



## ADVERTISING PRACTICES OF GLOBAL BRANDS IN THE TURKISH WORLD

### TÜRK DÜNYASINDAKİ KÜRESEL MARKALARIN REKLAM UYGULAMALARI

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#### Abstract

Today, to differentiate themselves or gain a foothold in the local market, international and local brands utilize elements of cultural identity in their advertising campaigns. The use of cultural values from the Turkic world by renowned brands in their advertising campaigns is crucial for the commercialization of products and brands. The accurate and effective use of local values strengthens brands' connection with local consumers. Graphic design effectively designs product and cultural elements in advertising presentations to accurately convey the message to the target audience. The study examines how international brands utilize cultural values from Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan in their advertising designs. It examines how some renowned brands specific to these countries (Algida, Yandex, Finish, and McDonald's) utilize Turkish cultural values and their underlying messages. Using a qualitative research method, Saussure's semiotic analysis approach, the advertising visuals were analyzed in specific stages. The study aims to reveal how brands visualize cultural motifs and values to connect with local consumers, whether these motifs retain their traditional meanings, and which advertisements utilize them as decorative elements. The way brands use traditional cultural motifs from the Turkic world in their advertisements was examined. The advertisements demonstrated that traditional motifs and values bridge meaningful and cultural bonds. The research reveals how these symbols reproduce their traditional meanings in design. The research demonstrates that brands convey the cultures of the countries studied through their products.

**Keywords:** Turkish World, Cultural, Advertising, Semiotics, Graphic Design.

#### Öz

Günümüzde farklı olabilmek adına ya da yerel pazarda tutunabilmek için uluslararası ve yerel markalar, kültürel kimlik unsurlarını reklam kampanyalarında kullanmaktadır. Türk dünyasına ait kültürel değerlerin ünlü markalar tarafından reklam kampanyalarında kullanılması ürün ve markanın ticarileştirilmesi açısından önemlidir. Yerel değerlerin doğru ve etkili kullanımı sayesinde markaların yereldeki tüketiciyle bağı güçlenir. Grafik tasarım, mesajın hedef kitleye doğru iletilmesi için ürün ve kültürel unsurların reklam tanıtımlarını etkili bir şekilde tasarımı yapar. Araştırma uluslararası markaların Türkiye, Özbekistan, Kazakistan ve Azerbaycan ülkelerindeki kültürel değerlerini reklam tasarımlarında nasıl kullandıklarını incelemektedir. Bu ülkelere özgü yapılan bazı ünlü markaların (Algida, Yandex, Finish ve McDonald's) Türk kültürel değerlerini nasıl kullandığı ve altında yatan mesajlar ele alınmıştır. Nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak Saussure'nin göstergebilimsel çözümlemesi yaklaşımında reklam görselleri belirli aşamalarla analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı markaların yerel tüketicilerle bağ kurmak için kültürel motifleri ve değerleri görselleştirdiklerini, bu motiflerin geleneksel anlamlarını koruyup koruyamadıklarını ve hangi reklamlarda dekoratif öğe olarak kullanıldıklarını ortaya koymaktır. Markaların Türk dünyasındaki geleneksel kültürel motiflerin reklamlardaki kullanım biçimleri incelenmiştir. İncelenen reklamlarda geleneksel motif, değerlerin anlamlı ve kültürel bağa köprü kurduğu görülmüştür. Araştırma, bu sembollerin geleneksel anlamlarının tasarımda yeniden üretimini nasıl yaptığını ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırmada markaların ele alınan ülkelerin kültürlerini ürünleri yoluyla aktardığı görülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk Dünyası, Kültürel, Reklam, Göstergebilim, Grafik Tasarım.



## INTRODUCTION

Culture consists of elements of societies such as traditions, customs, beliefs, and symbols. The Turkish world is a vast community encompassing many geographies linked by historical, linguistic, and cultural ties. The traditional characteristics of these communities hold a significant place in visual culture. Graphic design is one of the key tools for conveying this cultural transmission. Symbols, especially those used in advertising and poster design, are effective in conveying the intended message. Global brands utilize not only their products but also cultural signs in the local market. In the Turkish world, these signs include carpet patterns, geometric forms, floral and plant ornaments, mythological figures, and cultural values. Consumers identify with motifs, believing that local values are respected, and form a bond with the brand. Furthermore, the use of traditional motifs in modern design draws attention to the brand and the advertisement.

Cultural values acquire commercial significance, establishing a local and emotional connection with the consumer, combining traditional figures with modern design, and determining the position of global brands in the local market. Brands use symbols to reach consumers in the local market. This study examines how global brands operating in the Turkish world, such as Algida, Yandex, Finish, and McDonald's, incorporate cultural values into their advertising campaigns. This learning objective explores how international brands operating in the Turkish sector assess their perceived uncertainty about their cultural identity in their advertising. By conducting semiotic analysis of advertising examples from Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan, the study aims to reveal how brands recreate traditional motifs, symbols, and cultural values and integrate them into consumption.

The way brands use traditional cultural motifs in their advertising campaigns in the Turkish world is examined using semiotic methods. The research aims to reveal the use of cultural motifs and traditions in advertising designs by international brands operating in the Turkish world and how these visual elements contribute to the localization of global brands. This research is significant because it highlights the role of cultural values in contemporary advertising strategies. It is significant that the literature contains limited design-focused studies on how brands utilize shared cultural values from the Turkish world. This study aims to reveal how visual cultural codes are used and their underlying meanings in different countries through semiotic analysis. The research questions addressed are as follows:

1. How do international and local brands operating in the Turkish world use cultural identity elements (motifs, symbols etc.) in their advertisements?
2. Do the cultural elements used in advertisements reproduce local values, or are they transformed to adapt to global consumption?

## Global Advertising

Culture forms the basis of marketing and advertising activities, encompassing all the material and spiritual characteristics of societies and encompassing elements that differ across societies (Aktuğlu & Eğinli, 2010, p.167). Culture is the totality of shared values, beliefs, traditions, and symbols that vary across societies and are shared by groups within each society. Therefore, businesses seeking to enter international markets must be fluent in the cultures of those societies (Yıldız, 2022, p.294). Contrary to concerns that the world shares a common culture and loses local identity with globalization, globalization has contributed to the recognition of diverse cultures (Yenici, 2018, p.1).

As Marshall McLuhan described in his concept of the "global village," the distinct histories, identities, and understandings of each country have been gradually erased, leading to a shift toward similar lifestyles, tastes, and consumption patterns. This has led to the rise of global communication strategies that appeal to a shared understanding. In other words, all advertisements, often perceived as simply applying a single advertising message to the entire world, are now being prioritized by multinational corporations. (Aktuğlu & Eğinli, 2010, p.168).

Global advertising, or international marketing, is the advertising of a brand's products or products in countries outside of its home country.

When advertisers enter a market outside the brand's home country, global advertising has three key effects: reaching more customers, increasing brand visibility by accessing popular shopping sites worldwide, and creating ads in any desired time zone (Amazon, 2025). Globalization advances with technology. With the advent of the internet and its widespread use, it has become possible to access previously inaccessible information from anywhere, eliminating distance (Yenici, 2018, p.6). Kotler explains the advantages of global marketing as follows (Dumitrescu & Vinerean, 2010, p.152):

1. Consumers feel that the brand is relevant to them and adapts to their needs.
2. There is harmony and balance among the various levels of marketing, including strategic, tactical, and operational activities.
3. Brands gain greater market share.

Schiffman and Lazar Kanuk (2009), have developed a marketing strategy framework that a company seeking to do business globally can use (Table 1). A business may choose to standardize its products, localize it, standardize its communications plans, adapt them, or combine the two. Possibilities range from adopting a global strategy (standardizing both the product and communications program) to developing a fully local strategy for each market (customizing both the product and communications program) (Dumitrescu & Vinerean, 2010, p.149).

**Table 1.** A Framework for alternative global marketing (Dumitrescu & Vinerean, 2010, p.149)

<b>PRODUCT STRATEGY</b>	<b>COMMUNICATION STRATEGY</b>	
	<b>Standardized communication</b>	<b>Localized communication</b>
<b>Standardized Product</b>	<b>Global strategy:</b> Uniform product/ Uniform message	<b>Glocal strategy:</b> Uniform product Customized message
<b>Localized Product</b>	<b>Global strategy:</b> Customized product/ Uniform message	<b>Local strategy:</b> Customized product/ Customized message
	<b>Glocal strategy:</b> Customized product/customized message	

Adaptation is an approach that emphasizes local characteristics, as opposed to standardization. This approach, called think globally, act locally, necessitates the creation of market-appropriate advertising campaigns prioritizing cultural values. This adaptation

approach eliminates the need for re-creating advertising campaigns. Advertising is carried out by a local agency in the target country, tailored to the cultural characteristics of that country. This allows the local agency's knowledge and experience of the country to mitigate negative perceptions of the advertisement and reduce cultural differences in consumer habits. (Aktuğlu & Eğinli, 2010, p.169).

When examining both international and global advertising activities, it is important to carefully consider the characteristics of the culture being advertised. Ads should be prepared in accordance with the cultural values and beliefs of the society, considering the characteristics of this culture (Deneçli, 2013, p.3). Riili outlines five key principles for global brands to implement when operating in the local market. These are (Sözer Madanoğlu, 2025):

1. Identify the importance of localization in your marketing.
2. Position yourself based on the characteristics of the local culture.
3. Choose an advertising image that aligns with your global brand values and will be relevant locally.
4. Determine your product's role in the local market.
5. Apply the communication you've defined to all areas of marketing, ensuring its continuity.

Today, with technological advancements, the interaction between the global and the local is increasing. Drawing on Ritzer and Harvey's concept of time space compression, thanks to the increased capacity to deliver goods and services, products that were once far away (French cheese or Russian vodka) are now available to consumers in local stores. Products that once took time to access are now available instantly (Yenici, 2018, p.9).

Global cultures can be adopted, and brands can be sold, but they cannot replace local culture. For example, he likens this situation to a nightclub or sushi bar next to a McDonald's restaurant in Paris or Tokyo. This is a multidimensional and multicultural situation, unlike the constantly criticized American dominated culture. Other examples include a Chinese restaurant, an Irish bar, and Mexican grills located next to a centrally located McDonald's in Tokyo. (Yenici, 2018, p.20).

Successful companies must develop a global presence by customizing their global experiences and services. This should encompass not only product design or communication, but the entire branding and marketing framework (Dumitrescu & Vinerean, 2010, p.149). For organizations to successfully advance their marketing and advertising campaigns, they must understand the distinguishing characteristics of advertising (Deneçli, 2013, p.4). According to Vincenzo Riili, global marketing manager for PepsiCo Lipton Ice Tea, "If you don't understand the local elements of the market you're entering and embrace its culture, it's difficult to succeed and compete with local brands in that market." (Sözer Madanoğlu, 2025).

There are examples of the combined use of global and local in today's commercials. Coca Cola, one of the most prominent global brands, frequently uses the global and local in its advertisements (Yenici, 2018, p.9). Companies tailor their advertising campaigns to the needs of the global world, making them applicable worldwide. In global brands' international advertising campaigns, advertisements produced by agencies from around the world are shown worldwide. National advertising campaigns for beverage companies like Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola, and car companies like Toyota and Honda, have also been broadcast in Turkey (Yarimsakal, 2019, p.113).

Ads prepared for international products and translated into different languages mediate global culture by portraying a global human role. The appearance of people with similar styles or the uniformity of needed objects in advertisements creates an imposed human typology (Yenici, 2018, p.48). Cross cultural studies reveal the use of a similarity approach in countries with similar cultural characteristics, while the adaptation approach is used in countries with very different traditional characteristics. However, regardless of the approach employed, the main problems that may arise when advertising in another country are often similar in the country where the advertisement is broadcast. These problems are listed as follows:

1. Linguistic characteristics; Grammatical structure, proverbs, idioms, and alphabets, etc.
2. Commercial changes; currencies, the prevailing economic order, exchange rate and currency systems, international trade agreements, etc.
3. Legal regulations; regulations regarding a country's broadcasting policies, advertising regulations, etc.
4. Changes resulting from geographical structures; proximity between regions, climate, etc.
5. Cultural components; symbols, heroes, rituals, and values (Aktuğlu & Eğinli, 2010, p.169).

The concept of glocalization, introduced by Robertson (1995), underpins these strategies; it emphasizes how global and local dynamics interact to create a hybrid cultural space. Erdoğan (2023, p.647) examined the semiotic dimensions of the glocalization strategy in the advertising of multinational brands, outlining how global brands recode local values. Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2022, p.54) emphasize that digital marketing channels have become tools for representing cultural heritage, thus enabling digital platforms to function not only as commercial but also as cultural spaces.

Global advertising can only be effective if there are global consumers with global values. Because consumer approaches vary across cultures, globally standardized advertising is not equally effective across media (Mooji, 2004). The main problems that arise in the countries where the advertisement is broadcast are:

1. Linguistic characteristics: grammatical structure, proverbs and idioms, alphabet compatibility, etc.
2. Changes resulting from commercial structures: currencies, the adopted economic order, exchange rate and currency systems, international trade agreements, etc.
3. Legal regulations: regulations regarding a country's broadcasting policies, advertising regulations, etc.
4. Changes resulting from geographical structures: proximity between regions, etc.
5. Cultural components: symbols, heroes, rituals, values (Yenici, 2018, p.51).

In the face of rapidly increasing competition, businesses have begun to utilize cultural values to differentiate themselves in their communication practices. Primarily, to increase their share in the global market and differentiate themselves in competitiveness, they prioritize cultural components such as religion, language, beliefs, habits, traditions, and customs in their messaging strategies (Aktuğlu & Eğinli, 2010, p.168). Values that vary across countries, and the cultures to which marketing strategies are applied, can create a cultural landscape (Deneçli, 2013, p.2). Elements of global culture are integrated into local culture.

International brands adopt cultural adaptation strategies to establish a presence in local markets. They create a cultural harmony by combining traditional motifs, a heritage rooted in thousands of years, used in advertisements from the Turkish World. This harmony plays a significant role



both in visual richness and in reaching local consumers. Different approaches are used in advertisements, blending traditional motifs with modern design approaches. Some advertisements utilize traditional motifs while remaining faithful to their original forms. They are often featured in cultural events, exhibitions, or historical promotional advertisements. The colors, textures, and meanings of motifs add an authentic touch to the advertisement. Another approach involves stylizing traditional motifs with a more modern approach. By preserving the basic lines of these motifs, a more minimalist look is achieved. For example, a rug motif is abstracted and incorporated into a graphic element.

Traditional motifs are combined with elements such as photography, illustration, or typography. The Turkish World boasts a rich variety of motifs, figures, and patterns. Using familiar motifs like these in advertising creates a sense of belonging in the audience, making the intended message more sincere and effective.

### **Semiotic**

Semiotics investigates the meanings of humans for humans and the world for humans (Rifat, 1996, p.7). Semiotics examines the underlying meanings of a text or image. Semiotics is the branch of science that deals with signs and seeks the hidden meaning beneath the unknown. It is concerned with many fields such as painting, cinema, theater, literature, advertising, customs, and beliefs.

There are three fundamental areas of study in semiotics. The first is the sign itself. Signs, which are human constructs, are understood only through the ways people use them. The second is the codes or systems organized by signs. It concerns the transmission of codes developed to meet the needs of society and culture. The third is the culture within codes and signs. The formation and expression within culture depend on the ways these signs and signs are used (Fiske, 2014, p.122). In the late 19th century, Charles Sanders Peirce and in the mid 20th century, Ferdinand de Saussure worked in the field of semiotics in different ways. Saussure was interested in linguistic signs, while Peirce was interested in language structure (Atabek & Atabek, 2007, p.168). The founders of semiotics are logician and philosopher C.S. Peirce and linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Peirce defines semiotics as a triangle consisting of sign, interpretant, and object. Each corner of this triangle is interconnected. Saussure, on the other hand, considers sign, signifier, and signified.

A sign must be capable of representing something other than itself. Words, symbols, signs, and so on are types of signs. Linguists refer to the totality of sounds as the signifier, and the concept as the signified (Rifat, 1996, p.9). A sign is a physical entity we can perceive expressions that refer to something different from itself, and its existence depends on users' acceptance of it as a sign. The signifier is the physically seen, heard, and felt elements in an advertisement (Fiske, 2014, p.123). The signified is the abstract concept or idea evoked in the mind by the signifier.

Semiotic analysis is a discipline that not only examines the meaning of signs but also questions how these signs operate within cultural, social, and ideological contexts. In recent years, semiotics has provided an important basis for discussions on cultural identity, representation, and the production of meaning in the field of advertising and brand communication. Furthermore, contemporary research Mick (2019, p.203), demonstrates that semiotics is an effective method for understanding the relationships between consumer perception, brand identity, and cultural affiliation. In line with these theoretical frameworks, this study analyzes the layers of meaning in cultural motifs found in advertisements by brands operating in the Turkish world, revealing how signs are reproduced in both local and global contexts. Thus, this

research aims to offer a new contribution to current discussions of semiotics, focusing on cultural identity and visual communication.

## METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

This research examines how global brands incorporate cultural values from the Turkic world into their advertising strategies. The study aims to reveal how these cultural indicators are reinterpreted in visual communication and how they contribute to the future of contemporary advertising in a cultural sense. The study was chosen because, despite studies on global brands, research on the visual meanings of Turkic world cultural motifs in advertising is limited. The study sample consists of advertisements broadcast in Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan. While these countries share common historical and linguistic roots, they are comparable due to their socioeconomic differences. The data consists of five advertisements for Algida, Yandex, Finish, and McDonald's, broadcast on television and digital media in different years. The research adopts Saussure's semiotic approach, examining the relationship between the signifier and the signified in the advertisements. Each advertisement was analyzed according to the codes of sign, signifier, and signified using a qualitative semiotic content analysis method. The study's limitations include examining four Turkic states and only evaluating television and digital media advertisements. It offers a significant contribution by demonstrating how brands interpret local cultural motifs and how they leverage these motifs to establish emotional connections with their target audiences.

Cultural values are likened to the mechanism of perception. They foster creativity in advertisements related to a country's culture and provide a better perspective for developing strategies. The cultural and interactive message in advertisements is the historical and cultural values, beliefs, and views of that culture (Aktuğlu & Eğinli, 2010, p.168).

Global mass culture is dominated by the image, which is a tool of modern cultural production that quickly and easily transcends language boundaries and speaks languages much more directly. Visual and graphic design dominates all the ways it directly engages in the reconstruction of popular life, entertainment, and leisure. It is dominated by the imagery, imagery, and styles of television, film, and mass advertising. Satellite television is a prime example of all forms of mass communication. Not because it's the only example, but because you can't understand satellite television without understanding that it's rooted in a specific, developed national economy and culture, and yet its entire purpose is to no longer be confined by national borders. (Hall, 1991, p.27).

Ice cream brand Algida used the characters Karagöz and Hacivat in its 2014 Ramadan advertising campaign for the Turkish market (Figure 1). Performing the Karagöz and Hacivat shadow play characters, which hold a significant place in Turkish culture, on Ramadan evenings has become a tradition.



**Figure 1.** Algida ad, Turkey (Halkla İlişkiler, 2014)

In order to analyze Algida advertisement semiologically, it is classified with a table.

**Table 2.** Semiotic analysis

Sign	Karagöz and Hacivat	Ice Cream	House (stage setting)
Signifier	Traditional Turkish culture characters	Actual image of the product	Wooden frame, curtains and windows, traditional shadow play stage
Signified	Humor, folk culture	Product introduction, flavor	Ramadan, family, togetherness, traditional entertainment

Hacivat and Karagöz evoke Turkish culture, traditional shadow puppetry, humor, and conversation. According to the ad, ice cream evokes flavor, sweetness, refreshment, and a new product. The background scenery, with its wooden architectural structure, reflects traditional Turkish homes, reflecting the fun and friendly atmosphere of family time. The brand establishes an emotional connection with the Turkish community, the target audience of the ad, and references Turkish culture through the characters of Hacivat and Karagöz. The ad combines traditional elements of Turkish culture with Algida ice cream, offering a unique and entertaining meaning. The ad evokes positive emotions in consumers by leveraging the sincerity of Hacivat and Karagöz. It builds a meaningful and emotional bridge between the Algida brand and Turkish culture.

Yandex, an internet-based search engine, has adapted traditional patterns for its website, outdoor advertising, and promotional materials, launched in 2025. Designed to focus on tradition, Yandex Go offers a website featuring locations featuring traditional patterns in cities where it operates in Uzbekistan. These traditional patterns reflect Uzbekistan's historical and cultural heritage on the city streets. The advertising campaign showcases Uzbekistan's significant historical landmarks (Figure 2).





**Figure 2.** Yandex Go ad, Uzbekistan (Magic Camp, 2025)

Floral motifs in traditional decorative arts (rug motifs, wall decorations, blankets, dowry embroidery, etc.), which are important for the history and culture of Uzbekistan, have acquired a modern appearance with three dimensional modeling programs (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Traditional patterns of Uzbekistan (Magic Camp, 2025)

Fifteen patterns were included in the advertising promotion, but nine selected patterns were included in the research. In this context, these patterns were interpreted using semiotic analysis, and their meanings were presented.

**Table 3.** Semiotic analysis

Sign	Shoshgul	Gulsafsar	Chrysanthemum	Majnun-bed	Mehrob	Palm etta	Rapida	Lola	Anorguli
<b>Signifier</b>	Hexagonal floral pattern	Flower pattern in blue and yellow forms	Chrysanthemum, flower pattern	Bird-like motif, willow tree	Interlocking geometric pattern	Flower motif	Heart-shaped, centered floral pattern	Tulip pattern	Pomegranate symbol
<b>Signified</b>	Blanket draped over a horse, Uzbek culture	Decorative motif	Nature's awakening in spring	Crown embroidery, reference to the story of Layla and Majnun	Orientalism	Classic motif, the rebirth of nature	Good luck or protection, traditional motif	Simple and tidy	Fertility

Shoshgul is a blanket draped over a horse. In Uzbekistan, horseback riding symbolizes mobility and social status for urbanites. Velvet blankets for the wealthy were decorated with gold and silver threads. The gold embroidery on the blankets was mostly floral and mostly geometric (Tbc Shoshgul, 2025). Gulsafsar: The Bukhara school of embroidery is distinguished by the beauty and elegance of its plant-depicting embroidery, the abundance and accuracy of its floral and leaf patterns, and the use of various colors and shades of the same flower. It is used as decoration on household items and traditional clothing (Tbc Gulsafsar, 2025). Chrysanthemum (Chrysanthemum): flower, leaf patterns, and flower-ball-shaped ornaments surrounded by stems are the most distinctive features of this region's embroidery. The base of this pattern is the leaf, symbolizing the awakening of nature in spring (Tbc Chrysanthemum, 2025).

Majnun-bed: In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Bukhara women often wore crowns with plant and geometric shapes embroidered with gold thread. This pattern on the crown was made of willow. Among the people, the willow tree symbolizes sadness, compassion, beauty, and the revitalizing power of nature. The tree is also a symbol of Majnun, love, longing, and youth (Tbc Majnun-bed, 2025). Mehrob was used as a mihrab design, indicating the direction of the qibla (Tbc Mehrob, 2025). Palmetta was used in bedding, placemats, and pillowcases, as well as in pieces of a bride's dowry. This type of embroidery, featuring flowers and plants, reflects nature's spring awakening (Tbc Palmetta, 2025). It is given the form of a blooming plant.

Rapida; embroidered products include patterns that symbolize good luck or protection. Although this design previously had a different name, it has gained new meaning over time as embroiderers have embroidered it onto various objects (Tbc Rapida, 2025). With its heart-like lines, it resembles traditional embroidery motifs. Lola is a stylized version of the tulip flower and is used on clothing, ornaments, and household items (Tbc Lola, 2025). Anorguli; pomegranate is popularly considered a symbol of life, fertility, reproduction, and love (Tbc Anorguli, 2025). The advertising resulted in an average increase of over 150% in the brand's active user base (Magic Camp, 2025). In Central Asian and Turkish Islamic art, figures such as flowers, fruits, and plants represent life and nature, making them frequently used in decorative arts. These patterns, rooted in Uzbek culture, have been reinterpreted in modern graphic

language. The patterns hold aesthetic, cultural, and historical significance for the local population.

Despite modern dishwashers in Kazakhstan, brides still have to wash their dishes by hand a tradition inherited from their mothers in law. By showcasing their product at a real wedding, Finish transformed an ordinary dishwasher into a symbol of change and the mother in law into an inspiring example for others (GForce, 2025). The dishwashing detergent brand Finish created an advertising campaign for Kazakhstan titled "Finish Tradition," which aired in 2024 (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Finish ad, Kazakhstan (GForce, 2025)

The Finish ad was classified using a table for semiotic analysis.

**Table 4.** Semiotic analysis

Sign	Bride	Mother-in-law	Dishwasher	Finish
Signifier	Woman in traditional dress	Traditionally dressed elderly woman	Washes dirty dishes	Dishwasher-safe dishwashing detergent
Signified	Marriage, a new beginning	Advocate of old habits	Convenience, modern technology	Cleaning agent

**Bride:** A symbol of marriage, a new beginning, and a symbol of traditional expectations. **Mother in law:** A defender of old habits. Having the bride wash the dishes is a sign that she is a continuation of this tradition. The symbol is the breaking of traditions and openness to change. **Dishwasher:** Represents modernity and innovation. **Finish Dishwashing Liquid:** A product that works with a dishwasher.



The ad, unique to Kazakhstan, explores cultural codes such as respect for elders and adherence to traditions. Beyond promoting dishwashing detergent, the Finish ad tells the story of cultural transformation and modern life. The ad emphasizes the difficulty and necessity of change. The ad symbolically explores the tension between modernity and tradition. The mother-in-law, representing past generations, is a bearer of habits and traditional values. The Finish product, on the other hand, symbolizes modern technology. This dichotomy is reflected in the ad as one of compromise and transformation rather than conflict. The transformation between the ancient tradition of washing dishes by hand and the new, practical lifestyle represented by the dishwasher is depicted. The ad's theme of “From Tradition to Finish” and its reliance on the mother in law's (traditional authority) acceptance of change demonstrates that Kazakhstan is a culture with deep rooted traditional values, and the ad builds on this cultural connection. The Finish ad is not merely a promotion of cleaning products; it is also a sociocultural narrative. It symbolizes the progressive nature of the modernization process in Kazakh society while preserving cultural values. The ad tells a story of the shift between tradition and modern life.

The advertising campaign, titled “Details Matter: McDonald’s Advertising Campaign” was launched in Azerbaijan in 2023. McDonald’s products were displayed using images of Baku, reflecting both ancient and modern styles (Figure 5). While McDonald’s is a global brand, its name prioritizes the country’s culture and aesthetics in the local market. McDonald’s products are displayed in historical venues throughout Baku, creating a sense of belonging to the city. The name reflects the brands sense of belonging to the city. The name combines McDonald’s products (french fries, ice cream, and coffee) with Baku’s architectural elements. This combination creates a connection with the local culture. With its rich architecture and history, Baku represents a city with a distinct cultural identity. Azerbaijanis feel closer to a brand when they see it integrated with their own city's architecture. The ad not only attracts the attention of locals but also builds brand credibility and recognition.



**Figure 5.** McDonald's ad, Azerbaijan (DDB Azerbaijan, 2025)

The ad features a person holding McDonald’s products (french fries, coffee, ice cream, etc.) while juxtaposing them with the architectural structures of the Baku cityscape. In the image, the fries are placed on top of the building, making it appear as if they are part of the structure. This is displayed as a painting in the advertising campaign.

**Table 5.** Semiotic Analysis

<b>Sign</b>	Ice Cream Cone	French Fries	French Fries Box
<b>Signifier</b>	The walls of the structure aligned with the ice cream cone	The walls of the building are aligned with French fries.	Red box with local motifs
<b>Signified</b>	Historic, durable, local	Historic, durable, local	Historical, local, ethnic

Ice Cream Cone: The walls of the Baku Fortress in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, were used as ice cream cones. The cone's integration with the country's fortress walls conveys both a solid, rock solid feel and a local feel. French Fries: The combination of the potato box and the historical structure demonstrates the brand's connection to the city. The box features the country's architecture as fries. The French Fries Box features a patterned red cover instead of the brand's classic red box for fries. The motifs, including teardrop figures, floral patterns, and ornaments, resemble the traditional Azerbaijani silk headscarf, the *kelagayi*. The *kelagayi* like pattern on the McDonald's box in the image is used as a reference to Azerbaijani culture. The yellow and red colors in the ad reflect McDonald's identity.

## CONCLUSION

Incorporating traditional motifs into modern designs in advertising campaigns without compromising their universality is vital for a brand to maintain its value in the local market. For a global brand, utilizing traditional arts to showcase a country's national and cultural values is crucial for establishing local connections. By respecting the culture of consumers in the local market, brands strengthen the brand's sense of regional belonging and transform the product into a consumer product. When local motifs are combined with contemporary techniques, they not only prevent them from being forgotten but also establish an emotional connection with local consumers through advertising.

This study, unlike previous research, comparatively examined advertisements from different regions of the Turkic World (Turkey, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan) and, through semiotic analysis, revealed that the same motifs acquire different layers of meaning depending on the cultural context. Studies have been conducted on how international brands such as Algida, Yandex, Finish, and McDonald's strategically utilize traditional cultural values of the Turkic World in their advertising campaigns. Algida staged the traditional shadow play *Karagöz and Hacivat* in its Ramadan ice cream advertising campaign. The witty demeanor of *Karagöz and Hacivat*, prominent figures in Turkish culture, portrays ice cream as a warm, fun, and culturally meaningful product. Uzbekistan, due to its location, boasts a rich diversity of motifs influenced by various cultures. The examined patterns, when combined, bring together traditional and modern life. The Kazakhstan advertisement focused on the transformation of the tradition of hand washing dishes, passed down from mother in law to daughter in law, into the modern use of dishwashers. McDonald's products are used not only as consumer goods but also as cultural symbols. In addition to Azerbaijan's historical and architectural values, visual details integrate McDonald's products with these values, fostering a stronger connection with the local community. These examples demonstrate that renowned brands operating in various regions of the Turkic World use traditional motifs and traditions not only as decoration but also as cultural and commercial tools. Adapting traditional patterns to the modern world allows brands to strengthen their connection with consumers.



Adapting traditional symbols to contemporary contexts allows brands to build a bridge between cultural traditions and consumers. The findings are similar to some previous studies. For example, Kanso and Nelson (2002, p.83) demonstrate that advertisements reflecting local traditions generate greater engagement in markets with high cultural integrity. The accurate and effective use of local symbols strengthens brands' connection with local consumers. Traditional motifs are visually stylized and positioned in the background of advertisements. The use of traditional figures serves as a bridge between traditional culture and the present. However, it has also been observed that in some advertisements, traditional motifs are used solely for decorative purposes and lack contextual depth. The use of traditional motifs and traditions in advertisements has significant effects in strengthening the cultural identity of the Turkic World. These are as follows:

1. It strengthens the connection between the past and the present and allows younger generations to become familiar with their own cultural heritage.
2. In posters or advertisements designed for cultural festivals and events, these motifs reach a wider audience and increase interest in Turkish culture.
3. It increases the originality and authenticity in visual communication promotions. This originality makes the advertisement more memorable.
4. The use of traditional figures in advertisements by global brands helps them reach their target audience.

Reinterpreting cultural traditions and symbols through graphic design not only helps local consumers remember their past but also captures the attention of future generations or diverse communities. Graphic designers' conscious use of traditional symbols enhances both design quality and cultural transmission.

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