

Television Advertisements: A Reception Study

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Abstract

This paper focuses on an analysis of advertising reception and explores how audiences interpret advertisements. The study attempted to answer how female and male participants interpret advertisements with symbolic expressions and advertisements with direct messages. The main purpose is to define differences in interpretation of advertisements based on gender. In this process, a two-stage approach is employed in order to examine the audience reception in the context of television advertising. In this study, we first identified the characteristic features of the advertisements, later we intended to explore the reception of advertisements. The first stage of the study evaluated the contribution of 21 participants in Antalya, Turkey determined by snowball sample with male and female participants within the age range 21-55 years. The participants articulated written reactions to two advertisements instantly displayed on computer screen. Participants were subject to viewing those advertisements and responding ready-made questions on paper. In the second stage, considering Hojjer (1990)'s study, a focus group discussion was conducted in order to reveal more detailed information as a second stage of the research. This group consisted of 10 participants of the first stage. A semi-structured focus group discussion was employed for our study which allowed group interaction. Our findings revealed a difference in interpretation based on the gender of the participant. This reception study is one of the few researches done in the field in Turkey. It is also expected to make a contribution to gender studies.

Keywords: *Reception; television advertisements; gender*

Introduction

This paper establishes a theoretical framework as well as a reception study made in Turkey. The primary objective of reception studies, as a significant field in the qualitative research, is "to create, expand and refine theory by observing and interacting with people in their natural environment to discover rich explanations and unique instances" (Allen, Titsworth & Hunt 2009: 4). In this frame, "the characteristics -logic of discovery and attention to the diverse forms and details of social life- are shared by nearly all qualitative approaches which are interested in human understanding" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002: 19). Qualitative approaches concentrate upon "issues of how humans articulate and interpret their social and personal interests" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002: 19).

This paper focuses on an analysis of advertising reception and explores how audiences interpret advertisements. The study attempted to answer how female and male participants interpret advertisements with symbolic expressions and advertisements with direct messages. The main purpose is to define differences in interpretation of advertisements based on gender. For this purpose, we first identified the characteristic features of the advertisements, later we intended to explore the reception of advertisements. In this process, a two-stage approach was employed in order to examine the audience reception in the context of television advertising. In the first stage, the participants articulated written reactions to two advertisements instantly displayed on computer screen. In the second stage, a focus group discussion was conducted in order to reveal more detailed information.

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Literature Review

There is a shift from measuring effects/effectiveness or "empiricist models" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002: 24) to how audiences interpret messages in the audience research. In this frame, Curran (1990) pointed out that

"A new revisionist movement has emerged that challenges the dominant radical paradigms of the late 1970s and early 1980s. This has taken the form of contesting the underlying models of society, the characterization of media organizations, the representations of media content, the conception of the audience and the aesthetic judgements that underpinned much 'critical' research. This revisionism is in part a reversion to certain discredited conventional wisdoms of the past, a revivalism masquerading as new and innovatory thought. However, part of the new critique can be seen as a reformulation that could potentially strengthen the radical tradition of communications research"(p. 135).

Reception theory proposed that "individuals actively shape the meaning of advertising", and audiences do not passively receive meaning (Plunkey, 2010: 54). In this context, Wharton (2005) underlined social components in the reception process:

"Audience decoding of advertisements is a combination of producer intent and a complexity of contributory factors brought to or found in the decoding process. This includes a recognition of various ways of seeing associated with different media forms and social and spatial circumstances and the presentation and reception of adverts as part of a flow of advertising and of a wider social experience"(p. i).

There are a variety of studies examining the reception of advertisements in communication studies. In the tradition of reception research, the studies focus on reception investigate how different social-cultural groups interpret the texts. A number of studies have been conducted to analyze audiences' readings of advertisements in the literature. In this context, a research done by Yannopoulou and Elliott (2008) examined the interpretation of print advertising by different audience groups, and explores how audiences decode open-text vs closed-text advertisements. In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with male and female participants within the age range 20-60 years in the United Kingdom. In the conclusion of the study, significant differences in interpretation based on the social class and gender of the participants were revealed. The findings indicated that "male participants approach the advertisement in a descriptive way, while females approach it in an interpretive way" and "female readers would immediately attempt to interpret the advertisement, find associations and search for inferred meanings" (Yannopoulou & Elliott, 2008: 29). This study had an enlightening property for the current study by putting forward the differences between men and women in reception of advertisements in detail. In Sandikci's study (1999), the reading strategies used by different groups of audiences in the process of reading of the postmodern advertisements were examined. In this frame, Sandikci (1999) collected data about four advertisements from 20 participants and used only cultural capital to explore differences in reading strategies. The results of the study revealed that there were meaningful differences between participants in terms of advertisement interpretation. In this frame, participants with high levels of cultural capital tended to interact with the advertisements to form an overall impression or attitude about the brand, while the readings of participants with low levels of cultural capital were directed toward finding a product attribute-related meaning conveyed in the advertisement (Sandikci, 1999: 235). As Sandikci (1999) pointed out that

"The meaning of an advertisement lies neither in the ad nor within the viewer, but emerges from the interaction of the two. Advertisements do not determine meaning,

but through the employment of various structural features, they shape the reading experience. Cultural resources, previous experiences, and knowledge that viewers bring into a reading interact with the structure of the ad, and help construct the meaning from the advertisement” (p. 237).

This study had a guiding characteristic for the current study by providing a framework about the reading strategies adopted by different groups of viewers when reading the advertisements. Ayaşlıoğlu (2007) focused on the relationship between the reception and poverty, and focused on how different social, cultural and economic components impact the reception of advertisements. For this purpose, it was conducted three different focus group discussions with 20 participants in Turkey. In the study, it was emphasized that reception of the messages may vary in relation with a number of cultural, social and class related concerns. This study is significant for the current study by providing a sample focus group study. Kaderka (2006) focused on an analysis of the reception of non-commercial advertising among various social groups in Czech society using the focus group method. The results of the study indicated that “in the analysis the respondents did in fact interpret non-commercial advertisement as having dialogic relevance, given their deliberations on who was saying what to whom and why” (Kaderka, 2006: 379). This study had a guiding trait for the current study by putting forward the active role of the audience in meaning creation in detail. In another study, Plunkey (2010) conducted a student-centered research of advertising rhetoric. In this qualitative study, to generate new theoretical and practical approaches students’ writing about print advertising persuasion was analyzed. For this purpose, the data was collected from 16 students - eight students were male, and eight students were female in the United States. The findings of the study revealed that viewers stress product interest and personal attributes through identifications, and age, gender, ethnicity and income influence how advertisements persuade. As Plunkey (2010) pointed out, “advertisements persuade when viewers have personal attributes that get them to identify with advertising content. Through these identifications, viewers reinforce product interest and personal attributes” (p. 219). This study had an illuminating property for the current study by providing a sample of written assessment process of reception analysis. Raftopoulou (2007) conducted an investigation into the reception of anti-smoking advertisements. For this purpose, in the first step, twelve individual interviews were conducted with six male and six female respondents (ranging from 21 to 28 years of age) in London. In the second step, five of these respondents were taken part in the individual follow-up interview. The results pointed out that the advertisements were decoded within the wider media context, and the social and personal characteristics of the audience in the reception analysis of advertisements. This study is remarkable for the current study by putting forward the importance socio-cultural context in the decoding process.

A number of studies have been also undertaken focused on gender in the reception studies. Interpretation of advertisements based on gender differences have previously been studied by Mick and Politi (1989). Mick and Politi (1989) examined consumers’ interpretations of advertising imagery, and focused on students’ thoughts and feelings about a suggestive ad with a dominant visual content. The results of the study demonstrated that male and female participants related to the portrayals with different underlying needs and life experiences. This study had an enlightening characteristic for the current study by putting forward the importance of gender in the reception analysis of advertisements. As another example of this line, Barak’s study (2009) explored expressions of the third-person effect based on a feminist reception study. In this frame, women’s reception of femininity in television advertisements was examined. In this study, it was conducted personal in-depth interviews with Israeli women in the context of different social and economic backgrounds. The results revealed that socio-cultural context and the characteristics of media environment impacted gender interpretations. This study is remarkable for the current study by putting forward gender as a significant determinant in the reception process. Similarly, in Hogg and Garrow’s study (2003), the relationship between gender, identity and the consumption of advertisements was examined. In the study, it was conducted a small-scale exploratory study to analyze the effect of gender identity in terms of consumers’ reception. In this context, in the first phase, 25 young audiences watched video clips of two television advertisements, and in the second phase, it was conducted focus group discussions to clarify the respondents’ gender schemas. The findings pointed out that the centrality of gender identity to self-schemas played a significant role in the interpretation of the advertisements. This study is noteworthy for the current study by putting forward the impact of gender on the

consumption of advertising. In another study, Sandikci (1998) explored the reception of the polysemic advertising texts, and examined oppositional readings using focus group discussions. In this frame, the author focused on reception analysis based understanding of images of women in advertisements. The findings indicated that the same advertisements generated multiple readings including similar as well as different ones. This study had a guiding characteristic by emphasizing the importance of the interaction between the advertisement, the product, the audience and the context in reception analysis.

Research Questions

The present study attempted to answer the following research questions to get the comprehension of evaluations of participants:

- How female participants interpret ads with symbolic expressions and advertisements with direct messages?
- How male participants interpret ads with symbolic expressions and advertisements with direct messages?

Methodology

The main focus of this paper is the audiences' evaluation about advertisements. In this context, a two-stage approach was used to examine the audience reception in the context of television advertising. In the first stage, the characteristics of the advertisements were specified and then the reception of advertisements was examined in the paper. Considering Höjjer (1990)'s study, a focus group discussion was conducted as the second stage of the research. In this frame, in order to produce processes on sampling, reliability, validity and credibility, the books and papers such as Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2000; Denzin, 1970; Priest, 2010 were taken as primary sources.

Sample

In this study, snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling "yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981: 141). As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) pointed out "most sampling decisions in qualitative inquiry are not based on procedures of random probability in which every element of a population has an equal and independent chance of being selected" (p. 122). In this respect, Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also stated that "qualitative research does not produce data that can be subjected to statistical procedures that allow generalization to a population" (p. 122). In this frame, it is important to note that "qualitative studies intend to focus on a limited population so that the researcher can examine their experiences and perspectives within a specific context. Therefore the implications of this study cannot be overly generalized, nor can be drawn definitive conclusions" (Plunkey, 2010: 218-219). Following the above stated information, the results of our study cannot be overly generalized. The demographic information about participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Details of the Demographic Profile of Participants

Participant No.	Name	Age	Educational Background	Working Position	Gender
1	Pınar	26	Graduate	administrative staff	Female
2	Nurgül	28	Graduate	administrative staff	Female
3	Ozan	32	Graduate	administrative staff	Male
4	Didem	25	Graduate	administrative staff	Female

Participant No.	Name	Age	Educational Background	Working Position	Gender
5	İnanç	26	Graduate	administrative staff	Male
6	Janset	24	Graduate	administrative staff	Female
7	Hüseyin	28	Graduate	administrative staff	Male
8	Nesim	43	associate degree	technician	Male
9	Sibel	33	Undergraduate	worker	Female
10	Semih	31	Graduate	civil engineer	Male
11	Muhammet	36	Graduate	civil engineer	Male
12	Fatma	46	secondary school	worker	Female
13	Gülden	38	MSc	civil engineer	Female
14	Özlem	21	high school	secretary	Female
15	Fatma	21	associate degree	worker	Female
16	Orçun	27	Graduate	lawyer	Male
17	Arif	24	Graduate	lawyer	Male
18	Burcu	37	associate degree	administrative staff	Female
19	Muzaffer	55	associate degree	teacher	Male
20	Nilgün	42	Graduate	teacher	Female
21	Nezahat	41	associate degree	secretary	Female

Reliability

Reliability is defined as "whether or not repeating the measurement or experiment can be expected to yield the same or similar results" (Priest, 2010: 232). The following subjects were determined in order to ensure the external reliability:

- 1) The researchers were in the position as observer in the interview and as moderators in focus group study.
- 2) Information about the participants as data source was displayed in Table 1.

3) Data collection process:

First Stage

This audience reception research explored readings of two -one with symbolic expressions and one involving direct message- television advertisements. The first stage of the study evaluates the contribution of 21 participants in Antalya, Turkey determined by snowball sample with male and

female participants within the age range 21-55 years. During the process of research for the study, the public university in the city of Antalya, a public institution, a law firm and a private elementary school covered the social environment. The participants had different occupation and status. In this stage, written evaluations of the participants were taken in their work place. The researchers visited participants and allowed them to view two TV commercials on computer. TV commercials were played out a few times at the request of the participants. Written comments from participants were taken after they viewed each ad. In this frame, participants responded ready-made questions on paper. For written evaluation, open-ended questions were created in the context of literature review. The questions were adapted from the studies by Yannopoulou and Elliott (2008), Sandikci (1999), Mick and Politi, 1989; Ayaşlıoğlu (2007) and Plunkey (2010). This study took place between the dates February 23-25th, 2011.

Second Stage

Taking into account the methodological consideration of Höijer (1990)'s study, a focus group study was employed in order to reveal a more detailed information as a second stage of the research. In qualitative researches, one of the most commonly used methods is focus group discussions for interpretation of advertisements (e.g. Mick & Politi, 1989; McQuarrie & Mick, 1992; Mick & Buhl, 1992; Elliot et al., 1995). A semi-structured group discussion is employed for our study which allowed group interaction. For the focus group study, 10 participants were selected from the participants of the first stage. The study took place at Akdeniz University and focus group meeting was held on March 4, 2011. The meeting lasted in an hour. Researchers have participated as a moderator in this study. Researchers have identified the title and subject matter to be discussed in the context, dominating the new limit of discussion when it is exceeded. This process had been recorded with an audio recording device. After the meeting, the recorded conversations had been deciphered by an undergraduate student.

4) The conceptual framework was used to develop the research questions and to analyze the resulting data. In reception studies, participants were asked to describe the ad in their own words, describe their opinions and feelings about the ad, their thoughts about the advertiser was trying to communicate with the ad, to give an interpretation based on the intended meaning by the advertiser, to describe it as a picture, to state its figures and elements (e.g. Mick & Politi, 1989; Yannopoulou & Elliott, 2008). In this study, the questions were designed based on these studies.

5) **Data analysis methods:** Written assessments were coded under the headings as audiences' evaluations toward the commercial, product and brand the effect of commercial, identification with the experience. In this study, these questions were asked to participants: Description of the advertisement, the meaning of the message for the audiences, values expressed in the advertisement, description of product/brand, striking visual– audial elements, information presented in the advertisement, the situations that ads reminded to audiences when they viewed ads. The answers to these questions were analyzed and evaluated under the title audiences' evaluations toward the commercial, product and brand. Feelings about the advertisement, the feelings that the audience would have if they experience the product were also asked and the answers to these questions were analyzed under heading of the effect of the commercial. The answers to the questions any relationship with the advertisement and the life philosophy of the audience were analyzed under the heading of identification with the experience. Besides, the questions of first notice about the advertisement, components caught attention of the audience were asked and the answers to these questions were analyzed to reveal meaning creation.

The data obtained through focus group were coded under the heading of male and female audiences' comments and interpretation about the components of the advertisement, product and brand, the strategies and the format of the advertisements, and general assessments about advertisements. In this process, as mentioned above, the recorded conversations had been deciphered after the meeting.

In this reception study, data was analyzed in a descriptive approach recommended by Wolcott (1994). In this frame, the opinions of participants' about the headings were given in quotation marks in the original form. Later, these data were interpreted. In this approach, it is important to stick to the data

collected as much as possible in its original form and, if necessary, quoting directly what the individuals are saying in a descriptive approach and the last step is to provide data to the reader (Wolcott, 1994).

In order to ensure the internal reliability:

1. The collected data were presented in a descriptive approach.
2. The same study was carried out by two researchers.
3. After receiving the audience's written evaluations, the ideas similar to the issues were asked in a focus group setting. Here it is expected to confirm the findings of the written evaluations.
4. In the analysis section, the findings of other researchers who had found out similar conclusions were included.
5. Data were analyzed in the axis of reception study by using similar techniques in sample papers. Data and the results achieved in descriptive approach are very close to each other as "narrative". For example, longer borrowings from interviews could be possible and observation notes close to its original state can be described (Wolcott, 1994).

In this regard, it is important to note that interviews are usually non repeatable because "each informant is asked a particular set of questions only once, and in most types of interview research the questions will vary across participants" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002: 239). As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) pointed out, "reliability is not so much of a consideration in qualitative research", and "the question of validity has to do with the truth value of observations: whether a research instrument is accurately reporting the nature of the object of study and variations in its behaviour" (p. 239).

Validity

Validity is defined as "whether the researcher is measuring or observing what he or she thinks is being measured or observed" (Priest, 2010: 236).

Internal validity

The findings of this study were obtained using four different data sources and two different data collection methods were used. The findings were supported by the findings of similar studies in the literature. On the basis of the findings of the studies, researchers tried to be consistent with data obtained from the evaluations.

External validity

The sample of the research was described in detail allowing to make a comparison with other samples. Research findings can be tested easily in similar environments. The reader can associate their own experiences with the results of research. The research results can give answer to the question of "how" and has emerged as a suitable form of the nature of the reception study. There are necessary explanations so that the research findings can be tested in other studies.

Credibility

It can be explained as "using substantially different methods to study the same problem and achieving parallel results with different methods vastly increases the researcher's confidence in those results" (Priest, 2010: 236). In this study, research data were obtained by using different methods and the credibility of the findings has been realized in that way. In this frame, data from the audience through the written reviews of this study was confirmed by data from focus group discussions. As Denzin (1970) pointed out, to ensure the credibility, the data were collected in different ways from different individuals and environments in our study.

Advertisements

Nescafé advertisement was preferred because everybody knows about the product, and the style based on information. Honda advertisement was chosen because everybody knows about the product, and the style based on symbolic expression.

The characteristic features of the advertisements were identified mainly based on the study by Koudelova and Whitelock (2001: 92) in Table 2. Besides, the format and the other details were determined by the studies of Wicks et al. (2009), and Alexander et al. (1998).

Table 2. Characteristic Features of the Advertisements

Characteristic Features	1st Advertisement (Nescafé)	2nd Advertisement (Honda)
Format	Slice of life Problem and solution Relationship	Slice of life
Product	Demonstration of product	Graphic display
Music	Not major	Major
Humour	Yes	No
Pace	Moderate	High
Presenter/Production	Voice over / Realistic	Totally animated (made up entirely of a series of drawings rather than real life situations)
Characters	Celebrity Ordinary people	Graphic display
Appeals	Product appeals (taste/flavour/smell) Emotional appeals (fun, mood alteration, health/well-being)	Product appeals (speed) Emotional appeals (fun, nature, joy, romanticism)

Theme

Theme of the 1st Advertisement: Nescafé

In the Nescafé advertisement, a slice of life is presented. The spokesperson serves Nescafé in two cups to serve to two people, one male and one female. The couple is about to go to work in the morning- not very awake. The couple welcomes this offer and drinks it and smile. The slogan suddenly appears: "Drink the pleasure" ("Keyfi Yudumla") (Figure 1). Nescafé advertisement pointed out the problem and solution. In this frame, the advertisement underlined that Nescafé is an essential product to awake in the mornings. In Nescafé advertisement, the coffee as an alternative to tea is offered. A different habit -drink coffee in the mornings- for Turkish consumers is proposed by the global brand.

In Nescafé advertisement, the product is demonstrated in its package, humor is used as a component, a celebrity and ordinary people take part, both product and emotional appeals are employed. Besides, the moderate-paced Nescafé commercial include scenes from real life.

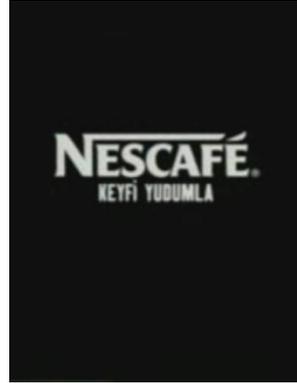


Figure 1. The motto of Nescafé

Theme of the 2nd advertisement: Honda

In the Honda advertisement, a slice of life is presented. A heart beat is displayed in a sudden and it continues till the end. Many different visual components -The Statue of Liberty, Eiffel Tower, a woman and a man with a glass in their hands, a road, trees on the road, a gazelle, the car is passing fast, skyscrapers are seen, the world which has blue seas and green nature is viewed from the space - were used (Figure 2). In this frame, the longstanding label is underlined. Moreover, the life is presented with the city lights within the frame of the globosity of the label which is emphasized in the commercial. In Honda advertisement, the high-paced Honda commercial is totally animated, and made up entirely of a series of graphics/drawings rather than real life situations.



Figure 2. Various Visual Components in Honda advertisement

Findings

This section of the study consists of two main parts. In the first part, the written analysis of commercials that the audiences have watched is presented. The second part concentrates on the findings of the focus group discussion. In this frame, male and female audiences' comments and interpretation about the commercials, product and brand, the strategies and format of Nescafé and Honda advertisements, and general assessments about advertisements were presented. In this frame, the analysis of Nescafé and Honda commercials are going to be mentioned respectively.

Study 1: The Written Analysis of Commercials That the Audience Have Watched

In this part of the study, three main topics come into prominence in the reception of the advertisements. In this context, audiences' evaluations towards the commercial, product and brand, the effect of commercial, identification (e.g. own experience) are presented.

Evaluations towards the Commercial, Product and Brand

The negative and positive features of evaluations towards the commercial, product and the company constitute the most important phase of this part. Evaluating the written analysis of the audiences, it was noticed that some participants mentioned the positive appraisal of the advertisements. In this frame, a male audience's comment is mentioned below about Nescafé commercial as an example of positive assessment of the Nescafé advertisement:

"It is just a nice commercial." (male)

Examples about the expressions towards the label and the product were also given in a positive consideration:

"Nescafé is always in our lives." (female)

"Coffee makes people happy and smile." (male)

When the data given above is analyzed, it is seen that some viewers attribute the product and the label. In this context, another male participant, who knows the company well, did not accept the message, and evaluated the strategy of the advertisement, and made this analysis about the label position:

"The image of three in one is more suitable." (male)

On the contrary, comments of some viewers are mentioned as examples of negative assessments towards the product. Some of the participants underlined the presentation of Nescafé as a replacement of tea and Turkish coffee and they criticized this:

"The commercial does not have an effect on me. Tea is more suitable for me and my culture." (female)

"It is just repugnance because Nescafé is irrelevant in a culture of a person who speaks in this local accent." (female)

It is possible to find these examples like the below when we evaluate the participants' comments in the context of commercial effect on culture:

"This commercial is not familiar in terms of Nescafé or grain coffee. Turkish coffee is the best." (male)

"I found the commercial strange because a person from Black Sea region famous for tea was introducing coffee." (male)

Other examples which are about the label and the product can also be given in the context of negative comments. Some male and female viewers were evaluating in a macro scale. They interpreted Nescafé commercial as interference for establishing a cultural dominance:

"The target of the commercial is to dispose a different cultural feature." (female)

"This commercial in which a person with a local accent from a country based on Turkish coffee culture gives rise to thought to reach not only the people who drink this but also much larger public." (female)

More significantly, a male participant underlined the link or the similarity between cultural elements in the commercial and the local culture:

"Getting up early is a tradition in Turkey especially in rural parts. People who wake up late are called lazy and they are condemned. Generosity and hospitality are also mentioned in the commercial." (male)



Figure 3. Demonstration and service of the product in the Nescafé advertisement

It was noticed that two male participants criticized the format and the strategy of the Nescafé commercial in an implicit way:

"I do not think that any idea or value is mentioned in this commercial. Most probably, a man from one of these television series is saying the motto of the campaign as he does in his character." (male)

"While watching the commercial, I had a little headache because of lots of irrelevant information." (male)

Similarly, when it was evaluated audiences' written analysis of Honda advertisement, it was noticed that some participants also mentioned the positive appraisal of the advertisement. Some viewers' positive evaluations are mentioned as examples of Honda commercials in the below:

"The commercial makes people feel how much Honda is essential for life and transport." (male)

"The mystery that exists till the car's shade appears is remarkable." (female)

It is seen that a female viewer mentioned her admiration of the commercial strategy. However, another female viewer did not find the expression in the commercial sufficient and interpreted the text in a different way.

"Technology is emphasized but it is not enough for a car commercial which should have the passion of speed or fast living." (female)

Some participants' positive comments about the product and label are mentioned as examples of Honda commercials in the below:

"I thought that the brand of my car had to be renewed again." (male)

"In our modern time, cars have become an essential part of our lives. Honda is well matched with my ideas about the nature, social activities and travelling." (male)

"Honda appeals to all ages and renew itself even if time goes on rapidly." (female)

"Honda tells that countries, cities and nature live within people." (female)

"They describe Honda as a company which makes a move all the time." (female)

On the contrary, a male participant commented on the Honda advertisement, and evaluated the brand negatively:

"People can direct their own lives. That is why they do not need Honda." (male)

It was noticed that some female viewers commented on the commercial that they have watched and made more general evaluations:

"I watch commercials because my baby who is 3 years old watches them too. We watch together without getting bored." (female)

"I prefer watching commercials to TV programmes because they are more lively and funny." (female)

"Commercials are evolving day by day." (female)

"All car commercials are impressive for me." (female)

In this regard, Raftopoulou (2007) pointed out that "it was important for the majority of respondents to show that they cannot be easily persuaded by advertising techniques for a 'personal choice'" (p. 23). In this frame, some male audiences' negative appraisals about advertisements is mentioned in the below:

"It does not make sense for me." (male)

"I especially do not watch the commercials." (male)

It is noteworthy to pointed out that participants' evaluations differentiated in terms of the language used in the reception of the advertisements. In this respect, Yannopoulou and Elliott (2008) underlined the differences between audiences in terms of "the use of long vs. short sentences, large vs. small use of vocabulary, rich vs. limited use of qualifiers, adjectives or adverbs, use of explicit vs. implicit meanings, and use of symbolism" (p. 17) in the analysis of reception process. In this frame, a male participant's assessment of the Honda commercial can be given as an example:

"Visually, the use of lines, fluency, the success of passing one figure to another draws my attention. Auditory moving ad music, rhythm in the ad strengthens the power of imagery and the lines of fact." (male)

When it was evaluated the comment mentioned above, it was noticed that audience stated his opinions using long sentences, and different qualifiers.

The effect of commercial

When the effect of commercial was evaluated in Nescafé example, it is seen female and male audiences were similar in terms of willingness of drinking coffee or consuming the product (Figure 4). For example, one participant expressed the effect of advertisement as given below:

"The moment of pouring water makes me drink coffee." (male)



Figure 4. Consumption of product in the Nescafé advertisement

Some viewers associated drinking coffee with happiness, joy and smiling instead of making an appraisal about the willingness of consuming product.

"The sense of happiness when you drink it." (male)

"Nescafé is the source of joy." (male)

Within the same context, it is mentioned that some participants wanted to try or used the product in the example Honda, while they were making assessments about how they feel.

"I thought that my car needed to be renewed again." (male)

"The message given in the commercial was not clear for me but I decided to go and see what Honda looked like." (male)

"I will go there as I got impressed." (male)

"A lovely journey with obeying the rules of the road and a good music." (female)

"Confidence" (female)

When it was evaluated audiences' comments stated above, it was noticed that some participants mentioned the brand positively. On the contrary, a male viewer evaluated the brand negatively, and compared Honda with another rival company.

"I thought why I couldn't go there with Audi." (male)

In this frame, it is likely to say that the commercial did not affect male audience or there was "an inadequate effect" in terms of advertisers when the data given above was evaluated. In this regard, it is important to pointed out there is a meaning creation in terms of own experiences and he emphasizes analysis of objects in terms of their properties.

Identification with the experience

It has been seen that some audiences make connections between themselves and the characters/the components in the process of evaluating the advertisements. Similarly, in Plunkey's (2010) study, it was revealed that "through identifications with advertisement content, viewers reinforce product interest and personal attributes, such as values, desires, and interests" (p. i). In this respect, audiences' comments about Nescafé commercial can be given as examples for this issue:

"The man who has some difficulties to wake up early looks like me as I have the same thing, and I always drink coffee to be awake. The intention of the person offering coffee is quite similar with mine." (male)

"The positive ideas that make people simile are quite similar with mine, and they are also relaxing." (male)

In a similar way, in Honda advertisement, it is seen that some viewers made connections between themselves and the components in the commercial that they have watched:

"The idea that allows people to use the car in each period of life is familiar to me as I like being consistent." (male)

"I want to be strong and innovative in all conditions." (female)

On the contrary, one male participant did not make this connection, and stated that:

"I do not think a situation in which the commercial and my perspective of life have similarities." (male)

When the comments are examined, it was also noticed that male viewers evaluate the same commercial from different points of view.

Study II: Focus Group Discussion

In focus group discussion, it has been seen that four main topics come into prominence in the reception of the advertisements. In this context, male and female audiences' comments and interpretation about the components of advertisement, product and brand, the strategies and format of Nescafé and Honda advertisements, and general assessments about advertisements were presented.

The Components of Advertisement

It was noticed that characters in the advertisement were one of the recurring topics in the participants' comments. In this frame, two female participants stated that the characters were lovely, and therefore they really liked the commercial. Other two participants considered that the actor has been chosen because the character is well-known, funny and witty. Another female participant pointed out that the supporting characters were not as strong as the main character therefore the commercial should have been more spontaneous. A male participant gave examples based on a television program that he watched and made a proposal about the format of the commercial:

"It could have been better if the character had been "laz" from 'Benim Annem Bir Melektir'." (male)

Some participants expressed their negative views on the celebrity in the Nescafé advertisement:

"I really do not like the actor in the commercial. I think that viewers should find something interesting in the commercial that makes them feel connected." (male)

"They are trying to appeal to public interest with a character who acts like an ordinary person." (female)

Phillips (2000) pointed out that "advertisements that explicitly spell out the meaning of a rhetorical figure to consumers may lead to dislike of the advertisement" (cited in Yannopoulou & Elliott, 2008: 10). Similarly, Ayaşlıoğlu (2007) underlined that contrary to some of the negative opinions about the products expressed in the advertisement, almost all the participants thought that a negative aspect will not be stated in use of chosen products (p. 80). On the other hand, Ayaşlıoğlu (2007) stressed that "all the participants adopted a critical attitude against the representation of the products embedded within the texts in the advertisements and stated their opinions with the negative modifiers" (p. 80).

Comments about Product and Brand

In focus group discussions, when the evaluations of male and female viewers are examined, it was noticed that comments on the product and the brand are one of central issues of the debate. In this regard, a female participant stated that:

"Actually, Nescafé is a well-known product. Nescafé can be consumed a lot as it is in a part of the life of Turkish people, which is the way of increasing the consumption." (female)

It is also noteworthy that female and male participants compared Nescafé ratings with other products and brands when evaluating the advertisements. Within this context, most participants compared Nescafé with tea and Turkish coffee. In this frame, a male participant pointed out that we used the name of the product as if we were talking about a handkerchief brand like Selpak.

"Nescafé is not a common drink in the society. Turkish coffee is more general than it." (female)

"Tea is more preferable for us." (female)

"Black Sea people could abandon Black Sea tea and drink coffee." (female)

"Coffee in a tea tray is an alternative, equivalent to tea, tea competitor." (female)

"For me, the place of the two is identical. Sometimes, I drink tea and sometimes Nescafé." (female)

"Not Nescafé but coffee with milk instead took me back. Mom's milk boils onto coffee spilling." (male)

"You might not always find Nescafé, but find the tea always." (male)

One male participant mentioned "retaliation" in the process of evaluating the Nescafé advertisement:

"Nescafé is retaliation to tea." (male)

Global and local cultural elements were confronted in male participant's assessment. Nescafé and tea were depicted as the two opposing poles.

Similarly, in the case of Honda commercial, audiences mentioned the other product of Honda or addressed to different car model:

"Hybrid cars can be produced. Price increase comes to gasoline." (male)

"I would be more interested in Honda motorcycle. I would pay more attention to Formula 1 car of Honda." (male)

When the comments mentioned above are examined, it is seen that this process is beyond the meaning of the messages produced by the advertisement.

In the process of evaluating the Honda advertisement, two male participants pointed out that:

"Honda exist all over the life." (male)

"Life in him." (male)

When the comment mentioned above is evaluated, it was noticed that connotations were produced by male participants. "Every moment of life" was being expressed in the case of written assessments for

Nescafé, "everywhere in the life" in the form of expressions were used for Honda. Besides, two female participants' connotations are expressed as below:

"World brand" (female)

"The passion for speed, tempo, energy" (female)

Interpretation about the Strategies and Format of Nescafé and Honda Advertisements

The advertisement format and strategy are one of the prominent topics in the focus group discussions. Audiences' assessments on the strategies of Nescafé commercial are given below:

"Use of celebrities is effective in the advertisement. I like to watch advertisements. I would do comparisons. Shorter commercial breaks increased the advertising rating." (female)

"Have done something to increase sales of Nescafé in local." (female)

A female participant states this while she was underlying the importance of the smiley face on the cup:

"The smiley face on the cup makes people relaxed and calm." (female)

It has been seen that some participants referred to the previous commercial in the process of evaluating the advertisements. For example, a female audience addressed to the previous commercial of Nescafé:

"In the previous advertisement of Nescafé there was a man sleeping on the sofa and a woman was watching TV." (female)

In the process of evaluating the commercial, female and male participants made assessments about the advertisement format. In this frame, participant's assessments can be given as examples of the Honda commercial:

"With an animation format it's an intriguing advertisement." (male)

"Honda is an intriguing advertisement." (female)

"Honda with an international advertisement has the ability to broadcast in every country, it exhibits self-confidence." (female)

Looking at impact of symbolic expressions in the advertisement, it was identified that some audiences criticized the style of Honda advertisement. In this regard, participants mentioned the following ideas:

"Producers can handle some more descriptive ads." (male)

"There should have been speech covering information in the advertisement speaking about why he should buy that car." (male)

"There could be a willingness to buy while such ads might be composed of normal appetite." (male)

"A car could have been advertised." (female)

"If a new product is to be promoted, the differences could be highlighted. Here, no difference." (female)

As Raftopoulou underlined that "the appropriateness of marketing techniques, associated for years with consumerism and individualism in the mind of the audience, can be questioned, though not completely rejected" (2007: 23-24). Within this context, Yannopoulou and Elliott (2008) pointed out that:

"Participants of all interpretive communities concentrated mainly on the visual part of the advertisement. They seemed to look for and read the text only when they had difficulties in comprehending the advertisement, and as a consequence they searched for clues in the advertisement's text. If they still couldn't understand it, their attitude towards the advertisement became either indifferent or negative, because it made them feel that they were not clever enough to be able to grasp its meaning." (29-30)

Although most of the participants prefer informative advertisements more, some audiences expressed the opposite:

"Advertising should not directly give information but rather draw interest of the audience. I should go to see the product because I wonder." (female)

"Honda does not need to tell each of my models. With a developed technology, the world brand is expressed here." (female)

"Honda does not concern sales of the brand. You expect to get one in a queue." (male)

In this respect, Yannopoulou and Elliott pointed out that "participants of the working class preferred clear and simple advertisements, while participants of the middle and upper social class liked advertisements with complicated meanings that take them on a conceptual journey in their efforts to read them" (2008: 29).

It is remarkable to state that participants' evaluations differentiated in terms of the impact of the advertisement:

"After watching a car ad, I would like to see the car, comfort, design, interior, features." (female)

"No request to ride the car at the end of the ad." (female)

"No temptation request to ride Honda." (female)

In this frame, Barak (2009) pointed out "when describing what they believed to be the impact of commercials as a marketing tool, our interviewees tended to play down the (negative) influence on them and thus depict themselves as intelligent critical consumers." (25)

In the focus group discussions, it was specified that some audiences referred to the previous commercials in the process of evaluating the Nescafé advertisement. Besides, it was also identified that female and male participants compared Honda with other brands in the process of evaluating the advertisement. In this respect, it is significant to note that some audiences do not only analyze the commercials they watched but also refer various brands' advertisements.

General Assessments about Advertisements

Female and male viewers make evaluations about advertisements in general assessments in the focus group discussion. In this context, the audiences may have referred to the different dimensions of the issues. For example, a female audience mentioned advertisements she drew attention:

"People like to watch the commercial of the things they possess. For example, I'm interested in seeing advertising of my car." (female)

Some participants drew attention to the role of commercials in the sale of products and in the increase of profit of companies:

"Those companies that broadcasted advertisements developed more than the others. Economic dimension of the ad is important." (male)

"Thanks to the ads increased sales of 3 in 1." (female)

It is also noteworthy to note that some participants engaged in evaluations of advertisement styles:

"I dislike virtual advertisements during football matches. They used to display ads when there was a foul only during the games." (male)

"Virtual advertising is aversive." (female)

Some participants commented about advertisements in some product categories they watched:

"The ads that take my attention are related with cars, motorcycle and holidays." (male)

"Women do the shopping of home life, food, hygiene and advertisers pay attention to those ads. I do not make zapping when ads begin. I would pay attention immediately to ads if the music sounds well like Honda ad." (female)

Some female and male audiences, in particular young participants, referred to social media influences in their life. In this regard, one male participant highlighted the importance of advice of advertisements in the virtual platform, especially in social networking sites:

"I watch the ad when there is a comment made on the Internet. If people liked the ad I would pay attention to it also. I would like to try the product if it is suitable for us. I take it that impressed me but I would not buy a car because the impressed me but it can have an effect when I am willing to buy a car." (male)

The findings of the focus group discussion pointed out that viewers focus on, make comments and discuss the components implicitly (e.g. Laz Dursun, Nescafé cabinet, selection of venue), and they evaluate the format and the strategy of the commercial. Besides, it was noticed that again audiences also think out of the box that they make detailed evaluations and wider comments, and focus on broader discussions about the advertisements.

Evaluation about Gender and the Reception of Advertisements

This section of the study consists of two main parts. In this frame, male and female audiences' comments and interpretation about the commercials were presented.

Female perspective

As for Study 1, when an advertisement was shown to female audiences, most of the participants evaluate the advertisement referring to the product appeals (e.g. taste, flavor, smell), and the elements of commercial. In Nescafé commercial, most of female participants stressed the sound of birds, the sound of ship, the warm weather, lively sky, smiling, speech in Black Sea accent, Laz Dursun (Figure 5), actors' way of speech (accent), the smoke of the coffee and the motto of Nescafé "enjoy the moment", the effects of the product, the effect of the coffee and its power to make consumers relax.



Figure 5. The character in the Nescafé advertisement

It has been seen that one woman viewer focused on the promotion (Figure 6) rather than the product itself:

"the presents" (female)



Figure 6. The present of Nescafé

It has been identified that some women audiences described Nescafé as a label via focusing on the features of the good.

"Nescafé makes people energetic." (female)

"The liveliness that it gives is more meaningful than its power which makes people smile." (female)

"It is a very good product to start the day as being awake." (female)

It was noticed that some female participants think that Nescafé is an essential component in their lives:

"joy and happiness" (female)

"3.5 minutes break: Nescafé" (female)



Figure 7. Consumption of product in the Nescafé advertisement

It has been seen that some women viewers draw their attention to emotional appeals in the presentation of the label. Similarly, Raftopoulou (2007) pointed out that emotions and feelings are involved in the making-sense process of the advertisements, and stressed that "several emotions are involved in their interpretation; however, these are not always the ones intended by the text" (p. 24). In the study, when an advertisement was shown to participants, some female audiences would evaluate the advertisement referring to the emotional appeals (e.g. fun, mood alteration, health/well-being). In this frame, female participants mentioned emotions like relaxing, joy, happiness and smiling in the example of Nescafé advertisement (see Figure 7). Along the same lines, some female participants stated that:

"It affects life positively and makes us feel relaxed." (female)

"Nescafé makes people relaxed and smile." (female)

"energy/joy and its positive effects." (female)

"vitality" (female)

"love of coffee" (female)

"Nescafé gives joy and it makes people to drink. It is familiar to us. Nescafé is always in our lives." (female)

When the comments are examined, it has been point out that female viewers addressed to the product with energy, fun, and vitality. Within this context, it is seen that emotional appeals such as relaxing/enlivenment, happiness/smiling were associated with Nescafé. According to the viewers Nescafé is so close that it is always a part of their lives, and it triggers them to drink.

The case of the Honda commercial, the features which appeal to women participants are given below:

"The heart beating, its drawings and the sound." (female)

"A concrete reality is underlined in a context of abstraction." (female)

The features that appeals first to women participants about how the label is located are mentioned clearly:

"The place where Honda is in the city and the world." (female)

"In every part of the world in every condition." (female)

"The globality of Honda" (female)

"It has been mentioned that Honda is in the countries and cities." (female)

"It has been claimed that the label is trying to be everywhere in the world." (female)

In this frame, it was noticed that most of female participants interpreted advertisements in the similar ways.

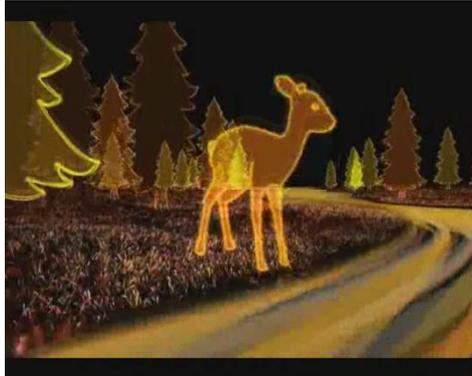


Figure 8. Various visual components in Honda advertisement

When Honda advertisement was shown to female participants, most of the participants evaluated the advertisement referring to the product properties, and the elements of commercial (see Figure 8).

"The speed and the comfort are underlined." (female)

"Comfort and visuality" (female)

"It is perfectionist and easy to adapt itself in each condition." (female)

"Honest, strong, global, technological, durable, innovative" (female)

"Safety and dominance" (female)

"A Honda which is in progress in a globalized world has been described." (female)

In this context, as mentioned below, two female participants used the word "space era":

"The speed of sound. The car of space era." (female)

"It is a technology which is developing via the space era." (female)

In Honda commercial, when the definitions and connotations of label are evaluated, it was identified that some features like safety, quality, technology and innovativeness become prominent. However, nature and environment become prominent in a female viewer's comment.

It has been seen that some female viewers put forward different concept for label definition and connotation. In this frame, one female participant pointed out a different concept in the process of evaluating the Honda commercial:

"Isolation" (female)

Similarly, it was noticed that some female viewers released different concepts of brand definition and associations by using their imagination as stated below:

"Night and the stars" (female)

"free" (female)

As for Yannapoulou and Elliott's (2008) study, it was revealed that some participants are prone to produce new meanings. In this respect, Yannapoulou and Elliott (2008) pointed out that:

"examining our participants' responses, we notice that some participants can think more freely, out of the box, and are able to come up with alternative meanings based on the same stimuli. They can think in an abstract way, while some participants think in a more concrete way and have difficulties in providing alternative meanings." (p. 30).

In addition, Yannopoulou and Elliott (2008) noticed that participants that have previous experiences about the products (viewed before or heard about it or their friends used them) were more receptive to alternative meanings and used their imagination more (p. 31). Within this perspective, mentioned in the above expressions are evaluated, it was noticed that some of the female participants are prone to produce new meanings. Two of the female participants mentioned the "comfort" referring to the motion silhouette of the product although it was just to show a skyline in the advertisement. Similarly,

some participants pointed out the "technology" even though the car's technical hardware did not demonstrate in the advertisement. One of the participants pointed out the "innovation" although there were neither real image of the products nor the technical features. At this point, some participants attracted attention to the features of product that were not expressed in the advertisement. In this regard, this situation indicated that some participants referred various features which were not expressed or shown in the advertisement. It is possible to stress that there is a tendency to ascribe different meanings or produce new meanings about the product or features not shown in the advertisement.

As for Study 2, it is noteworthy to point out that in the context of focus group discussion, female audiences commented in detail about the commercial than the male participants. In this frame, female participant's assessments can be given as examples of the Honda commercial:

"Animated transitions could have cover words such as safe, comfortable, environmentally friendly." (female)

"More memorable together with music." (female)

"Starting with heartbeat, life-long fact, expressing the existence in all over the world in every corner of life give it a little more up to date emphasize by using technological objects." (female)

"Honda needs advertising in terms of brand identification." (female)

"Connotations about innovativeness and technological aspects of Honda." (female)

"There was a music expressing the technology of Honda. An accurate determination. In shopping centers music is especially used." (female)

"Ad remains in the human mind when its music is listened." (female)

"Gazelle was very clear in the advertisement." (female)

"Gazelle was very nice." (female)

"I would like to be where gazelle is." (female)

Male perspective

As for Study 1, when Nescafé advertisement was shown to male audiences, most of the participants evaluated the advertisement referring to the product appeals, and the elements of commercial. When the comments of male viewers about Nescafé are examined, the basically important expressions are stated below (see Figure 9):

"The label itself" (male)

"The cup of coffee" (male)

"Questioning the Nescafé booth in the port" (male)

"I found it ironic that a man from Black Sea region suggests coffee instead of tea." (male)

"Practicality and sincerity of Black Sea people" (male)

"Nescafé brand and its package ... sea side" (male)



Figure 9. The service of product in the Nescafé advertisement

It has been seen that a man viewer focuses on the promotion rather than the product itself:

"promotion" (male)

When the important features are examined in the process of evaluating the advertisements, it has been seen that female and male audiences have a lot in common. It is pointed out that the most essential features are the visual components of the commercial for both genders. Moreover, female viewers give importance to audial components -especially speaking- more than male participants. In this regard, Yannopoulou and Elliott (2008) underlined that:

"We have noted that participants of all interpretive communities concentrated mainly on the visual part of the advertisement. They seemed to look for and read the text only when they had difficulties in comprehending the advertisement, and as a consequence they searched for clues in the advertisement's text." (p. 29-30).

When the comments about the components of the Nescafé commercial are examined, it has been seen that male viewers underlined emotional appeals such as mood alteration and health/well-being and they also associated the product with happiness, smile, and joy.

"When drank the feeling of happiness, smile and craving." (male)

"Positive mood alteration, relaxing, cheering up." (male)

"Nescafé is the source of joy." (male)

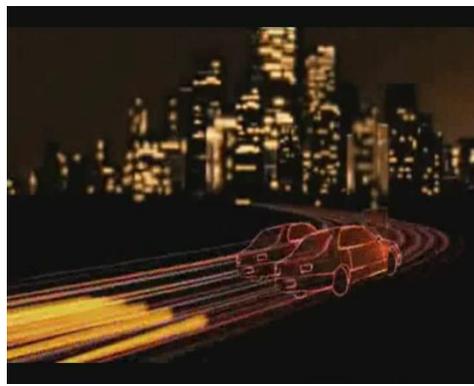


Figure 10. A scene from the city in Honda advertisement

The case of the Honda advertisement, animation, music, lighting, city, space is among the factors attracting the attention of many male participants (see Figure 10 and 11). One male participant mentioned gazelle. Some male audiences expressed their opinions about the advertisement as given below:

"Flashily life, splendid world" (male)

"City, shining, luminous, beautiful architecture city" (male)

"Speed, curiosity, family, nature, journey. See new places with this and be happy." (male)

It was noticed that male participants think that Honda has a part in their lives:

"In the commercial, it has been referred that Honda has always been a part of our lives since the first heart beatings and it will until the last day of our lives." (male)

"It makes me feel that Honda is always with us when we are happy. It implies that Honda is with us in our happy moments." (male)



Figure 11. The display of heart beating drawings in Honda advertisement

When two male audiences made comments about concepts expressed in the advertisement, they pointed out that:

"There is not any place without a car." (male)

"The role and the importance of the label which improves the life standards." (male)

"Honda observes the world more clearly which is quite different from the ordinary people's perspective." (male)

Some male audiences issued definition of brand associations out of the context of the advertisement:

"Journey with the family" (male)

"Family, love, heart beating" (male)

"It is adaptable to the nature, harmless to the environment and it is in the centre of the world via its features." (male)

It was noticed that some audiences are using their imagination and producing different meanings. For example, although there was not any indication in the advertisement, a male audience used the word "strong" while evaluating Honda commercial. Besides, the participants also provide alternative meaning based on their life philosophy. In this frame, a male participant's assessment of the Honda commercial can be given as an example:

"The idea of using Honda during the childhood and youth as well as her old age has come close to me as someone who loves stability." (male)

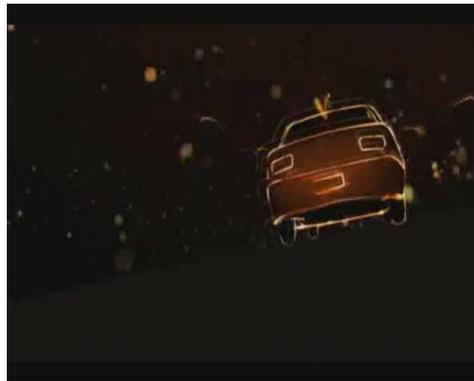


Figure 12. The display of car in Honda advertisement

Some male audiences' comments about concepts expressed in Honda advertisement are mentioned below:

"powerful, indispensable, timeless" (male)

"performance, security" (male)

"strength, quality" (male)

"power, speed, security" (male)

"the aesthetic quality of a vehicle brand" (male)

"Emphasis on items of comfort, speed, confidence, peace, comfort and so on that a car should associate is good." (male)

"Comfort, health, flashily life, splendid world, life embedded in nature, energetic, laidback, speed, and trust." (male)

Within this perspective, mentioned in the above expressions are evaluated, it was noticed that some male participants mentioned the "power", "performance", "esthetics" and "robustness" referring to the motion silhouette of the product (see Figure 12). Two male participant mentioned "security" based on her own experiences, although neither the product specifications nor the real image of the car's skyline were shown in the advertisement. At this point, some participants attracted attention to the features of the product that were not expressed in the advertisement. It is possible to say that there is a tendency to ascribe different meanings or produce new meanings about the product or features that are not shown in the commercial.

As mentioned above, some male viewers released different meanings about the brand either context dependent or explicitly used their imagination as stated below:

"Adrenaline that increases pulse is expressed in the advertisement." (male) (Language is noticeable).

"My cousin had a Honda Civic." (male) (He emphasizes interrelationship between objects)

"I thought it was a hospital ad because of heartbeat." (male) (He uses his imagination)

"The expressions suit my ideas that Honda brand is compatible with the natural life and is required for social activities and with which the travelling is nice." (male)

"Honda brings to mind Far East and the dynamism." (male) (There is an explicit expression).

"Comfort, health, glamorous life, moving side by side with nature in a way of life." (male) (There is an explicit meaning creation).

As for Study 2, it was identified that male participants made comments in detail about Honda than Nescafé in terms of the message, style and format of advertisement:

"The beginning and the end of the ad is effective. It is starting with a heartbeat continues until till the death. I think they wanted to show that Honda is next to us every time." (male)

"Advertising should influence people at first sight. In the example of Honda ad I would then change the channel in 3 seconds." (male)

"Honda gives energy." (male)

"The message that Honda is around the world." (male)

"Fast is better, the car should have high horsepower." (male)

In this regard, it was noticed that in particular more educated female and male audiences were more interested and more evaluated the advertisements.

The summary of decoding strategies is shown in Table 3. The format of this table mainly based on the study by Yannopoulou and Elliott (2008: 32).

Table 3: Summary of Decoding Strategies

Gender	Visual and Audial Part	Textual Part	Richness of Info	Meaning Creation & Produce New Meaning
Female	draws attention visual components	draws attention textual part	make comments in detail about the advertisements	Common themes: (e.g. safety, comfort, nature, environment, technology, speed, tempo, energy)
	stimulus for meaning creation	create different texts		Different concepts become prominent from male
	more attention to audial components			(e.g. quality, free isolation, speed of sound, space era, night and star, innovativeness)
Male	draws attention visual components	draws attention textual part	differentiation depending on product category	Common themes: (e.g. security, comfort, nature, environment, technology, dynamism, speed)
	stimulus for meaning creation	create different texts	(made comments in detail about	

Gender	Visual and Audial Part	Textual Part	Richness of Info	Meaning Creation & Produce New Meaning
			car advertisement)	Different concepts become prominent from female (e.g. powerful, family, strength, aesthetics, performance, robustness)

Conclusion

In the evaluation section, we analyzed the findings based on reception analysis. Results indicated that audience readings of advertisement components differ in the context of two advertisements. Our findings revealed a difference in interpretation based on the gender of the participants.

When audiences' interpretations towards the commercial, product and brand were evaluated, it was noticed that the negative and positive features of evaluations towards the commercial, product and the company constitute the most important phase of this study. There had been examples that the participants comments in the context of commercial effect on culture. Some criticisms about the format and strategy of the products were realized. The participants' evaluations differentiated in terms of the language used in the reception of the advertisements.

When the effect of commercial was analyzed, it was noticed that easily consumed products can have an effect on the participants in our example. It was noteworthy to note that there was a willingness to consume or to buy the product. Luxury products like cars may have different effects on male or female consumers. Some female and male audiences, in particular young participants, seemed to be entertained by advertisements; sometimes they had a lot more fun than the programs. Besides, they also refer to social media influences in their life. In addition, a mother viewing the advertisements with her child also pointed out that there is a positive effect of advertisements in communication between them.

One of the most important point about identification was that there were associations between the brands and themselves for male and female participants based on their experience.

Further comments about components of advertisement was examined, it was considered that the characters in the advertisement were one of the recurring topics in the participants' comments in the focus group. Looking at impact of symbolic expressions in the advertisement, it was identified that some audiences criticized the style of Honda advertisement. It was also noteworthy to point out that participants concentrated mainly on the visual part of the advertisement when they evaluated the elements of commercial. In other words, they made further comments about the advertisement's visual components.

When participants' comments about product and brand were evaluated, it was noticed that this topic was one of the central issues of the debate. The consumers compared the brand, the product and the advertisement with similar or competing ones. Female and male audiences refer to the television series/programs they watched while they are making relevant assessment about the commercials they are viewing. In this frame, females attributed to media theme more than male participants. Besides, female and male participants also refer similar products, and compare the brand with similar labels and indicate the advantages and weaknesses of them.

The evaluations on interpretation about strategies and format of advertisements were analyzed, it was founded that the advertisement format and strategy were one of the prominent topics in focus group discussions. The findings of the study revealed that the presentation of advertisements' theme, mainly through its style, characters, product benefits, voice and visuals evokes different reactions.

When audiences' general assessments about advertisements were determined, it was realized that the role of commercials in the sale of products, evaluations of advertising styles, comments about ads in some product categories were some of the general assessments. It was noteworthy to stress that the symbolic presentation caused difficulties in creating assessment, and different effects than expected at the end.

As a result of the study, some of the audiences had different assessments than the communication professionals or the advertiser's had planned. In this context, it had been noticed that the audiences had undertaken an active role in the process of reception of advertisements. In this frame, the participants made assessments outside the intended meaning of the advertisements. Meanings that were produced by the participants had been shaped both within and outside the context of the issue based on the previous information and personal worlds of the life of the audiences. It was realized that the participants produced different and even opposite meanings in assessing the ads.

For further studies it is suggested that other researchers can add different data sets (i.e. social class, age, education) to their research questions. Conducting an ethnographic research in this field is another proposal for researchers. Also, there are necessary explanations so that the research findings can be tested in other studies.

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Appendix: Ready-Made Questions

Questions about Audience Reception of Advertisements

This study was conducted by researchers at the Faculty of Communication, Akdeniz University. Your answers will only be used in the report of the study, and your personal information will not be shared by third parties. Thank you for your participation.

Demographics

Sex : Female Male

Age :

Education:

Profession:

Income (monthly household income): TL

Questions

1. What is described in the advertisement?
2. What did you first notice about this advertisement? What caught your attention?
3. What kind of feelings do you have when you watch this advertisement?
4. Is the message of the advertisement meaningful/significant to you (for any particular reason)?
5. What types of values and ideals do you think are expressed in the advertisement that you noticed? Do you feel these reflect your own?
6. Which components caught your attention in terms of visual-audial elements in the advertisement?
7. How do you describe this product/brand?
8. Does this advertisement remind you of situations that you have been in?
9. Does the advertisement contain any part of your life philosophy? An you tell us about them
10. What types of information are expressed/presented in the advertisement?