

ETHICAL ISSUES IN ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN - A KANTIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Children not only buy large number of products and services, but also influence the buying of their parents and families. Marketers' also see them as potential adult customers for the future. All this makes marketing to children very lucrative and advertisers are carrying out targeted campaigns to attract, capture and retain them. However, many find such an exploitation of unique vulnerabilities of children completely unethical. Immanuel Kant, the 17th Century German Philosopher, provided us a philosophical frame work for evaluating the right and wrong. To set the standards high, we apply the Kantian theory to evaluate the morality of actions of advertisers in targeting the children. We evaluate the concepts of 'Goodwill', 'Duty', 'Freedom' and 'Categorical Imperative' in the context of advertising to children. We found that there is nothing ethical about advertising to children from a Kantian perspective.

KEYWORDS: Marketing Ethics, Advertising Ethics, Immanuel Kant and Moral Philosophy

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