ADVERTISING THROUGH INFLUENCERS IN VIETNAM TODAY: TRENDS AND CONCERNS

a Võ Thanh Dũ, b Lê Thị Nhiên

ABSTRACT

Purpose: In the context of the developing market economy, businesses are increasingly paying attention to advertising activities to introduce products and services to the public, to increase revenue and to promote brands. Today, there are many forms of advertising such as Advertising through social media platforms (Google, Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok...), press media (electronic newspapers, newspapers, radio, and television), outdoor advertising, or advertising through celebrities (singers, models, actors, KOLs- Key Opinion Leaders). In particular, the form of advertising through celebrities is becoming a trend used by many businesses. This form of advertising has a strong attraction to the attention and attention of a large number of consumers, especially celebrity fans. However, this form of advertising also has many risks that need to be considered. Therefore, through this article, we explain and raise the basic concepts of advertising and celebrities. To analyze the current advertising activities through celebrities in Vietnam, from which to propose some recommendations on activities and management for this form of advertising.

Method: Leveraging innovative analytical approaches, this article unveils compelling insights into the evolving landscape of celebrity-based advertising in Vietnam. By proposing strategic recommendations, the study aims to shape the future of this influential marketing tool.

Results and discussion: Despite the certain advantages of celebrity advertising, it also has some limitations. These include: If celebrities, and representatives involved in the implementation of the campaign are involved in scandals related to their personal or work life, it will seriously affect the brand's image. Even if products are also boycotted, consumption is suddenly reduced. However, celebrity advertising in Vietnam is currently facing several problems, including: Unethical advertising; Lack of transparency; Lack of professionalism...

Originality: This article enriches the multifaceted landscape of advertising research by advocating for evidence-based, practical applications of celebrity endorsements. It further promotes the need for robust legal frameworks governing celebrity advertising, not only in Vietnam but globally.

Keywords: advertising, celebrities, kols.

a Master in Journalism, Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, E-mail: du.vt@ou.edu.vn, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9546-678X
b PhD in Vietnamese Language and Culture, FPT University, Can Tho, Vietnam, E-mail: nhienlt2@fe.edu.vn, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0001-7910-7200
PUBLICIDADE ATRAVÉS DE INFLUENCIADORES NO VIETNÃ HOJE: TENDÊNCIAS E PREOCUPAÇÕES

RESUMO

Objetivo: No contexto da economia de mercado em desenvolvimento, as empresas prestam cada vez mais atenção às atividades publicitárias para introduzir produtos e serviços ao público, aumentar as receitas e promover as marcas. Hoje, existem muitas formas de publicidade, tais como publicidade através de plataformas de mídia social (Google, Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok...), mídia de imprensa (jornais eletrônicos, jornais, rádio e televisão), publicidade ao ar livre, ou publicidade através de celebridades (cantores, modelos, atores, KOLs - Key Opinion Leaders). Em particular, a forma de publicidade através de celebridades está a tornar-se uma tendência utilizada por muitas empresas. Esta forma de publicidade tem uma forte atração para a atenção e atenção de um grande número de consumidores, especialmente fãs de celebridades. No entanto, esta forma de publicidade também tem muitos riscos que precisam ser considerados. Portanto, através deste artigo, explicamos e levantamos os conceitos básicos de publicidade e celebridades. Analisar as atuais atividades publicitárias através de celebridades no Vietnã, a partir do qual propor algumas recomendações sobre atividades e gestão para esta forma de publicidade.

Método: Aproveitando abordagens analíticas inovadoras, este artigo revela insights atraentes sobre o cenário em evolução da publicidade baseada em celebridades no Vietnã. Ao propor recomendações estratégicas, o estudo visa moldar o futuro desta influente ferramenta de marketing.

Resultados e discussão: Apesar de certas vantagens da publicidade de celebridades, também tem algumas limitações. Estes incluem: Se as celebridades e os representantes envolvidos na implementação da campanha estiverem envolvidos em escândalos relacionados com a sua vida pessoal ou profissional, isso afetará seriamente a imagem da marca. Mesmo que os produtos também sejam boicotados, o consumo é subitamente reduzido. No entanto, a publicidade de celebridades no Vietnã está atualmente enfrentando vários problemas, incluindo: publicidade antiética; falta de transparência; falta de profissionalismo...

Originalidade: Este artigo enriquece a paisagem multifacetada da pesquisa publicitária, defendendo aplicações práticas e baseadas em evidências de endossos de celebridades. Além disso, promove a necessidade de enquadramentos legais robustos que regem a publicidade a celebridades, não apenas no Vietnam, mas a nível mundial.

Palavras-chave: publicidade, celebridades, kols.

1 INTRODUCTION

Advertising has been around since the beginning of business and trade, with certain forms that are appropriate for the social context at that time. In different fields, there will be different perspectives on advertising activities. For example, from an economic perspective, according to the Market Economy Dictionary: "Advertising is to present to inform many people widely in order to attract many customers." From a legal
perspective, advertising is the use of means to introduce to the public products, goods, and services with a profit purpose; products, and services without a profit purpose; organizations, individuals engaged in the business of the products, goods, services being introduced, except for news; social policies; personal information. This shows that advertising is all activities, and forms of introducing goods and services, including the activity of introducing at trade fairs to sell products to consumers of goods and services.

According to the Vietnamese dictionary, the term “celebrity” can be understood in two ways:

Celeb: A celebrity is an individual or group of people who have a reputation and are widely recognized by the public, with the direct result of being paid attention to by the mass media. They can be famous doctors, athletes, painters, singers, comedians, etc. a person who has a reputation for having achievements for society and is recognized by society. They can be politicians, military leaders, cultural figures, scientists, etc.

Influencer marketing: This is one of the marketing forms that are being used by many businesses to promote, and introduce their products, services, and brands. In simple terms, units with the need to market their products and services will spend a certain amount of money to hire celebrities with influence to promote and market goods or services for that business. These celebrities will be the ones to directly convey the message to the community and consumers on behalf of the brand.

According to Article 2, Clause 8 of the Advertising Law 2012 in Vietnam, a product carrier is a person who directly delivers advertising products to the public or displays advertising products on their person through the form of wearing, hanging, attaching, sticking, drawing, or other similar forms. Therefore, celebrities who participate in advertising activities are considered product carriers under the above regulations.

Despite the certain advantages of celebrity advertising, it also has some limitations. These include:

If celebrities, and representatives involved in the implementation of the campaign are involved in scandals related to their personal or work life, it will seriously affect the brand's image. Even if products are also boycotted, consumption is suddenly reduced.

The use of inappropriate celebrities will make the transmission of information and messages inaccurate. It cannot be fully conveyed to inspire consumers, and at the same time, the target audience that the business wants to target is also somewhat distorted.
Many businesses only use one celebrity for a long time. This creates boredom, and it is very difficult to improve the marketing effectiveness. Therefore, based on the analysis of the current situation of celebrity advertising activities, we will propose and propose several solutions to the state management agencies to improve the effectiveness of managing this advertising activity in the current context.

2 SOME ISSUES WITH CELEBRITY ADVERTISING IN VIETNAM

Social media needs to be utilized in a positive direction by creating content related to the values in strengthening character education. There are 5 main values that exist in strengthening character education. These values include religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperation, and integrity values. Of the five values, in its implementation it must be done correctly and well, even if one examines this value in more depth each other are related. Content can be changed to posters with attractive designs or short videos that can be uploaded either on Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter. Because currently there is a lot of social media content that actually has no positive value but is widely accessed and disseminated, while content that contains positive values is reluctant to be accessed or disseminated, because there is a need for self-awareness to create and disseminate content in accordance with strengthening character education (Sugiaryo, 2023). Celebrity advertising has played an increasingly important role in connecting producers, businesses, and consumers of goods and services. This form of advertising has developed rapidly with many new and modern forms, creating favorable conditions for organizations and individuals to participate in advertising activities.

However, celebrity advertising in Vietnam is currently facing several problems, including:

Inappropriate advertising: Many celebrities participate in excessive advertising, advertising that is false or misleading. In most cases, these celebrities do not check, ignore, or intentionally fulfill the terms of the contract, even if the quality of the products or services does not meet legal requirements. They may also accept advertising based on habit or experience. In some cases, celebrities even accept advertising for products simply because of personal relationships or because their friends or colleagues have advertised them before.
Unethical advertising: Some celebrities use advertising to increase their income. Their personal social media accounts quickly become a place to sell products, advertise weight loss products, skin care products, hair care products, plastic surgery, etc., or more subtly, share personal experiences or general knowledge. Others subtly mention the brand names of products or services when performing or attending events. In many cases, these products have not been tested by authorities, but these celebrities always claim they are good and safe, causing many people to believe and buy them, only to find that they are not effective or even harmful.

Lack of transparency: There are many cases of celebrities being criticized for advertising products of unknown origin. Some celebrities even advertise a variety of drugs to treat a variety of diseases, such as bone and joint pain, numbness in the limbs, hemorrhoids, diabetes, and erectile dysfunction. In addition, they also face the risk of having their images stolen by brands to use in advertising.

Lack of professionalism: Celebrities who participate in advertising often do not have the necessary knowledge about the products or services they are promoting. This can lead to misleading or false advertising.

These problems have caused public outrage and damaged the reputation of many celebrities. In some cases, celebrities have been forced to apologize or even face legal action.

As a host of dating shows and actor, artist C.T. frequently appears in promotional videos for functional foods and milk products. A particularly noteworthy example is a social media clip where C.T. promotes a specific milk brand, claiming it could cure bone and joint diseases, leading to public criticism and subsequent deletion of the post.

C.T. also faced backlash for promoting horoscope readings on their page. After receiving public criticism, they deleted the post.

Similarly, a group of approximately celebrities (including singers, actors, and directors) endorsed the "super slimming" technology of the Americare Clinic high-tech weight loss center. However, following investigative articles exposing misleading advertising practices, the clinic's promotional content, including videos featuring these celebrities, mysteriously vanished from social media platforms.

Advertising through celebrities has the following advantages: Attract the direct attention of fans and followers of these celebrities: Celebrities have a large number of
fans and followers on social media, making them effective channels for reaching a wide audience.

Increase the reach of products, services, and brands: Celebrities' influence can help to increase the reach of products, services, and brands to a wider audience. Create a viral effect: When celebrities post about a product or service, their posts can be shared by their fans and followers, which can help to create a viral effect and reach even more people. Create goodwill for the brand: Celebrities can help to create goodwill for a brand by associating it with their positive image.

Increase conversion rates and sales: Advertising through celebrities can help to increase conversion rates and sales by making people more likely to buy a product or service that is endorsed by a celebrity they admire.

Increase product competitiveness: Advertising through celebrities can help to increase product competitiveness by making a product or service more visible and appealing to consumers.

Overall, advertising through celebrities can be an effective way to reach a wide audience, increase product reach, create a viral effect, and boost sales. These instances highlight the prevalent problems associated with celebrity endorsement advertising in Vietnam, where misleading and potentially harmful claims can negatively impact consumers. Consumers must remain vigilant and exercise critical thinking when evaluating such advertisements.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS

When advertisements are found to be inaccurate or misleading, businesses and celebrity endorsers often remain silent and avoid taking responsibility. This raises serious concerns about consumer protection and the effectiveness of existing advertising regulations. While the current Advertising Law and related legal documents address some aspects of this issue, they fail to adequately address the full scope of problems associated with celebrity endorsement advertising.

Therefore, it is crucial to implement additional measures to ensure responsible and ethical use of celebrity endorsements. These measures may include:

Strengthening legal regulations: The government should revise and strengthen the legal framework governing celebrity endorsement advertising. This could involve
introducing stricter requirements for disclosure of endorsements, increased penalties for false or misleading advertising, and clear guidelines for celebrity accountability.

Enhancing consumer education: Consumers need access to information and resources that help them critically evaluate celebrity endorsements. Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives can play a crucial role in empowering consumers to make informed decisions.

Promoting transparency and accountability: Celebrities and businesses should be held accountable for the products and services they endorse. This could involve implementing self-regulatory mechanisms within the advertising industry and establishing a system for investigating and addressing complaints about misleading celebrity endorsements.

By implementing these measures, we can create a healthier advertising landscape in Vietnam, where consumers are protected from misleading practices and celebrities take responsibility for their endorsements.

Current regulations on celebrity endorsement advertising

The current Advertising Law of Vietnam (2012) regulates the rights and obligations of organizations and individuals involved in advertising activities, including:

- The rights and obligations of the advertiser;
- The rights and obligations of the advertising service provider;
- The rights and obligations of the publisher of the advertisement;
- The rights and obligations of the lessor of the advertising location and medium;
- The rights and obligations of the recipient of the advertisement.

However, the law does not specifically mention the rights and obligations of the person who conveys the advertising product.

Proposals for new regulations on celebrity endorsement advertising

Based on the above analysis, we propose the following amendments to the Advertising Law:

- To add provisions on the rights and obligations of the person who conveys the advertising product. This is a distinct subject from other subjects and must have certain legal rights and obligations in complying with the Advertising Law.
- To add provisions on the joint and several liabilities of the person who conveys the advertising product if the advertised goods or services do not meet the standards,
technical regulations, quality, quantity, features, functions, prices, or other contents that the business entities have announced, posted, advertised or committed.

To have more specific guidelines in the subordinate documents of the law. The government should issue more specific guidelines in the form of interpretation or enumeration. It is necessary to clarify what constitutes an introduction, what content will show the purpose of profit, etc. to serve as the basis for applying the law when there are acts of false advertising.

To have other penalties for cases of false advertising by celebrities. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has issued a set of rules of conduct for people working in the field of art, which includes a provision on criticizing and condemning acts of violating the rules. Based on this set of rules, it is possible to have other penalties for cases of false advertising by celebrities, such as banning or restricting their appearances. In addition, in cases where the elements of a crime are met, criminal liability should be pursued under the Criminal Code.

To raise public awareness. False advertising is a violation of the responsibility of celebrities to the community, exploiting the trust and affection of the public for them. Therefore, we need to call on artists to raise their responsibility to their profession, and the community by participating in advertising, promoting, and introducing products.

We hope that these proposals will be considered and implemented by the authorities to effectively regulate celebrity endorsement advertising and protect the rights and interests of consumers.

4 CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing is an effective form of advertising, but it also has many risks. Therefore, businesses and regulators need to take appropriate measures to leverage the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses of this form of advertising.

The article highlights the current status of influencer marketing in Vietnam and proposes some improvements to the relevant laws. Specifically, the article proposes to add regulations on the rights and obligations of influencers, the joint liability of influencers in the case of false advertising, and more specific regulations on penalties for violations.
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