

MARKETING DEMOGRAPHICS, ADVERTISING SEMIOTICS:  
THE CASE OF *AKŞAM* NEWSPAPER

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **MARKETING DEMOGRAPHICS, ADVERTISING SEMIOTICS: THE CASE OF *AKŞAM* NEWSPAPER**

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The main aim of this thesis is to discuss conflicting opinions about the existence, targets and the system of advertising and to examine its effects on purchasing behaviors. Another important aim of the study is to demonstrate that advertising is an important but not the sole factor which increases the sales of a product. The study focuses on the relationship between the capitalist industry and consumers' purchasing decisions. It discusses the effects of marketing strategies on consumer behaviors and purchasing preferences. The interaction between the symbolic representations of commodities' brand names and consumption decisions are evaluated and the basic arguments of critics and advertisers about the system of advertising are discussed. In addition, variables other than advertising that influence consumer behaviors are

examined and the importance of advertising in modern marketing is presented. To understand the messages in today's advertisements deeply, semiology as one of the most important methodologies of decoding advertisements, the basic advertising formats and the language of advertising are evaluated. The question of how meaning is reconstituted both by advertisers and the viewers of messages is discussed. The study also entails a case study in which *Akşam*'s re-launch advertising campaign is evaluated. *Akşam*'s brand and image perception before and after the advertising campaign is examined. After this evaluation, the success of an advertising campaign in accordance with its advertising strategy is discussed.

**Key Words:** Marketing, Advertising, Advertisement, Semiology, Media, Newspaper, Consumption, Consumer Behavior, Purchasing Behavior, Sales, Brand Name.

## **ÖZ**

### **PAZARLAMA VERİLERİ, REKLAMDA GÖSTERGE BİLİM:**

#### **AKŞAM GAZETESİ ÖRNEK OLAY ÇALIŞMASI**

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Bu tezin temel amacı, reklamın varoluş nedenleri, amaçları ve genel olarak sisteminin nasıl işlediği konusundaki karşıt görüşleri karşılaştırmalı olarak tartışmak ve satın alma davranışları üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektir. Çalışmanın bir diğer amacı ise, reklamın satışı arttırıcı önemli fakat tek unsur olmadığını göstermektir. Bu çalışma kapitalist endüstri ile tüketicilerin satın alma davranışları arasındaki ilişki üzerinde odaklanmaktadır. Çalışma, pazarlama stratejilerinin tüketicilerin satın alma davranışları ve tüketim tercihlerine etkisini tartışmaktadır. Markaların sembolik değerleri ile tüketim kararları arasındaki etkileşim incelenmekte ve reklamı eleştirenler ile reklamcılarının, reklamın sistemi konusundaki temel argümanları tartışılmaktadır. Bunun yanısıra, tüketici davranışlarını etkileyen reklam dışındaki

faktörler incelenmekte ve reklamın modern pazarlama içindeki önemi sunulmaktadır. Günümüz reklamlarındaki mesajları derinlemesine anlayabilmek için, en önemli reklam metodolojilerinden biri olan semiyoloji, temel reklam formatları ve reklam dili incelenmektedir. Reklam içindeki mesajların anlamının tüketici ve reklamcılar tarafından nasıl oluşturuldukları ve çözümlendirildikleri konusu tartışılmaktadır. Bu çalışma ayrıca Akşam Gazetesi relansman kampanyasının incelendiği bir örnek olay çalışmasını da kapsamaktadır. Reklam kampanyası öncesi ve sonrası Akşam'ın marka ve imaj algılanması değerlendirilmektedir. Bu incelemenin ardından, Akşam'ın yeni pazarlama stratejisinin temel amaçlarına göre planlanan reklam kampanyasının başarısı tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pazarlama, Reklamcılık, Reklam, Semiyoloji, Medya, Gazete, Tüketim, Tüketici Davranışları, Satın Alma Davranışları, Satış, Marka.

To my parents and my fiance, Gökalp

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I hereby declare that all the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Date: December 04, 2003

Signature:

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In our day, the role of advertising is increasing tremendously. Especially in industrial societies, advertising has become one of the most effective social communication tools. Without any doubt, messages given in advertisements deeply affect us and our purchasing behaviors.

In capitalist societies, the relationship between the industry and consumers is quite complicated; on one hand, consumers are allowed to interpret industry's messages on their own, on the other hand, the industry encourages consumers to participate actively in the interaction. It is the industry, however, that dominates the communicative processes and even though it may be possible for consumers to formulate their own needs and desires through commodities, their freedom is eventually accommodated into the capitalist system. Therefore, advertising as one of the most important weapons of the capitalist system is highly criticized by many people for creating false needs which people strive to satisfy and thus encouraging people to consume more.

According to critics, while the primary function of advertising should be to introduce a wide range of consumer goods to the public and thus to support the free market economy, over the years it has become more and more involved in the manipulation of social values and attitudes and less concerned with the communication of essential information about goods and services. Critics claim that advertisements work only for creating new needs and consumption patterns to raise the sales of the products. On the other hand, advertisers insist that rather than creating false needs, they discover the new needs of the consumers and inform them about ways of satisfying these needs by presenting new products.

People who criticize advertising in its current form argue that advertising is an irrational system, which appeals to our emotions and to our anti-social feelings which have nothing to do with the goods on offer. Advertisements usually suggest private acquisition and competitiveness as a primary goal in life. It is said that today's consumer economy makes people greedy and materialistic, and advertising promotes this situation. On the other hand, those who defend advertising suggest that it is economically necessary and has brought many benefits to the society and advertisers also claim that people are perfectly free to ignore their advertisements and that commercials cannot be said to brainwash or manipulate people because there are some advertising campaigns which fail to attract consumers.

This thesis discusses whether advertising creates false needs and encourages people to consume more by changing existing consumption patterns, as some critics claim, or whether it contributes to the society's well-being and raises

people's standards of living by encouraging the sales of mass-produced goods and informing people about them. This question is worth discussing because in today's world advertising is not just business expenditure; it is an integral part of modern culture.

It would be correct to say that consumer goods and advertising have brought comfort and pleasure to a large number of people and this is not morally bad. In a complex society, consumer goods are both necessary and important and, on the whole, they have been a much welcome development of the modern world.

However along with commodities, people need information about them such as their prices, functions, durability, distribution channels, and quality. This kind of information will help consumers to make wise and rational consumption choices. At this point, the crucial question is whether consumer advertising gives people enough, or indeed any, accurate information.

In this respect, this thesis will examine the two opposing approaches to advertising; namely, the critics' claim that the only aim of advertising is to increase sales and consumption by manipulating people and the advertisers' point of view that the primary aim of advertising is to maximize consumer benefits by informing them and presenting a large amount of alternatives. The whole system of advertising will be analyzed in detail to comprehend how the system works.

Therefore, the main focus of this thesis is to discuss the contrasting opinions about the existence and the system of advertising, along with its effects on purchasing behaviors. Another important aim of the study is to demonstrate that advertising is an important but not the only factor which brings an increase in the sales of a product.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **TODAY'S CONSUMERISM AND THE MIND OF THE CONSUMER**

In the analysis of today's consumerism two different approaches are prominent. One is called the "subjective approach" by Herbert Blumer, which treats consumers and industry separately and studies the decision-making processes of either consumers or companies in a given environment. To illustrate, according to the subjective approach, marketers plan to launch a product not knowing what consumers really want or need. Similar to the marketers, consumers buy products based on their own rational decisions.

In this respect, consumers do not consider the information put forward by marketers and advertisers. In general, this approach portrays consumers as free agents in a marketplace and welcomes consumer activism in the consumption process. According to this, consumers carefully examine the quality and price of products when they decide to purchase it. They regard consumption not as a mode of cultural activity but rather as a rationalized process of fulfilling their desires. Therefore, consumer's purchasing decisions are not affected or manipulated by marketing or advertising strategies (Blumer, 1969, p.25-45).

On the contrary, the other approach emphasizes the interaction between consumers and the industry based on the premise that advertisers can affect consumers' purchasing decisions through the interaction of products. According to this approach, the advertising mechanism works in an unconscious and subliminal way because its effects do not seem open to introspection. Such approaches are associated with the "dark and manipulative" view of advertising.

In this respect, consumers cannot escape from the systematic constraint of capitalism insofar as they depend upon commodities in the expression of their consumption behaviors (Sutherland & Sylvester, p.5, 2000). There is a sharp contrast with the subjectivist observations at this point as this approach undermines the belief that consumers are free agents in the market.

According to this argument, manipulation begins not at the point where consumers choose different brands of the same product presented by the capitalist industry but at the point where the industry persuades consumers to choose a certain brand of the given product. For instance, according to this approach, the capitalist industry makes people believe that they need to have a cellular phone and they are given the "freedom" to choose the brand they like from the cellular phone market. However, having a cellular phone may not be a real need for the consumer in the first place as it is not a vital necessity for everyone to have a cellular phone.

On the other hand, according to the subjectivist approach, having a cellular phone is a real necessity in the era that we live because they make our business and

personal lives easier. In this respect, the capitalist industry does not create but discover consumers' new needs and presents alternative products to satisfy their needs. Marketers and advertisers in turn present these products to consumers and inform them about the qualities and functions of the products by using different strategies. There is no manipulation in this process; consumers are free to purchase cellular phones and they choose to do so not because they are manipulated by marketers but because they believe that cellular phones will make their lives easier.

In the light of these two opposite views, this chapter focuses particularly on the relationship between consumers' purchasing decisions and the importance of symbolic significance of commodities, which are created by marketers and advertisers.

This chapter serves as a basis for the following chapter that will discuss the opposing theories about the advertising industry by evaluating today's consumerism dynamics. The brand name is a powerful tool for the industry to associate commodities with consumers because it symbolizes various elements of commodities. Therefore, consumers have relative liberty in finding the association between their rational needs and the commodities that they purchase.

Even though it may be possible for consumers to consume in accordance with their own rational needs, their freedom is eventually restricted in the capitalist system. In this sense, this chapter examines the functional aspect of commodities as a

communicative tool. In the capitalist society, the power relation between the industry and consumers is quite complicated; on the one hand, consumers are allowed to interpret industry's messages freely, on the other hand, the industry encourages consumers to actively participate in the interaction. It is the industry, however, that dominates the communicative processes and even though it may be possible for consumers to formulate their own needs and desires through commodities, their freedom is eventually accommodated into the capitalist system.

In other words, this chapter discusses the question why people consume. Do they consume to satisfy their own rational needs according to their own preferences or do they act on created or false needs, which are formed by marketers and advertisers? Moreover, this chapter will examine the argument that some new needs like cellular phones are actually created by marketers. Do they become a real necessity for the consumer or are consumers just persuaded or even manipulated? To understand the relationship between consumers and the capitalist industry, firstly it is necessary to observe the types of commodities in the world of marketing.

## **2.1 Types of Commodities in the World of Marketing**

Before discussing the two opposite views which are mentioned briefly in the introduction, this section will focus on Phillip Kotler's specification of commodities in order to understand the strategies of marketers. Marketers and advertisers apply different strategies for every product. Therefore, they segment the products as they segment the consumers, which will be elaborated on in the



following sections, to achieve their aims more easily. Phillip Kotler, an American marketing advisor, classifies commodities into four categories (Kotler, 1994, p.436):

1. *Convenience Goods*: These commodities are what customers purchase frequently, immediately and with a minimum effort, such as tobacco products. The brand-name loyalty is very powerful for convenience goods because most consumers do not want to change their habits. Therefore it is very hard for marketers to launch a new convenience good because other competitors have already shared the market. To possess a piece of this market, the new product's unique selling purpose – the distinguishing points of the product from its competitors – must be very powerful.
2. *Shopping Goods*: This type of commodities includes furniture or clothing and major appliances, which customers characteristically compare on such bases as suitability, quality, price and style.
3. *Unsought Goods*: This type of commodities is ones that consumers either do not know about or do not normally consider buying. The classic examples are life insurance or gravestones.
4. *Specialty Goods*: These commodities are the ones with unique characteristics and/or brand identification for which a significant group of buyers are habitually willing to make a special purchasing effort, such as branded goods like cars, men's suits, women's jewelry, newspapers, or cellular phones. For this type of products, the important thing is not their price or quality but the symbolic representation of their brand name. No

matter how cheap or expensive, simple or vogue, the symbolic representation of the brand name is the crucial thing for consumers when they decide to purchase the goods.

When consumers choose products, they pay attention to the products' different specialties. To illustrate, when different people buy the same product, some may think of the price as a determining factor and others may think of its functional benefits. Consumers are especially likely to choose such commodities as food, detergents, toothpaste and cleaners based on their functional benefits and prices. In many cases, these kinds of products do not have symbolic representations and consumers purchase them to satisfy their basic needs. Therefore, when advertisers present these products, they just inform consumers of their prices, qualities, and functional benefits. They do not try to create new meanings for the product; therefore, advertisements of this kind mostly resemble each other.

On the other hand, according to this commodity classification, the fourth type of commodities, which is called "specialty goods" by Kotler are produced to differentiate themselves from other competing products by linking the differentiation to the self-image of consumers. Most of the time, consumers do not question the specialty product's quality or price but the symbolic representation of the brand name when they decide to buy it. Consumers purchase these products because they represent a life-style, a different social status in the society or a different self-image for the consumer, which is called "extra values", meaning extra benefits presented to the consumer apart from the use value of the product (Kotler, 1994, p.467).

For instance, *Cumhuriyet*, a Turkish daily newspaper, is not just an ordinary newspaper for the consumer. *Cumhuriyet* presents a life style to the consumer and it is the symbol of intellectualism. The same is true for expensive products. Consumers do not purchase Gucci watches for their fundamental benefit, which is telling the time, they are purchased because Gucci symbolizes a high socio-economic status. The consumer may not prefer to buy other competitive watches with unknown brand names even if their prices are the same as or lower than Gucci. Gucci is purchased to be a part of the “high society”.

Specialty products’ promise is not based on satisfying fundamental needs of consumers because they are meant to represent a life style. Therefore, for marketers and advertisers, it is a hard and long process to find such products, to create new meanings for them and to persuade consumers to purchase them. This chapter will focus on the relation between consumers and these kinds of branded products. To discuss this relationship, firstly, the subjectivist approach and its opposite views will be examined in more detail.

## **2.2 Borders of Freedom of Choices in the Capitalist Industry**

The subjectivist approach is based on the idea of freedom of choices for consumers in the capitalist society. In general, subjectivists portray consumers as free agents in a marketplace and they welcome consumer activism (Blumer, 1969, p.25-45). In this respect, consumers carefully examine the quality and price of products when they decide to purchase them. They regard consumption not as a mode of cultural activity but rather as a rationalized process of fulfilling their desires. There is no

manipulation or exploitation in this process as the industry presents a wide range of products which are chosen freely by consumers.

According to the British sociologist Robert Bocock, individual consumers can attain two different types of satisfaction through consumption. The first type is the consumption that directly satisfies consumers' immediate needs. The second type of satisfaction is attained from the "prolongation of consumption", and this prolongation or "the consumption of time" is also the pleasure of consumption. In other words, consumers can derive satisfaction not only from material acquisition but also from the process of consumption as an activity (Bocock, 1993, p.130). In this respect, for the second type of satisfaction, the feeling of "possession" is important. For instance, consumers purchase "specialty products" not to satisfy their immediate needs but for the pleasure of possessing them.

At this point, the question of how specialty products gain this extra value in addition to their use value becomes important. Is it marketers and advertisers who create them? According to the subjectivist approach, even though they are created by marketers there is no manipulation in this process. The capitalist industry only presents different alternatives and advertisers inform people about them. In contrast, the opposite approach claims that with its strategies of marketing and advertising, the capitalist industry creates these extra values and makes people believe that they can add something to their lives or personalities.

According to Bocoock, whether consumers choose commodities freely or they are persuaded, the symbolic representation of brand names, which are created by marketers and advertisers, affect consumers' decision-making process. With the development of the industrial society, people have more chances to escape from the constraints of traditions of social units such as a nation, company or family. As a result, people can act as individual agents and their needs are diversified. The industry presents to consumers different product lines to meet their diversified needs and consumers can express their preferences by making a choice from a wide range of product lines. However Bocoock claims that this is not a real freedom. In fact it is a created demand with the very same capitalist industry (Bocoock, 1993, p.130 – 135).

In relation to this point, according to Jean Baudrillard, commodities have an influence on consumers' purchasing decisions and he also claims that this influence is created by the industry. Individual preferences are actually not their own and the industry provides a wide range of products that may make consumers feel as if their individual tastes would be reflected on the commodities. Baudrillard criticizes the industry's generous attitudes, which is presenting a wide range of alternatives as the subjectivist approach claims, by giving consumers the freedom of choices as a trick of capitalism.

Baudrillard criticizes the subjectivists who claim that industry does not manipulate consumers' freedom of choices:

Our freedom to choose causes us to participate in a cultural system willy-nilly. It follows that the choice in question is a specious one: to experience

it, as freedom is simply to be less sensible of the fact that it is imposed upon us as such and that through it society as a whole is likewise imposed upon us. Choosing one car over another may perhaps personalize your choice, but the most important thing about the fact of choosing is that it assigns you a place in the overall economic order (Baudrillard, 1996, p.141).

In Baudrillard's account, the capitalist system allows consumers a certain degree of freedom. For instance, when a business executive for a well-known company decides to buy a car, he has multiple choices ranging from a Mercedes, BMW and Volvo to a Rover. These brands are perceived to be prestigious because of their marketing and advertising strategies. The capitalist industry tries to differentiate products as well as consumers so that the executive can find the best car. He feels as if the brand name of the car represents his own social status as a successful business executive and a member of the upper class.

According to Baudrillard, this is the point where manipulation starts. The executive is made to see the car as a social status symbol but not as a transportation vehicle. In this respect, the executive is persuaded about the product's extra values apart from use values in Phillip Kotler's terms. In the following section, capitalist consumerism and the manipulation arguments will be evaluated in the light of Baudrillard's approaches.

### **2.3 Agents and Reasons of Manipulation**

According to Pierre Bourdieu, the communication between consumers and the industry is not necessarily mutual; the categorization is drawn by industry, not

consumers, simply because the industry monopolizes the symbolic power, and exercises this dominant power over consumers. (Bourdieu, 1987, p.60-65)

As an example of the domination of the symbolic power by the industry, Bourdieu demonstrates the functions of the media and advertisements. However, in reality, the domination is not by the absolute exercise of power by the industry, but rather through the consensus among social agents including manufacturers, the mass media, distributors, advertising agencies, and individual consumers.

Based on this standpoint, individuals learn common-sense knowledge, and the domination of symbolic power is most effective when the domination is taken for granted by the members of the society (Hebdige, 1982, p.11-15). The industry treats consumers as groups by status, age, value or sex, based on marketers' segmentations which are called "intended consumer groups". Products are produced and marketed collectively according to these intended consumer groups, no matter how seriously the industry tries to diversify product lines (Kotler, 1994, p.60-65). In this respect, the following question can be evaluated: Why do consumers refer to this segmentation done by the industry in order to express their own consumption preferences? This question can be evaluated in the light of David Riesman's thoughts. Reisman rejects the myth that individuals create their own consumption preferences and argues that consumers rely on external criteria such as the mass media and other people when they form their own purchasing decisions. According to Reisman, the fundamental motive of consumption is anxiety and people consume to be part of a social group.

Such people are described as “other-directed people” and their common characteristics can be listed as follows:

The society of incipient population decline develops in its typical members a social character whose conformity is insured by their tendency to be sensitized to the expectations and preferences of others. These I shall term other-directed people and the society in which they live one dependent on other-direction (Riesman, 1961, p.8).

When other-directed people act, they tend to follow other people; the criterion of their judgment stem not from themselves, because they do not have normative criterion of their own, but from other external sources such as friends and the mass media.

Advertisements, the best way of marketers to persuade consumers to buy their product, inform the consumers about which product belongs to which group. In advertisements, marketers create an illusory atmosphere. For instance, the women in Diet-Coke advertisements are always fit, sporty and good-looking. This demonstration puts pressure on consumers because Diet-Coke advertisements imply that if you want to be fit, sporty and good-looking you have to drink Diet-Coke.

According to Riesman, consumption is not an activity to satisfy the basic needs of consumers but to ease the psychological anxiety of being part of a social group, and for this reason marginal differences are important. What constitutes consumer attitudes, according to Riesman, is anxiety (Reisman, 1961, p.8-10). Reisman



claims that people are open to all influences from their surroundings because of this psychological anxiety.

This psychological approach demonstrates “why” individuals as the elements of consumer groups are open to manipulation from their surroundings, which include the mass media and advertisements, and refer to the segmentations that are created by marketers. At this point, with the help of Bourdieu, “how” individuals as the elements of a social group are manipulated from their surroundings will be evaluated.

#### **2.4 Connection between the Industrial Society and Consumers**

The consumer society is a social reality, which is constituted as a result of power relationships among various social agents such as the industry, the media, and people involved. At this point, we have to consider the connection between the industry and consumers. Pierre Bourdieu's concepts, “social space” and “habitus” could give some keys to understand the relation between consumers and the industry in modern consumerism.

Bourdieu explains how people obtain both subjective and objective criteria of their identities by referring to their positions in the social world. He claims that in the social world the closer social groups come, the more similar properties they tend to share in comparison with other distant groups. He stresses that the social distinction he uses is not real class stratification. Bourdieu’s purpose is to group common propensities of certain social groups, in hopes that this categorization

reveals the ideological formation of each social group. He emphasizes that social groups are “made”, they are not a social reality (Bourdieu, 1987, p.129). For instance, two people of the same class are likely to show similar mental structures that are often represented by their political views, lifestyle or habits. Their perceptions of the world are an objective side of the explanation of “habitus”. On the other hand, “social space” is an objective criterion to measure one's position in the social world (Bourdieu, 1987, p.126).

To illustrate, while he is trying on a new suit that he cannot afford to purchase, someone who has a low socio-economic status may be told: "You look like a millionaire in this branded and expensive suit". This statement implies that both speakers and listeners recognize the social distance. The branded and expensive suit is not just a piece of clothing for them; it is indeed a symbol of the upper class. We tend to associate other people including ourselves with certain social characteristics common to our class.

This kind of collective characterization works as an objective criterion in judging people. Habitus, thus, is a collective objectification when we perceive “people”. According to Bourdieu, the perception of social reality includes both individuals, which means perception as the representation of individual mental states, and social groups that is cognitive structures, which are socially constructed. At the individual level, habitus has both subjective and objective sides to it; it is the schemata, or common-sense knowledge, of “practicing”, a taken-for-granted guideline for individuals when they act, and the schemata of “perceiving”,

individuals' reference of their own image to their positions in the social world. There is a connection between subjectivity and objectivity on the one hand, and between individuals and society, on the other hand. Habitus is the result of the internalization of the structures of the social world, and based on this criterion, people acquire both the perception of their positions and the schemata of practice in the social world (Bourdieu, 1987, p.131). For instance, people sometimes describe a book as an “intellectual book”. Such a judgment presupposes two conditions:

Firstly, habitus represents an objective criterion that a consumer buys an “intellectual book” and not a comic because she considers herself, with an objective criterion, as an intellectual. She classifies herself with her belongings and surroundings that suit her position. She refers to the social classification in finding her own place, which is an intellectual, and this objective reflection gives her the schemata of welcomed practice for her place, which is buying an intellectual book in this case. Secondly, the statement of “intellectual” presupposes that both speakers and listeners have a tacit agreement on what intellectuals should be like in terms of social personality, social action, and social role. Both of them are capable of perceiving the relation between practices or representations and positions in social space just as when they guess at a person's social position from her spoken accent.

In this sense, habitus is common-sense knowledge, and it provides people with the perceptions of the social world (Bourdieu, 1987, p.132). Therefore, habitus

represents not only the schemata of perception and of practice on the individual level, but also normative criteria on the collective level. It provides people with common sense knowledge, an ideological constraint, which regulates their mentality and practices.

## **2.5 The Effect of Marketing Strategies on Purchasing Decisions**

Until now, it has been suggested that individuals are likely to get highly affected by their surroundings, both psychologically and socially. It is obvious that the capitalist industry, which presents a wide range of products for the benefit of consumers according to the subjectivist approach and which manipulates them by creating false needs according to the opposite views, influences consumers' purchasing behaviors. At this point, the question of how the industry persuades or manipulates consumers by using marketing and advertising strategies will be discussed.

Modern marketing is simply defined as directing the flow of goods from producers to customers. The term "marketing" has many definitions. Recently, many marketers have begun to emphasize interactions between customers and other parties such as companies, non-profit organizations, political institutions, and educational institutions, through the market. Marketing has a huge impact on fast-moving consumer goods through a wide range of activities including promotion, market research and advertising. Kotler defines marketing as follows:

Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others (1994, p.6).

The ultimate aim of marketing is increasing consumption. The basic marketing strategy to achieve this aim is known as “segmentation” which can be described as defining an intended consumer group for each product that the capitalist industry presents. It is almost impossible for a product to be sold to everyone. Therefore, when marketers launch a new product, firstly they define an intended group of consumers whose age, sex, marital status, income level, educational level or occupation is in line with the new product (Yaylacı, 1999, p.132-133).

David Reisman links consumer groups and product segmentation, which is done by marketers, with the term “standard package”. According to Reisman, the capitalist industry creates a different group of commodities for each group of consumers, which is known as a “standard package”. People are made to believe that these standard packages may help them change their standard of living. For instance, Reisman claims that once young workers reach a certain income level, they always tend to purchase a package of commodity. According to this segmentation, three electric appliances characterize modern urban life; an electric washing machine, a television set, and a refrigerator. Young workers buy these commodities in order to integrate what these commodities symbolically represent into their own lifestyle. This is the standard package needed by young workers to be a part of modern urban life (Reisman and Roseborough, 1955, p.119-125).

In general, the industry attempts to communicate with consumers through commodities by using these basic strategies of marketing; defining the intended consumer group and doing product segmentation. They work so perfectly that consumers do not notice that they are assorted by the classification of industry and most of them refer to this segmentation unconsciously.

The other fundamental strategy of marketing that helps persuasion or manipulation according to some critics is positioning a brand name for the intended consumer group. The term brand name refers to commodities, images and services. It is a symbolic representation of the product; in other words, it is the very face of the product, the symbol which is remembered by consumers. The role of brand name in the relationship between the industry and consumers has been described as follows:

A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors. A brand thus signals to the customer the source of the product, and protects both the customer and the producer from competitors who attempt to provide products that appear to be identical (Aaker, 1991, p.7).

He assumes that the identification of the goods and services and the differentiation from the other products are key functions of brand names. A brand name represents various factors such as attributes, benefits, values, culture, or personality. Even though the brand name is one type of categorization, it is composed of common elements in terms of properties, images, services, and markets. It is through these categorized symbols that consumers perceive products

and services; on the other hand, the industry plans positioning strategies to reach the intended consumer group (Aaker, 1991, p.7-9).

With the product's brand-name positioning strategies, marketers build the identity of the brand as if it is something alive and try to create awareness about it between intended consumer groups with the help of advertising. Therefore, a brand name, according to Aaker, is the identity of a product, of an organization, and of a personality. For instance, Coca Cola is an energetic company or Erickson is a technology-driven company. Together with functional aspects of products, non-functional aspects like personality and visual imagery are also important because they affect the reception of consumers.

Aaker proposes that a brand name should have a personality, moreover, he argues for the humanization of brand identity. By doing so, marketers assume that consumers have an emotional association with the brand, which, they claim, raises consumption of the product and generates more profits for companies (Aaker, 1995, p. 68-70). According to Aaker, successful companies define the identity of the brand name, personalize it, and they also redefine the intended consumer group and market more concretely, based on the new identity. By strictly defining the identity of the brand name, it becomes easier for companies to reach their intended consumer group (Aaker, 1995, p. 70-85).

The industry, in general, has an advantage; it virtually monopolizes the symbolic power and economic resources by which it stamps these categorizations on consumers. For the industry, there are many ways to reach the intended consumer

group. With the development and segmentation of the mass media, the industry now establishes relatively direct channels to contact potential customers through TV advertisements. The distributions of the products are intentionally designed that potential customers find these products at the places where they mostly live. On the other hand, people outside the consumer group tend to be intentionally ignored by marketers in terms of the communication and distribution of both the products and images.

In light of these statements, it is possible to argue that there is an interaction between the industry and consumers through brand-names, which directs consumers' purchasing behavior, and the more active consumers become in the interaction process, the more they are incorporated into the system of the society. At this point, the interaction models of Don Peppers between consumers and the industry will be discussed.

## **2.6 Interaction Models between Consumers and Commodities**

According to Don Peppers, there are three types of interaction models between commodities and consumers: First, the consumer's purchasing preferences agrees with commodities' brand-name identities. Consumers identify their own values and lifestyles with the identity that the brand name symbolizes, by internalizing the symbolic meanings of commodities into their own values and lifestyles, which is known as "identical relation". This movement involves consumers' active interpretation of the symbols.



In the second type of interaction, as in the first type, commodities help shape consumers' purchasing decisions. However, there is a difference between this and the first type of interaction. In the first type of relationship, consumers have a life style which is created and developed in accordance to one commodity or a brand name. In the second type of interaction, which is called “commodity-driven identity”, consumers are given their values and lifestyles by a lot of different and trendy commodities. They are usually passive receivers of messages generated through symbolic interaction. In other words, they follow the fashion and form their lifestyles according to these “fashionable and trendy” commodities.

In the third relationship model, consumers help develop the identity of the brand name through the interaction between consumers and the industry. This last type of relationship may sound mutual; it involves the active participation of both consumers and the industry in the meaning-creation process. But it should be noted that this relation is based on the exchange of symbols, and no matter what form the relation takes, the operation of the relation takes place only within the system of capitalism. For modern consumers, as far as they rely on commodities for the expression of their own consumption behaviors, it is hard to free themselves from the intervention of the industry (Peppers, 1996, Presentation - Identity and Desire In Consumption).

**2.6.1 Interaction Model 1 – An Identical Relation:** A proper example of this interaction model is the “Harley-Davidson” motorcycle consumer. According to David Aaker, Harley owners see the Harley brand name as an important part of

their lifestyle. The Harley style is universal and owners everywhere get Harley logos tattooed on their bodies, wear the same style leather jackets, trousers and heavy boots and they mostly use similar accessories.

In the United States alone, over 250,000 people belong to the Harley Owners Group. When Harley lovers gather, a newcomer may be easily welcomed if he demonstrates his devotion to “Harley-Davidson”. According to Aaker, Harley lovers share three core values, the first of which is personal freedom. Based on the result of anonymous research, he concludes that the Harley-Davidson eagle logo is a symbol of freedom. The second value is patriotism and the third one is machismo (Aaker, 1995, p.138-142).

In this interaction model, consumers' choices of commodities or purchasing behavior are supposed to reflect the recognition of their places in social space in Bourdieu's terms, and of the symbolic identity of the brand. Harley Davidson owners regard Harley as the representation of their identities, namely being wild, free, macho and patriotic. Harley Davidson will retain the brand identity for as long as the company keeps the existing marketing strategy. By referring to the identity of Harley Davidson motorcycles, Harley lovers construct their lifestyles. They not only interpret the symbolic meanings that the Harley Davidson brand represents, they also internalize them as their own values and live their life accordingly.

Aaker assumes that since a brand name has a personality, it can be internalized as a part of one's self-identity. He claims "the ultimate personality expression occurs when a brand becomes an extension or an integral part of the self . . . the bike and the person become impossible to disentangle" (1995, p.156).

He also stresses the effectiveness of the symbolic meaning of "personalized brands" in relation with consumer purchasing decisions: "Brands that become a part of one's extended self are central to one's identity, have a deep emotional attachment to the self, and are somewhat controlled by the individual" (1995, p. 157).

Of course, commodities do not have a real personality, but marketers can strategically construct such "symbolic" personalities. This interaction model illustrates that consumers can have a deeply emotional relation with commodities if they internalize the symbolic message of the brand. A marketer of Harley-Davidson says that:

Since Harley's initial public stock was offered in 1986, by the year 2000, Harley-Davidson shares had split four times and were up more than 7,100 percent." Harley-Davidson's marketers spend a great deal of time thinking about customers and their buying behavior. They want to know who their customers are, what they think and how they feel and why they buy a Harley rather than a Yamaha, a Suzuki or a big Honda American Classic. Harley-Davidson makes good bikes and to keep up with its shifting market, the company has upgraded its showrooms and sales approaches. But Harley's customers are buying a lot more than just a quality and a smooth sales pitch. They are actually making a life style statement and displaying an attitude (Kotler, 2001, p.540).

In most Harley-Davidson advertisements, strong emotions and motivations are captured as well as representing the all-time popular Harley Davidson values. For instance, one of their popular advertisements shows a close-up of a man's arm with a Harley logo quite visibly tattooed on it and the headline asks: "When was the last time you felt this strong about anything?" The following quotation gives us several clues about the layout of the above-mentioned Harley Davidson advertisement:

Wake up in the morning. You do what has to be done. Use what it takes to get there. And what once seemed exciting has now become part of the numbing routine. It all begins to feel the same except when you've got a Harley-Davidson. Something strikes a nerve. The heartfelt thunder rises up, refusing to become part of the background. Suddenly things are different, clearer and more real as they should have been all along. The feeling is personal. For some, owning a Harley is a statement of individuality. For others, owning a Harley means being a part of a homegrown legacy that was born in a tiny Milwaukee shed in 1903. To the uninitiated, a Harley-Davidson motorcycle is associated with a certain look and a certain sound. Anyone who owns one will tell you change from within. This effect is permanent. Maybe it's time you started feeling this strongly. Things are different with a Harley (Kotler, 2001, p.543).

**2.6.2 Interaction Model 2 – Commodity Driven Identity:** In this type of interaction model, consumers use brand names as measurements to characterize everything including their lifestyles and personal relationships. According to Peppers, these consumers have material-oriented relationships. They can talk about not only their own belongings but also other people's belongings. More than that, they are likely to see objectively their own body as if it were a part of a material being (Peppers, 1996, presentation-Identity and Desire In Consumption).

In other words, the world in which they live is one whose ideology is that human relationships are recognized only by way of commodities. In this type of relationship model, consumers' purchasing decisions and preferences are made by the industry and their attitudes toward commodities are passive when compared to the first type of interaction model. Brand names represent objective criteria to measure both themselves and other people, and it is brand names that organize their life-styles. Although, this type of relationship model resembles the first type of interaction, there are some differences. In the first type of interaction model, which is called identical relation, consumers have a life style that is created and developed in accordance to one commodity or a brand name as it has been exemplified with the case of Harley-Davidson. In this type of interaction, consumers are given their values and lifestyles by a lot of different and trendy commodities. In other words, they follow the fashion and form their lifestyles according to these "fashionable and trendy" commodities.

In the identical relation model, consumers are not only interested in branded commodities that they own but also branded commodities which other people own. They appraise and criticize people according to their belongings. They like to catalog their own possessions but this catalog is a plan of their lifestyle, and their lifestyle, in this sense, is nothing more than their own capacity to collect and organize these commodities (Kotler, 2001, p.548).

For instance, in the case of Harley-Davidson, there are many non-American Harley lovers and owners who seem to believe that the Harley brand name represents

American values and they enjoy sharing these values represented in this product and image. They show their preference for American values by riding Harleys, wearing Levi's jeans, using Zippo lighters and smoking Marlboro. These commodities symbolize Americanness, and by the use of these American products they try to internalize American values into their own lifestyles. In comparison to the first type of interaction model, in the second one, consumers ride Harley-Davidson or wear Levi's jeans not to adopt the American lifestyle but just because they think Harley-Davidson or Levi's jeans are fashionable and trendy.

In this respect, theoretically, consumers have a freedom to position themselves in the social space and to organize their lifestyles accordingly. But, as far as they rely on commodities for the organization of their purchasing preferences, their decisions are provided according to the symbolic identities of brand-names produced by the industry or by marketers in today's world (Swidler, 1986, p. 276-278).

**2.6.3 Interaction Model 3 – A Reciprocal Relationship Between Consumers and the Industry:** In the third type of interaction model, consumers play an active role in building the brand name's perception. It is virtually impossible for the industry to totally control consumer behaviors because sometimes a certain kind of consumer-led interaction may take place. Consumers may be able to create a certain symbolic meaning in commodities. But once consumers begin to interact with the industry, in most cases the industry accommodates the new meaning and

re-categorizes the market. In this sense, the symbolic power always resides within the industry (Peppers, 1996, Presentation - Identity and Desire In Consumption).

There are many cases in which consumers find a new use for the commodities that manufacturers, suppliers and even marketers do not even think of. For instance, the trainer brand Puma is very trendy nowadays and is used for inner-house clothing especially among young consumers. In this sense, Puma earns a new symbolic meaning among consumers and the industry. The industry defines the brand identities, and based on the marketing strategy, tries to reach the intended consumers. In reality, many new products end up in failure in two to three months after the launch which forces companies to retreat from the market. Sometimes, they succeed in winning the intended consumers. However, in some other cases, their success does not come from the intended market; consumers interpret commodities in favor of their own uses, as in the case of Puma.

At the end of this chapter, it can be said that the industry generally accepts the change and redefines the identities of the brand name so that the new identities can win more consumers. Marketers redefine their intended consumer groups and re-launch the brand name according to new marketing strategies and support the commodity with a new advertising campaign and redefine the position of the brand name in the market.

According to the new marketing strategies, products are designed to appeal to the tastes of new consumers. In this type of interaction, the gap between the brand

identities and social reality prompts the industry to redefine the brand identities and the markets.

This chapter, basically, has focused on the relationship between the capitalist industry and consumers' purchasing decisions. The effects of marketing strategies on consumer behaviors and preferences have been discussed. The interactions between the symbolic representations of commodities' brand names, which are created by marketers and consumption decisions, have been evaluated.

In the following chapter, the mechanism of advertising as one of the most important vehicles of the capitalist industry to communicate with consumers, and the opposite approaches about advertising will be discussed. As Leiss, Kline and Jhally point out, "advertising could not be understood as simply another form of salesmanship. It arrived at something new, the creation of consumption communities" (1985, p.59).



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **A DISCUSSION OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ADVERTISING**

In industrial societies, advertising has become one of the most powerful and effective devices of social communication. In its simplest sense, advertisements promote goods and services. They draw attention to something or notify somebody of something. Advertising has been defined in many ways. From the consumer's point of view, it informs the consumer about products and services by means of various mass media. On the other hand, from the marketing point of view, advertising is the paid presentation of the products or ideas through mass media by an identified person or organization. Gillian Dyer defines advertising as "one of the means used by manufacturing and service industries to ensure the distribution of commodities to people in society at large" and she claims it is meant to create demands for goods and services (Dyer, 1995, p.5).

Advertising is an interdisciplinary field of study, which relates not only to mass communication but to arts, sociology, psychology, literature, drama, semiotics and linguistics as well. It also enters people's lives, influences our actions and purchasing behaviors. Advertising has become one of the greatest aspects of our culture and it also affects many cultural values. In relation to this point,

advertising reaches deep into our interpersonal and family relationships, affects older cultural traditions and younger generations and creates sex roles and stereotyping (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.2).

Advertising works when it influences a consumer's purchasing behavior. This does not only mean that non-buyers must be persuaded to become first-time buyers, nor that current consumers should be persuaded to purchase the brand that also buy before. In addition to this, advertising is effective if it helps maintain a brand name's already existing consumers.

This is known technically as protecting the brand name's franchise and keeping up the current levels of purchase frequency. It can even work if sales are going down as a result of competitive pressure on the brand in the marketplace, because effective advertising may help to slow down this process. Finally, a behavioral effect can be felt if consumers are persuaded to pay a premium price for an advertised commodity, even though sales in units may not necessarily be increasing.

The primary function of advertising, as has been mentioned, is to introduce a wide range of consumer goods to the public and thus to support the free market economy, but this is clearly not its only role. Over the years, it has become more and more involved in the manipulation of social values and attitudes and less concerned with the communication of essential information about goods and services (Dyer, 1995, p.3). In relation to this point, according to Judith

Williamson, the mass media and advertisements reach deep into our lives day by day. Williamson claims that advertisements create new needs and consumption patterns and do not inform people about the product's specialties. He explains this situation as follows:

The use-value of material goods covers our primary needs. Besides needing materials goods, we need to belong to a social place. But this is hard to find. The mass media provides us an imaginary one, giving a social meaning to the goods advertised so that our social need is covered. This meaning created to cover the need of non-material things, is ideology. The society we live in can be changed by advertising and it is changed by advertising which changes, existing consumption patterns or creates new ones (Williamson, 1978, p.14).

Most critics about advertising focus on the ideas of Williamson. Does advertising create false needs and encourage the production and consumption of things that are incompatible with the fulfillment of urgent human needs by changing existing consumption patterns? Or does it contribute to the society's well-being and raise people's standard of living by encouraging the sales of mass-produced goods, informing people about these goods, stimulating production, creating employment and prosperity? This chapter will focus on these conflicting approaches to advertising. The question of whether advertising has a significant and measurable impact on consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior patterns will be discussed because all opposite arguments about advertising are related to this basic question.

According to Leiss, Kline and Jhally, advertising has given rise to harsh criticism ever since it became prominent in the national media, on the grounds that it has a negative impact in general – for example, it encourages people to over-value material things. Suggestions that subliminal messages hidden in advertisements

affect us without our being aware of their influence are alarming, although this sort of claim is usually groundless. Advertising is defended with equal ardor as a valuable contributor to the efficiency and freedom of a market economy. Recently, it has also been acknowledged as a form of artistic expression (1985, p.3-4).

People who criticize advertising in its current form argue that advertising is an irrational system, which appeals to our emotions and to our anti-social feelings, which have nothing to do with the goods on offer. Advertisements usually suggest private acquisition and competitiveness as a primary goal in life. It is said that today's consumer economy makes people greedy, materialistic and wasteful, and advertising exacerbates this situation. (Fiske, 1982, p. 32-33).

On the other hand, those who defend advertising suggest that it is economically necessary and has brought many benefits to the society and advertisers also claim that people are perfectly free to ignore their advertisements and that commercials do not brainwash or manipulate people.

According to Dyer, it is indeed true to say that consumer goods have brought comfort and pleasure to a large number of people and have alleviated want and hardship. He claims that this is not morally bad. In a complex society, consumer goods are necessary and important and, on the whole, they have been a welcome development of the modern world. But along with commodities, people need information about them such as their prices, functions, durability or quality. This kind of information will help consumers make wise and rational choices.

Dyer claims that the question we have to ask ourselves is whether consumer advertising gives us enough, or indeed any, accurate information, and whether the economic function of advertising is so vital that we can not afford to do without it whatever the cultural, social and personal drawbacks. In addition to this, Dyer claims that we also need to ask who is ultimately benefiting from the advertising of consumer goods – the society as a whole or a few powerful commodity manufacturers and business corporations (1985, p.4-6). Advertising is not just business expenditure; it is an integral part of modern culture. In this chapter, advertising as one of the most powerful marketing strategies, which effects consumer's purchasing decisions and preferences, will be discussed from different perspectives that have been briefly mentioned above.

### **3.1 Criticisms against Advertising**

Many critics claim that advertising is an inefficient and irrational system because of two main reasons. The first reason concentrates on its economic function in the market place. According to this viewpoint, advertising is an unnecessary business cost, because it actually raises the prices of goods. Company owners spend huge amounts of money to advertising agencies for creative concept, production companies for shooting the advertisement, and media companies for broadcasting the advertisement on TV, the radio or newspapers. Company owners actually demand these expenses back from consumers. Therefore, the prices of products increase and considerable amounts of money are spent without resulting in an obvious consumer benefit. On the other hand, many other economists who are

defenders of advertising claim that advertising increases the standards of living and consumer satisfaction because it increases the overall sales of a particular brand name, resulting in a decrease in the product's price (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.15-16).

Aaker explains the economic function of advertising and points out its social impacts on the society as follows:

Although the literature on the economic effects of advertising is substantial by now, no consensus has been reached about whether it is wasteful or beneficial from a strictly economic standpoint. However, some commentators have sought to broaden the terms of debate by interpreting advertising's role in social as well as economic terms (1996, p.59)

The second important reason that advertising critics claim that it is irrational and inefficient is because of its social role and impacts on the society. This reason will be discussed under three topics: (1) why advertising exists; (2) how advertising works; (3) what effects advertising have on the society.

### **3.1.1 Why Does Advertising Exist?**

There are two opposite approaches relating to why advertising exists. Each approach claims that advertising exists because it creates demands among consumers. One is the Marxist position which claims that advertising is exploitative as is the whole capitalist system. The other approach is called "neo-liberal" by Leiss, Kline and Jhally. According to them, neo-liberals are people who are likely to concede that market forces must be constrained by public policy and government action.

The neo-liberals maintain that there are serious problems in how the modern society is organized, but these can be solved by modifications in the existing social system. In relation to this point, the neo-liberal position sees managed economy is desirable but, within such an economy, advertising is seen as unnecessary and disadvantageous to the public welfare (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.18). According to the neo-liberals, advertising creates desires that previously did not exist. The companies are the key decision makers and the system operates in the business firm's interests, not those of the consumer. Companies want to increase their profits by creating demand rather than by seeking to satisfy existing consumer needs. In short, in the neo-liberal approach, wants are created by producers through marketing strategies, and especially through advertising, which exists to create desires that are not real needs and to increase company profits (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.19-20).

The Marxist point of view about the creation of demand through advertising is similar to the neo-liberal approach. According to the Marxist theory, advertising is the most important and integral part of the capitalist system. The Marxist account accepts that without advertising the capitalist system cannot survive or vice versa. The capitalist productive capacity is huge, which also threatens its own existence for Marxists. At this point, the existence and importance of advertising arises.

The Marxist approach claims that advertising exists because, although the process of production places value in goods, profit only increases or even exists when those products are sold and converted into money in the marketplace. Otherwise,

capitalism will collapse because if goods cannot be sold there will be no further investment in production and, therefore, no profit.

From this point of view, advertising exists because goods produced in the marketplace can be sold and converted into a usable form. Advertising is only a small part of a larger system, which is capitalism for stimulating or creating demand that also includes package design, planned obsolescence, model changes and consumer credit. In this whole system, the Marxist approach sees advertising as the principle weapon in this strategy (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.20-22).

Even though, the neo-liberal approach and the Marxist positions are similar in claiming that advertising creates demands and desires for products and makes consumers purchase more than they really need, there are some differences between them too.

The neo-liberals claim that the market cannot be trusted to make good decisions about allocating resources and advertising distorts the composition of needs. Therefore, according to the neo-liberal approach, more rational planning institutions should replace advertising in the capitalist system.

On the other hand, the Marxist approach sees advertising as a solution to the problem of realization of capitalism. Advertising creates and also perpetuates the unnecessary desires of the social system as the neo-liberals claim. But there is no way to escape its continued existence in the capitalist system. In contrast to the



neo-liberal approach, Marxists claim that one can not contemplate the existence of advertising except in the context of rejecting capitalism as such. Therefore, the neo-liberals claim that there is no way of replacing advertising by more rational planning institutions in the capitalist system.

According to the Marxist approach, if there is an advanced capitalist system, there will be advertising too. The solution, which can prevent the creation of demands that consumers do not really need, is actually related to the capitalist system and not only to advertising. Therefore, the problem lies in the capitalist system (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p. 21).

### **3.1.2 How Does Advertising Create Demand?**

Underlying the argument that advertising creates demand is the tacit assumption that advertising actually succeeds in its attempt to increase consumption. A belief in the manipulative powers of advertising is one of the most widely accepted critics. Therefore, the criticism of advertising is directed not only at advertising's creation of demands but also at the ways in which it does so. According to the critics, one way in which advertising influences people is without even being aware of it, which means at a subconscious level. Vance Packard who is associated particularly with this issue claims that many of us are being influenced and also manipulated far more than we realize by advertising.

According to Packard, our habits, purchasing decisions, consumer behaviors are changing everyday at a subconscious level. He believes that there are some

manipulative techniques of advertisers that have hidden impacts on consumers. Therefore, he claims, advertising creates demands by affecting consumers at a subconsciousness level (Packard, 1957, p.11-16). There are some critics who believe that advertising is powerful with a mechanism that is unconscious and subliminal, and that is why its effects are not open to introspection. For instance, according to critics, in the print advertisements of Camel cigarettes, not only the image of a camel but also of a woman's figure, which reminds us of eroticism, appears (See Figure 1).

Another example, in Mercedes' print advertisements, there is no apparent message about the vehicle but one can see the three-point star, the logo of Mercedes, in the sole of a shoe. There is no clear message about Mercedes in this advertisement but the running shoe and the word "speed" influence consumers (See Figure 2). According to critics, these images seduce people at a subconscious level without them noticing (Sutherland and Sylvester, 2000, p.34.) Wilson Bryan Key, the writer of *Subliminal Seduction*, one of the most well-known books about advertising's hidden impact on consumer behaviors, claims that there are some manipulative hidden techniques of advertisers which effect consumer behaviors secretly and manage human motives in the interests of some special power structures. For instance, Key mentions the word "sex" baked into the surface of Ritz crackers and the deeply symbolic sexual imageries used in the depiction of iced cubes in alcohol advertisements (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.22).

On the other hand, advertisers claim that there is no proof that these kinds of advertisements affect consumer behavior. According to Max Sutherland and Alice K.Sylvester, such claims as Wilson Bryen Key's are nothing but visual graffiti and practical jokes played by those who design and create the advertisements. Sutherland and Sylvester believe that it is very easy for an art director to put something in an advertisement – a caricature of his boss for example – without his boss being aware that it is there. When the word “sex” is found disguised in the shadows of ice cubes in a Gilbey's gin advertisement, according to Sutherland and Sylvester, it is possibly an art director playing a joke on his boss.

Therefore, they claim that these kinds of theories are conspiracy theories with no real proof that they affect consumers at a subconscious level. Subliminal advertising is therefore a myth (Sutherland and Sylvester, 2000, p.33-37).

Sutherland and Sylvester explain their ideas about the subliminal effects of advertisements on consumer behaviors as follows:

The more attention we pay to an advertisements' message and the more consciously we process it, the more aware we are of it and the easier it is for us to recall it later. Advertising that receives shallow processing, far from being frighteningly powerful, is likely to be very inefficient and is almost certainly weaker than advertising that engages us at a more conscious level (Sutherland and Sylvester, 2000, p.42).



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

Figure 1. Subliminal Advertising: Camel Cigarettes

Figure 2. Subliminal Advertising: Mercedes Automobile

According to critics, the other way that advertisements influence people and create demand is commercial messages, which has to be created by advertisers to inform consumers about the commodity's specialties, price or functions. Advertising is criticized for the manner of these commercial messages in which goods are linked to various attributes presented as socially desirable.

Critics claim that advertising messages have been shifted from focusing on products to defining consumers as an integral part of the social meanings of goods. Therefore, according to critics, material objects have come to play an increasingly important role in social interaction and everyday life as symbols of prestige and status (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.24-27).

In relation to this point, Williamson distinguishes between a rational use of goods based on their utility alone, or what they can do for the consumer, and an irrational use based on what they symbolize, or what they mean to the consumer. Williamson claims that capitalist consumption is characterized by irrational use of goods because of the symbolic system of meaning within which goods are located (Williamson, 1978, p.185-190). According to critics, this symbolic system is irrational because objective performance features to the product are not demonstrated and any other demonstrations, or for goods to take on any other meaning, is unhealthy.

According to critics, another way of creating demand by advertising is the advertisement's promise. The product is shown as if it can change the consumer's life. For instance, in the advertisements consumers are persuaded that if they use the advertised product, they will be more attractive or good-looking, have shinier hair, more beautiful skin, save time or money, and so on. Therefore, advertisements portray some stereotypes, symbolic structures which are placed in the consumer's mind. Sut Jhally defines advertisements' promise as something "magical" that will transform the consumer's life (Jhally, 1987, p.42-45).

With the help of advertisements' promise, advertisers create imagery and symbolic images that replace "real" people with "artificial" types and situations, and thus turn people into "things", purchasable and exchangeable in the marketplace. In the advertisements, people are magically changed. Products engage in relations with humans as if they were alive. At the same time, because human personalities are

correlated with specific qualities ascribed to products, people become more like goods (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.26).

After this discussion about the ways in which advertising creates demands and affects consumers, the effects of advertising on consumers and the whole society will be discussed in the following section.

### **3.1.3 What Effects Does Advertising Have On The Society?**

According to the critics, creating false needs is the most important effect of advertising on consumers and the whole society. As has been mentioned earlier in this chapter according to Fiske, people who criticize advertising in its current form argue that advertisements create false needs and encourage the production and consumption of things that are incompatible with the fulfillment of urgent human needs.

Fiske believes advertisements usually suggest that private acquisition and competitiveness is a primary goal in life and consumer economy makes us greedy, materialistic and wasteful, and advertising promotes this situation by creating false needs (Fiske, 1982, p. 32-33).

Leiss, Kline and Jhally refer to Marcuse in defining a “false need”:

Most of prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs. Such needs have a societal content and function, which are determined by external powers over which the individual has no control. No matter how much needs may have

become the individual's own, they continue to be what they were from the beginning – products of a society whose dominant interests demand repression (Marcuse in Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.27).

In contrast with “false needs” which are created by marketers and advertisers, Marcuse also defines “true needs” of consumers. According to him, the only “true” needs that people need are nourishment, clothing and housing. In addition to this, Marcuse believes that individuals themselves must define these “true” needs and he claims that individuals define other needs for themselves except nourishment, clothing and housing only when they are truly free to give their own answers but, according to him, this is impossible, because individuals are kept incapable of being autonomous as long as they are indoctrinated and manipulated by the capitalist industry (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.27-29).

On the other hand, Dyer claims that it is perfectly true that consumer goods, which the capitalist industry produces and advertising presents to consumers, has brought comfort and pleasure to a large number of people and have alleviated want and hardship and Dyer does not maintain that this is morally bad.

According to Dyer, in a complex society, consumer goods are necessary and they are the symbols of the development of the modern world. In addition to this, Dyer believes that along with commodities, people need information about their prices, functions, durability, quality, and so on. This kind of information will help people make wise and rational consumer choices. Dyer claims that the question we have to ask ourselves is whether consumer advertising gives people enough, or indeed any, accurate information. Moreover, Dyer questions who is ultimately benefiting

from the advertising of consumer goods – the society as a whole as it is claimed by advertisers, or a few powerful commodities of manufacturers and business corporations (Dyer, 1995, p.4-5).

According to critics, the other impact of advertising on the society is the claim that advertising restricts people's self-development and makes them one-sided. According to anti-capitalists, advertising serves only the owners of capital not the interests of consumers. From the Marxist point of view, advertising not only manipulates consumer needs and brings into existence false needs that would not be felt in its absence but also for doing this, it just creates demands for particular products and makes consumers one-sided. Advertising presents consumption as a way of life and persuades people that only in consumption can they find satisfaction and happiness. According to Marxists, natural satisfaction of needs is replaced by the artificial mediation of commodities through advertising which restricts consumers' self development by affecting their purchasing decisions and consumption preferences (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.30-32).

Another important effect of advertising on the society lies in the assertion that advertising creates sex-roles and stereotypes. For instance, in detergent or food product advertisements, women are mostly demonstrated as responsible for cleaning and cooking.

In relation to this claim, according to Daniel Boorstin, advertisements encourage extravagant expectations because they are more vivid and dramatic than the



reality. Boorstin claims that advertisements create stereotypes and images and make people believe that they match up to reality. Boorstin worries not that advertising lies but that it befuddles or blurs people's experiences with values, making everything ambiguous. Therefore it becomes harder and harder to distinguish true images from constructed images in the advertisements (cited in Dyer, 1995, p.81-82). Leiss, Kline and Jhally explain Boorstin's ideas with the help of an example:

Advertisements combine a constructed or imagery event (how junior got his clothes so filthy) with a simplified but vivid ideal (mother's passionate concern for whiteness) so as to generate a desired outcome in reality (brand loyalty in a laundry detergent) (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.28).

In these sections, criticisms directed at the system of advertising, and the whole capitalist industry as the creator of advertising, have been discussed. Advertising critics regard advertising as a persuasive, manipulative and powerful tool of capitalism and, from this perspective the consumer is seen as the confused and mostly abused victim of advertising. In contrast, advertisers and defenders of advertising see the effects of advertising and portray consumers in a distinctly different way.

In the following sections, the system of advertising, its effects on the society and consumer behaviors will be discussed from the advertisers' and its defenders' points of view. Their ideas about the claims that advertising creates false needs and manipulate consumers will be evaluated to understand the other side of the picture and the whole system clearly.

### **3.2 Advertising from its Creators' and Defenders' Points of View**

Classical liberal economic theory portrays consumers as free agents who use products that the capitalist industry produces along with the information that is provided by advertising to satisfy their needs. From this point of view, consumers' needs and desires can be matched with suitable products to satisfy them with the help of advertising. In contrast to the critics of advertising, defenders claim that advertising does not create demands that consumers do not really need but they discover consumer needs and consequently design products to meet and satisfy these needs. In this respect, the defenders of advertising do not regard consumers as confused and abused; in contrast, they see consumers who are the most powerful side of the relationship between the industry, manufacturers and consumers.

In relation to this point, Leiss, Kline and Jhally explain how the defenders of advertising portray consumers:

According to defenders, the marketing system should be seen as a provisioning technology that confronts the enormous task of matching tens of millions of consuming units with tens of thousands of producing units. Its strategies are based on the premise that the consumer, as ultimate decision maker, is a rational problem solver who takes full advantage of this technology (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.35).

According to Kotler, advertising derives profits through creating customer satisfaction, not creating false needs and demands. He claims that rational consumers face many products that will satisfy their needs and rational producers of goods will only produce what consumers want. Therefore, consumers are free

agents who search products to satisfy their own needs and producers just discover these needs to present solutions to consumers. In this process, Kotler assumes that advertising just informs consumers about the results (Kotler, 1994, p.78-80).

### **3.2.1 The Myth of Manipulation**

The argument that advertising creates demands which consumers do not really need and thus manipulate them is the most important criticism relating to advertising. Therefore, it is the most serious issue that the defenders of advertising discuss. According to Borden, advertising accelerates trends in consumption patterns but it cannot by itself create these patterns (Borden, 1947, p.43-46).

The defenders of advertising claim that advertising aims to make consumers pay attention to the new products in the market but it cannot force people to buy things they do not need. They contend that advertising is a powerful communication tool; however, on the other hand, they claim that some goods sell successfully while others sell unsuccessfully.

Leiss, Kline and Jhally evaluate the premise that advertising creates demand on the side of defenders with reference to Rachael Querles. Querles sought to test advertising critics' claim that advertising creates demands by asking the following question: What factors determine how much people buy? The critics of advertising claim that especially television advertising is one of the most important elements in governing how much a society consumes.

On the other hand, according to Querles, advertising is just a minor element to determine how much a society consumes because there are more important issues than advertising to determine that, such as the society's per capita gross national product, habits of consumption, culture, or traditions. In this respect, it is impossible to claim that people consume just because of advertising (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.40-41).

In relation to this point, Querles explains the effect of advertising on consumption behavior as follows:

It is possible that consumers are not really manipulated by advertising but are instead beneficiaries of a more efficient distribution system made possible by advertising. Advertising may actually increase the level of consumption, not because it is persuading us to do things we would not otherwise do, but by making the system work more efficiently for the benefit of both consumers and producers (Querles, 1980, p.11).

In this respect, the defenders of advertising claim that consumers may be confused and, if they are, it is not because advertising manipulates them by creating false needs. In contrast, according to the defenders of advertising, it does not confuse consumers but discovers their needs and informs them about products. In the following section, the basic defense of advertising, its informative characteristics, will be discussed.

### **3.2.2 The Informative Characteristics of Advertising**

One of the most important criticisms about advertising is that if advertising did not create demand then company owners would not spend billions of dollars on

advertising each year. The defenders of advertising have two different answers to counter this issue. First, they claim that companies advertise not because they know it will work, but because they are not sure that it will not. According to this thought, companies take risks and advertise their products.

The second reason that companies advertise is, while they know advertising cannot increase demand, it can increase the product's market share and awareness of people. Advertising defenders claim that their advertisements are not demand-oriented but brand-oriented. Therefore, from this point of view, advertising does not increase products' consumer level but it promotes their brand image and makes people aware of the product.

Tobacco advertisements are given as an example of the premise that advertising does not increase demand. Advertisers claim that tobacco advertisements are brand-oriented, therefore they do not make people smoke; they just inform people of the brand. Advertisements do not increase the total quantity of the product but can persuade smokers to purchase a particular tobacco brand (Kotler, 1994, 331-336).

From this point of view, advertisements present alternatives to consumers. In other words, it is a form of information. Consumers rely on past consumption experiences or the advice of friends or relatives while they decide to buy something and this information is insufficient. According to advertisers, advertisements play the most important role. Especially television advertisements inform consumers and make them aware of different products.

The informative characteristic of advertisements is accepted to be its basic function and the most considerable defense of advertising by advertisers. According to Kotler, as the marketplace becomes more active, the role of advertising increases. He claims that advertising is indispensable for providing information to all market-oriented industrialized societies, which need their economies to function efficiently (Kotler, 1994, 331-336).

As a result, it is accepted that advertising plays an important role in affecting consumer behavior. On the one hand, critics believe that advertising affects consumer behavior by creating false needs and manipulating them; and on the other hand, defenders claim that they do not create but discover consumer needs and inform them about the products that will satisfy these discovered needs.

Leiss, Kline and Jhally summarize the arguments of advertising as follows:

The defenses of advertising are, in essence, remarkably simple: advertising is part and parcel of a highly industrialized, market-oriented society information and persuasion from encounter sources swirl around all the individuals who live, work and shop in this setting. Both informative and persuasive communications are vital and indeed necessary ingredients of decision-making process in politics, in social relations, and in the marketplace. Advertisements include both communication formats but constitute only one ingredient in the mix, and not a particularly outstanding one at that. In short, there is nothing special about advertising (1985, p.45).

According to Aaker, manipulation and persuasion have different meanings. While manipulation involves deception as lying or falsehood, persuasion is supposed to harbor only allowable exaggeration. It is quite important for the debates about advertising industry because this means that while advertisers do not lie, they do

not necessarily have to tell the whole truth. This argument can be the escape gate from the critics for the defenders of advertising (Aaker, 1996, p.52-57).

In this chapter, the basic arguments of critics and advertisers have been discussed. In the following chapter, variables apart from advertising that influence consumer behavior and the types of buying behaviors in marketing will be evaluated to explore marketers' views about the claim that advertising is the most important tool that influences purchasing decisions. Then, the importance of advertising in marketing and its basic aims will be discussed to show that marketers and critics have different approaches to the claim that the only aim of advertising is to raise sales and consumption.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVALUATION OF ADVERTISING AS THE MOST POWERFUL MARKETING STRATEGY**

In the previous chapter, the critics' and advertisers' views about advertising have been compared. Although advertisers' and advertising defenders' approaches toward critics have already been mentioned, this chapter will evaluate the aims and strategies of advertising in more detail and from the perspective of marketing. Consequently, not only advertising as a marketing strategy will be understood comprehensively but also advertisers' and marketers' points of view toward critics can be conceived more clearly.

Furthermore, against the claim that says advertising is the most important influence on consumer behavior, other variables that affect consumers' purchasing decisions will be discussed. Although critics claim that the only aim of advertising is raising sales and consumption, in this chapter, the other aims of advertising will be evaluated from the marketers' point of view. How advertising achieves its aims for segmenting consumers, products and buying behaviors will be discussed to comprehend the strategies of advertising.



In addition to this, basic marketing tools and strategies apart from advertising will be mentioned. At this point, companies' reasons for preferring advertising among many marketing tools will be evaluated to understand why advertising is as popular as it always is.

#### **4.1 Variables Affecting Consumer Behavior**

Even though the critics of advertising charge that it is the most important tool that affects consumer behavior in a manipulative way, marketers claim that advertising is just one of the tools that effect consumers' purchasing decisions. According to marketers, there are a lot of different variables than advertising which define consumer behavior. Advertisers accept that they try to persuade consumers to purchase the advertised product but sometimes they fail because of the other variables that will be discussed in the following sections. Marketers can usually not control these factors, but when they establish an advertising strategy, they analyze these factors carefully.

Kotler and Armstrong have categorized these variables into four main characteristics as cultural, social, personal and psychological factors (1996, p.135-136).

### **4.1.1 Cultural Factors**

Cultural factors are the deepest influence on consumer behavior. Therefore marketers need to understand consumers' culture, subculture and social class before planning an advertising strategy.

**4.1.1.1 Culture:** Culture is the main cause of consumer's wants, desires and purchasing behavior. Every group or society has a culture and cultural influences on buying behavior vary greatly from country to country. Growing up in a society, a child learns basic values, perceptions, wants and behaviors mostly from the family and from other important institutions and surroundings. In relation to this point, Kotler and Armstrong explain an American child's basic values as follows:

A child in the United States normally learns or exposed to the following values: achievement and success, activity and involvement, efficiency and practicality, progress, material comfort, individualism, freedom, humanitarianism, youthfulness, fitness and health (1996, p.136).

Even though cultural values that affect consumer purchasing decisions for every single product cannot be counted point by point as Kotler and Armstrong have done, without any doubt, cultural factors influence consumers' character development and personal behavior. Therefore, failure to adjust these differences among people can result in ineffective marketing or advertising.

Besides trying to comprehend cultural values that can affect an advertised product, marketers have to spot cultural shifts in order to discover new products that might be needed by consumers. For instance, the cultural shift toward greater concern

about technology can create a huge industry for high-tech products such as cellular phones, electronic notebooks, personal computers, or laptops. The shift toward concern about health and fitness can create an industry for exercise equipment and clothing or an increased desire for leisure time can result in more demand for convenience products or services, such as microwave ovens and fast food (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.135-136).

**4.1.1.2 Subculture:** Each culture contains subcultures that contains group of people with shared value systems based on common life experiences and situations. According to Dick Hebbidge, subcultures include nationalities, religions, racial groups and geographic regions. Many subcultures establish important consumer segments and marketers design products and plan their strategy in accordance to needs of these subcultures (1979, p.31-32).

Kotler and Armstrong exemplify one U.S. subculture, Hispanic consumers, and their special values as follows:

Hispanics have long been a target for marketers of food, beverages and house-hold care products. But as the segment's buying power increases, Hispanics are now emerging as an attractive market for pricier products such as computers, financial services, photography equipment, large appliance, life insurance and automobiles. Hispanic consumers tend to buy more branded, higher-quality products. They are very brand loyal and they favor companies who show special interests in them. Because of the segment's strong brand loyalty, companies that get the first foothold have an important head start in this fast-growing market (1996, p.137).

Kotler and Armstrong categorize such subcultures like African American or Asian American consumers as a target consumer segment to market the product more

specifically. Actually this is one of the points which critics charge, as it has been discussed in previous chapters, that marketers segment people as they do for products and, in accordance with this segmentation, they create false demands and make people believe they are real. In contrast, according to marketers, they segment both products and consumers to meet the right product with the right consumer and consequently maximize consumer benefits.

**4.1.1.3 Social Class:** Every society has some form of social structure. Kotler and Armstrong define social class from the eyes of marketing as “society’s relatively permanent and ordered divisions whose members share similar values, interests and behaviors” (1996, p.138).

According to Hebbidge, social class is not determined by a single factor but is measured as a combination of occupation, income, education, wealth and other variables (1979, p.42-43). In relation to this point, Kotler and Armstrong claim that there are seven American social classes, which are identified by social scientists and are the main reference for marketers while they plan to a product’s marketing and advertising strategy:

*Upper Uppers (less than 1 percent):* Upper uppers are the social elite who live on inherited wealth and have well-known family backgrounds. They give large sums to charity, own more than one house and send their children to the finest colleges. They are a market for jewelry, antiques, houses, vacations and branded clothes.

*Lower Uppers (about 2 percent):* Lower uppers have acquired a high income or wealth through exceptional ability in the professions or business. They tend to be active in social and civic affairs and buy for themselves and their children the symbols of status, such as expensive houses or automobiles.

*Upper Middles (12 percent):* They possess neither family status nor unusual wealth. They are primarily concerned with career. They have attained positions as professionals, businesspeople and corporate managers. They believe in education and are highly civic-minded.

*Middle Class (32 percent):* The middle class is made up of average-pay, white and blue-collar workers who live in the better side of towns. To keep up with trends, they often buy products that are popular. Most are concerned with fashion, seeking the better brand names.

*Working Class (38 percent):* They depend heavily on relatives for economic and emotional support, for advice on purchases. The working class maintains sharper sex role divisions and stereotyping.

*Upper Lovers (9 percent):* They are working, although their living standard is just above poverty. They perform unskilled work and are mostly uneducated.

*Lower Lovers (7 percent):* They are on welfare, visibly poverty stricken and usually out of work. They are mostly dependent on public aid or charity for income (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.138-140).

At this point, while they define target consumer groups and marketing strategies according to these classes for a product, marketers and advertisers must regard the social class structure of a country in which they live. This explains why

multinational companies apply local advertising campaigns in different countries such as Coca Cola's Ramadan campaign in Turkey.

#### **4.1.2 Social Factors**

Consumer behavior is also said to be influenced by social factors categorized as consumer groups, family, social roles and status by Kotler and Armstrong.

**4.1.2.1 Groups:** Kotler and Armstrong define a group as “two or more people who interact with accomplish individual or mutual goals” (1996, p.140).

Many small groups influence people. Therefore defining these group's consumption habits is one of the most important issues for marketers. Leiss, Kline and Jhally categorize groups related with marketing into two:

*Membership Groups:* Groups that have a direct influence and to which a person belongs are called membership groups. Some are primary groups with whom there is a regular and informal relation such as family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Some others are secondary groups, which are more formal and irregular interactions such as professional associations or trade unions.

*Reference Groups:* This serves as a direct (face-to-face) and indirect point of comparison or reference in forming a person's attitudes and behaviors. According to Leiss, Kline and Jhally, people are often influenced by reference groups to which they do not belong. They exemplify these kinds of groups with the help of inspirational groups, to which the individual wishes to belong, for instance, when a

teenage basketball player hopes to play for the champion team (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.51-51).

Marketers try to identify the reference group of their target markets. Kotler and Armstrong claim that reference groups expose a person to new behaviors and lifestyles, influence his attitudes and create pressures to conform that may affect his product preferences and brand choices.

According to Kotler and Armstrong, marketers try to identify opinion leaders, who influence others because of their special skills, knowledge, personality or other characteristics within a reference group, for direct marketing efforts toward them. In relation to this point, advertisements simulate opinion leaders for one reference group, which is also the target consumer group for a product and they use these opinion leaders in the advertisements to influence consumers. For example, in a trainer brand's advertisement where the target consumer group is teenagers, the most popular student in the school is always demonstrated as wearing these shoes. This is actually the strategy of creating an opinion leader. Another example is a diet product's advertisement which targets a consumer group who wants to be fit and good-looking. Here, a fit, sporty and beautiful woman is always demonstrated as eating this product and telling her friend that it is the reason for her good looks. According to Kotler and Armstrong, this demonstration directs the target consumer group to purchasing the advertised brand.

The importance of group influence on consumer behavior varies across products and brands. Kotler and Armstrong claim that it tends to be strongest when the product is visible to others whom the buyer respects. Therefore, purchases of products bought and used privately are not affected too much by group influences because others will notice neither the product nor the brand. In this respect, the group influence on consumers' purchasing decisions works only on visible products, such as clothing brands, automobile or jewelry (Kotler,1996, p.140-143).

**4.1.2.2 Family:** Without any doubt, family members influence consumer behavior strongly. According to Kotler and Armstrong, marketers and advertisers are highly interested in the roles of family members on consumption habits. Husband-wife involvement varies widely by product category.

Buying roles actually change with evolving life style of consumers. For instance, in a traditional family, the wife has been the main purchasing agent for the family especially in the areas of food, household products and clothing. On the other hand, if the wife is working, both wife and husband share the responsibility of shopping. Such roles actually vary widely in different countries, cultures and traditions. Therefore, marketers must research specific patterns in their target markets (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.144).

**4.1.2.3 Roles and Status:** As it is mentioned above, people belong to many groups such as family, clubs or organizations. The person's position in each group can be defined in terms of both roles and status. For instance, a person plays the



role of daughter in her family, the role of wife in her private life, and that of an accountant in her business life. Each role influences the person's purchasing decisions and carries a status reflecting the general esteem given to it by the society.

According to Kotler and Armstrong, people often choose products that show their status in society. In addition to this, as has been discussed in the first chapter, critics claim that people actually believe that products are the reflection of their status in the society by marketers. Even though consumers purchase products by their own rational decisions or they believe that the product can reflect their social status, awareness of products as a social status symbol among consumers becomes widespread with the help of advertising (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.145-146).

#### **4.1.3 Personal Factors**

As well as social and cultural factors, Kotler and Armstrong categorize personal factors which also affect consumers' purchasing decisions.

**4.1.3.1 Age:** People change the goods and services they buy over their lifetimes. Their preferences and likes change according to their age. Tastes in food, clothes and furniture are mostly age-related. In the world of marketing, age is one of the most important variables that influence the whole product's marketing and advertising strategy. When planning a positioning strategy for a product, marketers segment the target consumer group in relation to their age. At this point, the questions of who consumes a certain product and who the target consumer group is

gain importance; children, teenagers, young, middle aged or older people. These questions are quite important because the strategy is established on this base.

Therefore, for every age, marketing and advertising strategy varies and who is meant to consume the product must be determined for the success of the advertising campaign (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.144-145).

**4.1.3.2 Marital Status:** The other important variable that influences consumer behavior is marital status because people's consumption habits change with marriage. For instance, according to Kotler and Armstrong, single people consume frozen food products more than married people or married with children's cleaning products consumption rates are higher than married without children (Kotler/Armstrong, 1996, p.145). Therefore, marketers must analyze the target consumer group's marital status before establishing a communication strategy for the product.

**4.1.3.3 Occupation:** A person's occupation affects the goods and services bought. For instance, blue-collar workers buy more rugged clothes whereas white-collar workers buy more business suits. Marketers and advertisers try to identify the occupational groups such as blue-collar, white-collar, professionals, managers, company owners that have an above-average interest in their products and services.

Sometimes a company can specialize in making and advertising its products by a given occupational group. For instance, high-tech laptops become smaller in accordance with managers' mobility needs (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.146-147).

**4.1.3.4 Economic Status:** A person's economic situation affects product choice as well because consumption is related with people's income level and savings. Therefore marketers must plan their pricing strategy in accordance with the target consumer group's income level because almost all products are actually income-sensitive. For instance, if economic indicators point to a recession, marketers can take steps to redesign, reposition and re-price the product in order to prevent falling of sales (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.146-147).

**4.1.3.5 Life Style:** Kotler and Armstrong define life style with the help of their AIO model as follows:

Life style is a person's pattern of living. Understanding these forces measuring consumer's major AIO – dimensions, activities (work, hobbies, shopping, sports, social events), interests (food, fashion, family, recreation) and opinions (about themselves, social issues, business, products). Life style captures something more than the person's social class and personality. It profiles a person's whole pattern of acting and interacting in the world (1996, p.148).

Life style classifications are by no means universal and they can vary significantly from country to country. For instance, a well known multinational advertising agency, McCann Erickson's London headquarters have identified the following British lifestyles: Avant Guardians (interested in change), Pontificators (traditionalist, very British), Chameleons (follow the crowd) and Sleepwalkers

(contented underachievers) (Pars McCann Erickson London, Annual Report Presentation). The lifestyle concept can help the marketer understand changing consumer values and how they affect buying behavior.

**4.1.3.6 Personality and Self-Concept:** Each person's distinct personality influences his purchasing behaviors. According to Kotler and Armstrong, personality refers to the unique psychological characteristics that lead to relatively consistent and lasting responses to one's own environment. Personality is usually described in terms of traits such as self-confidence, dominance, sociability, autonomy, defensiveness, adaptability and aggressiveness (1996, p.147-148). Personality can be useful in analyzing consumer behavior for certain products or brand choices. For instance, coffee marketers have discovered that heavy coffee drinkers tend to be high on sociability. Thus, to attract consumers, Starbucks and other coffee houses create environments in which people can relax and socialize over a cup of steaming coffee (Pars McCann Erickson London, Annual Report Presentation).

#### **4.1.4 Psychological Factors**

Kotler and Armstrong categorize psychological factors that affect consumers' purchasing decisions into four main titles:

**4.1.4.1 Motivation:** A person has many needs, including biological ones arising from states of tension such as hunger, thirst or accommodation, and psychological

ones arising from the need for recognition, esteem or belongings. A need becomes a motive when it is aroused to a sufficient level of intensity.

According to Ann Swidler, a motive or drive is a need that is sufficiently pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction. Two of the most well-known theories of Sigmund Freud and Abraham Maslow have quite different meanings for consumer analysis and marketing (1986, p.273-280).

Freud claims that people are largely not conscious of the real psychological forces shaping their behavior. He assumes that as a person is growing up, he represses many urges which are never eliminated or kept under perfect control. Therefore, they emerge in dreams, in slips of tongue, in neurotic and obsessive behavior, or ultimately in psychoses. Thus, according to Freud, a person does not fully understand his emotions.

On the other hand, Maslow sought to explain why people are driven by particular needs at particular times. In relation to marketing, Maslow answers the question of why one person spends much time and energy on personal safety and another tries to gain esteem on others. The answer, according to him, is that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy, from the most pressing to the least pressing. His hierarchy of needs is in order of importance, physiological needs (hunger, thirst), safety needs (security, protection), social needs (sense of belongings, love), esteem needs (self-esteem, recognition, status) and self-actualization needs (self-development and realization).

According to this ranking, a person tries to satisfy the most important needs first. When that need is satisfied, it will stop being a motivator and the person will then try to satisfy the next most important need. For instance, starving people (physiological need) will not take an interest in the latest happenings in the art world (self-actualization) and other needs that are in ranking (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p. 148-150). Motivational researches are quite important for marketers because with the help of these researches, they can better understand consumer behavior.

**4.1.4.2 Perception:** Marketers claim that perception is the process by which people select, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world. A motivated person is ready to act but two people with the same motivation and in the same situation can act quite differently because their different perception of situations. At this point, advertisers' job is really difficult because they try to create motivation among the consumers and direct their perception to the action.

According to Kotler and Armstrong, the average person may be exposed to more than 1,500 advertisements in a single day. It is impossible for a person to pay attention to all of them.

“Selective attention” which is the tendency for people to screen out most of the information to which they are exposed means that marketers have to work especially hard to attract the consumers' attention. Kotler and Armstrong believe

that it is not as easy as critics claim because their messages will be lost on most people. Moreover, each person fits incoming information into an existing mind-set. “Selective distortion” describes the tendency of people to interpret information in a way that will support what they already believe. This means that marketers must try to understand the mind-set of consumers and how these will affect interpretations of advertising and sales information.

According to Kotler and Armstrong, people will also forget much of what they learn. They tend to retain information that supports their attitudes and beliefs because of “selective retention”. All of these selective exposure, distortion and retention, marketers have to work hard to get their message through. This actually explains why marketers and advertisers use drama and repetition in sending messages to their target consumer group.

In relation to this point, Kotler and Armstrong answer some critics who claim that advertisers create new demands and convince consumers that they are real needs as follows:

Interestingly, although marketers worry about whether their offers will be perceived at all, some critics worry that consumers will be affected by advertising messages without even know it through subliminal advertising. Most advertisers scoff at the notion of an industry conspiracy to manipulate consumers through invisible messages. Numerous studies by psychologists and consumer researchers have found no link between subliminal messages and consumer behavior. Directing consumers to the action is already a hard process without subliminal messages (1996, p.152).

**4.1.4.3 Learning:** Learning describes changes in an individual's behavior arising from experience. According to Swindler, learning occurs through the interplay of drives, stimuli, cues, responses and reinforcement.

A drive is a strong internal stimulus that calls for action. A person's drive becomes a motive when it is directed toward a particular stimulus object, which is a product in the world of marketing. Cues are minor stimuli that determine when, where and how the person responds, for instance, upon seeing a product in an advertisement or hearing of a special sale price. The practical significance of learning theory for marketers is that they can build up demand for a product by associating it with strong drives, using motivating cues and providing positive reinforcement (1986, p.273-280).

**4.1.4.4 Beliefs and Attitudes:** Through doing and learning, people acquire beliefs and attitudes which in turn influence their purchasing decisions. A belief is a descriptive thought that a person has about something (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p. 154). Marketers are interested in the beliefs that people formulate about specific products and services because these beliefs make up product and brand images that affect consumer behavior. If some beliefs are wrong or create disadvantages about the product, the marketer will launch an advertising campaign to correct them but mostly it is hard to change consumer beliefs about the product.

Attitudes describe a person's relatively consistent evaluations, feelings and tendencies toward an object or idea (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p. 154).



Attitudes put people into a frame of mind of liking or disliking things, of moving toward or away from them. They are difficult to change. A person's attitudes fit into a pattern and to change one attitude may require difficult adjustments in many others. Thus, marketers usually try to fit their products into existing attitudes rather than attempt to change attitudes.

On the other hand, there are some exceptions in which the great cost of trying to change attitudes may pay off. Kotler and Armstrong exemplify this situation with the help of Honda motorcycle advertisement launch in the late 1950's:

In the case of Honda motorcycle, increasing the size of the market would be more difficult and expensive because many people had negative attitudes toward motorcycles. They associated motorcycles with black leather jackets and undesirable characters. Despite these adverse attitudes, Honda took the second course of action. It launched a major campaign to position motorcycles as good clean fun. Its theme, 'you meet the nicest people on a Honda' worked well and many people adopted a new attitude toward motorcycles (1996, p.151).

As has been discussed above, from the marketers' point of view, many forces act on consumer behavior. The consumer's choice results from the complex interplay of cultural, social, personal and psychological factors.

Therefore, according to marketers and its defenders, in such complex variables it is quite difficult to direct to consumers to action and almost impossible to manipulate them as claimed by critics. Advertisers must take into account these variables that determine consumer behavior and plan a strategy for every single product differently because all products have different target consumer groups. Therefore,

according to marketers, they do their best to persuade the consumers to purchase an advertised product.

Even though marketers and advertisers claim that they establish different marketing strategies for every product, they categorize general buying behaviors into four categories.

## **4.2 Types of Purchasing Behavior**

Buying behaviors differ greatly for every single product. More complex decisions usually involve more buying participants and more buyer deliberation. Henry Assael categorizes buying behaviors based on the degree of buyer involvement and the degree of differences among brands (1987, p.85-90).

### **4.2.1 Complex Buying Behavior**

Complex buying behavior is a consumer behavior in situations characterized by high consumer involvement in a purchase and significant perceived differences among brands. Consumers are highly involved when the product is expensive, risky, self expressive or purchased infrequently. For instance, when buying a personal computer, the consumer will pass through a learning process, first developing beliefs about the product, then attitudes and then making a thoughtful purchase choice.

Marketers of high involvement products should help buyers learn about product class attributes and their relative importance and what the company's brand offers on the important attributes. They must differentiate their brand's features in order to be chosen by consumers.

#### **4.2.2 Dissonance-Reducing Buying Behavior**

This is a consumer buying behavior in situations characterized by high involvement but few perceived differences among brands. It occurs when consumers are highly involved with an expensive, risky or infrequent purchase but, different from the complex buying behavior, in this type, consumers see the differences among brands. For instance, buying a carpet may require high involvement decision because carpets are expensive and self-expressive. Yet buyers may consider most carpet brands in a given price range to be the same. In this case, because perceived brand differences are not large, buyers may shop around to learn what is available but buy relatively quickly.

After the purchase, consumers might experience post-purchase dissonance, which means after-sale discomfort when they notice certain disadvantages of the purchased product brand or hear favorable things about brands not purchased. At this point, to counter such dissonances, marketer's after sales communications should provide evidence and support to help consumers feel good about their brand choice.

### **4.2.3 Habitual Buying Behavior**

It is a type of buying behavior in situations characterized by low consumer involvement and few significant perceived brand differences. For instance, salt, coke or water consumers have little involvement in this product category and they simply go to the store and choose a brand. If they keep reaching for the same brand, it is out of habit rather than strong brand loyalty. They are mostly low cost and frequently purchased products.

In such cases, consumer behavior does not pass through the usual belief-attitude-behavior sequence. Mostly, consumers do not search extensively for information about the brands. Instead, they passively receive information as they watch TV advertisements.

At this point, advertisement repetition creates brand familiarity rather than brand conviction. Consumers do not form strong attitude toward a brand; they select a brand because it is familiar. Marketers of such products often use price and sales promotions to stimulate product trial. In their advertisements, visual symbols and imagery are important because they can be remembered easily and associated with the brand. Advertising campaigns should include high repetitions of short duration messages and TV advertisements are more effective than print advertisements.

#### **4.2.4 Variety-Seeking Buying Behavior**

Consumers undertake variety-seeking buying behavior in situations characterized by low consumer involvement but significant perceived brand differences. In such cases, consumers often do a lot of brand switching. For instance, in the case of FMCG (fast moving consumer goods), consumers choose a brand without much evaluation and the next time they might pick another brand to try something different. Therefore, brand switching occurs for the sake of variety rather than dissatisfaction.

In such product categories, the marketing strategy differs for the market leader and minor brands. The market leader encourages habitual buying behavior for running frequent reminder advertisements and second players of the market advertise their products to make consumers believe that they need to try something new.

Until now, the external influences that affect consumer behavior have been evaluated from the marketers' points of view. In the next section, the role and aims of advertising as a marketing strategy will be discussed to comprehend the influence of advertising on consumer behavior more specifically.

#### **4.3 The Role of Advertising as a Marketing Strategy**

In this century, the capitalist industry supplies an enormous variety of products to consumers. In such competitive conditions and product variety, companies have to focus on marketing as much as on production. The basic definition of marketing is

a combination of strategies, which provides reaching of the product to consumers. Without any doubt, advertising is one of the most important marketing tools. At this point, advertising and its effectiveness as a marketing strategy gains importance.

William Stanton, Michael Etzel and Bruce Walker claim that advertising is a form of communication, which is persuasiveness about a product or a service. The basic role of advertising is increasing the sales of the product and, more importantly, preparing the base for these sales. According to Stanto, Etzel and Walker, it is obvious that advertising is one of the most important marketing weapons but one does not purchase a product only with advertising. They claim that advertising achieves to sell a product only if it is done harmoniously together with other marketing tools (Stanton, Etzel and Walker, 1990, p.17).

These other tools are product, price, place and promotion, which are called “marketing mix” or “4p’s” in marketing literature. Advertising is one of the tools included in promotion, which is segmented into public relations, sales promotion and advertising. In this segmentation, advertising is the strongest promotion activity that supports sales (Assael, 1993, p.45).

Even though this basic segmentation of marketing has become extended with new strategies and tools, marketing works in accordance with these strategies, which are called 4p’s. According to Assael, raising sales of the product is possible through positioning and planning the whole tools of marketing mix effectively.

Therefore, a product which has a successful advertising strategy but unsuccessful pricing or distribution strategy is either not purchased by consumers or the motivational effects of advertising cannot be long-term. More important, Assael claims that the advertised product must have a sufficient quality that can satisfy the consumer's needs because the main reason that consumers prefer a product is its quality (1993, p.45-48).

According to critics, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, advertising is the strongest weapon of marketing and even if other marketing tools are not planned successfully, the consumer is persuaded to purchase a product by advertising. For instance, even if the product has low quality or its price is high, critics claim that advertising achieves to sell such a product to consumers in a manipulative way.

On the other hand, according to Assael, advertising's level of success is a result of product quality. Therefore, he claims that advertising is not a marketing tool that persuades consumers to purchase a low-quality product in a manipulative way but informs them about the product's specialties to satisfy their needs.

Assael also believes that the role of advertising is quite important in marketing because with the help of advertising, consumers can see the product and decide what to purchase. Therefore, advertising is the most effective promotion tool of marketing. In comparison to other promotion tools, the most important reason for

preferring advertising is its capacity to reach masses. This is the reason which makes advertising premium among the other marketing tools (1993, p.48-49).

In the following sections, the basic aims of advertising will be discussed from the eyes of marketing. These aims also define the success of advertisements. As long as an advertisement realizes its aims, it is considered to be successful in the world of marketing.

#### **4.4 The Aims of Advertising as a Marketing Strategy**

Even though the critics of advertising charge that the only aim of advertising is raising sales, according to marketers, advertising has different aims besides raising sales. Without any doubt, raising the sales of a product is the most important aim but marketers claim that advertising has some other important functions, such as informing consumers about the product, raising brand awareness, positioning brand-image of a product and so on. To realize these aims, advertisers claim that, in contrast to critics, they do not affect consumers' purchasing decisions in a manipulative way but inform consumers about the product to maximize consumers' benefits from the product. As a marketing strategy, the basic aims of advertising can be categorized into six sub-sections:

##### **4.4.1 Raising Sales of the Product**

The first and basic aim of advertising is defining the product specialties and determining differences of the product from its competitors. Even though some



critics claim that advertising is the most important tool for a product to be purchased, according to advertisers, advertising is just one of the factors that affects sales.

As has been mentioned in the previous sections, advertisers claim that a lot of different factors influence consumer behavior, such as the consumption culture of a society, income, educational and occupational level of consumers, life style, customs and habits or socio-economic status. Advertisers accept that, in spite of all the variables, they try to affect consumer behaviors but, according to them, it is not as easy as the critics claim.

According to Stanton, Etzel and Walker, raising sales is a long-term effect of advertising. Only constant advertising with correct media planning can raise the sales. If the other marketing tools are well planned, which means that the pricing of the product is considerable, distribution channels are sufficient, and the quality of a product is adequate for satisfying needs of consumers, advertising can raise the sales of the product (1991, p.463-466).

According to the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model, developed by William Strong, paying attention to consumers, attracting their interest and desire, and eventually heading for action, i.e. selling the product should be the basic aims of advertising. At this point, if competitors of the product are strong, making this model work and achieving the ultimate aim becomes hard. However, advertising strategies are mostly based on the AIDA model. According to the model,

advertising is the main tool of marketing, which pays and strengthens attention and desire of the consumer against the product (Cravens, 1991, p.487).

#### **4.4.2 Creating Brand Image, Awareness and Loyalty**

Advertisements that try to create brand image, consumer awareness and loyalty for the products are different from advertisements that try to increase the sales of the product. According to advertisers, to successfully launch a product, advertisements should first of all create awareness and a brand image.

These advertisements are known as “image advertisements” created to take a place in the consumer’s mind. When the brand name and image are placed in the mind of the consumer, sales advertisements are successful in directing the consumer to action.

Advertising is a marketing tool that causes consumers to purchase the product. In the first phase, consumers do not know anything about the product therefore they should be informed about it. In the second phase, consumers comprehend the product’s specialties and utilities. Then, in the third phase, they are persuaded to purchase the advertised product and lastly in the fourth phase, advertisers try to create loyalty for the product. The aim of every phase is different so marketers create different advertising strategies for every phase (Stanton, Etzel and Walker, 1991, p.467-469).

#### **4.4.3 Correcting Negative Impressions about the Company or the Product**

##### **Image:**

According to advertisers, this is the most difficult aim to be achieved. Creating a brand image for a new product is easier than correcting a negative image because, in the latter case, consumers have already formed an image in their minds. On the other hand, for a new product, there is no positive or negative image in the consumer's mind; therefore, directing them to something positive is easier for advertisers.

At this point, the advertising strategy must be well established because while an advertisement tries to correct negative impressions, it can cause more damage for the company or the brand image (Dyer, 1995, p.73-74).

#### **4.4.4 Creating Competitive Advantage for the Company or the Product:**

Advertising creates competition among companies and their products. Differentiating a product from its competitors is one of the most important aims of advertising. Such kinds of advertisements direct consumers to choose the advertised brand because of its different specialties and utilities from competitors (Stanton, Etzel and Walker, 1991, p.469-470).

For instance, all detergent products are produced for cleaning but one can differentiate itself because of its perfume. This specialty is the unique selling

purpose, meaning main differentiation point for the product from its competitors. In advertisements, products' unique selling purpose is highlighted.

#### **4.4.5 Informing and Educating Consumers**

As has been discussed in the previous chapters, this aim of advertising is the most commonly criticized one. According to critics, advertisements do not give enough or accurate information about the product. In contrast, advertisers claim that advertising is a tool which informs consumers about the benefits of the product and they accept that this is the most important mission of advertising (Dyer, 1995, p.73-74).

#### **4.4.6 Reaching the Masses**

Another aim of advertising is to present the product to masses. This is the reason that companies allot the biggest part of their marketing budget to advertising. With the help of advertising, companies reach their target consumer groups through different channels. For instance, a product that targets masses is presented to consumers through national TV but an expensive jewelry brand is presented to consumers through a magazine whose readers have high income (Stanton, Etzel and Walker, 1991, p.470-471).

The previous chapter has focused mostly on critics about advertising and its effects on consumer behavior from the critics' point of view. In contrast, in this chapter, advertising strategies aims and influences on consumers have been discussed from

the marketers' points of view. At this point, other variables than advertising that affect consumer behavior have been evaluated because, according to marketers, advertising is just one of variables that influence consumer behavior; there are other important factors that affect purchasing decisions.

Marketers claim that advertising is a tool that analyzes these variables deeply affecting consumer behavior and it informs consumers about products that are proper to their life-style, budget, culture or purchasing customs.

Therefore, according to marketers, there is no manipulation in this process; on the contrary, its aim is to maximize consumer benefits. On the one hand, marketers accept that the most important function of advertising is raising sales of the product but, on the other hand, they reject the idea that they force or encourage consumers to consume more.

At this point, critics and marketers differ from each other because, as has been discussed before, advertising is the most manipulative and persuasive tool that influences consumer behavior according to critics.

In this chapter, variables that influence consumer behavior other than advertising and types of buying behaviors have been evaluated to explore marketers' views about the claim that advertising is the most important tool that influences purchasing decisions. Next, the importance of advertising in marketing and its

basic aims have been discussed to show that marketers and critics have different ideas about raising sales and consumption.

To comprehend how advertisers reach the aims that have been discussed in the previous sections, following chapter will evaluate the process of developing an advertising program. Then, semiology, one of the most important methodologies in the study of advertising, will be used to analyze the messages in advertisements. At this point, the following chapter will not focus on the science of semiology as a whole in detail but on the use of semiology in the study of advertising as a methodology for decoding advertising messages. After this, in order to better comprehend advertising messages, some basic advertising formats and the language of advertising will be examined.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DEVELOPING AN ADVERTISING STRATEGY AND DECODING ADVERTISEMENTS**

In the previous chapter, the aims of advertising have been evaluated in detail. At this point the question of how advertisers reach these aims gains importance. In this chapter, developing an advertising strategy will be discussed for answering this question. Setting advertising objectives, calculating an advertising budget, deciding on the media alternatives of the advertisement campaign are quite important for the success of the advertisement.

Next, the use of semiology in the study of advertising will be discussed. To evaluate the effects of advertising on consumer behavior, one must analyze advertising messages. Only this can give a comprehensive perspective about the motivational role of advertising on consumer purchasing decisions. In this chapter, the following question will be discussed: “How is meaning reconstituted both by advertisers and the viewers of messages?” More simply, the question of how advertisements work on consumers will be evaluated.

Researchers have studied the effects of advertising and its communication formats, messages and meanings. By regarding the “text”, the advertising industry produces systematic expression of strategies and meanings. They have sought to uncover the commonalities in form and content occurring in this material over time that are not apparent at first glance and they may not have been consciously intended by their creators.

Therefore, one must focus on advertising messages themselves as well as its reactions on consumer behavior. The science of semiology is one of the most important methodologies in the study of advertising messages.

In this chapter, the use of semiology for decoding advertising messages will be discussed. With the help of semiology, advertising messages and its influences on consumers will be evaluated to comprehend the motives that direct consumers to the action.

Understanding the ways in which advertisers give messages to consumers is as important as analyzing advertising messages themselves. Therefore, the four categories of the basic formats of advertising, the product-information format, the product-image format, the personalize format and the life-style format, will be the other concern of this chapter. In relation to advertising messages, lastly, the language of advertising will be examined.



## 5.1 Developing an Advertising Program

There is a large-scale and well-established research engaged in measuring the psychological impact of advertising campaigns such as their effect on brand awareness, image attributes and advertising recall, i.e. whether consumers can remember the brand name, what qualities they associate with the brand and what features of the brand's advertising have remained in their minds. These measures are most commonly used as substitutes for sales measures because they can be detected more easily. But if a company wants to increase their sales, it must consider the product's brand awareness as well as its sales because they are closely related to each other. Therefore, the advertising program should not only focus on sales, it should also support the brand image too. Marketing management must make four important decisions when developing an advertising program:

1. Setting an advertising objective
2. Setting an advertising budget
3. Developing an advertising strategy – message decisions and media decisions
4. Evaluating advertising campaigns (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.543)

The first step is to set “advertising objectives”. These objectives must be based on past decisions about the target market, positioning and marketing mix, which defines the job that advertising must do in the total marketing program. Kotler and Sidney define the advertising objectives as follows:

An advertising objective is a specific communication task to be accomplished with a specific target audience during a specific period of

time. Advertising objectives can be classified by primary purpose – whether the aim to inform, persuade or remind (1973, p. 544).

“Informative advertising” is used mostly when launching a new product or service. In these advertisements, the objective is to build primary demand and to gain a first-time buyer. Therefore, informative advertising briefly presents the market a new product, suggests new uses for it, informs the public of its price, explains how it works, corrects false impressions, reduces consumer’s fears and builds a company or brand image.

On the other hand, “persuasive advertising” becomes more important when competition increases. Therefore, in this type of advertising, the aim is to build selective demand. Some persuasive advertising has become “comparative advertising” in which a company directly or indirectly compares its brand with one or more other brands. Persuasive advertising heavily builds brand preference, changes customer perceptions, persuades and encourages customers to purchase the product now and try to explain to the consumers the differentiation points about the product from other competitive products.

According to Kotler’s advertising objectives specification, “reminder advertising” is important for a mature product. It keeps consumers thinking about the product or services. For instance, Coca-Cola advertisements on television are created primarily to remind people about Coca-Cola, not to inform or persuade them. These types of advertisements are mostly called image advertisements. They focus on increasing brand awareness. After determining the advertising objective, the

company sets its “advertising budget” for the product. A brand’s advertising budget often depends on its stage in the product life cycle. For instance, new products typically need large advertising budgets to build brand awareness and gain consumer trial.

This does not mean that mature brands, which have high market share, do not need high advertising budgets. On the contrary, they also need to have a high advertising budget to continue having their market share and reaching more and more consumers. In addition to this, undifferentiated brands such as fmcg – fast moving consumer goods – like detergents, beer, soft drinks may require heavy advertising to set them apart and tell their differentiation points to the consumer.

After the company decides on the advertising budget for the product they promote, the next step is to develop an “advertising strategy”. Advertising strategy consists of two major elements: creating advertising messages and selecting advertising media. No matter how big the budget, advertising can succeed only if commercials gain attention and communicate well. The strategy requires a thorough analysis of all available market research, personal discussions or focus groups with a typical prospective target consumer group and knowledge of all competitive products and their advertising campaigns.

Based on the understanding and insights derived from this information, advertising professionals write a strategy based on the target consumer groups’ needs and

desires. With this strategy as a guide of strategic planners, creative directors and art directors begin to create the advertisement campaign.

Developing an effective message strategy begins with identifying customer benefits that can be used as advertising appeals. Ideally, advertising message strategy will follow the company's broader positioning strategy. The creative concept brings the message strategy to life in a distinctive, memorable and attractive way. It emerges as visualization, a symbol, a phrase or a combination of all of them. It will guide the choice of specific appeals to be used in an advertising campaign (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.540-548).

According to Kotler and Armstrong, "advertising appeals" should have three characteristics:

First they should be meaningful, pointing out benefits that make the products more desirable or interesting to consumers. Second, appeals must be believable – consumers must believe that the product or a service will deliver the promised benefits. However, the most meaningful and believable benefits may not be the best ones to feature. Appeals also should be distinctive – they should tell how the product is better than the competing brands (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.548).

Any creative message can be presented in different execution styles; for example, slice of life shows one or more typical people using the product in an ordinary setting such as cleaning commercials, lifestyle shows how a product fits in with a particular lifestyle such as Harley-Davidson commercials, fantasy style creates a fantasy around the product or its use such as Gap's new perfume Dream, mood or image style builds a mood or image around the product such as beauty or love,

musical shows one or more people or cartoon characters singing about the product, personality symbol style creates a character that represent the product like Marlboro Man, technical expertise shows the company's expertise in making the product such as furniture commercials, scientific evidence style presents survey or scientific evidence that the brand is better than the other brands like some toothpaste brands, testimonial evidence or endorsement style features a highly believable source endorsing the product as it is seen mostly in shampoo brands.

The advertisers must use memorable and attention getting words or slogans in the advertisements. Finally, advertisers must choose a tone for the advertisement such as Procter & Gamble's positive tone that avoids humor in their commercials. After the creative concept has been completed, advertisers decide on media selection, which is as important as the creative concept for the success of the campaign.

The major steps in media selection are deciding on reach, frequency and impact, choosing among the major media types – newspapers, television, radio, outdoor, magazine, the Internet and direct mail – selecting specific media vehicles and deciding on media timing. As a medium, briefly, the newspaper is preferred for its flexibility, believability and good local market coverage; television is preferred for its good mass market coverage visually; radio is preferred for its local acceptance and low costs; outdoor is preferred for its good positional selectivity; magazine is preferred for its credibility, prestige and long life; the Internet is preferred for its interactive capabilities and direct mail is preferred for its capability of personalization (Kotler and Armstrong, 1996, p.548-552).

Generally, the process of developing an advertising program which has been evaluated above is very much related to the advertising messages. Advertising objectives, budget or media planning are all done in accordance with the messages that advertisers would like to give to the consumers. For instance, if the company targets the mass consumer group, then the advertising budget will be high and media planning will be detailed. Therefore, in the study of advertising, messages given in advertisement and their analyses are quite important. In the following sections, semiology as a methodology of analyzing advertising messages will be evaluated.

## **5.2 Semiology and the Study of Advertising**

Semiology, a method for examining textual material, has emerged from linguistics and literary and cultural analysis. Semiology is a system of signs created for communication and analyses their tasks in the process of communication. A sign within a system of meaning may be separated into two components: “the signifier” and “the signified”. Semiotics involves the study of signification, a process going from “the signifier” to “the signified”.

The signifier is a material vehicle of meaning; the signified actually is the meaning. People use semiology in language, in gestures, in photography, in art, in psychology, in everyday life, therefore the cultural system actually generates signification. It can be said that human beings are defined by means of signification discipline, which explains the interaction between human beings and the nature. Jonathan Culler explains the sign in the following quotation:

A language is thus conceived as a system of differences, and this lead to the development of the distinctions on which structuralism and semiotics have relieved: between a language as a system of differences (*langue*) and the speech events which the system makes possible (*parole*), between the study of the language as a system at any given time (*synchronic*) and study of the correlations between elements from different historical periods (*diachronic*), between two types of differences within the system, syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations, and between the two constituents of the sign, *signifier* and *signified* (Culler, 1976, p.98).

According to Dyer, semiology aims to analyze “the system of sign” or “the system of signification” like images, gestures, musical sounds, objects and the complex association of these forming the content of rituals, convention or public entertainment.

In social life, disciplines such as linguistics, information theory, formal logic or structural anthropology use semantic analysis with new instruments such as consumer oriented advertising which is known as commercial consumer advertising, which commands great expenditure, space, professional skills and which is directed towards the mass audience (Dyer, 1982, p.4-9).

In the following section, the reasons why semiology is appropriate to the study of contemporary advertising and the basic concepts of the method describing how meaning derives from advertising will be discussed.

### **5.2.1 The Use of Semiology in Advertising**

According to Leiss, Kline and Jhally, earlier advertising usually stated its message quite explicitly through the medium of written text but starting in the mid-1920s visual representation became more common, and the relation between text and

visual image became complementary, which means the text explained the visual. Especially after the early 1960s, the functions of text moved away from explaining the visual and the text appeared as a kind of key to the visual.

Additionally, advertising design and content have also changed in time with the theory of market segmentation which is rooted in the fragmentation of consumers and specify of messages. All in all, the effect was to make a commercial message more ambiguous and complicated. “Decoding” of these more complicated message structures requires the use of a method and the most important one is semiology. Advertising draws from the hopes and concerns of the advertised product’s consumers and reformulates them to suit its own purposes, not reflecting but reconstituting meaning (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.198-199).

The reason why semiology is quite appropriate is because it tries to answer some very basic questions concerning meaning: “How is meaning reconstituted both by advertisers and viewers of messages?” and “how does the product come to have a meaning?” Leiss, Kline and Jhally refer to Roland Barthes’s example for explaining semiology, which is a system of signs, and sign components which are “the signifier” and “the signified” and their usage in the advertisements:

Barthes gives the example of roses, which in most western cultures signify romantic or passionate love. The “meaning” of roses in western cultural setting is tied up with the idea of passion. In analytical terms, there are three elements in communicative process: (1) the signifier – roses; (2) the signified – passion; (3) the sign – their unity as “passionified roses”. One of semiology’s most important points is the distinction between the signifier and the sign; they are not the same, although they appear the same. Nothing inherent in roses limits their meaning to passion alone. In another culture, or in another system of meaning, roses could signify something totally



different, perhaps even the opposite of passion. The rose as a signifier without the signified is empty of meaning. The rose as sign is full of meaning. In advertising, the creators of messages try to turn signifiers (goods), with which audiences may have little or no familiarity, into meaningful signs that, they hope, will prompt consumers to respond with appropriate behavior (1985, p.200).

In advertising, the sign is a thing, an object, a word or a picture, which has a particular meaning to a person or group of people. It consists of the signifier or the material object and the signified or its meaning. Saying that an advertisement is only a transparent vehicle for a message is part of the deceptive mythology of advertising but certainly, a large part of any advertisement is this message.

The form or the signifier is only a frame; it is a set of relations, which has to be complemented by the meaning, which is substantial. But the conveyors of the messages are material such as the logo-characters which are significant in them. The messages exist in the overlay of ideology; they are the signifieds. The signifier and the signified are materially inseparable since they are bound together in the sign that is their totality (Williamson, 1978, p.14-17).

For instance, in the advertisement in Figure 3, the signifier is a jeep which is shown as a symbol of safety and control. The signified, penguins, signify other competitive jeeps and their unity in the sign is the Free Lander. On the icy hill, the Free Lander never skids or loses control. Advertisers imply that you are totally safe during your journey if you are driving a Free Lander. Even penguins, natural inhabitants of Iceland, can skid on ice but the Free Lander does not.



FIGURE 3

Figure 3. Semiology in Advertising: Free Lander

### 5.2.2 Decoding Advertisements with the Science of Semiology

The semiological approach suggests that the meaning of an advertisement does not get across to the consumer; in contrast, it waits to get internalized by the consumer. More specifically, for advertising to create meaning, the consumer has to make an effort to grasp it. Judith Williamson uses the French perfume manufacturer Chanel's advertisements (see Figure 4) to illustrate this argument. In this advertisement, the French actress Catherine Deneuve's face is shown together with a picture of the product, a bottle of Chanel No.5, in the corner of the image.

In this advertisement, Chanel No.5 is shown as chic, sophisticated and elegant product and wearing it would add something to one's character. The signifier is an actual bottle of perfume, the signified is French sophistication and beauty represented by Catherine Deneuve and the sign Chanel No.5 is the symbol of French glamour, beauty and sophistication (Williamson, 1978, 44-50).

Assuming that this is the meaning of the Chanel No.5 advertisement to the consumer, Leiss, Kline and Jhally explain how the consumer internalizes this message. According to them, there are three steps to this process, which relates both the creator and the viewer (1985, p.200-206).

First, the meaning of one sign is transferred to another as seen in Williamson's example. Here, the meaning of "Catherine Deneuve" which is French chic and beauty is transferred to the product. Leiss, Kline and Jhally explain that there are many ways in which this transfer can take place: between persons and objects as in this example, between social situations and objects, between objects and objects and finally between feelings and objects.

Second, this transfer of significance is not complete within the advertisement; therefore, viewers or potential consumers make the connection themselves:

The sign is only capable of being transferred or of replacing something if it has a meaning in the first place for the reader or viewer. The transference requires our active participation. There is a space, a gap left where the speaker should be; and one of the peculiar features of advertising is that we are drawn in to fill that gap, so that we become both listener and speaker, subject and object (Williamson, 1978, p.14).



FIGURE 4

Figure 4. Decoding Advertisements: Chanel No.5

Therefore, the audiences create and recreate the meaning for themselves. The advertisement is a mediator between the creator and the viewer. There is double symbolic process in the marketplace, where producers of goods try to construct one set of meanings, and where consumers use these meanings in the construction of their own lifestyles.

Third, in order for the transfer to take place, the first object must already have a meaning to be transferred. In other words, it must already be significant to the audience. As in Williamson's example, people already know who Catherine Deneuve is and what she represents. Williamson defines these systems of meaning from which it draws the materials to complete the transfer "referent system". In this context, advertising plays the role of a mediator. At this point, advertisers transform the material into the meaning – "encode" it – by developing an appropriate format and shaping the content, and the audiences "decode" the advertisements' message to make the transfer of meaning.

In the move from mass to segmented market, advertising strategies change dramatically. Today, advertisers can draw upon the specialized knowledge of fragmented consumers so that the same product can be sold in different ways to different groups. Semiology highlights the way that audiences themselves take part in the creation of meaning in messages, suggesting that audiences are not mere by-standers in the advertising process, but participants in creating a code.

As consumers are fragmented into smaller market segments, the operative codes for each target group become more specialized. The production of messages and their reception by the audience are always perfectly symmetrical process each is incomplete without the other. If there is no common understanding, there can be no communication (Leiss/Kline/Jhally, 1985, p.206-208).

### **5.2.3 The Weaknesses of Semiology as a Method for the Study of Advertising**

As a method for the study of advertising, semiology suffers from a number of related weaknesses. First, it is heavily dependent upon the skill of the individual analyst. Leiss, Kline and Jhally explain this weakness as follows:

In the hands of someone like Roland Bathes and Judith Williamson, it is a creative tool that allows one to reach the deeper levels of meaning-construction in advertisements. A less skilful practitioner, however, can do little more than state the obvious in a complex, and often pretentious manner. As a result, in these types of studies there is little chance to establish consistency or reliability – that is, a sufficient level of agreement among analysts on what is found in a message (1985, p.213).

Second, because the semiological approach stresses individual reading of messages, it does not lend itself to quantification of results; it is impossible to base on overall sense of constructed meanings on the examination of a large number of messages. Leiss, Kline and Jhally claim that what insights may be extracted from this approach must remain impressionistic.

Third, semiology cannot be applied with equal success to all kinds of advertisements. According to Leiss, Kline and Jhally, Williamson does not take a random sample of advertisements and then apply the semiological method to them,

but seems to have chosen advertisements specifically to illustrate her points such as the Chanel No.5 advertisement which has been mentioned in the previous section. Such a procedure courts the danger of self-confirming results therefore the conclusions should be confined alone and not generalized to the entire range of advertising (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.213-216).

In the following sections, some basic advertising prototypical formats, within which the person-product relationship is constituted, and predominant patterns of meaning in various historical periods will be analyzed to understand in which ways advertisers give messages to consumers because it is as important as the messages themselves. To illustrate this, in the following sections, four main advertising formats will be discussed.

### **5.3 Basic Advertising Formats**

Leiss, Kline and Jhally have categorized basic advertising formats into four sub-titles regarding advertising's historical development: The product-information format, the product-image format, the personalized format and the life-style format (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.263).

#### **5.3.1 The Product-Information Format**

In the product-information format, the product is the center of attention in the advertisement and all elements in it focus on explaining the product and its utilities. In this type, the brand name and a picture of a package are frequently

prominent. The text is used primarily to describe the product and its benefits, characteristics, performance, distribution channels, constructions or special offers. The advertisement is based on the text but may contain visuals that emphasize the effectiveness of the product or point out its benefits of use (See Figure 5).

The product-information format is used infrequently nowadays because visuals are more prominent today than the text. For the consumers, they are always more attractive than text in the advertisements (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.239-240).

### **5.3.2 The Product-Image Format**

In the product-image advertisements, brand name and package of the product play an important role. The product is given special qualities by means of a symbolic relationship. It becomes embedded or situated in a symbolic context that imparts meaning to the product beyond its benefits. This format works by composing two codes within the framework of a single message. Therefore, semiologists use this type of format for interpretation in the field of advertising. The codes are not synthesized by logical linkages but by some narrative device. The fusion of product code and setting code, which formulates the basis of the product image, depends largely on narrative techniques like metaphor (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.243-246). In the Clinique skin re-newer advertisement, the product is the sign of youth and freshness. The advertisement aims to make women believe that Clinique products will be useful to renew their skin by using the picture of a new-born chick. Therefore, in this advertisement, the product and the chick are fused metaphorically (See Figure 6).



**PERFORM**

**Her bedene uygun:**

S M L

XL XXL

**TÜRKİYE'DE İLK KEZ!**

**Perform "Kişiyi Özel":**  
Yatacağın yerini düşünürken, en yakın arkadaşın gibi düşün. İhtiyaçların kişiliğin bir parçası, aynı kişi için farklı ihtiyaçlar olabilir. Bel ve sırt problemlerini atan bir insanın, diğer insanların yatacağından farklıdır. **İhtiyaçlarını ve yaşa özgü farklı alan çözümleri, tek yatacağı sistem.**

**Perform anti-mite hijyen:**  
Perform yataklarının kuruması, özel bir işlemle, anti-mite özellik kazandırıldı. Böylece evin her köşesinde yaşayan, gizlice görülenmeyen ve insanı rahatsız eden mite'lerin (veya akar) oluşumu engellenmiştir.

**Perform "EXTRA HİJYEN"**

**borderex EXTRA DİSTEK SİSTEMİ**

Performda, her ağırlığa göre, Borderex Sistemine ekstra destek sağlayan Borderex Sistemi var. Borderex Sistemi, ihtiyaçlarına göre de normal kullanılarak, her kişiye uygun. "Hijyen Ozel" sistemi perform yatacağı ortadan yatacağıda zamanla meydana gelen deformasyon ve çökme riskini ortaya çıkan yatacağı altına ya da sırt ve bel ağrılarını gibi problemlerini önüne geçiyor.

**Performun özellikleri:**  
• Performun yüksek kaliteli, dayanıklı ve hijyenik malzemeler kullanılarak üretilmiştir.  
• Performun yüksek kaliteli, dayanıklı ve hijyenik malzemeler kullanılarak üretilmiştir.

**İstikbal**

**444 33 44**

**Beştaş**

FIGURE 5

Figure 5. The Product Information Format: İstikbal Perform



**FIGURE 6**

Figure 6. The Product Image Format: Clinique

### **5.3.3 The Personalized Format**

The direct relationship between a product and the human personality defines the primary framework of personalized advertisements. Here the person code takes on an importance quite different from its use in the product image advertisements in which people sometimes appear as part of a social setting that transfers abstract symbolic qualities to products. In personalized advertisements, people are directly interpreted in their relationship to the world of the product. Social admiration, pride of ownership, anxiety about lack of use or satisfaction in consumption becomes important in the interpretation of the product (See Figure 7). Consumers are invited to imagine themselves in some more idealized state. There is a great intimacy between the product and the consumer (Leiss, Kline, Jhally, 1985, p.246-251).

### **5.3.4 The Lifestyle Format**

The life style format combines the product image and the personalized format. In most life-style advertising, the setting serves in the interpretation of the person code. Social psychology describes this as the use of “stereotypes” rather than “prototypes”.

A prototype is based on attributions about the personality or characteristics of a person such as friendly, intelligent, warm and so on. A stereotype is based on inferences about the relation of the individual to the group or the social context such as class, status, race, or group members (See Figure 8).



# Bir tutku hikâyesi.

E-Serisi.

► En son ne zaman yürüştüğüne jür jür etti, dillerinizin boğuş çözüldü, çözümleriz kamaşıp soluğunuz kesildi? Hızlıyor musunuz? Histerikamaya hazırlandı. Çünkü E-Serisi o ilk gışık duyularınıza size tekrar yaşatacak. Onda tutkunuzun hak edecek her şey var. Sürüş konusunuza konuyacak şekilde destek sağlayarak evirizin konforunu sunan, çok hızlı dinamik sürüşü koştığı gibi. Ya da fren teknolojisi

devir açan Sensotronic Fren Kontrol Sistemi, ön camdan arka cama kadar uzanan panoramik cam tavanı, eğimli yollarda araçı aynı seviyede tutarak nasıl bir solda gittiği/laizi hissettirmeyen Semi aktif Süspansiyon Sistemi gibi. E-Serisi, sınıfında ilk olan bu özellikleri ve büyüleyici görünümüyle sizi bekliyor. Kendini yeni bir tutkuya hazır hissediyorsanız, bir Mercedes-Benz Türk boyisine gelin

ve E-Serisi'ni daha yakından tanıyın. Histerikamaya sizi yaşattığımız geleceksiniz.



Mercedes-Benz  
Otomobilin geleceği

Mercedes-Benz Türk A.Ş. Beyliközü Adana Mahallesi, Mecidiyeköy 331, 33220 4500 00 01 İstanbul (Merkez) İstanbul, Türkiye Tel: (0212) 450 71 72 İstanbul (Merkez) İstanbul, Türkiye Tel: (0212) 450 71 73 Antalya Antalya, Türkiye Tel: (0242) 307 10 11 Bursa Bursa, Türkiye İstanbul Tel: (0222) 247 10 10 Çarşamba Çarşamba, Türkiye Tel: (0264) 307 10 10 Gaziantep Gaziantep, Türkiye Tel: (0342) 307 10 10 Konya Konya, Türkiye Tel: (0332) 307 10 10 Mardin Mardin, Türkiye Tel: (0346) 307 10 10 Samsun Samsun, Türkiye Tel: (0362) 307 10 10 Trabzon Trabzon, Türkiye Tel: (0362) 307 10 10

FIGURE 7

Figure 7. The Personalized Format: Mercedes-Benz



FIGURE 8

Figure 8. The Lifestyle Format: J&B

More commonly, in the lifestyle advertisements, consumers, products and settings of consumption are harmonized around a unified impression. There is no need for any other information because the advertisement provides a direct vision of a consumption style (Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1985, p.246-251).

#### **5.4 The Language of Advertising**

The language of advertising, what the text in the advertisement tells the consumers and how the message is told by advertisers, is sometimes more important than the visual aspect. The ultimate objective of advertising language is to attract consumers' attention to the product or service on offer.

To achieve that aim, advertisers use language distinctively, they play with words manipulating or distorting their usual meanings to direct the consumers to the action by influencing them with the written message.

The most effective and frequent advertising language used by advertisers is called "double meaning". Here, advertisers use a word which has two different meanings and give two different messages to the consumer (See Figure 9).

On the other hand, there are not many advertisements which take their power from and influence consumers by their language. Language and image are inseparable parts of the advertisement. Each of them is as important as the other one for the success of the advertisement (Kotler, 2001, p.236-238). In relation to this, Dyer states that:

Because the advertising language is full of unusual or stylish words and short, crisp sentences easy to repeat and remember, it can catch our attention and imagination and aid memory. There are also brand names, slogans, or catch-phrases, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, partitions of songs or verse and repetition. Some advertisements rely just on the style of the language. For example, an advertisement for a foreign product in the foreign language cannot be understood but it is expected to be recognized that it is in the foreign language (Dyer, 1998, p.140).

#### **5.4.1 Double Meaning**

In this Volkswagen advertisement, there is double meaning. The layout that is “better prices for you to meet the one you love” has two different meanings.

One is, Volkswagen makes you meet the person you love and it is sold for a lower price now so you can afford it more easily. The other meaning is that you can have a Volkswagen that you will love because it is cheaper now. Therefore the layout refers to two objects; the Volkswagen and a lover.

As long as an advertisement message reaches the consumers, it is counted as successful. Moreover, consumers should perceive the message with its visual and textual concepts correctly. Therefore, the decoding process should be completed both by advertisers and consumers successfully. Aaker summarizes all the processes of decoding advertisement messages as follows:

There are four stages of decoding advertisement process. One is advertisers draw material from the social knowledge (a referent system) of the audience. Then transform these materials into messages (encoding). Thirdly, they develop appropriate formats and shape the content in order that the process of communication from audience to audience should be completed. Finally, the audience properly decodes the message (transfer meaning) (Aaker, 1996, p.85-87).

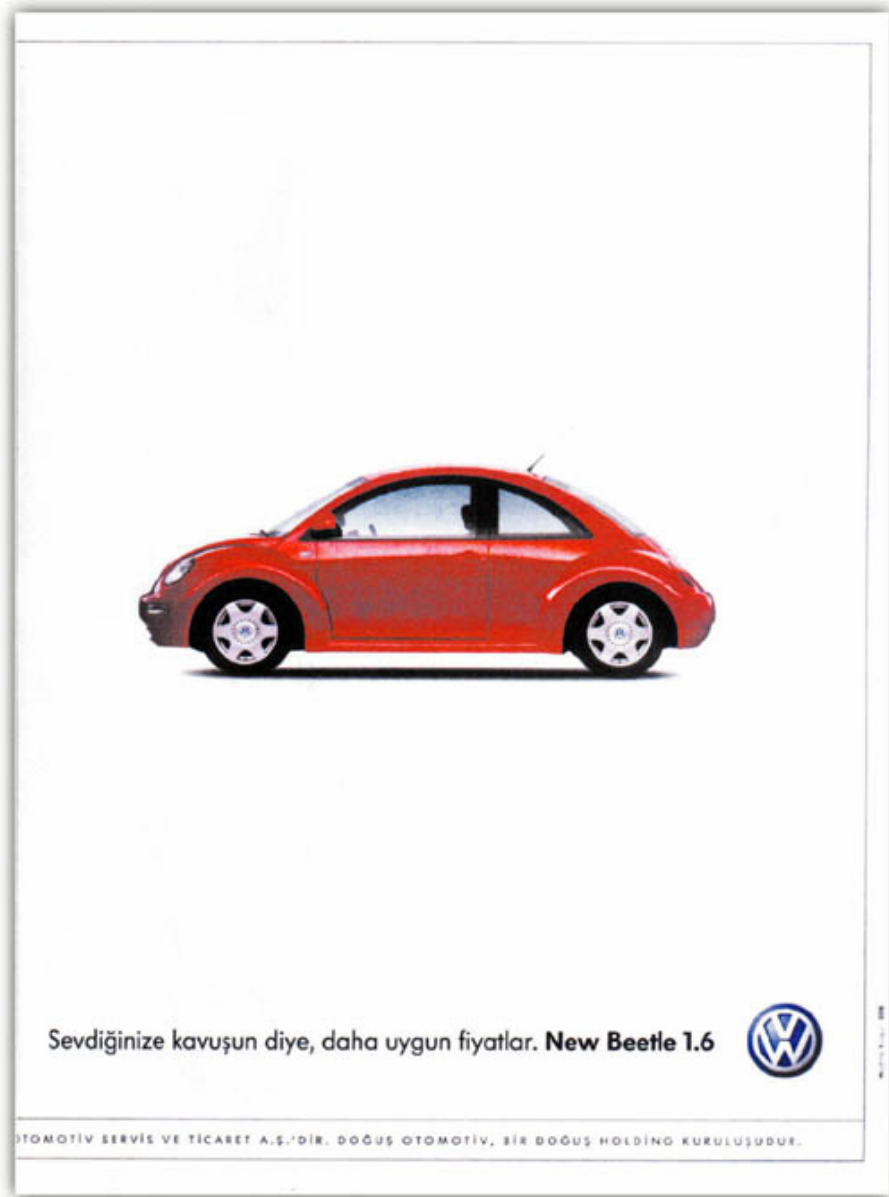


FIGURE 9

Figure 9. Double Meaning: Volkswagen New Beetle



The last chapter will be a case study in which the discussions about advertising mentioned until now will be demonstrated. In the following chapter, the re-launch advertising campaign for a Turkish newspaper, *Akşam*, will be evaluated. *Akşam* had lost its market share and brand image before the new editorial policy and advertising strategy. In the light of all arguments given in the previous chapters, the brand and image perception for *Akşam* before and after the advertising campaign will be examined. After this evaluation, the success of the campaign in accordance with the basic aims of its advertising strategy will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE RE-LAUNCH ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN OF *AKŞAM***

In this thesis, the first chapter has discussed consumer behavior and the effects of advertising on purchasing decisions. The basic argument of the critics is that advertising is one of the most important weapons of the capitalist system, it creates false needs and demands and that advertisers convince consumers that these needs are real by using manipulative ways. In the second chapter, these criticisms have been evaluated in detail and advertisers' basic defenses towards critics have been discussed. At this point, advertisers and its defenders claim that advertising does not create false needs but discover new needs that have to be satisfied and they inform consumers about the products that may satisfy these needs. According to marketers and advertisers, there is no manipulation in this process as they just try to maximize benefits for consumers.

In the third chapter, advertisers' answers to the claim that their only aim is to raise sales and consumption have been evaluated, and other aims and functions of advertising apart from raising sales have been discussed. With relation to this point, basic marketing and advertising strategies that provide the communication of advertisements to consumers, target consumer group segmentation and basic

consumer behavior models have been evaluated. As the most important and powerful marketing strategy, the necessary conditions for advertising to be successful have been examined.

In the fourth chapter, the strategies before communicating the advertisements to consumers and developing an advertising strategy have been mentioned. Then the most important part of the advertisements, the messages, and the science of semiology as a methodology of deconstructing advertisements have been evaluated.

All evaluations about advertising will be exemplified in the last chapter, which focuses on the re-launch advertising campaign for *Akşam*, a Turkish newspaper. There are some reasons why the *Akşam* advertising campaign has been chosen as the case study of this thesis: Firstly, a newspaper is a mass consuming product; thousands of newspapers are purchased by people everyday day. Despite this, a newspaper does not resemble other fast moving consumption products which are purchased by people to satisfy their basic human needs. As a product, newspapers' product loyalty and conscious preference are quite high. Especially in our country, a newspaper is not only a communication tool which informs people about the latest news of the country or the world. Moreover, a newspaper is a product that presents a lifestyle to people, some kind of a social status symbol.

Therefore, especially for a newspaper, changing consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior is a very difficult process. With the case study of *Akşam*, the

ways of improving the brand image of a product that has hit the bottom because of past experiences, wrong marketing and advertising strategies will be shown. During this demonstration, all the evaluations and discussions until now will be used and exemplified. While the re-launch advertising campaign of *Akşam* is being examined, authorities from the *Akşam* Research Company, Strategic Planning and Marketing Department, Editorial Group and Advertising Agency will be interviewed.

There are three basic questions that will be asked to authorized-people from *Akşam* and its third parties. The first one is about *Akşam*'s reader profile and brand image perception before the re-launch campaign; the second one is about the basic targets of the advertising campaign, the point they want to reach; and the last one is about their evaluations of the advertising campaign's success. For this purpose, firstly, BIAK's (Basın İzleyici Araştırmaları Kurumu) research about target consumer group segmentation of newspapers will be examined to understand the definition of basic consumer groups in the world of press.

Following that, the research done prior to the advertising campaign that was about *Akşam*'s brand image perception by different consumer groups, such as university graduates, high school graduates, university students, bureaucrats, housewives, white and blue collar workers, will be evaluated by interviewing the Research Company's authorized people and demonstrating the numeric conclusion data.

Then, the Editorial Group and Strategic Planning and Marketing Department people will be interviewed with the three questions mentioned above to comprehend *Akşam*'s strategic aim to reach the reader. Following this, the *Akşam* advertising campaign will be evaluated with the guidance of the Advertising Agency. In this stage, *Akşam*'s advertising campaign will be decoded.

Lastly, the success of the advertising campaign will be discussed by using three different devices. One of them is *Akşam*'s circulation rate, the other is printed advertisement customer's rate and the last one is reader profile analyses before and after the campaign.

### **6.1 Newspapers' Reader Group Segmentation**

As has been mentioned in the previous chapters, defining a target consumer group and developing basic marketing strategies for the product in accordance with this segmentation is the first step of every study in the world of marketing. Every product targets a group of people who can purchase it because of their socio-economic status, life-style, likes and dislikes, educational and occupational level, social environment and other special characteristics. Newspapers also target consumer groups even though these groups are wider than those of most other products. Their editorial policies and contents are defined in accordance with their target consumer group. For instance, because their target consumer groups are different from each other, *Radikal* and *Posta* have quite different editorial policies, while *Radikal* targets the intellectuals, *Posta* targets people who are mostly

uneducated and, because of this reason, their contents are quite different from that of each other.

In Turkey's Press Readership Research, there is a common social class definition used by all newspapers, which is developed by one of the most well-known research companies, ACNielsen ZET, and approved by BIAK. It is a common currency that presents press readership researches to all Turkish newspapers. According to BIAK, they do these researches every three months because it is important to correctly inform companies that give advertisements to these newspapers. Media companies, advertising agencies, media planning and purchasing companies have all been using BIAK's press readership researches since 1997 (Türkiye Basın Okurluk Araştırması/2.Yıl/7.Rapor, p.5). For instance, while an fmcg product such as a milk brand targeting high amount of people advertises in *Hürriyet* which is the market leader and has the biggest reader share in Turkey, an investment bank may prefer a more thematic newspaper that focuses on economy and have a reader segment that is interested in investment banking, such as *Dünya*.

ACNielsen ZET defines the socio-economic status index in accordance to three basic variables; durable consumer goods ownership, occupational status of the individual who has income and lastly educational status of the individual. All variables have sub-titles that have different points and, in the end, all points are calculated and they establish one of the socio-economic statuses (Türkiye Basın Okurluk Araştırması, 2.Yıl, 7.Rapor, p.25-28).

Table 1. Durable Consumer Goods and their Indicators

<b>Durable Consumer Goods</b>	<b>Possessing</b>	<b>Not Possessing</b>
Video	+12	
Microwave Oven	+11	
Dishwasher	+11	
Automobile	+10	
Camera	+10	
Automatic Washing Machine	+9	-10
Oven		-11
Normal and Automatic Washing Machine		-11
Refrigerator		-13

Table 2. Educational Status of Readers

<b>Educational Status</b>		
University Graduate	+18	
High-School Graduate	+9	
Secondary School Graduate	+3	
Primary Graduate		-2
Un-Graduate		-14

Table 3. Occupational Status of Readers

<b>Occupational Status</b>		
Qualified Self Employment	+23	
Employer + employs 5 workers	+20	
Manager + manages 5 people	+19	
Manager + manages at least 5 people	+16	
Employer + employs at least 5 workers	+10	
Employee	+9	
Farmer + employs more than 1 worker	+8	
Retired	+1	
Unqualified Self Employment		-1
Civil Employee		-3
Farmer + employs at least 1 worker		-11

According to this, ACNielsen ZET has made a social class categorization, similar to Kotler and Armstrong's socio-economic index mentioned in the third chapter.



Table 4. Socio-economic Status of Readers

<b>Socio-Economic Status</b>	<b>Point</b>
Upper Uppers <b>(A)</b>	+ 53 point and higher
Lower Uppers <b>(B)</b>	between +35 and + 52 point
Upper Middles <b>(C1)</b>	between +14 and + 34 points
Lower Middles <b>(C2)</b>	between + 2 and + 13 points
Upper Lovers <b>(D)</b>	between +1 and -31 points
Lower Lovers <b>(E)</b>	-32 points and lower

According to this, the common consumer segmentation of the newspaper market in Turkey will be given in the following section. *Akşam*'s brief history, brand image perception and readers' profile will be examined with the reference of Editor in Chief of *Akşam*, Nurcan Akad; the Strategic Marketing Director, Ercüment Bilgen; the Head Researcher of *Akşam*'s research company Strategic Focus, Nuray Tunalı; and the Customer Relations Director of *Akşam*'s advertising agency Pars McCann Erickson, Koray Taneli will be mentioned. At this point, *Akşam*'s Brand Image Research Report that was done in September 2002 by one of the marketing research companies named Strategic Focus will help define *Akşam*'s brand image perception and reader profile before the advertising campaign.

## **6.2 Akşam's Reader Profile and Brand Image Perception before the Advertising Campaign**

According to Kotler, a product's consumer group defines the product's standing in the market. The product's brand image is very much related with the product's consumer profile (Kotler, 1994, 232-233). In this section, *Akşam's* brand image and reader profile will be examined but firstly, *Akşam's* history will be evaluated briefly to understand the past time experiences and wrong marketing decisions.

### **6.2.1 A Brief History of *Akşam*:**

Turkey's one of the oldest and fundamental newspapers, *Akşam* was established in 1919. During those times, *Akşam's* brand image was defined with the attributes such as trust, prestige, respect and honesty. It was published at nights and was the first newspaper that reached the latest news to its readers. In the 1960's, *Akşam's* owner was changed and then because of economic problems it's publishing was stopped.

In the 1990's, the Ilıcak Group purchased *Akşam*. In those times, with wrong and highly commercial marketing strategies, *Akşam's* brand image and value hit the bottom. The most important reason behind this loss was its promotion campaign. With this promotion campaign, *Akşam* promised that all readers who collect the coupons in the newspaper for a limited time would be given a television free of charge. But at the end of the promotion campaign, *Akşam* could not give the promised televisions to all people who collected the coupons. After that, it has

been associated with attributes such as swindler or liar newspaper among consumers. This is how *Akşam*'s brand image and value hit the bottom.

In 1998, Çukurova Holding purchased *Akşam*'s copyrights but did not take any action to change the brand perception till 2002. In 2002, Nurcan Akad joined the newspaper as the Editor in Chief and then their editorial and managerial strategies changed dramatically. First of all, *Akşam*'s new editorial and managerial strategies were planned according to data conclusions gathered from the brand image research. In the following section, the conclusions of *Akşam*'s Brand Image Research will be examined in detail to understand its old perception among the people and position in the market.

### **6.2.2 *Akşam*'s Brand Image Reseach**

Strategic Focus carried out *Akşam*'s Brand Image Research in September 2002. During this research, there were five focus group discussions, 70 deep interviews and 800 face-to-face interviews with *Akşam* readers, competitive newspapers' readers, university students, competitive media workers, non-governmental organizations, *Akşam*'s editorial and managerial staff, bureaucrats, and different age, educational and occupational groups. At this point, two main questions have been asked to Strategic Focus's Head Researcher Nuray Tunalı:

1. What is the main aim of this research?
2. What are the basic conclusions of this research?

According to Tunalı, the main aim of the research was to examine the readers' behavior towards six competitive newspapers which are *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*, *Posta*, *Star*, *Vatan* and *Akşam* and to define brand images and reader profile for these seven newspapers.

To achieve this aim, the subjects below were examined:

1. Examining consumer behavior towards the newspapers as a communication tool.
  - Newspaper purchasing customs (when, where, how frequent, why)
  - Newspaper reading customs (when, where, how frequent, in which mood, why, which sections and columnists)
2. Exploring customer's expectations from the newspapers
  - Definition of the ideal newspaper
  - Evaluating how proper the seven newspapers are to this ideal
3. Evaluating consumers' awareness and perceptions towards the defined newspapers
  - Reader profiles of the brands
  - Brand value characteristics
  - Brand positions in the market

Conclusions of a number of these reports were not shared in detail because of confidentiality reasons, but some basic common conclusions and brief data about *Akşam*'s reader profile were shared. In accordance with this, the first output of the research is about a newspaper's common perception among people. According to

the research, most people think that a newspaper is a communication tool that gives daily news and information about the country and the whole world.

According to *Akşam* Brand Image Research, even though the facts differentiate among different consumer segments, the basic common attributes which a newspaper must have for are trust, honesty, objectivity and correctness. Although people think that newspapers must have these values, most of them believe that there is not one single newspaper which has all these values at the same time. Most people suspect the honesty and correctness of the news in the newspapers because they aware that newspapers belong to definite media companies. They also believe the news in the newspapers are highly manipulated. People choose to read the newspaper closest to their political thoughts and life-styles.

According to Tunalı, in our country the newspaper is not just an informing communication tool but it is a symbol of social status and life-style. The results of the research showed that especially for middle-aged people, it is a very hard decision to change their newspaper. Therefore, the brand loyalty for a newspaper is quite high among middle-aged people. According to research conclusions, among the young people and teenagers, there is no such a powerful loyalty. Changing their newspaper and trying a different brand is widespread among young people and teenagers. While for middle-aged and older consumer groups, political identity and columnists of the newspaper determines their purchasing decisions, for young consumers and teenagers, content richness, reflection of different

perspectives and approaches, and objectivity of the newspaper are more important than other characteristics.

According to the research, educational status also determines the reasons for reading newspapers among different consumer groups. In this respect, while people with little education prefer more colorful, illustrated, easy to read newspapers, highly educated ones prefer rich content, high-quality news and less illustrated and colorful newspapers.

After examining the reasons why consumers buy newspapers briefly, Tunalı says that according to consumers' common approaches, the seven newspapers that are chosen for the research as the competitive of *Akşam* can be categorized into two based on their content, price and the number of pages.

1. *First League Newspapers*: This type of newspapers contains fewer illustrations, have more news about economics and politics and more columns, higher prices and page numbers. This kind of newspapers is read mostly by C1, B and A reader segments. According to the research, among the seven newspapers, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah* and *Vatan* belong to this type.
2. *Second League Newspapers*: This type of newspapers are highly illustrated, easy to read, have light magazine news, promise fun to their readers rather than information, have lower prices and fewer page numbers. This kind of newspapers is read mostly by C2 and D reader segments.

According to *Akşam* Brand Image Research, among the seven newspapers, *Posta* and *Star* belong to this type.

*Akşam*'s place is determined between these two types of newspapers but closer to the second league. According to the final research conclusions:

- 80% of *Akşam* readers are male while 20% are female.
- 60% of *Akşam* readers are over 35 while 40% is younger.
- 55% of *Akşam* readers are high and secondary school graduated, 35% primary- school graduated, and 8% university graduated.
- According to their socio-economic status, 40% of *Akşam* readers are D and E, 25% C2, 20% C1 and 15% A and B.

In addition to these basic facts, one other important conclusion of the research is, according to consumers, *Akşam* has no political approach or definite standing in the market and does not have a stable publishing policy.

The most evident reasons for *Akşam* to be purchased are its cheap price, illustrated layout and crossword puzzle. In the light of these research conclusions, in the following section, the development of *Akşam*'s re-launch advertising campaign, its planning stages and targets will be evaluated with the help of Editor in Chief Nurcan Akad and Strategic Marketing Director Ercüment Bilgen.

### **6.3 Developing *Akşam*'s Re-Launch Advertising Strategy**

In the previous section, *Akşam*'s reader profile, brand image and values before the re-launch advertising campaign have been examined by interviewing *Akşam*'s research company head researcher Nuray Tunalı. In this section, regarding the facts of the research, three questions will be asked to *Akşam*'s Editor in Chief Nurcan Akad and Strategic Marketing Director Ercüment Bilgen:

1. What is *Akşam*'s new editorial and marketing strategy?
2. What is the target consumer group of *Akşam*?
3. What are the main targets of the advertising campaign?

#### **6.3.1 *Akşam*'s New Editorial and Marketing Policy:**

In light of the data obtained from the research and from her own experiences in the world of media, Nurcan Akad determined the new editorial strategy of *Akşam* by applying necessary editorial changes to provide the newspaper to be placed in the first league, such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Sabah*. Akad says major changes were made in the illustrated layout of the newspaper, the editorial team and the columnists.

The change in the illustrated layout was made to create the new look and the change in the editorial team and columnists were made to create a richer content. The editorial policy was re-made according to the lacks of the market, which are objective and honest newspapers.



By the same token, Ercüment Bilgen established the new marketing strategy of *Akşam* mainly on the promise that it will be the only newspaper which will not be manipulated in any way and will not serve any profit obtaining or political beneficiary group. At this point, the differentiation point was chosen to be objectivity and courage. Therefore the product promise of *Akşam* is that news can be in any newspaper but only *Akşam* writes objectively and correctly. Moreover *Akşam* can give such news that other newspapers cannot since they are not free or objective.

### **6.3.2 The New Target Consumer Group of *Akşam***

According to the new publishing and marketing policy, which has been examined above, *Akşam*'s new target consumer group strategy is established into two categories:

1. Keeping C1 and D reader segments that already exist.
2. Raising C2, B ve A reader segments

According to Bilgen, while the message that will be given with the new communication strategy to the existing readers is that, with its new look and editorial policy, *Akşam* maximizes their benefits more than ever, the other message that will be given to the new potential readers is that, in this situation where the media is highly manipulated, *Akşam* will be the best alternative for correct and honest publishing. However, Bilgen believes that keeping the old readers and raising the new ones at the same time is a very difficult and risky strategy, because

these consumer groups belongs to different socio-economic status. Therefore, with the new editorial and marketing strategy, the risk of losing readers who belong to C2 and D segments is considered as a possibility. At this point, the possibility of reader loss from C2 and D segments is planned to be compensated with the gain from C1, B and A segments.

Bilgen states that for minimizing this risk, they decided not to change the price of the newspaper and distribute the crossword puzzle not printed in the pages of the newspaper but as a supplement apart from the newspaper because, as has been mentioned before, the main aim of the strategy is broadening the general target consumer group without losing the existing ones.

### **6.3.3 The Aims of the Advertising Campaign**

According to Ercüment Bilgen, the most important marketing tool of the new editorial policy is advertising because they want to reach to the masses and share the changes and new promises of *Akşam* with thousands of people. Bilgen defines the basic aims of the advertising campaign including television, print and outdoor as follows:

1. Keeping the existing readers and gaining new ones, therefore raising the circulation numbers of the newspaper. At this point, the most important aim is raising the number of young and female readers who are in segments A and B.

2. In the long term, with this new brand image and a wider and more qualified reader segment, raising the income of the newspaper with new advertorial customers.
3. Improving the brand image of *Akşam* that was at the bottom because of television promotion campaigns.

According to these basic aims and the main strategies evaluated above, *Akşam*'s editorial and managerial team briefed the advertising agency, Pars McCann Erickson, and then they created *Akşam*'s re-launching advertising campaign. For further discussions, in the following sections, *Akşam*'s outdoor and printed advertisements will be evaluated and deconstructed with the references from Koray Taneli, The Customer Relations Director of the agency.

#### **6.4 *Akşam*'s Outdoor and Printed Advertising Campaign**

The following questions have been asked to Koray Taneli about the outdoor and printed advertising campaign:

1. What are the main objectives of the campaign?
2. What is the message communicated to consumers with the images and layouts of the advertisements?

According to Taneli, the campaign had three aims which were examined in Chapter III under the title of "Aims of Advertising as a Marketing Strategy".

#### **6.4.1 Objectives of the Campaign**

*1<sup>st</sup> Aim: Correcting negative impressions about the product image:* According to the agency, the prime priority is to change the negative brand image of *Akşam* which came from the previous owner, The Ilıcak Group because of not keeping their promises. As was mentioned before, it is more difficult to change the negative impression of a brand to positive than creating a positive image for a new product.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Aim: Creating a new brand image, awareness and loyalty:* According to Taneli, the first aim was to erase the negative image. At this point, the high frequency of printed advertisements and outdoors was used to reach the maximum amount of potential and existing consumers. In this time period, the aim was to make people believe that the newspaper has really changed and is promising something new and thus to convince them to buy the newspaper and make them see the differences. In the following step, they tried to create an awareness of the new positive image of *Akşam* and to build brand loyalty.

At this point, the campaign was divided into two main paths by the means of target consumer group; the first is to increase the already existing consumers' brand loyalty and the second was to create maximum brand awareness to the potential consumers.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Aim: Raising sales of the product:* As is the main aim of every advertising campaign, *Akşam's* campaign's aim was also to raise its sales. As mentioned before, the risk was not to lose the existing readers but to gain new ones. This is quite a hard task for an advertising campaign because with one campaign many different consumer groups were targeted. As mentioned in the chapter entitled

“Types of Purchasing Behavior”, buying a newspaper is habitual buying behavior but different from other habitual buying behaviors.

For the newspaper, consumer involvement is also high. According to Taneli, especially in our country, people see the newspaper as a symbol of their social status. Even though a new product is better priced, they do not think of changing their own newspaper. For instance, it is very hard to convince a university student who reads *Radikal* to change to *Akşam*. Because according to him, while *Akşam* is a newspaper read by low-educated people, *Radikal* is one that is read by intellectuals.

In the following section, *Akşam*'s printed advertisements and outdoor campaign's layout and image will be decoded with the comments of Koray Taneli to comprehend the messages that they want to get across to the consumers.

#### **6.4.2 Decoding of the Advertisements of *Akşam***

The printed and outdoor advertising campaign of *Akşam* started in December 2002 and continued for three months. The main layout was “Even if nobody writes it, *Akşam* does” (Hiç kimse yazmasa da *Akşam* yazıyor).

According to Koray Taneli, this slogan underlines *Akşam*'s new brand values of honesty and objectivity and moreover it highlights *Akşam*'s differentiation point, which is courage.



FIGURE 10



FIGURE 11



FIGURE 12



FIGURE 13



FIGURE 14



FIGURE 15

Figure10-15. *Akşam* Advertising Campaign

The base used in all advertisements is black. According to the creative team of Pars McCann Erickson, black base signifies the manipulated media other than *Akşam*. The layout for “Even if nobody writes it, *Akşam* does” is white and covers almost the whole base, meaning that *Akşam* is a new light in the darkness of other manipulated media. *Akşam* uses red in the layout to make the advertisement recognizable and also to establish a connection with its logo.

Six alternatives were used in the print and outdoor advertisement campaigns, each of them targeting different consumer segments. Relying on the brief that came from the Strategic Marketing Department and Editorial Team of *Akşam*, a high number of people from different consumer segments were targeted with the new advertising campaign. Pars McCann Erickson’s creative team solved this problem using different, real, black and white photographs placed on the left corner of each advertisement, three of which targets segments A and B (see figures 10, 11, 12) and three of them targets C2 segments and D (see figures 13, 14, 15) and all of them targets segment C1 at the same time. According to this, in figure 10, 11 and 12 which are directed to segments A and B, the photographs are related with social responsibility such as air pollution, anti-militarism and homeless children.

With these advertisements, the message to the consumer is that *Akşam* sees these social problems and is the only newspaper, which will do something to change them. As the same, in figures 13, 14 and 15 which are directed to *Akşam*’s existing readers, the message given is that *Akşam* is aware of your problems and is the only newspaper to change them. The *Akşam* visual is on the left corner of all

advertisements, and the headline “Here is our difference” supports the new brand values and the general slogan of the advertisements. This promise targets all consumer segments.

In the following section, the effectiveness of this advertisement campaign will be evaluated using some numerical data.

### **6.5 The Effectiveness of the Re-Launch Advertising Campaign of *Akşam***

In this section, the effectiveness and success rate of the *Akşam*'s re-launch advertising campaign will be evaluated. In relation to this, the aims of the advertising campaign will be explained with reference to The Marketing Director of *Akşam*, Ercüment Bilgen. According to Bilgen, with the new advertising campaign, they want to realize three targets. In the following sections, these three aims and the success of the advertising campaign to reach these aims will be discussed using the numerical data of BIAK's Turkey's Press Readership Researches and also the Circulation Report which is provided from one of the biggest distributing companies, BBD (Birleşik Basın Dağıtım).

#### **6.5.1 Readership Profile of *Akşam* before and after the Advertising Campaign**

In relation to this, the aims of *Akşam* about its readership profile prior to the advertising campaign will be mentioned point by point briefly:



- Keeping its already existing readers from in segments C2 and D
- Raising the number of readers from segment C1
- Gaining new readers which are segments A and B
- Raising the number of female and young readers

The effectiveness of the advertising campaign will be evaluated with comparison to the data of BIAK 6<sup>th</sup> Season Research, which is done before the advertising campaign in March-May, 2002 and the data of BIAK 10<sup>th</sup> Season Research, which were collected after the advertising campaign in March-May, 2003.

Table 5. Comparative Gender of Readers

<b>Gender of <i>Akşam</i> Readers</b>	BIAK 6 <sup>th</sup> Season Research	BIAK10 <sup>th</sup> Season Research
Female	20%	28%
Male	80%	72%

Table 6. Comparative Ages of Readers

<b>Ages of <i>Akşam</i> Readers</b>	BIAK 6 <sup>th</sup> Season Research	BIAK 10 <sup>th</sup> Season Research
Ages between 15 and 17	8%	9%
Ages between 18 and 20	8%	13%
Ages between 21 and 24	7%	14%
Ages between 25 and 34	23%	29%
Ages between 35 and 44	18%	19%
Ages between 45 and 54	23%	8%
Ages over 55	13%	8%

Table 7. Comparative Socio-economic Status of Readers

<b>Socio-Economic Status of <i>Akşam</i> Readers</b>	BIAK 6 <sup>th</sup> Season Reserch	BIAK10 <sup>th</sup> Season Research
A and B Reader Segment	18%	26%
C1 Reader Segment	19%	27%
C2 Reader Segment	25%	20%
D Reader Segment	38%	27%

### 6.5.2 Circulation Rates of *Akşam* before and after the Advertising Campaign:

As all kinds of product advertising campaigns, the other main aim of the *Akşam*'s advertising campaign was raising its sales, which means an increase in the circulation rates. The success of this aim will be evaluated with the data that came from the daily distribution company of *Akşam*, BBD. In this respect, *Akşam*'s quarterly average circulation numbers will be examined by comparing January – September 2002 and January – September 2003.

Table 8. Comparative Sales

	Jan-Fab-March	Apr-May-June	July-Aug-Sept	<b>02-03 Raise of Sales</b>
<b>Sales in 2003</b>	197.360	203.388	210.443	<b>36%</b>
<b>Sales in 2002</b>	138.068	151.560	159.000	

(BBD 2002, 2003 Circulation Reports)

### 6.5.3 Raising the Income of *Akşam* with New Advertorial Customers:

As it is known, newspapers have two different income sources, which are sales incomes and advertorial incomes, which are equally important for the general profit of a newspaper. Therefore, in the long term, for the advertising campaign of *Akşam*, raising the advertorial incomes with the new advertorial customers was one of the important aims. Similar to the circulation rates evaluation, advertorial incomes of *Akşam* will also be examined quarterly by comparing January – September 2002 and January – September 2003. In these time periods, *Akşam*'s share rates of the total advertorial rates will be demonstrated with the reference of BIAK reports.

Table 9. Comparative Advertorial Rates

	Jan-Fab-March	Apr-May-June	July-Aug-Sept
<b>Advertisements in 2003</b>	8%	7%	9%
<b>Advertisements in 2002</b>	3%	4%	4%

(BIAK 2002, 2003 Advertorial Rates Reports)

As can be seen from the data, *Akşam*'s circulation numbers and advertorial rates have increased after the advertising campaign. Similarly, the reader profile of *Akşam* has changed after the advertising campaign.

According to *Akşam*'s Marketing Director, Ercüment Bilgen, the advertising campaign is not the only factor behind these changes. Editorial changes, content richness, well-known columnists, new layout and the management of The Editor in Chief, Nurcan Akad are all more important than the advertising campaign. Moreover, Bilgen states that apart from advertising, they apply other marketing tools for *Akşam* such as promotion campaigns, sponsorships, and events.

On the other hand, Bilgen claims that without an advertising campaign, these changes can not be communicated to the readers. Therefore, according to Bilgen, advertising only works if the product is as qualified as claimed in the advertisement.

In this chapter, *Akşam*'s re-launch advertising campaign has been evaluated to exemplify the whole examinations and discussions in previous chapters. With this study, the consumer segmentation, planning and developing marketing and advertising strategy is demonstrated with reference to the product's Managerial and Marketing Team, Research Company and Advertising Agency.

The following section will be the conclusion of the study. In the conclusion, besides the evaluations about the whole study, *Akşam*'s advertising campaign's success will be examined apart from the numerical data that given in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION**

In the final analysis, in this thesis, conflicting opinions about the existence and the system of advertising were discussed. In relation to this point, the effects of advertising on consumer behavior, the ways in which it reaches the consumers and how it directs them to the action were evaluated. At this point, the primary criticism towards advertising was that its only aim is to direct people to consume more by creating false needs and manipulating them. On the other hand, advertisers' main approach was that advertising does not create but discovers consumers' new needs and presents a great amount of alternatives by informing consumers about how to satisfy these needs.

Without any doubt, critics are quite right in claiming that, advertising influences consumers' purchasing decisions and its primary aim is to increase the sales of the products and consumption. On the other hand, advertisers are also right in their concerns; namely, that advertising is one of the most important factors that affect consumer behavior but it is not the only one, and one of the basic aims is raising sales but this is not the only aim either. Advertising is the primary strategy of

modern marketing that influences consumers' purchasing decisions and directs them to consume more. At this point, advertising is neither as dangerous as the critics claim it to be, and nor is it as innocent as advertisers' maintain, which means it does not always manipulate consumers or maximize their benefits.

As has been examined in the case study of *Akşam*, the differentiation point of this newspaper was correct and honest news. With the slogan, which was "Even if no one writes, *Akşam* does", they promise consumers honesty and courage.

At this point, the basic issues which are open to discussion are whether *Akşam* can realize these promises that are highlighted in the advertisements and how they persuade people *Akşam* is different from other manipulated media. Is *Akşam*'s advertising campaign which was examined in previous chapter sufficient and believable enough to tell its basic consumer promises that are honesty and courage to the readers? As has been mentioned before, even the media has to be the symbol of objectivity and honesty, especially nowadays it is perceived by most of people as a weapon of some beneficiary groups. All of us use our freedom of getting objective and right news while we read newspapers but, in our country, media is in the monopoly of two or three big holdings. Therefore, the news in them can not be truly objective and right. At this point, *Akşam*'s consumer promises which are honesty and courage actually have to be all newspaper's consumer promises naturally but in such conditions, unfortunately, these attributes can be the differentiation point of a newspaper as in the case of *Akşam*.

What has *Akşam* done to make people believe that these promises are real? As has been mentioned in the last chapter, according to *Akşam*'s managers, first of all its editorial policy has been changed, new columnists, journalists and correspondents came to *Akşam* and its lay-out has been revised. For telling the differences in the lay-out and the editorial team and, the most important, its new honest and brave editorial policy, the managers has decided to use advertising as the marketing strategy and briefed their Advertising Agency, Pars McCann Erickson, in according to this strategy. Because of the brief that came from the Strategic Marketing Department and Editorial Team of *Akşam*, a high number of people from different reader segments were targeted with the new advertising campaign. As has been mentioned before, six alternatives were used in the print and outdoor advertisement campaign of *Akşam*, each of them targeting different consumer segments. Pars McCann Erickson's creative team decided to use different, real, black and white photographs placed on the left corner of each advertisement, three of which targets reader segments A and B (see figures 10, 11, 12) and three of them targets reader segments C2 and D (see figures 13, 14, 15). What is this creative concept's strategy and what does tell to the consumer?

In figures 10, 11 and 12 which are directed to segments A and B, the signifier is a newspaper which is demonstrated as the symbol of honesty, courage and sensitivity. The signified are the photographs which are related with air pollution, anti-militarism and poverty and which are shown, according to Pars McCann Ercikson's creative team, as the symbol of the social interests of the intellectuals and AB reader segments. The sign is actual visual of *Akşam* which is demonstrated

as the mirror of social problems on the one hand and as the solution point on the other hand. With these advertisements, *Akşam*'s promise to the reader segments A and B is that *Akşam* is aware of the social problems of the country and the world. They are sensitive about all of these problems, even it sometimes can be against some beneficiary groups, *Akşam* is brave enough and work to find solutions to them.

On the other hand, in Figures 13, 14 and 15 which are directed to the reader segments C2 and D, the signifier is still the same, the newspaper which is demonstrated as the symbol of honesty, courage and sensitivity. The signified are the photographs of the earthquake and flood victims, and the elderly waiting in the bank queue for having their salaries. These photographs were chosen on purpose by Pars McCann Ercikson's creative team, because with these photographs *Akşam* is trying to communicate to reader segments C2 and D who are live these problems in reality. With these advertisements, creative team tries to tell to the C2 and D reader segments that *Akşam* aware of your problems and will write about them every day in a fearless way to find solutions of your problems. The sign is *Akşam* which is shown along with the people who face these kinds of problems every day of their lives. The message is that *Akşam* is aware of the public's problems and it is the only newspaper to change them.

At this point, the question of why Pars McCann Ercikson's creative team separates the advertisements according to A,B and C2,D reader segments gain importance. Why a person who belongs to A or B reader segments is not interested in the



problems that are shown in Figure 13, 14 or 15? Earthquake, flood disaster or long retired people's salary queues are actually related with all people who are sensitive for their surroundings, for the world they live. However, Pars McCann Erickson's creative team separates these advertisements into two because they believe that rather than the general social problems, such as air pollution or anti-militarism, reader segments C2 and D are interested in the problems that they actually face everyday. By the same token, according to the creative team, segments A and B may not be familiar with or sensitive about the problems related to being flood victims or salary queues because in reality they do not face these kinds of problems. Even it is not still clear enough or can be called as the weakness of the campaign that is why advertisements were separated into two groups in accordance with the reader segments by *Akşam*'s advertising campaign creators.

With these advertisements, the general message given to the consumer is that *Akşam* sees these social problems and is the only newspaper which will do something to change them.

Even though different photographs were used in each advertisement, the base in all advertisements is black which signifies the manipulated media other than *Akşam*. The layout which is "Even if no one writes, *Akşam* does" is in white and covers almost the whole base signifying that *Akşam* is a new light in the darkness of other manipulated media. At this point, as has been mentioned before, the advertising campaign pays attention to the other crucial problem of our country which is monopolized and manipulated power in the media.

In Turkey, there are a lot of newspapers but most of them belong to same media group. Many newspapers' editorial policy is the same in general because all of them work for the same profit center or beneficiary group. Therefore, most of times they have to support their own business and can not write anything that may cause problems for their group.

At this point, the most problematic issue of the advertising campaign is, as it is obvious, *Akşam* also belongs to one of the biggest companies in Turkey, Çukurova Holding, which means it cannot be as objective and brave as it promises. Therefore, *Akşam*'s editorial policy can be more honest and brave than others but there are also news that *Akşam* can not write. Even though the consumers are aware of this truth, according to data that was examined in the last chapter, consumers believed that the promises of *Akşam* were true and therefore the advertising campaign has reached almost all its targets. At this point, there is not a direct manipulation of consumers. The gap and the need of the market were determined perfectly by the *Akşam*'s Strategic Marketing Department and Advertising Agency and the consumers have been persuaded that this gap will be filled by *Akşam*.

It cannot be said that all of the targets of *Akşam* were achieved just because of the advertising campaign. The sales of the product can increase not just with the advertising campaign but also along with other well-planned marketing tools. Advertising affects the sales of the product but it cannot be measured in numbers. As has been shown in the case of *Akşam*, sales reports and data provides to have an

estimation of the success of the advertising campaign but there is not any technique that determines the definite effects of advertising on consumer behavior yet. Therefore, the success of the advertising campaign cannot be measured in definite numbers but it can be said that a successful advertisement directs consumers to purchase the advertised products.

To achieve this, advertisers must determine target consumer groups and analyze their buying and consumption habits. Besides this, they have to examine the socio-economic status, demographic and psychological conditions carefully. Moreover, the success of an advertisement is very much related to deciding on the right message, the right timing and the right choice of media. An advertising campaign is only successful if it reaches correct consumers within the right time span.

Therefore, advertising is a powerful communication weapon that interacts with many other variables and it has to be carried out professionally. With advertising, consumers can be persuaded to purchase a product only if the product's quality is as good as it is claimed in the campaign. Otherwise, the success of the advertisement and its influence on consumers will be short-term. It is obvious that consumers will not continue to buy the unqualified product just because its advertising campaign is effective and attractive. Therefore, raising sales with the help of advertising and the quality of the product is very much related to each other and each contributes to the other's success. With the help of advertising, a company can have first-time buyers but all marketing tools need to be well-planned with the high quality products, and then sales rates increase continuously.

Finally, consumers can be convinced that *Akşam*'s new brand values promise honest and correct news, and they can also be persuaded to purchase *Akşam* with the help of their advertising campaign. As long as the product, *Akşam*, keeps its promises to the consumers, its success graphics of the sales and brand image perception will continue to rise.

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