

Promotion's Ethics – Social And Economic Aspects

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Abstract

The advertising and promotion are fields in which the non – compliance of ethical standards or different considerations may have visible negative results and often harmful for the company. One of the controversial issues of promoting is that the companies use this to increase the sales, impacting not only the sales methods but also the values of life style. The techniques used by the advertisers are considered to be not true and vulnerable. Some of these techniques leave bad impression and are considered as an offense by the public and some others have a negative impact to the sensible groups, especially to the children. All these techniques will be analyzed in this paper that aims to evidence these issues, based in some case studies, and the possibility of avoiding these methods considered unsustainable and harmful for the applicant companies. Which are the most frequent cases of ethic violation ? Are frequent the cases when a promotion message is presented as not true and fraudulent ? What makes an advertising or promotion message offensive or bad perceived? These are some of the research questions that i will try to give an ansëer in this paper. On the other side also the advertisings and promotional spots very often violate the ethic, representing inconvenience and are considered as a bad indicator for the social values and life style. The increasing number of unethical advertisings and their presentation in media represent a bad impact to social values in general. The visible impact of advertising in society very often determine what is bad and what is good for them and contributes in public dialog as well. Although, nowadays the impact of advertising and promotion are evaluated for their positive impact in the society but on the other side there are opinions also for the negative impact of these advertisings and promotions. The research in question will reflect on the abovementioned cases, when the advertising faces the reality, and also the reality reflected by how advertising faces with opinion's misunderstanding.

Key words: Promotion, Product, Campaign, Consumer, Marketing.

1. Introduction

Ethics is the science that studies the moral, the principles, norms and rules of people behaviour. The ethic in philosophy is the study and evaluation of people behaviuor in the light of moral principles. The moral principles can be seen as a standard of behaviour that people have build for them selves or as a result of the constriction or obligation of what a society requires by her members. It deals with the facts what is good and what is bad, how we can differentiate them, is the good and the bad ugal for all; how can we take such important decisions that can help or exasperate the others, etc.

The role of promotion and advertisement in society is complex and controversial, very often results with efforts that limit or prohibit the transmission of the advertisement in this way the advertisement is limited only to a specific group of the society.

The function of promotion market requires the defining of the game rules for all the subjects that will take part on it. This requires objectively continous perfection of legal framework. The commercial code, in the concrete case in Kosovo, was a positive effort in this direction but there are still many uncovered fields.

The law for audiovisual media is one of the important issues that deal with the prevention of ethical violation in advertisement and promotion. This law in Kosovo is still deficient regarding its implementation. Actually in Kosovo, the biggest companies have started to buy long term advertisements. In this aspect every advertisement holder chooses the advertising interests and their duration by realizing a non clean competition against the opponent.

The audience measurement is another challenging issue that is turning as a priority to the Kosovo companies. The Independent Commission for Media and other different organizations that take care of such activities reflect time by time the measurement of watching in Kosovo media.¹ The weakness in this aspect represent the fact that these measurements are made on order by the mediums that in this case they laft behind doubts for the results and doubts in really facts of the company.

¹ Independent Commission for media, 2009, pg. 12, Independent Commision for Media, Kosova,

Beyond the law in the end is the consumer that evaluates and seals the advertisement ethics. If the consumer see a ethical violation in the advertisement message he reacts – reflect or coment negatively, refuse to by the product, made a formal complain, etc.(Hysi et. al. 2012). What is important in thisw aspect is the influence of media. The media must have professional criterium in choosing, selecting and differenting the advertisements considering what is right, what is appropriate for the viewers or things that are in contradiction with the ethic of the advertisement.

2. Ethical Principles of Advertising

Many societies and countries dedicate success of economic and social development to the role of ethics individual behavior of institutions and businesses. The core of this success lies in the transition from the stage of "limited individual ethics" in the state of "general ethics". Limited ethics applies values its obligations only in close family environments, clan, political, social or business. Beyond this environment of connection, everything is ethically and morally acceptable. Rather, the general ethics means that its norms become part of the whole economy and society, and economic or public policy, all manner of different professional categories to contain essentially ethical values and norms. "Generalized Ethics" creates much more mutual trust between stakeholders of an economy or a society causing market economy to function qualitatively (Civici 2009).

If we compare two neighboring countries and Kosovo, and analyze the ethical principles of advertising, or more precisely the annex of advertising messages, it is regulated by law that messages should be in Albanian language, and the main reason is not to create confusion among the society. This paragraph states that customer must be protected from the unethical advertising such as:

- Discrimination against sex, race, religion, nationality, political affiliation, age, personality, physical and mental condition;
- Attempt to provoke anxiety or benefit from the lack of the customer experience;
- Inadequate explanations for the customer who has no knowledge for the of the luck

games that promise easy profit;

- Creation of confusing situation by providing the similar products or services and comparing them with the well known brands;
- Causing moral harm and distress to children;
- Greatly increase the value of the goods or service advertised.

For misleading advertising, for damages caused and for an immediate halt to this ad, legal provisions in both countries are applied. Advertisers and advertising agencies are responsible, individually or jointly, for their misleading and unfair advertising, and are sanctioned accordingly. Since the main reason of advertising is to push customer to buy certain product, sometimes the way the product is advertised or presented customer decides to buy the mentioned product. There are several ways how design and content can influence on customer preferences.

One of the main issues or problems today is that advertising is that many advertisements are misleading and confusing customers and directly violates the ethics of advertising. As a result of this phenomenon, many researchers have concluded that customers have lost their trust in advertising.

3. The influence of advertisements to children and society's specific groups

One of the most sensitive issues tied with the advertisement of the products has to do with children. Televisions are the main mediators that reach the children through their advertisements. According to the latest researches, there is an average of five hours a day that children pass around media (audio-visual devices), especially watching television, on internet or playing video games. The research estimates that besides the fact that a kid spends 22 hours a week around audio-visual media, the same is supposed to be a subject of 40000 advertisements a year (Belch and Belch 2007).

It is estimated that huge advertisement companies in the world spend more than 12 billion dollars a year in order to reach the children through advertisement, since the children are considered as an important target group for the market.

On the other side, children are those who desperately want to buy the goods they see on advertisements, because of a single reason: they want to have those goods that the rest of the children have, too. Therefore, their parents are urged to buy what their children ask for.

Nevertheless, a simple question might be raised: Why these advertisements, whose target group are the children, are so deceivers? The psychologist Jolanta Vons explains how the content of an advertisement is not focused on the price, quality or advantage of the product.

The advertisement is made to abet the feelings. Vons explains: "The children do not deeply analyze the advertisement. They do not compare the information with what they know about. Even if they try to do so, their knowledge is too limited to understand the real value of the product".

In this context, could we ascertain that we have to do with the violation of ethics or these are merely² some psychological aspects that the advertisers do usually take into consideration when they create an advertisement?!

Taking into account the influence of these advertisements to children, and especially their deceivable power, is there any way to prevent this phenomenon? According to the magazine *Rewia*, the researchers found that in order to avoid this phenomenon, there is a need to spend more time with the children and to explain them that the value of a human is not the same as the value of his clothes or shoes. Furthermore, they suggest that there is a need to explain to children that they could have a happy childhood without having toys. And that the parents should be aware on how the advertisements influence their children. Vons advices that we don't have to permit the advertisements to show what are good and what is bad for our children.

Another sensitive group exposed to advertisements might be the females who are mostly introduced as a sexual object. Those who mostly commit ethic violence is the cosmetic companies as well as "under wear" companies, whose advertisements sometimes overpass the common sense of an advertisement.

4. The social and economical influence in advertising

Exept the advantages offered by a company and products upgrading, the advertisement and other forms of promotion face also with negative opinions. Such opinions are always present but it must be considered the fact that advertisers, the companies that applying for advertisement must be careful in the way of use, formulating of advertising messages and when they use them, with the only aim that the advertising will have no negative impact to the society. The advertising is an potential institution, and as such will remain only if the consumers believe what they see or hear (Belch and Belch 2007). The multiple problems that the advertising face in the front of the consumers and wide opinion can be avoided only when the intermediaries, the promotion managers, or the company as a order of advertising campaing decide to respect the ethical issues among the planning process containing in itself the marketing integrated communication.

The advertising plays an important role in open markets where the free trade is applied, in the concrete case the Kosovo market. In these markets the consumers learn for the products and services that they want to have (buy). In general the economical role of the advertising goes even further that its fundamental role can be. The advertising obviously encourages the product's consumption and in the same time encourages country economical development. On the other side the advertising not only plays the information role for the products and services but in the same time supports and facilitates the introduction into the market of a product or brand.

Despite these effects and benefits and advantages, is the advertsing role informative and the right one or all these elements in some cases exceed they limits? One of the reviews is that the advertising manipulates with the opinion, force them to buy products that can be useless for them and as abovementioned the influence of advertising to the children, but in this case has impact also for the adult.

The advertising that in this case try to convince the consumer for the function of the product, the concrete case when within an advertising is presented a new product that can solve people's problems, can have emotional and psychological effects and also can be scary to those who believe or create hesitation for advertising message. Such advertising very often has raised discontents to the consumers, especially for the enthusiasm created for the new product that in this case will help them to choose a determined problem.

In this case arises the question.....is this advertising ethical violation considering the fact that such advertising message with a negative content in a part of the opinion result with the dissadifaction after buying the product.

On the other side the advertising holders try to give different arguments that defend them from the charges why they tried to convince the consumers to buy the uneseccary products. The first explanation of them is that the consumers are they need or not, even when the advertising's aim is to convince them to buy the product.³ What reforce the fact that the consumers is free to choose between many product represented in advertisings and he is not obligated to buy the produktet. If this fact stays today we will not meet companies that have enough capital but their productsare not stable in

² Watchtower, Online Library, 12/08, Fraud power of advertising, pg, 22, wol.jw.org

³The research according the opinion of the consumers and marketers opinions according the the Hulumtimi rreth advertisingsd and the convintion to buy a product is made in 2011 by a company for juice production Bibita Group in Peja, Kosovo.

the market, they will invest this capital in advertisements and in this case they will “convince” the consumers” to buy their products.

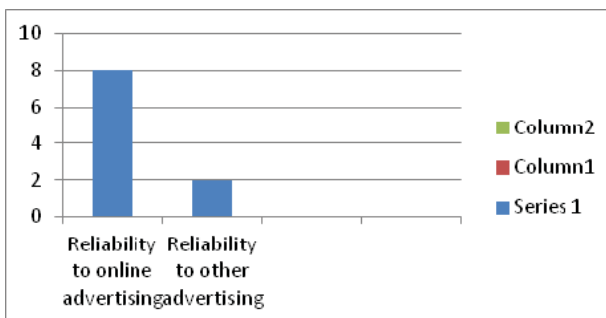
However, is possible to prove that these advertisements even after the argumentation of the public or advertiser have within their message ethical violation? Even if there is no any offensive message in the classic way these advertisements can not be considered no ethical. These companies are doing their work and in this case there are stimulation the consumers to buy their products. If we go back to the key problem where the target are the children even even in this case such advertising is not considered unethical because in this case the company is not trying to convince the children but their parents to buy the products.

5. The societie’s reviews against the non ethical advertisings and their influence in no reality

The ethical violation, then the frauds, the wrong conclusions that in this case can be the stimulations or trying attempts to convince at any cost the consumers is some of the influences pushing the consumers to claim against their advertisements. Many researches not only in Kosovo but in the entire world result with the consumers claiming against the advertisements. According to the research realized by Banvari Mital is identified a specific detail and the statistics that a quarter of the TV advertisements are reliable.

Another research realized by Sharon Shavit, Pamela Loveri and Xhejm Hefner with the participation of 1000 respondents, mainly of them adults. The reasearch’s aim was to understand the consumer’s behaviour toward the advertisements. The findings of the research were that the Amerikans in principle do not believe the advertisements even if they believe in many cases and their decision to buy a product is based to the advertisements.

Forest Research has revealed that the consumers in many of cases do not believe in the advertisements for a considerable part of their products and for them the best advertising is the direct advertising, information of a friend regarding the product they used before. On the other side this research shows another important fact, the online advertising, advertisements in webpages is the second sorce of reliable advertisements.



Graphic 1. The percentage of reliability of advertisings according to Forest Research, 2009

The research shows that the consumers in most of cases ignore the advertisements with the explanation that the number of advertising is to be big and their relevance to small.

6. The media’s policies to accept the advertisings

One of the biggest guarantors in financing the media are considered the companies or the advertiser. This fact arise a hypothesis if these advertisers are indicators in editorial policies of the media or simply the editorial policies of the media or simply they control them. According to a research realized in April 2013 by a group of the students of Haxhi Zeka University, where the subject were the national public media (radio and TVs) in Kosovo result that that 70% of incomes of these media are realized by the advertisements. In the e private media 100% of the incomes are realized by the advertisements.

Even in the last years are established new standards and the media are limited by a “wall” between the advertisements department and information editorial, nevertheless the influence of advertisements is present through direct forms.

There are several products that require a special treatment by the media who decide to promote these products. In this group of the advertisements are included non-medical products (different medicines), harmful or very harmful products

for the health. For alcoholic drinks the advertisements must be in accordance with the law dispositions for advertisements and promotions. In the concrete case in Kosovo these advertisements are not monitored.

The advertising for different tanning lotions according to the experts must pass first to the approval of the editor. And the same thing for cosmetics or the preparations that prevent premature aging of the skin, etc.

On the other side the books and other publications that are subject of advertisements must pass first to the editor. This is made for different reasons as copyright and the content and appearance of the books or publications, etc.

The advertisements for nutritional products, vitamins and minerals must be in accordance with advertising and promotion legal guidelines. The same thing states also for products which emphasize weakening or body increased energy (drinks, energy products).

Travel agents are another sensible sector and the advertisements require a special treatment. Initially the advertising company must be authorized and must provide evidences that testify the consumers and all the audience.

7. Conclusion

The present research has raised many issues for further discussions and researches, many prejudices, but also specific cases that reflect the ethic or the ethical violation during the product advertising. Is difficult to avoid the ethical violation during the product advertisements, considering the fact that many products are questionable for the content?

This research identify some cases when "without" consciousness make a ethical violation during their advertisements. There are many cases when is discussed the question if there is ethical violation in alcohol, medicines, food and other products when in focus are the children. If all these products are not subject of editorial controls or is not verified the legal content then within these advertisements we will have ethical violations.

Non controlled media, especially in transition countries, are predisposed for ethical violation in their advertisements spots and promotions. All these advertisements that in reality after their consumption have no testify the same effects of advertisements have influenced negatively to the consumers. A big part of the consumers in Kosovo do not believe to the advertisements and some of them considered them offensive.

The fraud, that in this case is a heavy ethical violation, is one of the elements that today are presented to the advertisements. The most frequented cases, referring to Kosovo, are advertisements regarding the promotion of kids products.

Another element, founded in this research is the stimulation of the companies who promote. This stimulation is directly "aggressive" in frequent cases has as target the children and the adults, and in this case they obligate the consumers to buy products that for them are not useful. This element is alarming and require a special treatment.

In conclusion, considering what is presented in this paper we can say that the ethical violation is present and really is very difficult to take necessary measures for this phenomenon. The attention has to be greater by the govermental authorities to control the media and the law for consumer's protection must be implemented.

If we consider the professional issue in advertising and promotion field and global trends the ethic continue to be a very sensitive issue for the society that change one from another.

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