

## On the Ethical Dilemma of Advertising in the New Media Age

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**Keywords:** Media, Advertising ethics, Advertising.

**Abstract:** The arrival of "new media era" has greatly promoted the reform and development of advertising industry, but at the same time, it also makes the whole field of advertising industry face some new difficulties, and the anomie of advertising ethics is one of the key problems to be solved urgently. In the process of the development of the new media advertising, such as the lack of the quality of the subject of advertising, the ethical conflict in the different cultural fields, the value orientation of the light and the light meaning, the social norm system and the unsound operation mechanism of the industry are especially outstanding. Choose "integration" or choose "dispersion"? This should be the primary issue for us to face the rationality and inevitability of advertising ethics.

### 1. Introduction

With the revitalization of digital and internet communication technologies, the inherent structure and distribution of rights in the traditional advertising industry have been dissolved to some extent. Even if the traditional positions of TV, radio, newspapers, and other traditional advertisements still look unbreakable, they will never be broken. Doubtful facts are also happening, that is, new media advertisements are also increasingly demonstrating the advancement of their business ancestry and social influence. However, we must note that the era of new media has also provided a breeding ground for the spread and proliferation of various decadent cultures and negative thoughts. Therefore, in this context, it seems that the advertising discourse has caused severe challenges to the traditional ethical framework. Since ancient times, China has been regarded as an ethical society. "Ethics" has also been forged in the long smelting of culture to maintain the basic principles of group social survival and healthy development. "Advertising ethics is about the basic principles and value norms of the survival and healthy development of advertising communication activities and the maintenance of the comprehensive operation of the integrated social system ecological environment brought about by advertising communication activities." [1] Even if the revolutionary tide of the new media era brought unprecedented opportunities to the advertising industry, we must admit that the impact of ethics and ethics on the advertising industry will eventually become stronger and stronger over time, even if we look at the current situation. It is not so obvious. Choose "integration" or "dispersion"? This should be the most important issue for us to face the rationality and inevitability of advertising ethics.

### 2. The lack of quality of advertising behavior

When we examine the modern advertising industry or new media advertising, the first thing we need to make clear is that advertising is a business activity. Its primary purpose should be how to make money. Just as many scholars have related to the definition of advertising, "The only purpose of advertising is to achieve sales, whether advertising is profitable, depends on the actual sales caused by advertising". [2] Objectively speaking, the profit characteristic of advertising is not justifiable or even justified. However, the means adopted by the advertising agency when seeking market profits or the ethical orientation displayed are often open to question. As far as the subject of advertising behavior is concerned, this is mainly manifested in the absence of advertising ethics

education and excessive emphasis on performance indicators. These two points are also two aspects of the same thing.

First of all, advertising communication is a kind of two-way interactive behavior in the final analysis. This feature is more prominent in the context of new media. Therefore, the norm of advertising ethical order relates not only to the interpretation of advertising audiences, but also to the ethical education of advertising subjects. One fact that cannot be ignored is that the idea, design, production, cultural connotation, and ethics of an advertisement are all inseparable from the advertiser's own qualities and accomplishments. Among these elements of advertising, new media ads have largely ignored the importance of ethics. The development process of China's new media advertising is still in its infancy, and most advertising training institutions only pay attention to technical and vocational training and do not rise to the two-dimensional level of "material" and "spirit". From a comprehensive point of view, the current theoretical system of new media advertising in China still needs to be further improved. The cultivation of advertising moral education should become an important part of advertising education.

Secondly, overemphasis on performance indicators is another important reason for the loss of advertising ethics in the "new media era". If we say that the lack of advertisement ethics education is the internal reason for the loss of advertising ethics, then the excessive emphasis on performance indicators is the reality of the out-of-the-ordinary and extrinsic reasons. In order to occupy the market share, some advertisers tend to collapse and blindly cater to certain low-quality appeals, eventually causing the entire advertising industry to be chaotic and irrational. Objectively speaking, this over-emphasis on business ideology of performance indicators is, in the final analysis, to promote a kind of extreme utilitarianism and kind of money-minded money worship. The harm it brings us should have been prevented as early as possible, but it still has A large part of the group loses its self in front of libido.

### **3. Ethical Conflicts in the View of Advertising and Different Cultures**

The so-called advertisement cross-cultural communication refers to the "Advertising information is disseminated among different cultural communities. It is an information dissemination campaign for advertisers through international media, advertising agencies, and international marketing channels for specific consumers of target countries or regions in relation to goods, services, or ideas". [3] It is more likely to cause ethical conflicts in this highly interactive and accommodating process.

Take Nike, an internationally renowned sport Brand Company, as an example, an advertisement released in 2004 was named "Fear Chamber". However, it was this advertisement that caused a mighty uproar on the Chinese and Western cultural ethical standards in the Chinese land on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean. However, it was this advertisement that caused an ethical standard for Chinese and Western cultures on the western land of the Pacific Ocean. The three scenes of the controversy in the "Fear of the Chamber" were NBA star James, who played a juggling action to knock down the old Chinese defender, and then made a layup. The second was a Chinese flying woman who started her arms to meet James. The deduction of the rebounds, the flying women have vanished; the third is the image of the smoke-like Chinese dragon incarnate as a deterrent to James's advancement, and James finally overcame all the obstacle shots.

This incident fully embodies the heterogeneous cultural barriers encountered by advertising ethics in the new media era. From the original intention of Nike's creation of this advertisement, it is based on the perspective of business and expects to obtain more profits. As a global multinational company, it is also unlikely that it will infuriate or instigate large consumer groups in the Chinese market, because this obviously violates the first principle of gaining interest in business activities. Therefore, the value identification and ethical standards among different cultural systems constitute the intrinsic factor that led to the widespread controversy of the advertisement. The individualism, heroism, and craving for success in the "Fear of the Warrior Room" are highly praised in the American cultural model. However, its form of expression has made Chinese people deeply affected by the Confucian traditional culture arrogant and furious. In particular, the unintentional

Western-style superiority in advertising has touched the fragile cultural spirit of the Chinese nation in modern times. From this example, the cultural misreading and transitional interpretation of new media advertisements in the cross-cultural perspective is still one of the topics that advertising ethics can hardly escape.

#### **4. Deviate from traditional ethics, to respect the interests, not to value the feelings**

The traditional Chinese ethical ideology is a concentrated embodiment of the spiritual accumulation and national spirit accumulated over thousands of years by the Chinese nation. It reflects the basic value selection and moral standards of the Chinese people, and in particular, the concept of "value justice above material gains" in relation to the subject's choice of righteousness and profitability shows even more the spiritual style of the ancestors of our clan to shun the public and avoid selfishness. "Traditional Chinese ethics is not only a rich and valuable moral cultural resource, but also a unified development process of content and form". [4] In this sense, traditional ethical thinking should not be the conceptual morality of lying in a museum. Normative, but contains the ethos of our contemporary need to pass the torch, but also provides moral and ethical guidelines and direction for our future development.

In contrast, the dilemma of the development of advertising ethics in the "new media era" is due to the catalyst role of market economic factors such as market opening, free competition, industry monopolies, and self-financing, etc. As a result, the so-called industrial civilization in the advertising field has become so popular that it has seriously impacted on the traditional ethical concept of Confucian culture - "benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, and faith". This to a certain extent has actually weakened the role of traditional culture in regulating and balancing the negative impact of the contemporary technological revolution. Reflected in the advertising industry, the concrete manifestation is that in order to strive for selfish interests, a large number of false advertisements with unworthy or false appearances are produced, or vulgar and vulgar advertisements that are unpleasant or vulgar, or comparative advertisements that disobey others and disparage others are produced. This, and so on, constitutes a chaotic turmoil in the field of new media advertisements.

#### **5. The social norm system and industry operating mechanism are not perfect**

Because the development level of China's new media advertising is still in its infancy, there are still certain constraints and defects in management policies and internal mechanisms. It is these loopholes in management and operation that have aggravated the ethical anomie in new media advertising. In a comprehensive view, the lack of new media advertising social normative systems and industry operating mechanisms is manifested in the imperfection of the ad ethical review system and the lack of industry self-regulation and social supervision. The following will briefly analyze these two points.

The lack of so-called advertising ethics review system is mainly reflected in the complex situation of new media advertising, the vagueness of the review standards, the undulating review, and the breadth of the review. At present, the objects punished by China's advertising law are basically confined to illegal advertisements. However, those advertisements that run on the edge of law and morality are incapable of being able to do so. The examination standards formulated do not go deep into the ethics of advertising ethics. In addition, as far as China's current laws and regulations for new media advertising are concerned, problems such as weak targeting, general borders, and unclear concepts are involved, which in turn leads to the legal or moral derailment in the face of new media advertising. The lack of maneuverability of the law has ultimately compromised the degree of censorship and caused adverse effects.

#### **6. Conclusion**

It is true that the phenomenon of anomie in new media advertisements is endless, partly because

of the lack of relevant legal systems and ethical standards in the country, and on the other hand because of the lack of self-discipline within the advertising industry in China and the lack of functional supervision. Some of the advertising agencies have gone against the rules and moral ethics, among which new media ads have been used. Some advertising media know that customers' requests are often irregular, but they still let themselves go, regardless of whether they care about it. Secondly, most of the mass media carriers and ad-loading pages are represented by intermediary agencies. It is inevitable that there will be mutual refusals and unclear responsibilities. This combination of causes has resulted in the lack of functionality in the advertising industry's self-regulation rules and social supervision.

### **Acknowledgements**

This work was financially supported by Hunan philosophy and social science foundation project "Research on Advertising Design Ethics ", Item No.: 12ZD85.

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