin's scale:

(a) Ethical consequences (deception, puffery, sexual appeals)

(b) Social consequences (needless products, clutter, materialisms, undesirable values)

(c) Advertising regulations (harmful products, exiting regulations, proliferation)

The General Attitude scale (good, helpful, believable) is selected from Pollay and Mittal (1993) to measure the general attitude of female college students towards television advertising. To measure the response, the five point Likert Scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree was devised. The demographic information like gender, age and class of the respondents were also sought through the questionnaire.

8.3. Analysis Tools

In order to analyse the consequences, impact of television advertising and governing regulations, descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation were used. The Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to establish the relationship among various elements of consequences/impact/regulations of television

advertising the and general attitude of female college students towards this industry. Linear regression analysis was carried out to determine the influence of the television advertising consequences/impact/regulation on the attitude of female college students towards television advertising. All tests were conducted at a 5% level of significance. All statistical measures were generated by SPSS17.

8.4. Respondents Profile

Table 1 Demographics comparison of respondents

City	Frequency	Percent	Age	Frequency	Percent	Class	Frequency	Percent
Peshawar	55	18.4	16 years	5	1.7	Inter.	27	9%
Islamabad	38	12.7	17 years	25	8.4	Degree	272	91%
Rawalpindi	52	17.4	18 years	67	22.4			
Quetta	96	32.1	19 years	202	67.6			
Karachi	58	19.4						
Total	299	100.0	Total	299	100.0	Total	299	100

The respondents comprised of 18.4% from Peshawar, 12.7% from Islamabad, 17.4% from Rawalpindi, 32.1% from Quetta and 19.4% from Karachi. The respondents surveyed in the age of 16 years were 1.7%, 17 years of age 8.4%, 18 years of age 22.4% and that of 19 years age 67.6%. The respondents from intermediate class were 9% while from graduate class 91%.

8.5. Reliability of Scale

The study established the reliability of the measuring tools through two reliability methods i.e. Cronbach alpha and Parallel form. The reliability coefficients for the tools are given in Table 2 and 3.

Table 2 Cronbach alpha and parallel model reliability coefficient

Cronbach's alpha	N of items	Parallel model reliability statistics	
.634	17	Common variance	1.061
		True variance	.137
		Error variance	.924
		Common inter-item correlation	.129
		Reliability of scale	.639
		Reliability of scale (unbiased)	.642

Table 3 Test for model goodness of fit

Chi-square	Value	438.355
	df	151
	Sig	.000
Log of determinant of	Unconstrained matrix	-.654
	Constrained matrix	.847

Under the parallel model assumption

All reliability coefficients of the study's tool suggested that Larkin's (1977) scale for attitude towards advertising and Pollay and Mittal (1993) scale for general attitude towards advertising could be definitely applied in the case of female college students in Pakistan for measuring their attitude towards the consequences/impact/regulations of television advertising as well as their general attitude towards it. The same instrument was applied by Chung-Chuan Yang (2000) in his study about "Taiwanese college students' attitudes towards and beliefs about advertising" and the study recommended that the outcome obtained supports that the scales are valid for application in other Asian countries.

8.6. Descriptive Analysis

To find out the consequences and impact of television advertising on female college students attitude mean and standard deviation of each factor was calculated. The results in *Table 3* show that the judgment of the respondents about the consequences of television advertising is negative. The students are positive about the economic impact of television advertising. However, having negative ethical, social and regulatory judgment the results indicate that female students having generally positive attitude toward the television advertising except that currently they do not consider it believable.

Table 4 Descriptive analysis (The results summary of H₁ to H₄)

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Deception	299	2.71	.986
Puffery	299	1.99	.945
Sexual appeals	299	2.64	1.279
Economic growth	299	3.59	1.066
Standard of living	299	3.41	1.118
Quality products	299	3.94	.972
Decreasing prices	299	3.11	1.216
Needless products	299	2.47	1.115
Clutter	299	2.16	1.013
Materialisms	299	2.14	1.022
Undesirable values	299	1.86	.983
Harmful products	299	1.61	.943
Regulations	299	2.12	1.069
Proliferation	299	2.64	1.197
Good	299	3.62	.841
Helpful	299	3.64	.885
Believable	299	2.71	1.007
Valid N (listwise)	299		

Note:

a) **Mean <3** shows negative attitude for (deception, puffery, sexual appeals, needless products, clutter, materialisms, Undesirable values, harmful products, regulations, proliferation) as these are all reverse scaled.

b) **Mean >3** Shows positive attitude for (economic growth, standard of living, quality products, decreasing prices, good, helpful, believable) these are not reverse scaled.

8.6.1. The Ethical Consequence

The results in *Table 4* show that the respondents agreed that most of television advertising is false/misleading, exaggerated information and contains sexual appeals. In the realm of ethical consequences the result indicates that female college students have a negative attitude towards moral consequences of television advertising.

8.6.2. The Economic Impact

In the domain of the economic impact the figures in *Table 4* disclose that female students consider television advertising to be serving to the development of the national economy, raising the standard of living of the community, assuring quality goods and encouraging competition, leading to price cut-backs of merchandise and services. The result indicates a positive attitude of students with regard to the economic impact

8.6.3. The Social Consequence

Female college students admitted that television advertising is convincing people to buy products which they do not really need, therefore

confusing them and also promoting materialism. The result in *Table 4* confirms that female college students acknowledge television advertising to be a source of promoting obscene values among the youth. The results imply that the attitude of female college students towards television advertising social consequence is negative and consider having adverse effects on society.

8.6.4. Feelings about Advertising Regulations

The mean score of the respondents in *Table 4* recommends blocking television advertising of products which have a damaging impact on society. The students have demanded more regulation for control and proliferation of television advertising. The overall outcome proposes that female students are not happy with the ability of existing regulations to control and check television advertising effectively.

8.6.5. The General Attitude towards Television Advertising

With regard to the general attitude, results in *Table 4* advocate that respondents are convinced that television advertising is good and helpful. However, they oppose on the point that television advertising is believable. The results put forward that female college students' general attitude is positive towards television advertising in general.

8.7. Correlation Analysis of Variables

Table 5 Correlation matrix of variables

	General attitude	Ethical	Economic	Social	Regulatory
General attitude	1				
Ethical	.184**	1			
Economic impact	.342**	.050	1		
Social	.106*	.356**	.045	1	
Regulatory	.133*	.367**	.141*	.386**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

The results of the correlation coefficients in *Table 5* show a significant correlation among all the independent variables and the general attitude of female college students towards television advertising.

The results in *Table 5* indicate that there exists a positive correlation between the ethical consequences and the general attitude of female college students towards television advertising. The results also reveal that the more ethical television advertising is, the more positive is the attitude of female college students towards advertising. Hence it supports the H_6 .

The correlation coefficient between the economic impact of television advertising and the general attitude of students towards television advertising, as indicated in *Table 5*, is fairly significant. The study draws the inference that the more positive the economic impact of television advertising is, the more positive is the atti-

tude of female students towards advertising. We agree to H_7 .

The significant correlation coefficient in *Table 5* between the social consequences of television advertising and the general attitude of female college students towards it conclude that the more socially responsible television advertising is, the more positive is the general attitude of female college students. The hypothesis H_8 is established.

The result in *Table 5* demonstrates a significant correlation between the mind-set about television advertising regulations and the general attitude of female college students towards television advertising. We can infer that the more government regulations are set to control the television advertising, the more positive the general attitude of the female college students is towards advertising. Hence the study acknowledges H_9 .

8.8. Regression Analysis

Table 6 Model summary

Model				
	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.383 ^a	.146	.135	.57316

a. Predictors: (constant), regulatory, economic, ethical, social

Table 7 ANOVA

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.577	4	4.144	12.615	.000 ^a
	Residual	96.583	294	.329		
	Total	113.159	298			

a. Predictors: (constant), regulatory, economic, ethical, social

b. Dependent variable: general attitude

The results in *Table 6* and *Table 7* indicate that the independent variables significantly explain the variation in the general attitude of female college students towards television advertising.

The results in *Table 8* show that the ethical consequences and the economic impact significantly predict the general attitude of female college students towards television advertising. However the social consequences and feelings about the advertising regulation do not significantly predict the general attitude of female college students towards television advertising.

Table 8 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.722	.234		7.369	.000
Ethical	.131	.052	.149	2.498	.013
Economic	.336	.055	.331	6.075	.000
Social	.030	.059	.030	.498	.619
Regulatory	.016	.050	.020	.324	.747

a. Dependent variable: general attitude

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research study is an effort to secure sufficient evidence on the consequences/impact of television advertising and their relationship to the general attitude of female college students towards it. The outcome of the study evidently discloses that the majority of the respondents experience that current television advertising is unethical because of its deceiving, exaggerating nature and for putting more emphasis on the sex appeals. At the same time, most of the respondents believe that television advertising is imperative for economic growth, enhancement of the standard of living, guaranteeing of quality products and also see it as an effective means to cut back prices. The results of the study explain very significant negative feelings of the respondents about social consequences of modern television advertising. Television advertising is judged to be the source which persuades people to purchase products that they do not need, puzzles the people by creating a clutter effect, encourages materialism and instills obscene values in the youth of Pakistan. The results also portray that female college students demand changes by regulatory authorities with the aim to control television advertising. The general attitude of female college students towards television advertising on the whole is positive, as confirmed by the results of the study.

10. Limitations

The generalisation of the results is limited because the study relates to college female college students only. The non-serious approach and other delicate issues related to female college students might manipulate the responses to some extent the consequences and the attitude towards print advertising may be different because the centre of attention of the study was restricted to television advertising. The results of this research have, however, highlighted some

significant consequences and impact of television advertising and brought to light the need for future research, despite of these limitations. As this area of knowledge has not been investigated by researchers in Pakistan so far, the study also has contributed important information about the consequences and impact of television advertising and the general attitude towards it.

11. Implications

The study bring to light an assessing tool to evaluate the ethical and social consequences, and an economic impact of television advertising. The measuring tool will facilitate the marketers and the regulatory authorities to appraise advertising campaigns. The study calls attention of the marketers and the regulatory authorities to shun any disruption well in time in the positive, general attitude towards television advertising. The mounting ethical, social and regulatory concerns in the mind of female students, as brought to light by the results, call for changes in marketing and regulatory strategies.

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Razumijevanje stavova studentica prema televizijskom oglašavanju u Pakistanu

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Svrha: Istraživanje se bavi posljedicama i utjecaju koje televizijsko oglašavanje ima na opće stavove studentica prema televizijskom oglašavanju u Pakistanu. Podatci su prikupljeni na temelju slučajnog uzorka od 299 studentica. **Metode:** Respondentice iz pet glavnih gradova poput Peshawara, Islamabada, Rawalpindi, Quetta and Karachia su odgovorile na upitnik. Za analizu podataka korišteni su statistički postupci, poput deskriptivne statistike, T-statistike, korelacija i regresije. **Rezultati:** Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da studentice imaju negativne stavove o etičkim i socijalnim posljedicama televizijskog oglašavanja. S druge strane, imaju pozitivne stavove o ekonomskim učincima televizijskog oglašavanja. Studentice zahtjevaju više zakonske regulative koja bi kontrolirala televizijsko oglašavanje. Rezultati upućuju na to da postoji značajan pozitivan opći stav prema televizijskom oglašavanju u Pakistanu. Studija je predvidjela pozitivnu korelaciju između posljedica/ učinaka i općeg stava studentica prema televizijskom oglašavanju. **Preporuke:** Preporuke studije za oglašivače i zakonodavce odnose se na preuzimanje veće odgovornosti u rastućim etičkim, socijalnim i regulatornim pitanjima s kojima se susreću studentice u pogledu televizijskog oglašavanja. Osim toga, studija može biti korisno polazište za buduća istraživanja i komparacije.

Ključne riječi: stavovi, televizijsko oglašavanje, studentice, Pakistan