

BRAND COMMUNICATION THROUGH MUSIC MARKETING IN VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

Music is a special form of emotional connection between customers and brands. Music marketing is becoming a trend to promote brands impressively and uniquely. Through desk research and sociological investigations, the research group has clarified the concepts of brand communication, music marketing, the benefits, and limitations of music marketing. The survey results indicate that: (i) A popular music product may not necessarily be an effective music marketing product because it may not convey the brand message; (ii) Music marketing products play an important role in increasing favorable attitudes towards the brand among consumers; (iii) The listening experience is more important in creating an impression on consumers; (iv) The lifecycle of a music marketing product is partially determined by its listening component; (v) The harmony between music and the brand message is crucial; (vi) Creating an emotional impact on listeners is an effective way for businesses to convey their message through music video (MV) marketing. Based on the research findings, the group proposes some suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of music marketing: (i) Striking a balance between music and the brand; (ii) Choosing influential artists who align with the brand; (iii) Selecting song themes that are relevant to the brand message; (iv) Focusing on music while not neglecting visuals; (v) Creating a consistent emotional experience throughout the song; (vi) Launching short-term consecutive campaigns and increasing the impact of communication.

Keywords: Brand communication, marketing, music marketing, trends

1. INTRODUCTION

Music is an essential part of our lives. Pleasant and catchy melodies often have positive effects on cognition and behavior. Consequently, an increasing number of brands are incorporating

music into their communication campaigns. The combination of music and communication is becoming increasingly popular. Catchy tunes that create viral waves across various platforms play a crucial role in enhancing and conveying the message of a specific brand (Minh Quang, 2022).

Alongside the fast-paced lives of consumers, screenless moments in communication formats are becoming prevalent. Audio advertisements present a golden opportunity for brands to reach customers even when they are occupied with daily tasks such as driving, cooking, reading, or working in an office. According to the Online Music Streaming report (2018) by Adtima, up to 68% of users listen to music while simultaneously performing one or two other tasks (Ly Tu Nha, 2022a).

According to the "Listening Habits of Vietnamese People" report by Qandme, music is the primary form of entertainment for Vietnamese people, with 75% of individuals listening to music every day. Many people engage in various activities while listening to music. Thanks to its ability to connect emotions and effectively convey messages, music marketing has become a communication trend widely adopted by many brands (amis.misa.vn, 2023).

In this study, the research group clarifies the concepts of brand communication, music marketing, highlights the benefits and limitations of music marketing, and explores effective ways to implement music marketing in communication campaigns. Additionally, the study conducted a survey of 318 young individuals from Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2010) in Vietnam. The survey included the following content:

- The level of recognition of music marketing products and brand messages through typical case studies.
- The impact of brand communication through music marketing.
- The harmony between one's musical identity and brand messages through music marketing products.
- The emotional factors in music marketing products through typical case studies.
- The lifecycle of a music marketing product.

Based on the survey results, the research group proposes some discussions to enhance the effectiveness of music marketing in brand communication strategies for businesses.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

2.1. Basic concepts

Brand communication

Brand communication is a process of coverage and promotion aimed at bringing the brand of a business closer and reaching a larger number of potential customers. It is also the process by which a business widely introduces its products and services to customers. (goacademy.vn, 2023)

Brand communication is primarily the process of carrying out activities to introduce and promote the brand through identifying signs of the brand, its products and services, and the goods of that business. Through these activities, trust can be built regarding the customers' perspectives and behaviors that are beneficial to the business.

This is also a small part of the marketing field. From here, there are two groups of brands: personal brands and organizational brands, goods. All professions in the field of communication will be applied in the brand communication strategy. (Hua Thien Vuong, 2023)

Music Marketing

Music Marketing is the use of strategic messaging and advertising to connect a brand with their customers through music. Music marketing plans can employ various tactics, from traditional methods such as distributing mixtapes with new recordings (a strategy popularized by early hip-hop artists) to modern digital marketing efforts, such as posting video content on social media platforms. (Minh Quang, 2022)

Music marketing refers to activities that use music to convey brand messages. It is an effective marketing form to engage, stimulate interaction, and create positive impressions with customers through music. (Tran Thi Nhu, 2023)

Music marketing, or marketing and communication through music, involves using music as a central or partial element in campaigns/projects to reach target listeners/viewers/customers in order to increase brand recognition and/or drive sales. (Doan Nhuoc Quy, 2018)

It is an advertising approach that reaches listeners through melodies, where upon hearing the sounds, they can identify which song and lyrics come from which brand. In the seminars of South Edge Digital, Mr. Leavis Nguyễn emphasized, "Choosing Music Marketing as a way to advertise and establish brand identity is a method that most businesses and individuals use to enhance the ability to make a strong impression on customers and get closer to them." (South Edge Digital, 2021)

2.2. Advantages and disadvantages of Music Marketing

Benefits of Music Marketing

Music and branding are a perfect combination for any business. Having a catchy and memorable song or melody can evoke positive emotions in the minds of your customers. It provides a platform for your brand to be built upon beautiful memories. From there, you can build your brand to attract customers actively and effectively to your business. (Minh Quang, 2022)

Music Marketing has the ability to spread easily across multiple platforms, with a high level of message recall along with the influence of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs)/Celebrities in products. Music marketing has become an indispensable tactic in the campaigns of many brands. From being a "blue ocean," nowadays brands have to compete fiercely to capture the attention of their target customers through music. (Ly Tu Nha, 2022a)

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Limitations of Music Marketing

According to Ly Tu Nha (2022a), in the current "advertising overload" situation, audiences nowadays are more selective in their appreciation of music marketing. Some reasons why music marketing is no longer the perfect communication formula for many advertising campaigns are as follows: Firstly, music marketing not only competes with products from other brands but also has to share the field with purely musical products. Moreover, when a piece of music becomes overly commercialized, it can create barriers in reaching customers. On the other hand, if the brand's message is not clearly conveyed, the product may not achieve optimal effectiveness.

2.3. Music Marketing as a Brand Communication Trend

Today, thanks to the widespread development of music, along with the popularity of various music genres and melodies, the dissemination of music is extremely high. As a result, a new form of marketing has emerged, creating positive effects in terms of perception and behavior. Therefore, more and more businesses are applying music in their communication and promotion efforts. (sbmedia.com.vn, 2023)

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connect emotions and effectively convey messages, Music Marketing has become a trending communication approach adopted by many brands. (Tran Thi Nhu, 2023)

In recent years, the trend of "Marketing through the ears" has been booming, and the use of music in communication campaigns helps businesses differentiate themselves and stand out from their competitors. Various industries, from Fashion, F&B, FMCG to Finance, and Banking, are using this innovative approach to "capture the hearts" of customers. (Athena CM Agency, 2022)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To study the "**Trends of Brand Communication with Music Marketing**," the research team used two research methods: desk research (reviewing published materials in the media) and sociological survey (collecting surveys from young individuals, mainly students and Generation Z individuals born between 1995 and 2010, living and working in Vietnam). The data will be compiled and analyzed using Excel software.

Through desk research, the research team examined materials on the trends in brand communication with music marketing, the benefits and limitations of music marketing, and the reasons why music marketing is currently a trend in brand communication. The research team developed a survey questionnaire to conduct a sociological survey on the trends in brand communication with music marketing.

The data collection method employed by the research team was based on two approaches: convenience sampling and snowball sampling - a method of finding the next subject based on the recommendations or introductions of the surveyed subjects. The survey questionnaire was built on Google Forms and was pilot tested with 5 young individuals who have knowledge of music and music marketing to improve the questionnaire. The survey link (<https://tinyurl.com/survey-music-marketing>) was then distributed to young individuals in Vietnam through social media platforms such as Facebook, Zalo, Email, etc. A total of 318 survey responses were collected and included in the analysis. The survey data was compiled and statistically analyzed using Excel software to analyze and provide evidence for the research question.

Some content in the survey questionnaire was designed based on the levels of awareness of music products. Specifically, the research team assigned scores to the levels of awareness to calculate the awareness score of music products and the brand messages conveyed through music products. Specifically:

0. Not aware of the music product

1. Not aware of the brand message

2. Aware of the music product

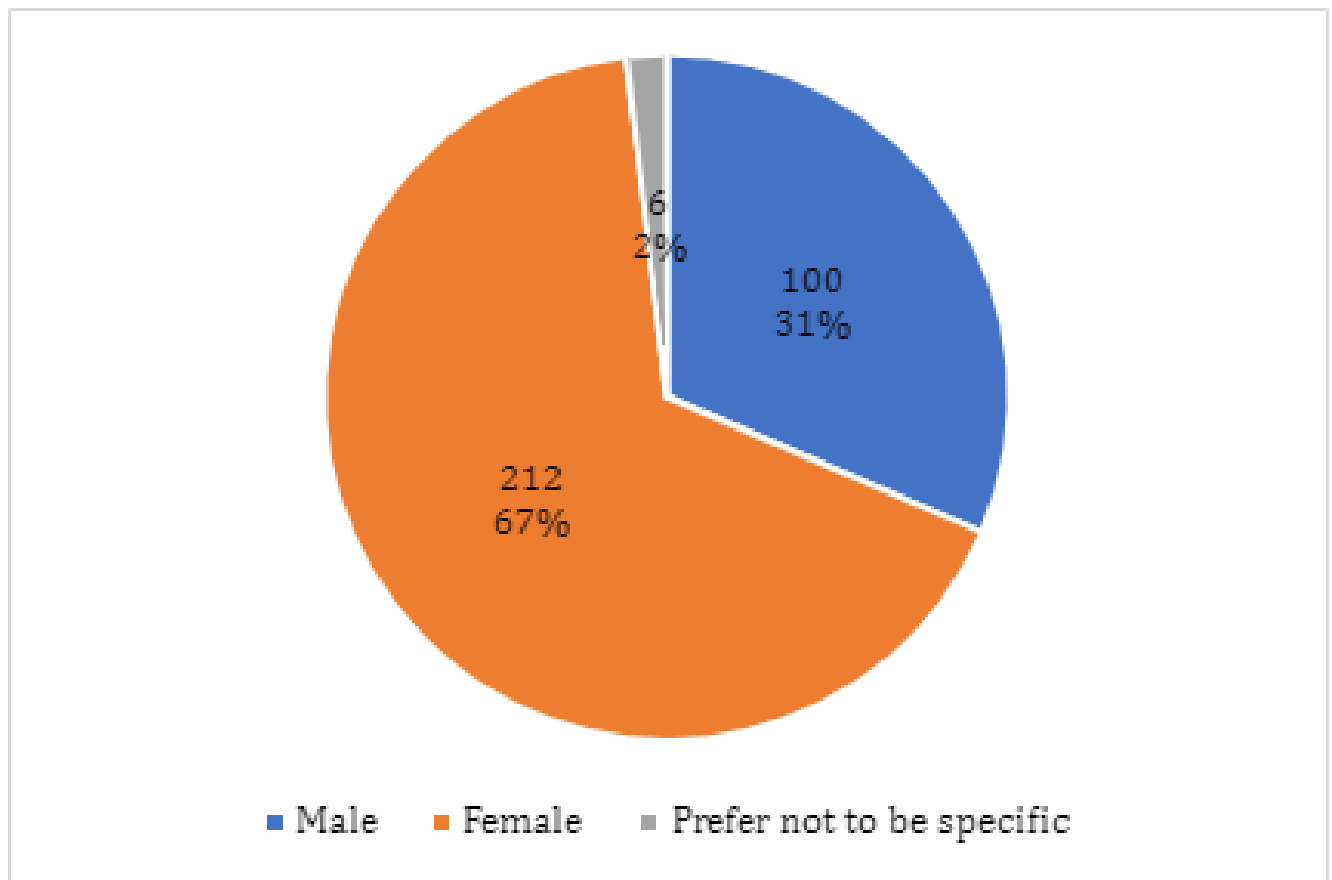
3. Aware of the brand message

The research team collected survey data and calculated the total awareness scores for each music product to assess the effectiveness of brand communication through music videos.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

Description of Survey Participants

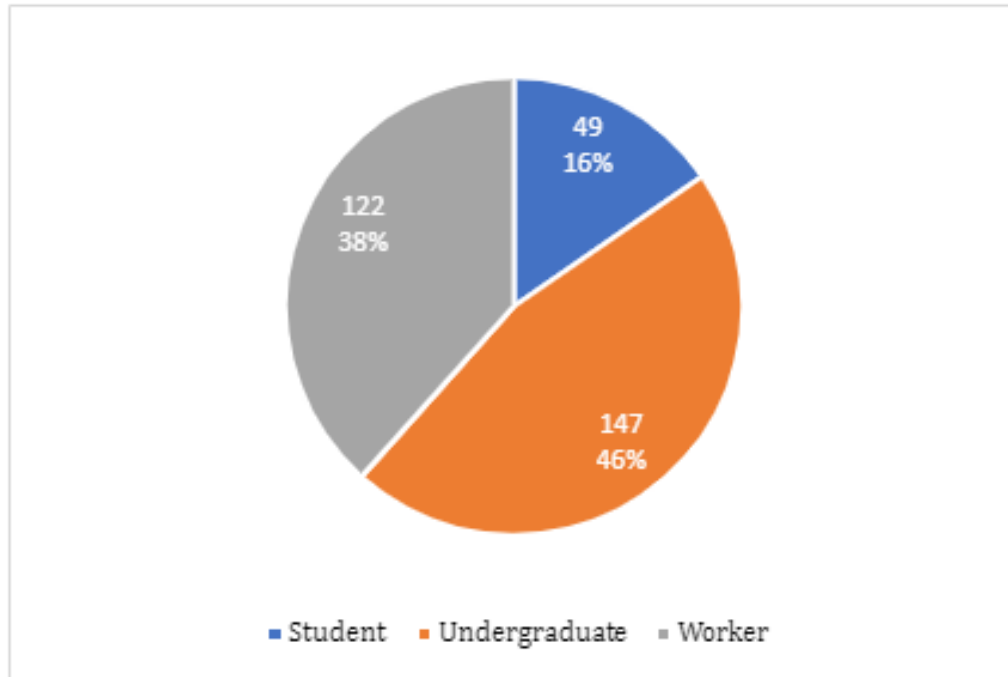
Chart 1. Gender of the survey participants



Source: Survey Results

A total of 318 young individuals participated in the survey, consisting of 212 females (67%), 100 males (31%), and 6 individuals who preferred not to specify (2%).

Chart 2. Current occupations of the survey participants.



Source: Survey Results

Among the 318 young individuals who participated in the survey, 147 were students (46%), 122 were professionals/employed individuals (38%), and 49 were students (16%).

Level of Product Recognition In Music Marketing & Brand Messages

Table 1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of typical Music Marketing MVs

Evaluation Criteria	Score *	Shay Nanggg - AMEE x Obito (Skin Aqua Tone UV)	Lac Troi - Son Tung M-TP (Biti's Hunter)	Di De Tro Ve - Soobin Hoang Son (Biti's Hunter)	Di Ve Nha - Đen x JustaTee (Honda)	Em Be – Amee x Karik (Baemin)	Anh Oi O Lai - Chi Pu (Tiki)
Aware of the music product	2	364	542	514	500	394	456
Aware of the brand message	3	132	216	312	252	47	183

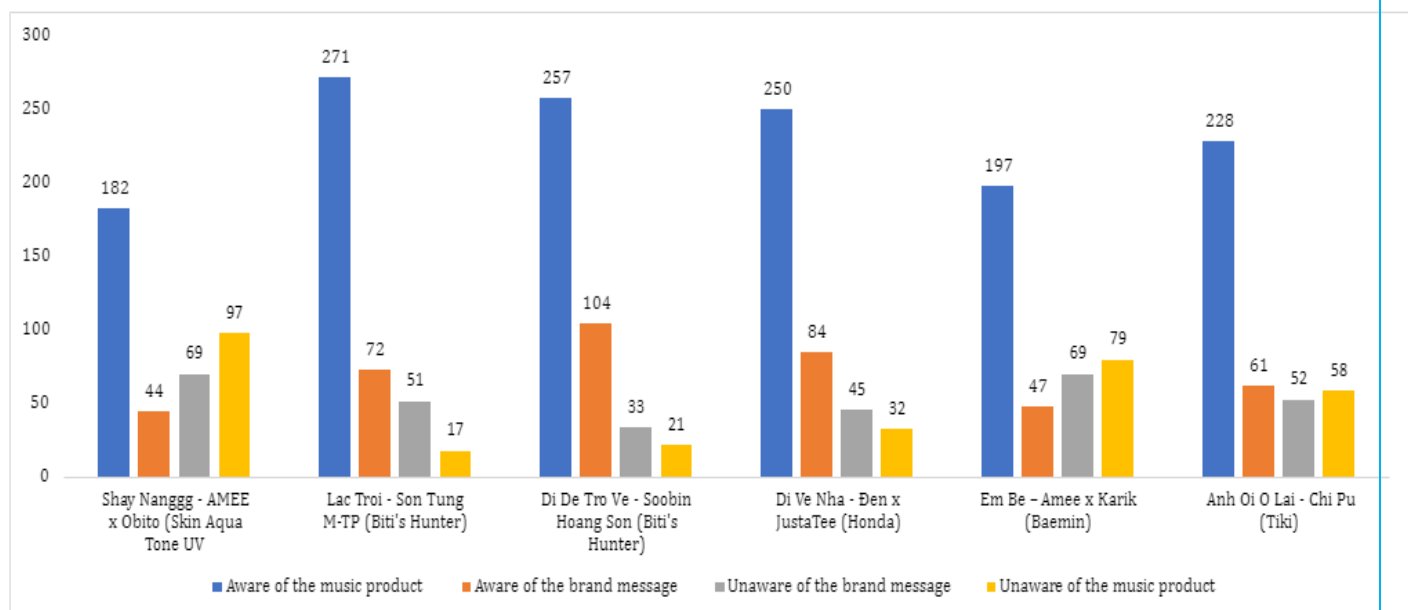
Unaware of the brand message	1	69	51	32	45	69	52
Unaware of the music product	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total converted score		565	809	858	797	510	691

Source: Survey Results

* To evaluate the effectiveness of the music videos, the research team established the following criteria: If the survey participant is unaware of the music product, it is assigned a score of 0; if they are unaware of the brand message, it is assigned a score of 1; if they are aware of the music product, it is assigned a score of 2; and if they are aware of the brand message, it is assigned a score of 3.

The most effective music product is "Lac Troi" with a music recognition score of 542, while the most effective music marketing product is "Di De Tro Ve" with a brand message recognition score of 312 and a total score of 858. The brand message recognition score of "Lac Troi" is 36 points lower than that of "Di Ve Nha," while the music recognition score of "Di Ve Nha" is 42 points lower than that of "Lac Troi." Therefore, we can conclude that **a popular music product does not necessarily guarantee an effective music marketing product** as it may not effectively convey the brand message.

Chart 3. Level of MV recognition and brand message recognition.

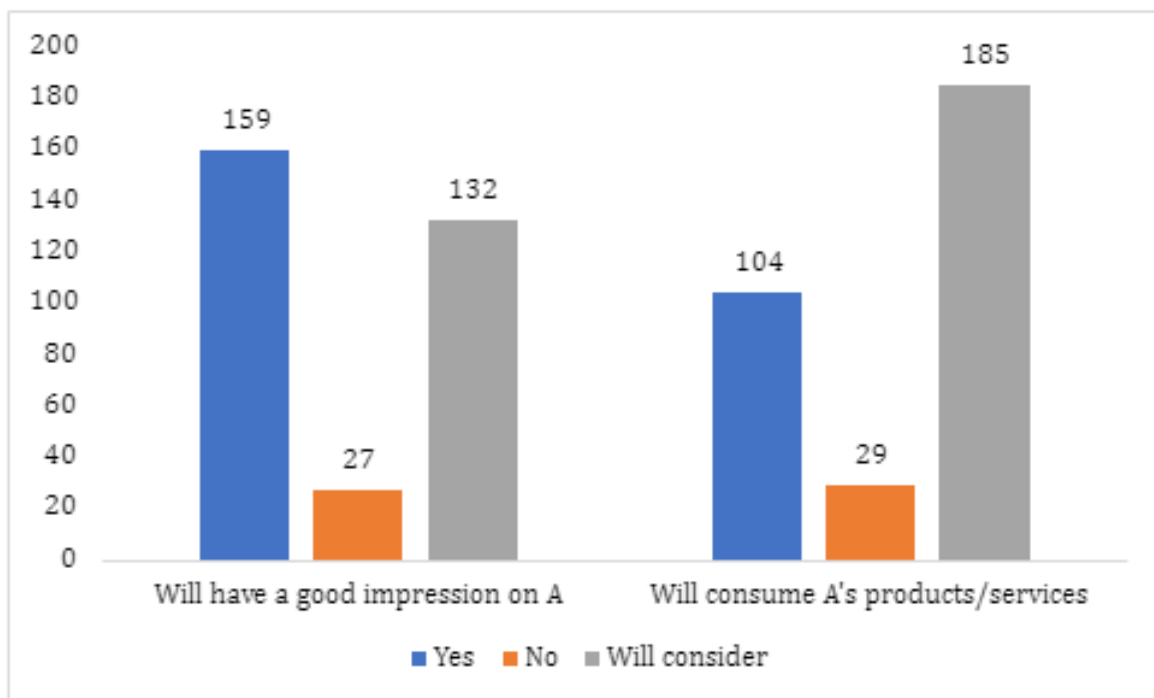


Source: Survey Results

In general, **as the level of popularity increases, the recognition level also tends to increase.** This is particularly true for 4 out of 5 songs (excluding "Lac Troi"), where the order of music recognition is the same as the order of brand message recognition. "Di De Tro Ve" has the highest recognition, followed by "Di Ve Nha," "Anh Oi O Lai," "Em Be," and finally "Shay Nanggg."

Brand Communication Effects

Chart 4: Brand communication effects through music marketing products

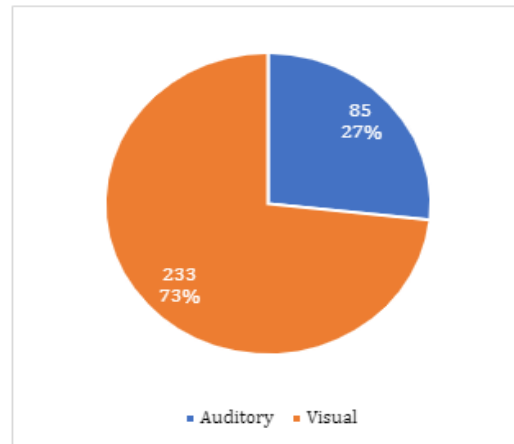


Source: Survey Results

Based on the survey results, it can be observed that **music marketing products have a significant impact on increasing favorable attitudes towards brands** in the eyes of consumers. Specifically, out of a total of 318 respondents, an impressive 159 agreed that they would have a positive perception of a brand if their favorite singer endorsed it. This positive effect is further demonstrated by 185 respondents who expressed their willingness to consider consuming a product associated with brand A.

The Harmony Between Music Identity And Brand Message

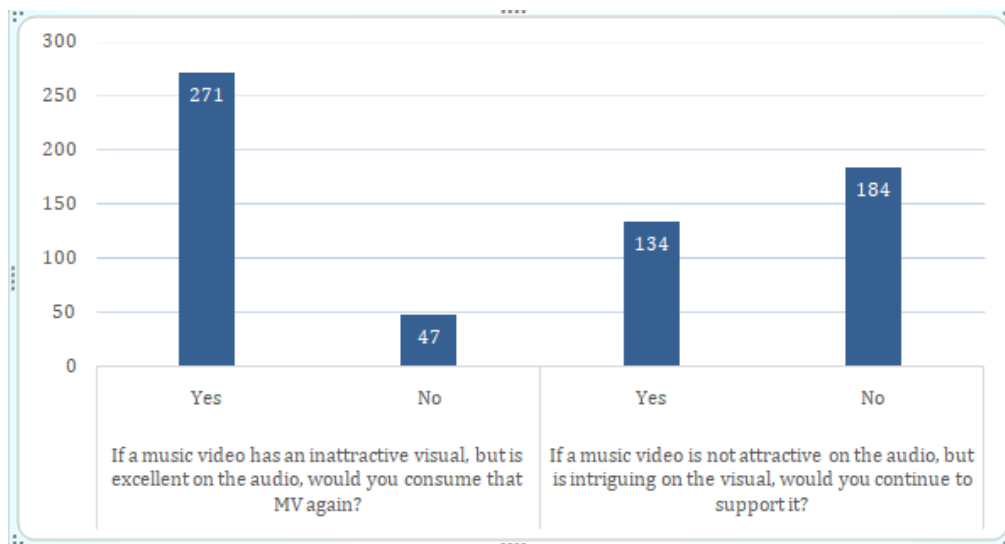
Chart 5: Influence of the auditory and visual elements on the attractiveness of music marketing products



Source: Survey Results

It can be observed that, for a music marketing MV, **the auditory component is more crucial in creating an impression on consumers**. Specifically, 233 individuals (73%) agree that, for a music marketing MV, the auditory component is what makes them more attracted when it comes to a music product.

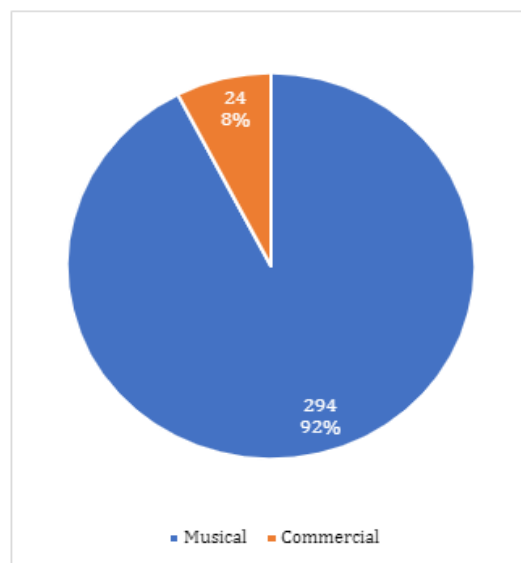
Chart 6: Comparing the influence of the auditory and visual components on the product lifecycle value of music marketing products



Source: Survey Results

From the chart, we can see that a significant number of respondents, 271 individuals (85.2%), agree that if a music marketing product has excellent auditory quality but lacks impressive visuals, they would still be willing to consume the product. In contrast, this number is only 134 individuals (less than 50%) for a music marketing product with average music quality but impressive visuals. Therefore, it can be said that **the product lifecycle of a music marketing product is partly determined by the auditory component of the product.**

Chart 7: Comparing the level of favorability between music-oriented products and advertising-oriented brand message products



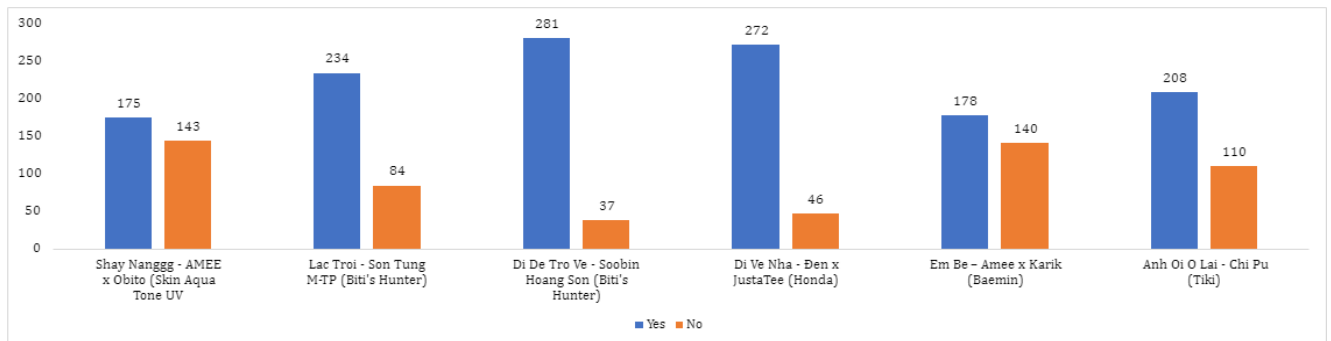
Source: Survey Results

According to the survey data, an impressive 294 respondents (94%) highly value the musical aspect in a music marketing MV. Therefore, we can see **that the harmony between music and brand message is crucial.** If the product is too "commercialized," it will lose favorability among the public. Conversely, if the brand message is excessively concealed, the MV will lose its brand recognition value.

This conclusion aligns perfectly with a statement made by Ly Tu Nha on advertisingvietnam.com, specifically: "When a music product is excessively commercialized, it creates many obstacles in reaching customers. Conversely, if the brand message is not conveyed clearly, the product cannot achieve optimal effectiveness. Therefore, brands should prioritize selecting artists with similar values from the beginning to ensure that the song fully conveys information about the brand while helping the artist shine." (Ly Tu Nha, 2022a)

Mood Creators In Music Marketing Products

Chart 6: Evaluation of the presence of mood-creating elements in music marketing products

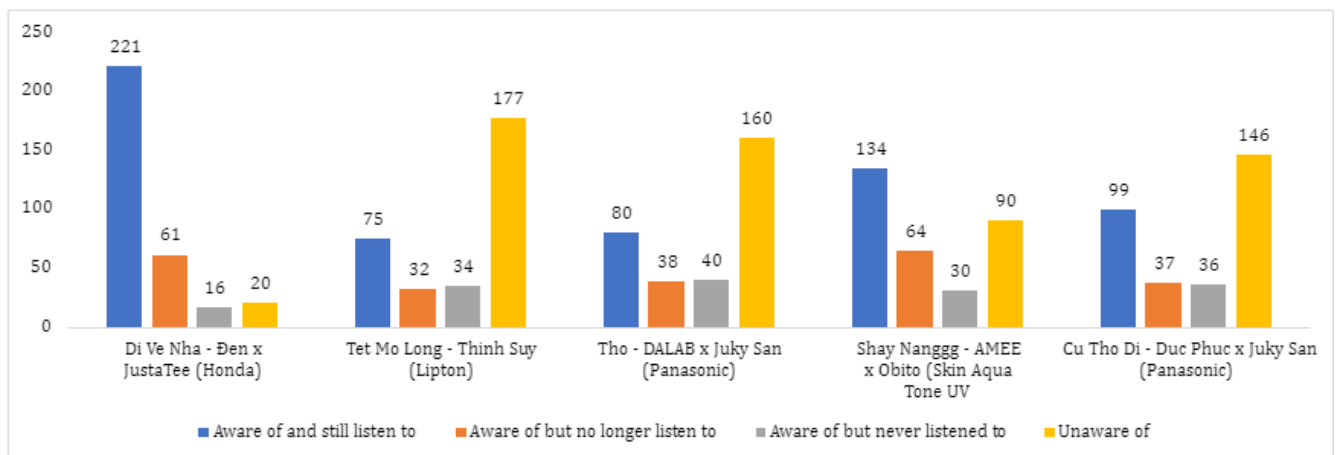


Source: Survey Results

From the chart, we can see that the two most effective products in terms of brand recognition are "Di De Tro Ve" (312 points) and "Di Ve Nha" (252 points), which are also the two products that listeners agree have a dominant emotion throughout the song. Therefore, it can be said that **creating an impression of emotion in listeners is an effective way for businesses to convey their message through music marketing MVs.**

The Product Lifecycle of A Music Marketing Product

Chart 7: Evaluation of the lifecycle and coverage level of selected music marketing products



Source: Survey Results

From the chart, we can see that even with popular products like "Shay Nanggg" or "CủThỏĐi," their popularity gradually diminishes within just one year after the song's release. In the case of "TếtMởLòng" and "Thờ," the number of people still listening is extremely low, even lower than those who are unaware of the song. Only "Di Ve Nha," released in 2020, still maintains its appeal. Therefore, **it can be said that a song typically loses its heat within 1-2 years.**

5. DISCUSSION

In order to enhance the effectiveness of music marketing in brand communication strategies, MVs should:

Balance the elements of music and brand

If a music product emphasizes the brand element too much, it loses favorability from consumers. Conversely, if the product conceals the brand message too much, it loses its effectiveness in brand recognition. Therefore, artists and brands need to find a harmonious balance between the music and brand elements.

Choose influential artists aligned with the brand.

The success of a music marketing campaign depends not only on the brand or product but also largely on the chosen artist. Therefore, brands should select artists who have influence and, more importantly, have a musical direction that aligns with the brand identity. Only then can a music marketing campaign achieve maximum effectiveness.

Select a song theme that aligns with the brand message.

To enhance brand recognition and leave a strong and lasting impression on consumers, brands should work with artists to select a theme for the music product that is both suitable for the artist and effectively conveys the brand message. This way, users will have a better impression of the brand.

Focus on music but don't neglect visuals.

While music plays a significant role in influencing consumer perception, brands should not overlook the visual elements. The visuals in an MV provide an opportunity for brands to subtly and cleverly embed product messages. Utilizing the visual aspect is a key strategy for successful music marketing campaigns like "Di Ve Nha" or "Di De Tro Ve."

Create a consistent emotion throughout the song.

To engage listeners for a longer duration in a music product, the element of emotion is crucial. Whether it's sadness, happiness, anger, dislike, or nostalgia, these strong emotions are meant to create a powerful impression in the eyes of users and establish a stronger connection with the brand message.

Release short-term consecutive campaigns and boost media influence.

Music marketing products typically have a short lifespan. Therefore, if businesses want their marketing strategy to have long-lasting effectiveness, they should launch short-term consecutive campaigns or increase the media influence of their music marketing products.

Conclusion

Music and branding are a perfect pair for every business. A great song with a catchy melody evokes positive emotions in customers' minds, creating a brand connection based on beautiful memories and attracting customers more effectively. Music is a powerful tool to differentiate and leave a mark in customers' minds, making your brand stand out and memorable. Using music in a brand strategy is an excellent way to create a subtle and profound connection with customers. It not only helps build trust and loyalty but also creates a memorable and appealing brand image, making your business stand out and succeed in today's competitive market.

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