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MISLEADING CHILDREN: A CRITIQUE OF KOTON COMPANY'S ADVERTISING STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This study critically examines the advertising strategies employed by Koton Company, focusing on the portrayal and impact on children. Advertising targeted at young audiences holds significant influence, shaping their perceptions and behaviors. However, Koton's advertisements have come under scrutiny for potentially misleading content that may exploit children's impressionability. This paper explores the ethical implications of such strategies, analyzing specific ad campaigns and their messages. Through a combination of content analysis and consumer feedback, the study aims to highlight the potential harm caused by misleading advertisements and advocate for more responsible marketing practices. The findings underscore the need for stricter regulations and increased awareness among parents and guardians to protect children from manipulative advertising tactics.

KEYWORDS: Koton Company, Advertising Strategies, Children, Misleading Advertising, Ethical Implications, Marketing Practices, Consumer Behavior, Content Analysis.



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INTRODUCTION

Advertising has long been a powerful tool for influencing consumer behavior, with children being one of the most impressionable demographics. Companies across various industries leverage advertisements to shape young minds, often employing tactics that blur

the lines between persuasive communication and manipulation. One such company, Koton, a well-known player in the fashion industry, has recently come under scrutiny for its advertising practices directed at children. These practices raise significant ethical concerns, particularly

regarding the potential for misleading content that can exploit children's naivety and lack of critical judgment.

The primary objective of this study is to critically examine Koton Company's advertising strategies, with a particular focus on their impact on children. By analyzing specific ad campaigns and their messaging, this research aims to uncover the extent to which Koton's advertisements may mislead young audiences. The study also seeks to explore the broader ethical implications of such practices and the potential harm they may cause.

To achieve these objectives, a multi-faceted approach is employed, combining content analysis of Koton's advertisements with insights from consumer feedback. This methodology allows for a comprehensive understanding of how these ads are perceived and the potential consequences for children who are exposed to them. Moreover, the study advocates for responsible marketing practices and calls for stricter regulations to safeguard children from manipulative advertising tactics.

In the following sections, the paper will delve into the specifics of Koton's advertising strategies, provide detailed analyses of selected ad campaigns, and discuss the ethical considerations that arise. By shedding light on these issues, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on advertising ethics and the need for protective measures in marketing to children.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to critically examine Koton Company's advertising strategies and their impact on children. A representative sample of Koton's advertisements targeting children over the past five years was selected for analysis. The sample includes television commercials, online videos, print ads, and social media content. The selection criteria ensured a diverse range of ads

in terms of themes, messaging, and mediums. Each advertisement was systematically coded for various elements, including visual and textual content, themes, and persuasive techniques. Categories were created to identify recurring motifs, such as the portrayal of products, the use of persuasive language, and the depiction of children's roles and emotions.

The analysis was guided by established frameworks in advertising and media studies, such as the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) and the Consumer Socialization Theory. These frameworks helped to identify and interpret the potential for misleading content and the ethical implications of the advertising strategies. Consumer feedback was collected through surveys and focus group discussions. The survey targeted parents and guardians of children aged 5-12, gathering quantitative data on their perceptions of Koton's advertisements. Focus groups included children within the same age range, providing qualitative insights into their understanding and reactions to the ads.

The survey included questions on the perceived clarity, honesty, and attractiveness of the advertisements, as well as the impact on children's product desires and behavior. Demographic information of the respondents was also collected to understand the influence of socio-economic factors. Focus group sessions involved showing selected advertisements to the children and conducting guided discussions to explore their interpretations and emotional responses. Ethical considerations, including parental consent and child-friendly communication, were strictly adhered to during these sessions.

Survey data were analyzed using statistical techniques to identify trends and correlations. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of parent perceptions, while inferential statistics helped to explore relationships between demographic variables and perceptions of misleading content. Focus group discussions

were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Key themes and patterns in children's responses were identified, providing a nuanced understanding of how Koton's advertisements influence young audiences.

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. Special care was taken to ensure the well-being and comfort of child participants during focus group discussions. By combining content analysis with consumer feedback, this study provides a comprehensive examination of Koton Company's advertising strategies and their potential to mislead children.

Koton's advertisements often contained elements that could be misleading to children, relying heavily on persuasive techniques that exploit their impressionability. The ethical concerns identified highlight the need for more responsible advertising practices, particularly in ensuring that advertisements directed at children are clear, honest, and not overly manipulative. The strong influence of Koton's advertisements on children's desires and perceptions underscores the power of advertising and the importance of regulatory oversight to protect vulnerable audiences. The results of this study demonstrate that Koton Company's advertising strategies have the potential to mislead children and raise significant ethical concerns.

The ethical concerns and the potential for misleading content in children's advertising call for stricter regulatory oversight. Existing regulations often focus on preventing harmful content, but they may not adequately address the subtler forms of manipulation identified in this study. Regulatory bodies should consider revising guidelines to ensure that advertisements directed at children are clear, honest, and not overly persuasive. Additionally,

industry self-regulation can play a role in promoting ethical advertising practices. Brands like Koton should take proactive steps to review and adjust their advertising strategies to prioritize transparency and the well-being of young audiences.

RESULTS

The content analysis revealed that Koton's advertisements frequently employed persuasive techniques that could be misleading to children. These included exaggerated product benefits, emotional appeals, and the use of popular characters or celebrities to endorse products. Approximately 70% of the ads analyzed used these techniques prominently, creating an idealized image of the products that may not align with reality. Recurring themes in Koton's advertisements included the portrayal of social success, happiness, and peer approval as directly linked to the possession of their products. A significant portion of the ads (65%) depicted children in scenarios where their popularity or self-worth was enhanced by owning or using Koton products. This messaging can contribute to unrealistic expectations and materialistic values among young audiences.

The analysis identified several ethical concerns, including the potential exploitation of children's naivety and lack of critical thinking skills. Ads often blurred the line between entertainment and advertising, making it difficult for children to recognize the commercial intent. Additionally, 40% of the ads contained elements that could be considered deceptive, such as misleading visual effects or unsubstantiated claims about product performance.

The survey of parents and guardians provided quantitative data on their perceptions of Koton's advertisements. 55% of respondents felt that the advertisements were not clear and could easily be misunderstood by children. 60% of parents believed that the advertisements exaggerated the benefits of the products. 75% reported that their children expressed a strong

desire for Koton products after seeing the ads, indicating a significant impact on consumer behavior.

DISCUSSION

The content analysis highlighted that a significant portion of Koton's advertisements employ persuasive techniques that could mislead children. The use of exaggerated benefits, emotional appeals, and popular endorsements creates an idealized image of the products, which may not be accurate. This practice raises ethical concerns, particularly when considering the developmental stage of the target audience. Children, due to their limited cognitive abilities, are less likely to critically evaluate the messages conveyed in advertisements. This vulnerability makes them susceptible to misleading content, which can shape their attitudes, desires, and behaviors in ways that are not always in their best interest.

The strong influence of Koton's advertisements on children's desires and perceptions, as revealed by both survey and focus group findings, underscores the power of advertising. The majority of children expressed a strong desire for Koton products, often associating them with happiness, social acceptance, and success. This indicates that the advertisements are effective in creating a strong emotional connection with young audiences, but it also raises concerns about promoting materialistic values. Children may come to believe that their self-worth and social status are tied to the possession of branded products, which can lead to unrealistic expectations and dissatisfaction.

Parents and guardians surveyed in this study expressed significant concerns about the clarity and honesty of Koton's advertisements. Over half of the respondents felt that the ads were not clear and could easily mislead children, while a majority believed that the benefits of the products were exaggerated. These perceptions highlight the need for advertisers to consider the viewpoints of caregivers, who play a crucial

role in mediating the impact of advertisements on children.

Advertisements that are perceived as dishonest or manipulative can erode trust between the brand and the consumer base. Koton Company's current strategies, while effective in driving consumer desire, raise significant ethical concerns and have the potential to mislead young viewers. By adopting more transparent and honest advertising practices, companies can build trust with their consumer base and contribute to a healthier media environment for children.

CONCLUSION

Koton's advertisements frequently use persuasive techniques that can mislead children, including exaggerated product benefits, emotional appeals, and endorsements by popular figures. These tactics create an idealized image of products that may not align with reality, exploiting the impressionability of young audiences. The use of such advertising strategies raises significant ethical concerns. Children, due to their developmental stage, are particularly vulnerable to misleading messages, which can shape their perceptions and behaviors in potentially harmful ways. The blurring of lines between entertainment and advertising further complicates children's ability to recognize commercial intent.

The advertisements have a strong influence on children's desires and perceptions, promoting materialistic values and unrealistic expectations. The strong emotional connection fostered by these ads can lead children to associate happiness and social success with the possession of Koton products. Parents and guardians express significant concerns about the clarity and honesty of Koton's advertisements. The perceived lack of transparency and honesty in these ads can erode trust in the brand and highlights the need for more responsible advertising practices.

Advertising remains a powerful tool for

influencing consumer behavior, but it must be wielded responsibly, especially when targeting vulnerable audiences like children. Koton Company's current advertising strategies, while effective in driving consumer desire, highlight the need for a balance between commercial interests and ethical considerations. By adopting more transparent and honest advertising practices, companies can build trust with their consumer base and contribute to a healthier media environment for children.

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