

Ethical Dilemmas of Sport Advertising

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study represent the sport advertising, while the main goal will be directional to discuss ethical dilemmas of sport advertising. The main tasks of this study is discussing a law regulations and ethics, as well as communication with hidden interest. During the making of this study, the author used descriptive method with consulting of competent literature. The previous author' experience in this field was also so useful. Moreover, the author used the analytic method and parallel method that is the most productive if you make some inferences about some appearance. Consequently, the main outcome of this study was creating some basic outputs with regards to Ethical Dilemmas of Sport Advertising.

Key words: advertising, sport, ethics, dilemma

Introduction

Today, advertising activities are more than ever overwhelmed by ethical dilemmas, having in mind bigger and bigger appearance of concurrency on the market, it becomes harder to think about unique advertising message, that will not provoke the feeling of being cheated on and manipulated. According to that, ethical problems are concerned with questions, situations and opportunities which require from individuals or organizations choose between a few advertising actions which should be evaluated as good or bad, e.g. ethical or non-ethical, which will not allow consumers to feel cheated on or manipulated, regardless their legitimacy. The most accurate definition of advertising ethic, according to the author, provided G. Belch and M. Belch (2009), which represented it as a combination of moral ballasts and values which administrate actions and decisions of individuals or groups, conforming the law or not.

Law Regulations and Ethics

Although advertising is now, more than ever, governed by law regulations than it was the case in the past. Still, there are many situations which cannot be predicted by strictly regulated rules, so that is when we talk about advertising ethic, which reading everything, plays as important role as law regulations. Consequently, the fact is that marketars often, while conducting advertising activities, encounter problems which they are forced to solve according to their own moral ballasts, seeing that there are no law regulations to be followed in that situations. On the other hand, often there are situations when certain advertisements are within law regulations, but still no in accordance to ethical ballasts. The perfect example for this situations is the fact that there are no law regulations which would prevent organizations which produce tobacco goods from advertising their trademarks for target groups, as it is case, principally, with coloured population in America. Sport and sports events are even used in order to display advertising messages to above mentioned groups, so it is more than necessary to state that this business practice is at odds with moral ballasts seeing the fact

that high level of lung cancer and lung diseases connected with smoking are present with mentioned population. Also, it is often the case that certain organizations act strictly according to law regulations when it comes to advertising, but are still brave enough to advertize stimulant aids which sportsmen consume in order to improve their results, not taking care that they risk their health which could be undermined in the future by using above mentioned substances. Although there are no law regulations to sanction non-ethical activities, it is often the case when an accident happens, that they cause disapproval of consumers and big damage to organizations which presented them because advertising and promotions are fields in which failures are easily visible and very hard to hide (Irwin, Sutton, & McCarthy, 2002; Popović, 2011).

Communication with Hidden Interest

As advertising connotes communication with consumers in order to form a positive attitude about products and services (Popović, Matić, Milašinović, Jakšić, & Bjelica, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c), the main aim is their accentuation in a process of buying on a market, as well as target marketing position of products and organizations. But, advertising often represents communication with hidden interest, and recursive, gets into “grey zone” in which non-ethical behavior is very often awarded, or at least forgiven, seeing that it brings short-term benefits for organizations, which in constant race for profit an marketplace do not choose advertising aids, but often decide to cheat on potential consumers through the sole piece of information or through the pressure to which they display them in various ways. Because all the mentioned problems, public controversies about limitations or prohibitions of advertising activities when it comes to certain groups of people or products are very often organized (Popović, 2011). The most actual problem that occurs in the modern world are unrestrained groups of sport supporters which use mass media as a way of sending various messages which in most convenient cases are not even close to consistence with moral ballasts. Still, there are certain countries in the EU which accepted law regulations which started sanction-

ing ragers strictly, so that the level of these non-ethical activities reasonably lowered in the past years. In our environment, these advertising activities are still present via messages on stadiums or similar locations. It is also very interesting to mention an example which is not closely linked to sport, but which can help solving the problems with sports supporters because of its similarity, because it shows how legislation organs limited the students' activities which used alcohol more and more on their meetings. This common social problem became so big lately, that negative consequences started occurring on daily basis in their behavior, even fatal accidents started occurring more often. As a few studies according to G. Belch and M. Belch (2009) in the U. S. showed that considerably big number with meetings which have for aim to fully enjoy in alcohol occurred, responsible legislative organs made a decision to forbid any advertising and promoting activities concerned with alcohol beverages, even certain universities limited circulation of alcoholic drinks towards their students. These limitations, among the rest, clasp the limitations of sponsorship or supporting sports, musical, cultural and social events conducted by producers of alcohol drinks, as well as limitations for university newspapers to sell copies with advertising messages which promote alcohol drinks. Also, it is interesting to imagine how hard it was for organizers of final match of Champions League which took place in May, 2008 in Moscow seeing that beer producers "Heineken" as a general sponsor of this competition had a conflict with Russian law which doesn't allow a public advertisement of alcohol drinks. In a certain moment, even the sole match was under the question mark, but because of its importance, the leadership decided to make an ethical precedent and allow ease advertisement of above mentioned product for higher country interests.

It happens very often that organizations which deal with non-ethical activities step forward in media with advertising messages which have for aim to remove doubts publicly of doing activities consistent to moral ballasts (Popović, 2011). On the concrete example, organizations which produce stimulant assets for sportsmen very often feel the need to step forward publicly to remove doubt for doing such non-ethical things. It happens that these organizations start or directly support advertising activities of other organizations which transparently send messages which have for an aim to reduce misuse of prohibited stimulant assets, especially when it is concerned with population of young people. Many of these organizations develop social programs and display advertising messages designed to put an apostrophe to this problem. On the exact example, it is worth mentioning advertising campaign which presented the message which has for aim to encourage parents to talk to their children about allowed and prohibited stimulant assets which are more and more available on the market, as well as to explain them how to differentiate them. These organizations, also, cooperate with parents, teacher, sports and social organizations, legislative clerks, as well with all other interested subjects with aim to ensure improvement in battle against misuse prohibited stimulant assets. But, this problem is very hard to alleviate, seeing that there are many organizations which promote publicly above mentioned social programs because of a good profit and start advertising activities through which inform young people about harms which these products provoke, but beside that, they produce in their machineries these mere products and place them on the market constantly. Very negative message, when these issues are concerned, was sent by world and Olympic athletic champion, Marion Jones, when she confessed that she had been taking prohibited stimulant supplements and won prestigious awards via their help and thus

shocked the whole world publicity and overturned multiannual efforts of social organizations and even put under question mark basic mission and existence of sport.

Marketers, even despite laws and ethics, mostly freely produce advertisements with contain shocking and other insulting contents and which put an emphasis to immaculate values, as sexual attractiveness, link between materialism, happiness and confidence, as well as stereotypes (Kotler, 2000). Although these problems are much more worked on in the paper, the author put an emphasis in this one on perpetual ethical dilemma which became very common in contemporary media as the question if it is ethical to emphasize female sexuality in advertising its, wether sports on non-sports products. Although borders in grammatical distinguishing between subject and object with an aim for consuming and sexual desire are being changed on daily basis, author still thinks it is not in accordance with moral ballasts to emphasize female sexuality. Still, it is obvious that messages which are sexually colored attract more attention than a product, which stays neutral in that moment and as well have a goal to connect women attractiveness directly with attractiveness of a product and thus are more useful for organizations. But, this problem is impossible to solve so it is best to know it as much as possible, so that in the future everyone who is on the author's side concerned with ethical dilemmas in sports advertising could contribute to reduce negative impacts of mentioned advertising messages.

There is a combination of very extreme cases, according to G. Belch and M. Belch (2009), when it comes to putting emphasis on sexual attractiveness in advertisements, and whose business activities weren't in accordance with advertising ethics, in the first place the activities of globally recognized organization D&G, towards which majority of organizations who fight for women rights showed huge resentment, seeing that they considered their advertisement to promote group rape. This advertisement showed an elegantly dressed woman in a Russian dress and high heels, lying on her back, below a tastelessly dressed man, while four other men were standing beside and looking what was going on. Marketers of mentioned organization were defending it from public allegations by using an argument that this advertisement had for an aim to show Sicily legacy, which comes from Latin area, which is very passionate and emotional. When this problem turns to sport, it is very evident that it is more than common for various non-ethical messages to be sent on covers or inside magazines, such as Playboy, CKM and similar. It became by appearing famous sports women with few clothes on them or even without them, as the most popular tennis player, Serena Williams, as well as many others, but honestly speaking less intensely, even more often their male colleagues appear.

Simultaneously with growing of "advertising industry", the ethical problems grew, too. Seeing that there is a big number of people employed to think about something new, something that no one else came up with so far, they often forget about moral ballasts and driven by desire for business success they come in a situation to behave not according to advertising ethic. According to this, it happens very often that certain organizations decide to appear with numerous shocking advertisements which contain problematic photos, such as, in the first place, according to G. Belch and M. Belch (2009), a black woman caressing a white baby, children with special needs, as well as a series of very similar photos in which sportsmen very often act and even take a lead of certain advertisements. Unfortunately, all of these advertisements succeed in achieving their goals and that is attracting attention of potential consumers and later recognition of certain products. Still, majority of organizations after shock-

ing advertisements by which they placed their product on the market, decide to shift to activities such as public apologies, supporting of voluntarism, caring for starving populations or something similar which could replace ethical fallacies of previous activities.

Conclusion

Still, at the end of this paper, in which the author tried to

draw attention to ethical fallacies in advertising, there appears the question if there is advertising ethic in practice, e.g. if complete discussion is only lead in scientific areas, while on terrain marketers behave only according to law regulations and put moral ethic aside. Anyway, author allow all of ones who want to find the answer on the question if there is advertising ethic or they are all the actors of a market match in fight with this notion, to give themselves an answer, seeing that there is no authority who can draw the conclusion about who is right and who is not.

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