Research Article

Hooking Consumers with Stories: Sequential Mediation Analyses On Ad Credibility and Purchase Intentions

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Abstract

The present study aims to compare two different advertising types that are known to have a significant role on advertising credibility and purchase intentions. The effects of narrative ads through being-hooked and of expert endorsement through internalization on the dependent variables were analyzed via empirical research design. The hypothesized model was tested with the sequential mediation analyses. Besides, the differences of mediator variables within the scope of ad credibility and buying intentions were investigated by conducting a series of t-tests. The subjects were exposed to one of the stimulus ad types composed of either story-based (n=128) or expert endorsement (n=124) advertising style. The results showed that both the direct effects of narrative advertising and the mediating effects of being-hooked significantly predicted the dependent variables. Although almost similar findings were reached for the expert endorsing and internalization, the mean scores remained behind the narrative ad type.

Keywords: Narrative Ad, Expert Endorser, Being-Hooked, Internalization, Credibility.

Araştırma Makalesi

Tüketicileri Hikayelerle Kancalamak: Reklam Güvenilirliği ve Satın Alma Niyeti Üzerine Seri Aracı Değişken Analizleri

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Öz

Bu çalışma, reklam güvenilirliği ve satın alma niyetleri üzerinde önemli rol oynadığı bilinen iki farklı reklam türünü karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Öyküleyici reklamların kancalanma etkisi aracılığıyla ve uzman desteğini içselleştirme yoluyla bağımlı değişkenler üzerindeki etkileri ampirik araştırma tasarımı ile analiz edilmiştir. Hipotezleri içeren araştırma modeli, Hayes (2013) tarafından geliştirilen PROCESS adlı bir SPSS eklentisi üzerinden sıralı aracılık analizleriyle test edilmiştir. Ayrıca, aracılık değişkenlerinin reklam güvenilirliği ve satın alma niyetleri kapsamındaki farklılıkları bir dizi t-testi yapılarak araştırılmıştır. Denekler, öyküleyici (n= 127) veya uzman desteği (n= 124) formatlarından oluşan uyaran reklamlarından birine maruz bırakılmışlardır. Sonuçlar hem öyküleyici reklamın doğrudan hem de kancalanmanın aracılık etkisinin bağımlı değişkenleri önemli ölçüde tahmin edebildiğini göstermiştir. Her ne kadar uzman onayı ve içselleştirme aracılığı için neredeyse benzer bulgulara ulaşılmış olsa da, ortalama puanlar öyküleyici reklam türünün gerisinde kalmıştır. Sonuç bölümünde araştırmanın sonuçları, sınırlılıklar ve öyküleyici reklam yaklaşımının farklı etkileri üzerine yapılabilecek çalışmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öyküleyici Reklam, Uzman Desteği, Kancalanma, İçselleştirme, Güvenilirlik.

Introduction

Human life is abundant in stories. We narrate all our experiences, practices, and even plans as stories no matter how ordinary they are. Because human brain is programmed to employ stories as being a primary tendency in arranging the facts of our worlds, this is an innate means of communicating with others. This way of comprehension through stories certainly include our consumption experiences in a market environment. From this point of view, advertisers have long been looking for creative and powerful technics to increase the impacts of the ad and to build trust on consumers.

Many scholars in the advertising field stated that narrativity in ads which stimulate positive emotions and cognitive reactions cause more favorable ad/brand attitudes (e.g. Chang, 2009; Escalas, 1998; Green, Brock, and Kaufman, 2004; Padgett and Allen, 1997; Phillips and McQuarrie, 2010). This can make story-based advertising more persuasive than any other effort in advertising. Consumers generally evaluate information-intensive messages cognitively in an argument ad and develop counterargument (Deighton, Romer, and McQueen, 1989, p. 348). Whereas, the persuasiveness of narrative advertisements depends on the emotional climate of the story components in which feelings are being hooked (Escalas, Moore, and Britton, 2004). Hence, individuals who are transported in the narrative are so immersed that they would likely trust the premises introduced in the story and they avoid analyzing them critically (Green and Brock, 2000, p. 703). Such an evaluating process where the counterargument response disappears leads consumers to develop higher levels of credibility perception towards the narrative ad message (Kim, Ratneshwar, and Thorson, 2017, p. 286).

However, from a rhetorical theory perspective, the credibility of the source is the vital priority of the persuasive impact. For that reason, Ethos was placed at the top of the persuasion triangle that Aristotle mentioned for the first time in his immortal work on persuasion; Rhetoric. Ethos is virtues that strengthen the sense of authority, correct and good attitudes, personal abilities related to trust and reassurance (Aristoteles, 2013, p.40). It covers the speaker's apparel, speech, behaviors, professional characteristics, education, experiences, humor, and title (Meyer, 2009, p. 25). In the modern age, the initial study for the reliability of the source, whose roots go back to Aristotle, was developed by Hovland and his colleagues. According to the Source Credibility Model (Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, 1953), the sense of expertness and trustworthiness towards an endorser can boost the influence of a message. While trustworthiness can be described as the endorser's truthfulness, honesty, or believability; expertise refers to the professional accumulation, experience, or abilities an endorser holds (Erdogan, 1999, p. 298). Studies on the credibility of the ads, proven to have a positive effect on consumers' cognitive and behavioral intentions (Kim et al., 2017; Yoo and MacInnis, 2005), have been mostly based on source-oriented or endorser-oriented. However, its relations between narrative ads and emotional impact have been handled in a very few researches which means there is a gap in ad credibility literature. For instance, direct comparisons between several consequences of narrative ads and expert endorsement ads regarding credibility development may lead to a notable output.

Although the supreme power of narrative ads has been approved on many advertising studies, it is evident that utilizing expert endorser has an overriding reputation in ensuring ad credibility. Therefore, the current study will extend prior related researches in several ways. Initially, we depict the emotional responses caused by the components of the narrative ads which constitute close relations with ad credibility. Accordingly, we

explained the Being Hooked Theory by Escalas and her colleagues (2004) that mediates narrative-based emotional impact on ad credibility. Thereafter, we focused on the expert endorser effect which is the second main variable of the study, and its internalization process as a mediator for ad credibility. Even though numerous researches have tested the influence of these factors on ad credibility, the present research aims to take these findings one step further. Previous studies have posited being hooked and internalization as predictors for the multiple effects of narrative ads and expert endorsements respectively. Despite that, this is the first effort - as far as we know - that investigates and compares narrative impact versus expert endorsement empirically in terms of ad credibility.

Principally, this paper strives for analyzing the influence of narrative ads and expert endorsements on ad credibility, and behavioral intentions through the mediating roles of being hooked and internalization process. In the analyses, between-subject results were obtained through the main and interaction effects of the hypothesized variables. Based on these findings, the underlying insights of the varied impacts derive from expert endorsing versus narrative format are also discussed, followed by the argumentation of the limitations and suggestions for future studies.

Being Hooked by Narrative Ad

Conventional advertising is performed in the form of argumentative, where information on product or service benefits becomes a promise and supported by product attributes; but a narrative form simply presents a story (Boller, 1988, p. 3). The ad format, in which a message of a product or a brand is presented in the story form consisting of a plot, characters, place, and time components that are constructed with chronological and causal links, is called narrative advertisement. As stated by Aaker, Stayman, and Hagerty (1986, p. 366)particularly the characters with whom the viewer can empathize, narrative ads have all we need to arouse warm feelings towards the ad. The consumer gets "lost" in the story and develops empathy by experiencing the concerns and feelings of the characters when a drama in an ad is well performed (Deighton et al., 1989, p. 335). Accordingly, empathy is a primary emotional reaction that viewers experience when processing narrative advertising (Chang, 2009, p. 24). Narrative ads offer stories to consumers leading them to build practical and figurative conclusions in the appraisal of the ad. Hence, a consumer intuits what it is like to experience the product by witnessing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with the brand (Padgett and Allen, 1997, p. 57). This also means that the consumers viewing the ad are affected by the story in terms of being engaged in the ad or it is possible to state briefly that these consumers are "hooked" by the ad.

Consumers become hooked by a narrative ad when the components of the ad story such as a thrilling plot, a commonplace, or the protagonist with whom the consumer may link, encourages emotional reactions to the ad (Escalas et al., 2004, p. 108). As stated, a story can draw in or hook consumers, getting them to be involved in what the characters feel and engage them in the characters' world. Thus, the superior power of narrative advertising behind the scene is that it involves consumers in the ad cognitively and emotionally, and draws them into the advertising story (Chang, 2009, p. 22). With this regard, emotive response refers to "the extent to which a viewer feels emotionally involved in an ad" (Kim et al., 2017, p. 287). Many scholars have associated this dominant impacts of narrative advertising with some variables such as positive attitudes toward the ad (Deighton et al., 1989), product evaluations (Lin and Chen, 2015) and involvement (Wang and Calder,

2006), reducing counterarguments (Green and Brock, 2000), behavioral intentions (Johnson, 2012), and advertising credibility (Kim et al., 2017).

Consumers within the effect of narrative ads feel motivated to consider themselves in a sequence of events while benefiting from the advertised product. This cognitive process that consumers experience is called "mental simulation", which Taylor and Schneider (1989, p. 175) explain as "the imitative representation of a series of events or construction of hypothetical scenarios". As in the stories in which we are the main character, consumers constantly imagine themselves in behavioral scenarios through mental simulation which turns into a persuasion mechanism (Escalas, 2004, p. 37). In connection with the cognitive simulation process, Escalas et al. (2004, p. 106) claim that continuous attention is required to bring emotions in action and allows consumers to be hooked by the ad which is a result of viewing the ad. They also proposed a model that being hooked acts as an interface between the individual's emotional intensity and the narrative structure of the ad, and that consumers experience this interface when any emotional response occurs. This can foster an idea that being hooked mediates some of the ultimate goals of narrative advertising, starting from the creation of advertising credibility to behavioral intentions. According to Lin and Chen (2015, p. 701), this is because when consumers are hooked by the ad story, they reveal lower levels of negative cognitive but powerful feelings responses which make being hooked an important mechanism for desired advertising goals. Brand evaluations prompted by narrative ads would be more likely in an emotional rather than a rational nature. Therefore, these emotional reactions to the narrative ads could mediate the sense of trust towards the source of the message or ad itself.

Expert Endorsement and Ad Credibility

Although it is not as common as the use of celebrity endorsing in advertisements (Biswas, Biswas, and Das, 2006, p. 17), the expert endorsing increases the credibility of an ad, mainly because of the increased source reliability (Maddux and Rogers, 1980). Credibility lies on the attributes in which consumers perceive the source of the message to be an expert that can be trusted on opinions related to the communication theme (Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell, 2000, p. 43). Correspondingly, the degree to which consumers think how trustworthy the information in the ads is defined with advertising credibility. In many studies to date, credibility has been found to have direct relationships with both advertising and brand attitudes (Hellier, Geursen, Rodney, and John, 2003; Kim et al., 2017; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; Obermiller and Spangenber, 1998; Sutherland, 1982). Since attitudes toward the ad are considered to have been influenced positively by the ad credibility, higher credibility of ad messages or sources can enhance additional favorable responses of the consumers (Kim and Damhorst, 1999, p. 20).

Source trustworthiness and expertise as the aspects of credibility are the main characteristics in persuading consumers and in influencing attitudes towards ad or/ and brand (Goldsmith et al., 2000, p. 43). Consumer responses to advertising are heavily influenced by the credibility of the ad and to the extent to which advertising is meaningful or relevant to them (Yoo and MacInnis, 2005, p. 1398). From The Source Credibility Model point of view, consumers are said to have gone through some kind of internalization in which they admit an impact concerning their values and personal beliefs (Kelman, 1961). In the internalization process, consumers are influenced by the information coming from a reliable source, and they change in terms of beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors (Erdogan, 1999). When the endorser is an expert, to put it briefly, viewers will be influenced by the message if it seems beneficial for their particular problem (Biswas et al., 2006, p.

19). According to Maddux and Rogers (1980, p. 235), the persuasive power of an expert source comes from supporting argumentation because internalization is based on the content of the communication. So it would be befitting to assert that expert endorsements boost the ad credibility more likely for its increased source trustworthiness. More than this, it was confirmed that if the promises of an advertised product come from an expert endorser, the credibility of the ad will be higher than a celebrity endorser's credibility who is not perceived as an expert (Biswas et al., 2006, p. 22).Consumers lend an ear to their perceptions about the reliability and expertise of the brands to evaluate products and decide whether they tend to purchase (Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell, 2002, p. 3). The brand can support its trustworthiness and overall image with its connotations, just like the expert endorser in the advertising approach. Because experts can serve to reduce uncertainty (Mulken and Hornikx, 2011, p. 95), the claims of the brand through expert endorsers are considered to be reliable facts that can be beneficial in responding the consumer needs (Wang, 2005, p. 4035). Therefore, the internalization process ensures consumers to be satisfied with the information they acquired regarding the solution to the needs. This process also becomes an instrument by which consumers can engage in the message cognitively and enables developing powerful attitudes towards the ad which remain for long (Kapitan and Silvera, 2016, p. 559).

The drives for practical information of consumers regarding their own needs or problems involve them in the internalization process. It can be considered that they achieve this satisfaction mostly when they meet up with the expert endorser. According to Lafferty and Goldsmith (1999, p. 110) if consumers believe that the incoming information represents an accurate position on that problem, they perceive the endorser as an expert and are more likely to consider the ad favorably which leads a potential purchase of that brand. As seen, the way consumers evaluate an expert endorser can divert them to a sense of trust for the ad. Following this, positive brand attitudes and behavioral intentions can arise. This is the key insight of how the internalization process mediates the influence of expert endorsers on ad credibility and, so forth.

Method

Main Aims and Hypotheses

Many studies have examined the correlations among ad format preference, credibility development, and behavioral intentions. However, researches indicating how and why these outcomes arise among those factors and the power of the indirect effects are important. This study is carried out to empirically compare being hooked state and internalization process that mediate the effects of the narrative ads and expert endorsement on the credibility of the ad. In other words, narrative advertising, which is highly accepted in terms of emotional responses versus the power of the expert endorser, which has an indisputable superiority in improving trust, have been investigated. Also, it should be emphasized that this empirical study varies from similar studies and enriched them theoretically. Within this context, the principal procedure that characterizes the study is that the transformation of ad credibility into a predictor which, in turn, mediates the impact of other mediators on dependent variables. Thus, the correlations were tested in a holistic approach considering them as a bridge between ad formats and intentions to buy. The study was also carried out with an empirical procedure and different responses to ad stimuli made it possible to statistically compare the independent variables. First, the effects of narrativity have been assessed through the mediators; second, the expert endorser was analyzed with internalization and credibility; and finally, the effect sizes

of stimuli were examined in terms of the mean scores and determined which of the ad made the difference in terms of credibility and intentions. Those were stated in hypotheses as follows:

H1- The effect of narrative ads on credibility is mediated by being hooked, then ad credibility mediates the impacts of being hooked on purchase intention.

H2- While expert endorsement leads consumers to internalize the benefits offered in the ad, internalization mediates the emergence of ad credibility. Then both credibility and internalization mediate for purchase intentions.

H3- There are statistically significant differences between ad types (narrative versus expert endorsement) and levels of mediators (low versus high) regarding the development of advertisement credibility and purchase intentions.

Design and Procedure

A 2x2x2 between-subjects design was exerted in the experiment. The independent variables were ad type (narrative vs. expert endorser), being hooked (high or low), and internalization (high or low). Advertising credibility –also a predictor- and purchase intentions were assigned as dependent variables. Ad type was manipulated to measure the awareness of the subjects to be used in mediation tests. The being hooked, internalization, and ad credibility scores were classified as "low" and "high", by a median split calculation.

A Sequential Mediation Analysis which was stated above as a serial mediation with multi predictors was conducted to test the H1 and H2. A macro software named PROCESS, compatible with SPSS, which is available online was used to perform this analysis. Model-6, constructed by Hayes (2013) was utilized in the present study since the relevant hypotheses emphasized sequential interactions where indirect effects were determinatives. In PROCESS, inferences for the statistics is relied on bootstrapping procedure because of the irregular sampling distributions which make significance suspicious (Hayes, Montoya, and Rockwood, 2017, p. 77). If a bootstrap CI interval for a regression coefficient does not include zero, this is a significant mediation of the indirect effect by that mediator within confidence (Hayes, 2018, p. 13). The PROCESS Model-6 can be visible in Figure-1 as conceptual and statistical diagrams. This model was performed by the 95% confidence from the dispersion of the indirect effect estimations within 5,000 bootstrap samples (Zhao, Lynch, and Chen, 2010, p. 202).
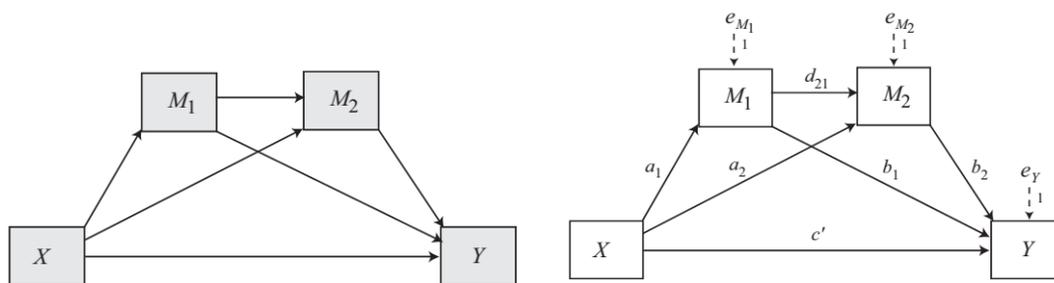
Figure 1. *PROCESS Model-6 Conceptual and Statistical Diagrams (Hayes, 2013).*

Participants

Two hundred and fifty-two undergraduate students (145 males, 107 females) in social sciences departments participated in the study and, randomly assigned to one of the two experimental groups; narrative group (n=128) and expert endorser group (n=124). They were told about participation should only be a voluntary basis. First, the subjects

in the groups were exposed to one of the advertising stimuli. After viewing the ads, they responded to a questionnaire that includes several items for being hooked, ad credibility, purchase intentions, internalization, and also rated the manipulation checks for both ad types.

Stimulus Materials

The toothpaste product category was selected to be used as advertising stimuli. Toothpaste was picked out specifically for its regular use in the daily routine (Varenne, Petersen, and Ouattara, 2006). Also, being in the category of health and cosmetics makes a good fit for product-expert matching (Biswas et al., 2006; Purkey, 2003). Finally, the subjects were considered to be highly familiar with the toothpaste (Kirtiloğlu and Yavuz, 2006) because it is a product type that can address the concerns about good looking and self-confidence (Klages, Bruckner, and Zentner, 2004).

The stimulus group incorporated two ads from different brands. First, the ad of a well-known brand was selected as an expert endorsement format in which the product is recommended by dentists as an effective solution in whitening and dental caries. Secondly, the ad of an international brand was appointed as a narrative stimulus. In the ad, the story of a young girl was presented in a series of events from business interviews to entrepreneurial success, from romantic relationships in her private life to her marriage. White smiles were in the focus of all these events.

Measures

All scale items used in the questionnaire form were adapted from English originals to Turkish. However, in this paper, the item statements in the original language were quoted for publication exactly as they were. All items were measured with 5-point Likert scales, defined by strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5). Details on measurement tools are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptives For Variables in the Study*

Manipulation Checks for Narrative Ads		M	SD	α
The ad tells a story	Chang, 2009	4,35	0,94	0,82
There is a plot in the ad		4,21	1,09	
Manipulation Checks for Export Endorser		**M**	**SD**	**α**
The endorsers in the ad are expert	Lafferty et al., 2005	3,81	1,27	0,87
The endorsers in the ad are knowledgeable		3,81	1,25	
Being Hooked Scale Items (Narrative Group Only)		**M**	**SD**	**α**
This commercial did not really hold my attention (-).	Escalas et al., 2004	2,21	1,37	0,78
This ad did not draw me in (-).		2,08	1,39	
This ad really intrigued me.		3,68	1,24	
If I had seen this ad at home, I'd have watched the whole thing.		3,51	1,46	
I could not relate to this commercial (-).		2,11	1,16	
This commercial reminded me of feelings I've had in my own life		3,34	1,28	
I felt as though I was right there in the commercial experiencing the same thing.		3,51	1,42	
I would like to have an experience like the one shown in the commercial.		3,15	1,55	

Internalization Scale Items (Expert Endorser Group Only)		M	SD	α
If the endorsers were of a different background, I would not be influenced by them	Biswas et al., 2006	4,13	1,10	0,85
My personal views and those of endorsers are likely to be similar		4,20	1,08	
I would prefer this product recommended by these endorsers because of their background		4,26	1,00	
My attitude toward this product is primarily based on the similarities of my values and of the endorsers		4,11	1,97	
What this endorser stands for is important to me		3,88	1,115	
Ad Credibility Scale Items		**M**	**SD**	**α**
This ad is believable	Cotte, Coulter, and Moore, 2005	3,76	1,13	0,78
This ad is truthful		3,63	1,16	
This ad is reliable		3,74	1,08	
Purchase Intention Scale Items		**M**	**SD**	**α**
If I were going to buy this product, I would consider buying this brand	Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal, 1991	4,02	0,96	0,87
The likelihood of purchasing this product is high		3,93	1,05	
My willingness to buy the product is high		3,81	1,27	
The probability I would consider buying this brand is high.		3,92	1,12	

Ethics Committee Approval

Within the framework of the verdict taken in the session by Aksaray Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü, İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu dated 31/08/2020, the present study does not embrace ethical issues.

Findings

Manipulation Checks

Ensuring that the subjects to process the ad properly in the narrative group, they rated above items about the ad they were exposed to. The answers given by all subjects to both questions are quite satisfactory. ("The ad tells a story." M= 4.35 sd=0.94; "There is a plot in the ad" M= 4.21 sd= 1.09). Similarly, the expert group subjects rated two items about whether the endorsers in the ad they viewed are perceived to be an expert or not. The mean scores were above average for this manipulation. ("The endorsers in the ad are expert." M=3.81 sd=1,27. "The endorsers in the ad are knowledgeable." M= 3,81 sd= 1,25).

Hypothesis Tests

In testing Hypothesis 1 which stated that the positive effect of the narrative ad on purchase intentions is mediated by being-hooked and ad credibility, the PROCESS Model 6 was conducted. The results were given in Table 2. First of all, the proposed model in which narrative ad, being hooked and credibility were predictors for buying intentions is statistically significant (F(3-124)= 68.775, p< .001). In this study, 95% bias-corrected estimates and significance intervals of the indirect effects of the variables were evaluated through the 5000 bootstrap sampling method. Also, the power of the regression model to explain total variance is about 62% level. As shown in the mediation diagram (Figure 2), the total effect of the narrative ad on purchase intention was significant (c =.68 95% CI: [.546, 0.814]) and there was a reduction for the direct effect of narrative ad (Bc1=.41, 95% CI: [.243, .536]). The decline for the effect of the independent variable can be interpreted as an indicator that the predictor variables may have acted as mediators. The results demonstrated that being hooked (B=0.33, 95% CI: [.160, .464]) and ad credibility (B=0.36, 95% CI: [.230, .499]) mediated the effects of narrative ad on purchase intentions

(see Table 2 and Figure 2). The indirect effects through being hooked and ad credibility were significant in a 95% confidence interval excluding zero.
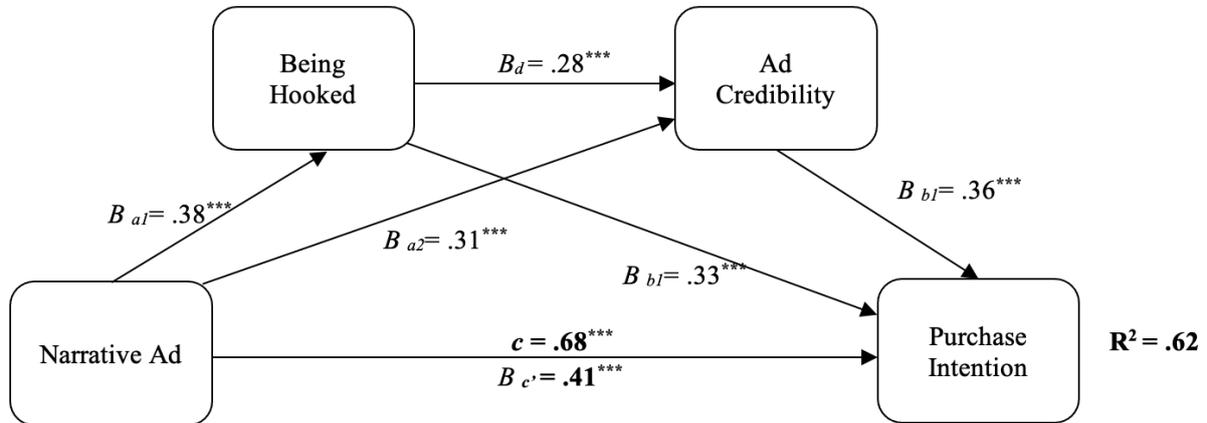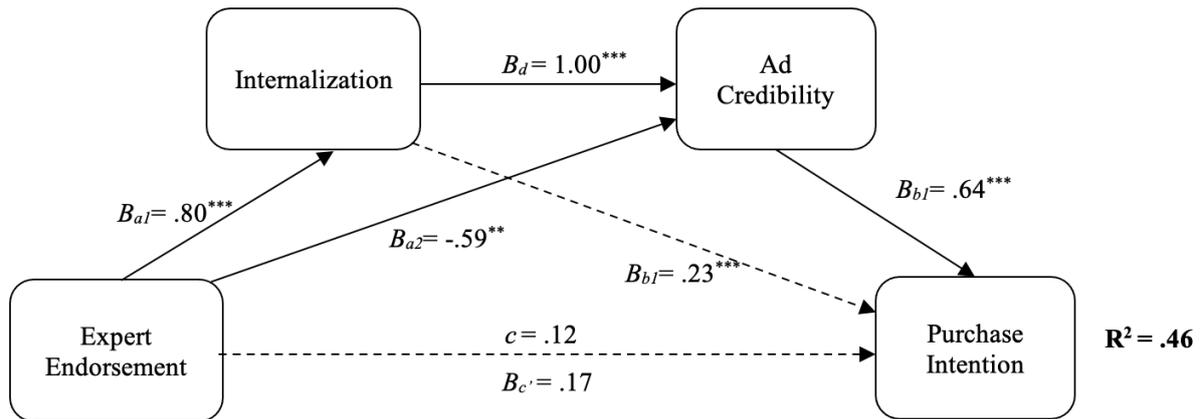

*Figure 2. Sequential mediation paths and non-standardized coefficients for the narrative impact on purchase intentions through being hooked and ad credibility. *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001*

Table 2. The Mediating Roles of Being Hooked and Ad Credibility Between Narrative Ad and Purchase Intention

Path	B	SE	t-statistic	p-value	Bootstrapping Samples 95% Confidence Interval	
					LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect (NA → PI)	0.68	0.67	10.03	0.00	0.546	0.814
Narrative ad → Being Hooked	0.38	0.67	5.57	0.00	0.242	0.508
Narrative ad → Ad Credibility	0.31	0.82	3.99	0.00	0.166	0.493
Being hooked → Ad Credibility	0.28	0.09	2.86	0.04	0.086	0.473
Being hooked → Purchase Intention	0.33	0.77	4.05	0.00	0.160	0.464
Ad Credibility → Purchase Intention	0.36	0.68	5.35	0.00	0.230	0.499
Direct Effect (NA → PI)	0.41	0.66	6.08	0.00	0.273	0.536
NA → BH → Purchase Intention	0.12	0.30	Indirect effect(s) of NA on PI:		0.056	0.173
NA → AC → Purchase Intention	0.12	0.47			0.049	0.234
NA → BH → AC → Purchase Intention	0.04	0.17			0.014	0.068

NA: Narrative Ad; PI: Purchase Intention; BH: Being Hooked; AC: Ad Credibility

When the factors (independent and mediating variables) were evaluated all in conjunction with the purchase intentions, the direct effect of the narrative impact decreased but still indicated a significant resistance. Furthermore, the results revealed that ad credibility (B:=0.36, 95% CI: [.230, .499]) and being hooked (B=0.33, 95% CI: [.166, .493]) directly effected buying intentions almost equally. Being hooked seems to fuel the possibility of purchase intentions with ad credibility which means the more emotionally an ad effects consumers, the more likely behavioral aspects can arise. In other words, being hooked and ad credibility was found to be crucial predictors for behavioral intentions. Based on these results, the serial regression-based model seemed to determine that mediating variables can significantly predict the relationship between narrative ad and purchase intention. Thus H1 was supported.

Figure 3. *Sequential mediation paths and non-standardized coefficients for the expert endorsement effect on purchase intentions through internalization and ad credibility. Hyphenates indicate insignificant paths. $^*p < 0.05$ $^{**}p < 0.01$ $^{***}p < 0.001$*

Likewise, the second hypothesis assuming that ad credibility and internalization mediate respectively the effects of expert endorsement on purchase intention was tested through Model 6 (Table 3). It was found that the proposed model was significant $(F_{(3-120)}= 35.139, p< .001)$, and 46% of the variance could be explained. According to these results, it seems that internalization mediates the effects of expert endorser for ad credibility (B=1.00 95% CI: [.511, 1.516]) but not for the purchase will (B= -.23 95% CI: [-0.620, 0.154]). The direct effect of the path for purchase intentions is insignificant in 95% confidence interval for the upper and lower bounds of bootstrap samples crossing through zero point. While the internalization process failed to mediate expert endorsing on intentions, ad credibility achieved mediation between expert endorsement and purchase intentions within a positive significance excluding zero point (B=0.64, 95% CI: [0.512, 0.773]). Given that the direct effect of expert endorsement on the intentions to buy was insignificant (B: 0.17, 95% CI: [-0.153, 0.494]), it is obvious that the purchase will only be available through ad credibility (B: -0.38, 95% CI: [-0.759, -0.116], see Table 3 and Figure 3). This result represents that neither expert endorser nor internalization is a significant predictor for buying intentions. In that case, it would be proper to assert that both variables have anything to do with behavioral intentions directly, but indirectly through advertisement credibility. Nevertheless, as shown in the path diagram, it seems possible and significant that expert endorsement ad format can reach the behavioral intentions through internalization and ad credibility which represents the indirect effect of expertness on buying will (B=0.52, 95% CI: [0.245, 0.901]). Overall, it should be noted that expert endorsement and internalization are fundamental and powerful predictors for ad credibility. Although these two independent variables do not directly effect purchasing behavior, they have considerable power on ad credibility. In particular, it is clear how critical an internalized advertising message that contributed to the model (see Table 3). Even so, since the mediation of internalization failed whereas credibility mediated to purchase intentions, H2 was partially accepted.

Table 3. *Mediating Roles of Internalization and Ad Credibility on Purchase Intentions.*

Path	B	SE	t-statistic	p-value	Bootstrapping Samples 95% Confidence Interval	
					LLCI	**ULCI**
Total Effect (EE → PI) *	0.12	0.76	1.62	0.17	-0.272	0.273
Expert Endorsement → Intern.	0.80	0.02	7.69	0.00	0.752	0.863
Expert Endorsement → Ad Cred.	-0.59	0.21	-2.73	0.00	-1.034	-0.165
Internalization → Ad Credibility	1.00	0.25	3.99	0.00	0.511	1.516
Internalization → PI*	-0.23	0.19	-1.19	0.23	-0.620	0.154
Ad Credibility → PI	0.64	0.06	9.77	0.00	0.512	0.773
Direct Effect (EE → PI) *	0.17	0.16	1.04	0.30	-0.153	0.494
EE → I → Purchase Intention*	-0.18	0.24	Indirect effect(s) of EE on PI:		-0.581	0.366
EE → AC → Purchase Intention	-0.38	0.16			-0.759	-0.116
EE → I → AC → Purchase Intention	0.52	0.16			0.245	0.901

EE: Expert Endorsement, Intern.: Internalization, Ad Cred.: Ad Credibility, PI: Purchase Intention

* Insignificant effects at zero point in Bootstrap CI intervals.

After proving that being hooked, internalization and ad credibility mediate the effects on purchase intentions, a series of independent sample t-tests were performed to investigate H3 that questioned the significant differences between the different levels of mediators (low versus high) and the ad formats (narrative versus expert endorsement). First of all, a median split was calculated to categorize subjects as "high versus low" in connection with their internalization and being hooked scores. After performing the median split, the values were median= 4.20 for internalization and median= 4.00 for being hooked. Therefore, the subjects below these values were classified as "low" and those with higher scores were classified as "high". Comparisons regarding the means of variables are shown in Table 4.

Hypothesis 3 predicts significant differences among ad type and mediators classified as high and low. Specifically, the mean scores of the subjects were expected to be higher when they were exposed to narrative ads than the scores when exposed to expert endorser ads in terms of ad credibility and potential buys. Accordingly, a significant difference is predicted in favor of narrative impact in terms of mediator levels which means emotionally effected consumers are very likely to trust the ad message and become closer to purchase. As presented in Table 4, the relative superiority of narrative ads was significant for both ad credibility and purchase intentions.

Table 4. *Group Comparisons of Means*

Dependent Variables	Ad Format*				Being Hooked*				Internalization*			
	Narrative	**Expert**	*df*	*t*	**Low**	**High**	*df*	*t*	**Low**	**High**	*df*	*t*
Ad Credibility	4.00	3.56	250	5.23	3.64	4.28	126	4.75	3.08	3.71	122	3.89
Purchase Intentions	4.23	3.41	250	6.11	3.71	4.65	126	7.15	3.38	3.73	120	2.32

* Significant at p < .01

As obvious in the pairwise comparisons, both ad credibility and purchase intentions were lower when the endorsement was by an expert type than when it was a story-based ad (M*AdCred*= 4.00 vs. 3.56, t = 5.23, p< .01; M*PurcInt*= 4.23 vs. 3.41, t = 6.11, p< .01). The following t-tests indicated that the main effects of being hooked over ad credibility and buying intentions were significant for both high-hooked (M= 4.28, t = 4.75 vs. 4.65, t =

7.15, p< .01, respectively) and low-hooked (M= 3.64, t = 4.75 vs. 3.71, t = 7.15, p< .01, respectively) consumers. Likewise, significant differences were found at different levels of internalization in terms of ad credibility and purchase intention. The scores for ad credibility in low and high internalization conditions were M= 3.08 vs. 3.71, t = 3.89, p< .01. Finally, scores for purchase intentions in low and high internalization conditions were M= 3.38 vs. 3.73, t = 2.32, p< .01. Therefore H3 was supported.

Albeit not formally stated in hypothesis, ad credibility and purchase intentions were almost significantly equal when they were in high-internalization condition (MAdCred= 3.71, MPurcInt= 3.73, p< .01) and in low-hooked condition (M*AdCred*= 3.64, M*PurcInt*= 3.71, p< .01). (see Table 4). This result may seem unexpected since the expert views and the rationality of the level of internalization for the health and cosmetic product category once again lagged behind emotional processing. This can also be considered as the passivation of the effectiveness of the expert endorser compared to the emotional power in narrative ads. Finally, t-test results demonstrate that the story-based and expert endorser type average scores regarding ad credibility and purchase intentions were among the lower and higher bounds of being hooked and internalization. Accordingly, to create maximum impact, it is necessary to develop a rational knowledge-oriented approach for internalization in expert endorsement type; or emotional influence for being hooked when the ad was designed in a narrative type.

Results and Discussion

Since all the advertising message promises involve some risks for ad credibility, advertising professionals have benefited from different techniques to increase consumers' trust levels towards the ad message. In the modern marketing approach, although it varies according to product category and target audience, persuading consumers by arousing emotions has been one of the most distinctive techniques of all. However, specifically for a product in the health and cosmetics category, expert endorsing is still an important advertising approach that is frequently used to make the advertising message convincing and lead consumers to purchase behavior. This paper investigates and compares narrative ads, as a strong stimulus of emotions that have a significant superiority in the advertising literature, and expert endorsement ads, which is still used as a strong sales proposal, through different processes in the focus of ad credibility and purchase intentions. The experimentally tested model predicted that narrative ads were more effective on ad credibility and behavioral intentions through the mediation of being hooked than the internalization mediation in expert endorsing. The outputs reached in the current study support these hypothesized asserts. Initially, for a health and cosmetics category product such as toothpaste, an endorsement by a person perceived to be an expert effected the desired aims indirectly to a remarkable extent. This is a well known and reasonable advertising tactic due to the nature of the product category and consumer expectations. However, an inquiry of how effective this approach is and to what extent it has led to shifts in key goals, such as ad credibility and willingness to buy, without the need for any mediators can make a significant contribution to the literature. The way to reach this support may need to compare expert endorsers with the narrative advertising approach.

What the results tell us is that expert endorser, alone and indirectly, is a significant predictor of ad credibility, while having a limited impact on the purchase intentions. However, although the effective power coefficient on ad credibility is quite satisfactory, the performance of the expert endorser on the subjects, surprisingly, fell behind emotional interaction in terms of both credibility and willingness to buy. But the main focus was

that narrative advertisement was able to reach the desired outputs with relatively lower impact coefficients. It can be assumed that the most critical consideration that lies behind this outcome is to offer consumers, albeit somewhat, an emotional experience. In other words, by internalizing a message in the ad consumers can get closer to a brand with a sense of trust and potential buys can be indirectly created. The fact that expert endorsing did not have any significant direct impact on purchase intentions could be unexpected considering the prior studies that have provided significant proofs in this field. One of the superiorities of narrative ads highlighted in the study was the effect of being-hooked on buying intentions which did not require any mediators like ad credibility. However, it should be noted that prior studies compared the endorsement types whether they were a celebrity or non-celebrity or any person perceived to be an expert. Because this study examines expert endorsement in the focus of advertising credibility, expertise was compared to a narrative ad that represents an emotional dimension on credibility development.

On the other hand, the internalization process seems to be not as effective as emotional hooking for some reason (eg. argument strength, expert character, etc.). Besides, whereas being-hooked is a mediator that serves both advertising and sales purposes, it has been observed that the internalization process has an effective power directly on advertising credibility. Moreover, while being hooked and narrative ads can be a direct predictor of purchase intentions, an expert endorsement can achieve these goals by creating an argument and advertising trust that will lead consumers to internalize the message. However, the indirect effect of expert endorsers appears to be less satisfactory than narrative advertising. Apart from that, as empirically indicated, the differential effects of both mediators may be subject to product type as well as to the target audience. Given these inferences, the theoretical contribution of the current research in which the underlying predictors incorporated into the relevant processes through an empirical investigation stands on the direct comparison of two different credibility-oriented ad types (narrative versus expert) in ensuring advertising and the sales objectives. To summarize, even though expert endorser perfectly matches with the product type, it may not always be effective in results. This is specifically crucial to prove that consumers who react by their feelings to a story-based stimuli leave the logical plane, and make a decision with their emotions.

Above all, answering the question of why narrative impact, which have relatively lower effectiveness led to such a big difference on advertising credibility and buying intentions, would be the most significant inference of the research. Similar questions can be rised in terms of expertise. What was the reson behind low mean scores while having a high coefficient of effect? The motives for these responses may be surprisingly caused by a suppressive perception towards people who are perceived to be an expert, or more specifically, towards doctors and related materials (white coat, expert terminology, clinic room, etc.). Gooden, Smith, Tattersall, and Stockler (2001, p. 221) stated that the hospital setting can be frightening and threatening, reporting that only a third of patients prefer doctors to wear a white coat. Moreover, in a study conducted on this issue, whereas younger patients have a tendency to opt for a doctor without a white coat, an increase in the preference of a white coat appears as they get older (Anvik, 1990, p. 8). This kind of worry, which started in early childhood, is called the "white coat syndrome" (Bischof, 1995; Matsui, Cho, and Rieder, 1998). As the subjects of the current study were recruited among young undergraduate students, it is likely that similar reactions can be

of any relation with the above considerations. However, analyzing these attitudes towards experts in future studies may further clarify the subject by linking such an inference to the current results. The insight we can reach is that if any message from the expert endorser be internalized, it can really work, but narrativity stands out as a far more convenient and risk-free advertising approach.

The findings of this paper can provide support for the managerial implications leading a more comprehensive decision on how to select an ad type for the daily routine health and cosmetic category product. Although expertise as a source of the message is considered a top priority for the products in this category, research findings might offer important cues about product positioning to be made. That is closely connected to decide whether the advertised product would be perceived as a health or a personal care category or a symbol of self-confidence and well-being. If the brand prefers to employ an expert endorser for the advertised product, a message content that creates a health category perception may work. However; a thrilling story, engaging events and affective characters to be covered in the ad seem to have the potential to move the brand and product to a much more desired target.

It may be quite interesting to think that consumers evaluate the advertised product with an understanding that will benefit as cosmetic rather than health concerns. Therefore, the foremost concerns of getting rid of rationally-based dental caries versus looking beautiful with an emotional impulse seems to be affected more by the story-based emotional interaction accompanied by an ideal role-model character. Based on these insights, this study also provides some signals in terms of effecting the way consumers evaluate the ad and the product. Although the product rationally positions itself within a trustworthy premise, a sentimental story plot and a charming character can put the health concerns in the shade of emotional concerns like a good-looking and personal achievement. These further insights should be examined by a managerial standpoint within the competitive market environment.

As empirical research, the current study has some limitations in conducting and of its scope. First, exposing the subjects, gathered unusually in a classroom setting, to an ad stimulus may have risks causing consumers to view the ads far more reactive than ordinary circumstances. Moreover, the student sample selected as respondents, although having a perfect match with the product category, may constitute a disadvantage in generalizing the results. Also, the results provided from this paper should be evaluated in a specific perspective for such a low-involvement category in which decision making is much faster and the level of knowledge of the subjects about the product is neglected. The present study investigates two advertising types and distinctive potential effects through a comparison procedure within the scope of ad credibility and purchase intentions. Forthcoming studies can question further issues within different and high involvement product categories. For instance, it is more likely that the results would be dissimilar if selected product from a higher-priced category like an automobile or an airline travel. In a high-involvement category in which consumers need to think a lot more before purchasing, the responses of a certain subject group other than the student sample might offer different insights about the potential effects of narrative ads over other advertising approaches.

Ethics Committee Approval

Within the framework of the verdict taken in the session by Aksaray Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü, İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu dated 31/08/2020, the present study does not embrace ethical issues.

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Tüketicileri Hikayelerle Kancalamak: Reklam Güvenilirliği ve Satın Alma Niyeti Üzerine Seri Aracı Değişken Analizleri

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Genişletişmiş Özet

Hikayeler yaşamın içinde doğan anlatılardır. İnsanlar başlarından geçeni, arkadaşlarından dinlediklerini ne kadar sıradan olursa olsun hikayeleştirme yoluna giderler. Bu durum, insanoğlunun doğuştan gelen bir yatkınlığıdır. Dolayısıyla hikaye anlatmak anlamanın, değer katmanın ve başkalarıyla iletişim kurmanın doğal bir aracıdır. Hikayeler, hayatın her anında olduğu gibi tüketim davranışlarını sergilediğimiz pazar ortamında da markalarla ilişkilerimizin oldukça önemli bir belirleyicisidir. Pazarlama iletişimi alanında yapılan bir çok çalışmada, marka hikayelerinin ve öyküleyici reklamların tüketicilerde olumlu bilişsel ve duygusal tepkileri uyardığı ifade edilmektedir. Bu bakımdan, hikaye anlatıcılığı merkezinde inşa edilen pazarlama iletişimi çabalarının çok daha ikna edici bir özellik kazandığı ve satınalma davranışını teşvik ettiği söylenebilir.

Pek çok araştırmacı, öyküleyici reklamların yaygın etkilerini olumlu reklam tutumları (Deighton vd., 1989), ürün değerlendirmeleri (Lin ve Chen, 2015), markaya ilişkin olumsuz eleştirilerin önlenmesi (Green ve Brock, 2000), satın alma davranışlarının teşvik edilmesi (Johnson, 2012) ve reklam güveni (Kim vd., 2017) gibi sonuçlarla ilişkilendirmiştir. Tüketiciler ürün özelliklerine vurgu yapan argüman reklamlarını, genellikle bilişsel açıdan işlemeye ve karşıt argümanlar geliştirmeye eğilimlidirler (Deighton vd., 1989, s. 348). Durum böyleken, öyküleyici reklamlar ikna gücünü, tüketiciyi "kancalayan" mesaj yapısındaki duygusal hikaye bileşenlerinden almaktadır (Escalas vd., 2004). Böylece, hikaye dünyasına taşınan tüketiciler öylesine olaylara kapılır ki, reklamda anlatılanlara güvenir ve onları eleştirmekten vazgeçer (Green and Brock, 2000, s. 703). Böylesi bir değerlendirme süreci ise tüketicileri tüm önyargılardan uzaklaştırarak reklama ve markaya güven duygusuyla yaklaşmaya teşvik eder (Kim vd., 2017, s. 286). Tüketicilerin hikaye karakterleriyle empati kurmasını sağlayan öyküleyici reklamlar, ortaya çıkan sıcak duyguların da markaya ve reklama yönlendirilmesini olanaklı hale getirmektedir (Aaker vd., 1986, s. 366). Bu bakımdan empati duygusu, tüketicilerin öyküleyici reklamları değerlendirirken sergilediği tepkilerin başında gelir (Chang, 2009, s. 24). Böylece reklam öyküselliği, mesajın değerlendirilmesi sürecinde somut ve duygusal sonuçların ortaya çıkmasını uyaran hikayeleri aktarmış olur. Bu süreç, özellikle ürün ve marka deneyiminden elde edilecek çıktıları tatminkar bir seviyeye yükselten duygusal deneyimlerin elde edilmesini mümkün kılar. Escalas ve arkadaşları (2004), tüketicilerin reklama yönelik duygusal yoğunluklarını "kancalanma" kavramıyla açıklar. Tüketiciler öyküleyici bir reklama maruz kalmaları neticesinde hikayede yaşanan olaylar, tanıdık bir mekan ya da karakterlere yönelik duygular tarafından kancalanarak reklamın dünyasına çekilirler (Escalas vd., 2004, s. 108) ve bu süreç onlarda reklama yönelik olumlu tutumların pekişmesine neden olur.

Hikayelerin reklama yönelik güven duygusunun geliştirilmesi üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olmasına rağmen, markaların bir ünlü ya da uzman kişi tarafından temsil edildiği durumlarda da reklam güvenilirliğinin tesis edildiği bilinmektedir. Kaynak Güvenilirliği Modeli'nde (Hovland vd., 1953) ifade edildiği haliyle, mesajı aktaran kişiye atfedilen uzmanlık niteliği ve güvenilirlik algısı mesajın etkisini artıran bileşenler arasındadır.

Bu bağlamda, güven duygusu kaynağın gerçekliği, dürüstlüğü ya da inandırıcılığından etkilenirken; uzmanlık algısı mesleki birikim, deneyimler ve yeteneklerden kaynaklanır (Erdogan, 1999, s. 298). Dolayısıyla tüketiciler, değerleri ve kişisel inançlarıyla ilgili bir etkiyi kabul ettikleri bu algısal süreçte karşılaştıkları uzman kaynağı içselleştirerek ona güven duyabilirler (Kelman, 1961). Bu doğrultuda, içselleştirme tüketicilerin güvenilebilecek bir kaynaktan çıkan enformasyondan etkilenerek bir takım inanç, düşünce, tutum ve davranışların değişime uğrayacağı bir süreç olarak değerlendirilir (Erdogan, 1999). Kısacası, reklam mesajı bir uzman destekçi aracılığı ile ulaştırılmışsa, tüketicilerin sorunlarını çözeceğine inandıkları ürüne yönelik tutum gelişimi çok daha hızlı bir şekilde gerçekleşmektedir (Biswas et al., 2006, s. 19). Ancak, ürüne ya da markaya yönelik gelişen güven duygusu reklamda kullanılan uzman kaynağa bağlı olduğu kadar, reklamı izleyen tüketicilerin mesajı içselleştirebilemesine de bağlıdır. Dolayısıyla içselleştirme süreci, tüketicilerin sorunun çözümüne ilişkin edindikleri bilgilerden şüphe duymayacak ölçüde tatmin olmalarını sağlar.

Bu çalışmada, öyküleyici reklam ve uzman desteği yaklaşımlarının reklam güvenilirliği ve davranışsal niyetler üzerindeki etkileri, kancalanma ve içselleştirme süreçlerinin aracılığıyla analiz edilmektedir. Araştırma hipotezleri Hayes (2013) tarafından geliştirilen PROCESS adlı bir makro yazılım ile test edilmiştir. Çalışmaya katılan 252 kişilik bir denek grubu reklam yaklaşımlarından birine maruz bırakılmış ve ilgili soru formlarını doldurmuşlardır.

Hipotez testleri sonucunda, öyküleyici reklamların reklam güvenirliği ve davranışsal niyetler üzerinde doğrudan etkili olduğu görülmekle birlikte, kancalanma ve duygusal süreçlerin satınalma davranışı üzerinde aracılık etkisine sahip olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Diğer taraftan, reklamda uzman desteği kullanmanın ve içselleştirme süreçlerinin reklam güvenirliği üzerinde doğrudan etkileri saptanmasına rağmen, satınalma davranışını doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak etkilemediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Ayrıca, farklı kancalanma ve içselleştirme skorlarının da reklam güveni ve satınalma niyetleri üzerinde farklılaştığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Özetlemek gerekirse, uzman destekçi ürün kategorisiyle mükemmel bir şekilde eşleşse de, tüketici tutum ve davranışları üzerinde her zaman arzulanan sonuçlar ortaya çıkmayabilir. Bu durum, tüketicilerin hikaye temelli bir uyarıcıya bilişsel düzeyde tepki vermek yerine duygularıyla bir karar verdiklerini kanıtlamak açısından önemli görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öyküleyici Reklam, Uzman Desteği, Kancalanma, İçselleştirme, Güvenilirlik.