

Emine Çobanođlu, PhD.
Associate Prof. of Marketing at Marmara University Faculty of Business
Ressam Namık İsmail Sok., No.1, Bahçelievler, İstanbul
Tel: +90 212 677 74 00

İlke Kocamaz, PhD.
Lecturer of Marketing at Marmara University Faculty of Business
Ressam Namık İsmail Sok., No.1, Bahçelievler, İstanbul
Tel: +90 212 507 99 25

ANALYSING CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF IMAGERY: DETECTION OF
CONSUMERS' STEREOTYPING AND SINCERITY PERCEPTIONS WITH RESPECT
TO THE HEADSCARF USAGE

Mis en forme : Justifié

Kocamazi, İ. & E. Cobanoglu "Analysing consumers' perception of imagery:
detection of consumers' stereotyping and sincerity perceptions with respect to
the headscarf usage", Proceedings International Marketing Trends Conference
2015

**ANALYSING CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF IMAGERY: DETECTION OF
CONSUMERS' STEREOTYPING AND SINCERITY PERCEPTIONS
WITH RESPECT TO THE HEADSCARF USAGE**

Associate Professor Emine OBANOĐLU, PhD.*
Lecturer İlke KOCAMAZ, PhD.**

ABSTRACT

Visuality has gained great importance in commerce in general, and in marketing communications in particular in the last half of the century. Increased dependence on imagery is a phenomenon of our era. The perception of imagery by the target audience is crucial to understanding their interpretations. We conducted an exploratory research using in-depth interviews. We tried to get insights regarding their perception of two images, the main difference of which was that one had a woman wearing a headscarf and the other one had a woman without a headscarf. Within this framework, different stereotype and sincerity perceptions have come out, which have also brought about some ethical questions.

Key Words: imagery, stereotyping, sincerity, headscarf, advertising, indepth interview

* Marmara University, ecobanoglu@marmara.edu.tr

** Marmara University, kocamazi@marmara.edu.tr

Author note page at the end of the article: present position, address, telephone number and e-mail address and any acknowledgement of financial or technical assistance.

Introduction and literature review

We're living in an 'image economy' and visuality in general has gained great importance during the course of the last century, in an era that is commonly called postmodern and "in a market based on images – brand images, corporate images, national images and images of identity – vision is central to management in the information society" (Schroeder, 2004). This phenomenon has affected most areas of our lives including the way we dress, the way we look, the way our homes, cities, shops look, the way we communicate with and evaluate each other. It has in turn affected our marketing communication tools such as our advertisements. Branthwaite (2002: 164) declares the reasons for overreliance on imagery in the last decades as follows: the drive for global marketing required advertisement campaigns that transcended languages and cultures (Lannon, 1991); in a climate of intensifying competition, branding had to rely increasingly on non-rational implicit communication; and with increasing legal restrictions on what can be said directly, images and symbols have become more important vehicles for communicating impressions and brand personalities. "In the creation of a brand, certain key elements connect, these include the product and its abilities/constraints, the brand and its name, the brand symbolism and imagery and the consumer" (Meenaghan, 1995: 25). Pictures have special importance for print advertisements in that visual imagery is an effective tool for learning and making a purchase decision. However, for imagery in advertising to have the aimed effect, it should be interpreted by the target audience as the advertiser intends. People don't always seem to view ads the way that advertisers would like them to. They look at these pictures from their own perspectives, which are shaped by their own life experiences, perceptions and general inclinations,. This is something advertisers need to acknowledge. People might interpret a particular picture in many different ways, they can read it differently. At this point, their socio-cultural, psychological, economic, demographic backgrounds are decisive. To what kind of a society they belong to, their sense of belonging to that society vs. their need for self determination, what kind of values they internalize and externalize, what kind of a relationship they have for themselves, their personality traits, how egocentric they are or the degree they like to dedicate themselves to the society, which social classes they belong to, what their education and income levels are, where they prefer giving out their money and variables similar to these determine to a great degree how they approach an advertisement text (just like any other text). At this point, advertisers need to follow the qualities and sensibilities of their target markets as closely as possible. This study aims at finding out what people see, feel, identify themselves with when they look at imagery, in this case specifically at two images; among which the main difference is the head scarf, as headscarf is a

sensitive issue in a Muslim country, specifically Turkey in this study. In Turkey, people have different views regarding the headscarf, some positive some negative opinions. The objective is to understand how the respondents view these images with and without headscarf and how this variable changes interpretation. There can obviously be many different visual objects for imagery in advertisements one of which are 'women' (Lanis and Covel, 1995; Kang, 1997; Karaca and Papatya, 2011 etc.). The portrayal of the woman image in advertisements can be read from different angles including psychological, sociological, economic, demographical angles as well as from the perspective of its target market, which reference groups that target market belongs to or doesn't belong to, and how the image is being stereotyped by those people. Stereotypes are overgeneralized beliefs that get hold of the few simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped, and widely recognized characteristics about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development to eternity. (Hall, 1997: 258 in Merskin, 2001: 163).

There are stereotypes in people's minds and these stereotypes shape in part the way advertisement texts are designed by advertisers and advertisement texts shape and change the way stereotypes are formed in people's minds in return. So we can say that there's a dialectic between the production and consumption of stereotypes in general. "TV commercials, in particular, make race and gender stereotypes readily available" (Coltrane and Messineo, 2000: 365). Advertisements come to show/teach us how we should play the roles that we play each day including gender roles, parental roles, familial roles, friendship roles etc. For example, one can learn womanly characteristics such as ways of getting dressed, putting on make-up, how to behave from the media in general and advertisements in particular. The subtleties of leading a family life can also be taught us by the media in general and advertisements in particular. For example, Coca Cola uses family life practices in their advertisements very often, how to come together, how to prepare a family dinner table etc. Also, the images such as 'good woman' and 'bad woman' can be taught us through advertisements, women can be depicted as "mother", "housewife" and "beauty" (Mamay ve Simpson, 1981, cited in Oğuz, 2000: 40).

Women in these advertisements may fall into one of 3 reference groups that the target audience of these ads refer to, these being the dissociative, membership, and aspiration groups (Pittard, 2013). The target group may prefer to disassociate themselves from the reference group, may feel part of the group or may long to become part of the group. Which of these reference groups an ad targets to is an important variable that effects that audience.

In so-called postmodern times, fragmentation has come to take over many areas of our lives (Firat, 1992: 203). This phenomenon has affected the media as well in that individual media channels have appeared in Turkey as well as globally, which were targeted to small populations and could reflect the ideologies that they belonged to more freely and prominently. This has brought together with it the phenomenon that stereotypes in ads were reflected onto specific target markets in a more focused way. Stereotypes may have different meanings for different target groups depending on the target group background. This has in Turkey shown itself (among other things) as media channels that express

themselves in various positions on the line of the secular-religious dichotomy. Various media channels that target conservative people have come to blossom and their number has increased quite dramatically in the last 30 years. The framework of the secular-conservative dichotomy has brought with it some philosophical considerations. One of them is related with ethics and the other one with sincerity but these unite at some common points. Firstly, views around the topic of head covering carry a polarity in them, in general. "Some regard head covering as a signifier of oppression and seclusion of women in Islamic societies, others see it as a symbol of resistance and liberation" (Sandikci and Ger, 2005). Perceptions about this topic vary widely according to where people find themselves within this polarity. Another ethical dilemma rises in the tendency and will of some women to try to express modernity and conservative religiosity together in their appearances usually by means of wearing a head scarf but at the same time putting make-up on and wearing and/or doing other things that in fact address worldly pleasure seeking. This expression of modernity and conservative religiosity at the same time on the same bodies can both be seen problematic as well as liberating and uniting when viewed from different angles. This is where sincerity comes into question. This is where ethicality can unite with sincerity because the approach one adopts to the above stated question can determine whether one finds a modern as well as conservatively religious looking woman 'sincere' or not. In fact, that what's modern can be perceived to be (in)sincere even though (un)ethical if it has a unity (or not) in itself and also conservative religiousness can be perceived to be (in)sincere even though (un)ethical if it has a unity (or not) in itself.

Methodology

We conducted an exploratory research to understand how imagery is perceived by our sample. We have chosen to do an exploratory research in order to be able to figure out the dimensions of this topic, which in this particular format is not researched widely, The nature of the data to be collected is also in line with exploratory research. We have shown our interviewees 2 different image texts taken from two popular women magazines published in Turkey monthly. These images are quite similar to each other (Figure 1 and 2). There were 2 main differences though, one was that one of the women shown in the image was wearing a headscarf and the other was not. The one without the headscarf was an image of various different producers selling various different products and the one with the headscarf was an image of again various different producers who were selling various different daily wear products. These two women in these images looked very similar in their bodily appearances and postures. These women looked alike as they were well-cared for, they wore light make up, they appeared alone in the image texts and the pose they have adopted was almost the same. So the main difference between the two women was in the fact that one was wearing a headscarf while the other wasn't. Another difference was that the woman without the headscarf was in a sitting pose while the one with the headscarf was in a standing pose. Yet another difference was that the hands of the woman without the headscarf looked inwards while the hands of the other looked outwards. The reason for us to have chosen these images was based on the assumption that these images basically reflected the two different facets

(modern and conservative) of the average Turkish woman image. Within this conceptual framework, we have chosen our interviewees to include people that were from 2 different orientations, some closer to the modern point of view, others closer to the conservative one. Interviews have been carried out with people who were said to belong to different religiosity levels most of which have found themselves religious. Almost equal number of respondents happened to fall into different gender, age, education, marital status groups. Most of our respondents were in the 1000-1999 TL income group (which is the lowest one). We have made in-depth interviews in order to be able to extract out their perceptions of and comments about these two women and also about the images in general. Firstly, the 'stereotypes' that have been formed in the minds of our interviewees about the image of these two women have been recorded, then these images have been evaluated from the perspective of their perceived 'sincerity' (sincerity of both the image and the women in the ad). Finally, general views of our interviewees have been taken about the two images.

The research has been carried out in İstanbul, all throughout August 2014, with 19 interviewees. The interviewees have been selected by means of convenience sampling method. At the same time, interviewees' different modernity versus conservatism orientations were taken into consideration because these orientations have been thought to have great impact upon the comments that the interviewees make on these images. The interviews took between 15-45 minutes each. By means of the laddering technique consecutive questions have been asked to the interviewees, letting their imaginations get involved and they have been asked to tell in detail what they exactly thought about the images. Especially predictions and comments about the images have been taken by means of the following questions: what kind of people they are, who they would have been if they were someone in the interviewees' social environment, where they probably are from, what their education levels might be, their professions, their marital status, their free time activities and if these image texts were a cross-section from the lives of these women, what would they have probably be doing before and after this particular cross section in time. The questions asked in the interviews have been shaped by our research objectives and the framework we have drawn through our literature review. As the interviews have been structured with open-ended questions and in an unstructured way, the questions asked have been just a starting point for deepening the conversation. During the interviews, participants' views have been tried to be gathered in an exhaustive and detailed way. Therefore, during the interview process it has been possible to widen and stretch the framework, which has been set in the beginning of the research.

The questions and answers were in Turkish. The findings were translated into English and while translating we tried to keep the originality of the words and the findings are given as close to respondents' answers as possible. Due to the nature of exploratory research, the objective is not to generalize the findings. That's why the frequencies related to the answers are not given.

The interviews have revealed the opinions of the interviewees regarding the following issues: which of the two ladies do they feel closer to themselves, what

kind of ethical and sincerity perceptions do these ladies' physical appearance create in them, what kind of complications/problems could rise related with the presentation of religious inclinations through the female body, how tolerable do the participants find the physical appearance of the two ladies in terms of the religious expression of their worldviews, whether these ladies actually belong to their dissociative, membership and aspirational reference groups.

Findings

The results from the interviews have revealed some kind of ***stereotypes*** that the interviewees had in their minds about the women in the shown images. The answers given to the questions have come to focus on certain features. These features are important in that they reveal the degree to which stereotyping has actually come.

Among the comments that the interviewees have made about the *first picture (modern)* are the following ones: This woman is a sportive, beautiful, sympathetic, happy (if she wasn't, she wouldn't spare time for any sports), carefree, relaxed woman with a lot of freedom, both financially and in other aspects. She is around 25-30. She lives in a city, she has a lot of self-confidence. She's one of those "White Turks". She has a potential for being wealthy even if she's not at the moment. She is cultivated. She adorns herself up and walks around beautifully. She spares time for herself. She takes care of her body weight and bodily appearance in general. She doesn't have any familial pressures, she can live her life according to her own will. She's a member of the Y generation. She's a foxy woman. Her priority is herself. She has problems with time management. Her hair is a bit untidy but this could be because of her sportive activities.

The respondents also projected what they thought about the first picture's image to the "similar" population in general and said:

The youth (including her) is more delicate, sportive, taller, freer, more concerned with their independence. They consider Western values as important but also take into account Eastern values when necessary. They do this without losing their Turkish side and contact with the world at large. As to the question "who would they have been if they were someone in the interviewees' surroundings", the respondents have given the following answers. Some of the respondents said that she was like people around them, very familiar:

We could see them in Cevahir (a popular shopping mall in İstanbul) or any other shopping malls. She could have seen her in Simit Sarayı (Turkish bagel shop) or in shopping malls. If she was near me, she could have been an inhabitant of our building. She could be a student at the university. She could have been a friend of mine. She could have been my niece. She could be a member or a worker in a sports club. She looks like women on the media. If she'd be someone that I know, she'd look like my students' in 5-6 years time. I can identify myself with her. She could be my cousin, my friend, someone that I know. Can identify with herself. Another interviewee can identify with her old self only.

Some say, this woman could have been a parent in the school she's working as a teacher but she cannot identify her with herself. Another one says this woman

could have been my daughter (her three daughters do Pilates); she can identify her with herself not age-wise but style-wise (she says they didn't have these things-sports- in her times). She could be someone I see in my surroundings, in front of my house but they have more conservative clothes on. I can identify her with myself, she could have been my grandson or student. If this woman would have been wearing a bit more closed clothes, we would have seen her in our surroundings. I wouldn't hang around where she's hanging around. She could have been my family doctor. She wouldn't have been my friend. I don't identify her with myself but this style looks fine on her. She could have been one of the workers in a sports center or a customer there.

On the other hand, some of the respondents said that she was very different. She doesn't look like anyone that I know of, I don't have people like her in my surrounding. She can be identified with. I'm conservative, so this lady is mentally far away from me. She doesn't look like no one I've seen. Some others projected what they saw in her to the population in general. All youth is like her, everyone can live this life if they wanted. There are women like this around. I can't identify it with myself because I work too hard. We don't meet her in hair dressing saloons. We wouldn't have common points with her. Our life styles are different. She could have been one of my customers. For some others, she's an inspiration. If I had time, I would be like her.

The woman in the first image was thought by our interviewees to be from İzmir, the Aegean Region (Western region), Istanbul, the Black Sea region, the Middle Anatolian region and Tracia. Some have claimed that she could be from Italy or France or middle Europe. One said that nowadays these modern women can be seen everywhere, even in Antep (southeastern Turkey) and that this is in fact related with the familial background more than with anything else; even Kurds can be like her. She could be Russian or Greek.

She is thought by our interviewees to be highly educated; all of them said that she must be graduated at least from high school (otherwise she wouldn't have been this well cared-for and looking western). Having graduated from a university degree or being a university student was among the answers given to the question about her education.

She was thought to be a mid level banker, a doctor's assistant, mid-level professional worker in a corporate firm, a business center person. She might be the owner of an agency. She might be an actor in a soap opera or cinema (her figure is right for that). She could be doing advertising, marketing, photo modelling, clerical work, public relations. She is too young to be a manager, however she could be that in the future. She could be doing deskwork (one says she wouldn't be a deskworker), consultancy. She might be a Pilates instructor, sportsman, volleyball or basketball player. She's a public practice employer or a housewife, a fashion model, a marketer. She has a busy work. She could be an actress from the TV, cinema sector. She could be a model or a TV artist, a soap opera actress, sports coach, a slimming guide in a newspaper; a not too hard working secretary. Maybe she's not working at all, she's a university student (but not in a very important department, maybe in the tourism department). Could be an architect, an advocate, a policewoman. Could be a photo-model with flexible and arbitral working hours. She wouldn't be working all day, priority is herself (she's very well cared for).

She is thought to be single, could be a housewife, could be living alone but is a free individual who is far away from familial pressures.

As for free time activities, the interviewees named the following: She wouldn't be engaged in intellectual activities (although another interviewee said the opposite), she's more of a social kind and she doesn't even spend her time at home, she gets socialized even at home (phone, Internet etc.). She goes to the cinema, chooses romantic and (romantic) comedy films. She prefers cinema to theatre. She also goes to concerts (open air concerts). She reads books (love novels or adventure novels) and books of popular writers (such as Orhan Pamuk). She definitely doesn't read arabesque books, she reads popular literature, and easy to read books. She reads emotional novels (Canan Tan), love novels. One interviewee said she doesn't read books, she likes wandering around instead, or watching films. She might be reading philosophy, love novels, poetry, daily books, magazines, bestseller 1&2 books in D&R bookstore (maybe she wouldn't finish them all but she'd buy them). She probably wouldn't read novels, mathematics books however maybe she would; this woman would read and do anything. She would read detective novels, maybe love novels, but wouldn't read history novels, could read books about health but if she's working, she wouldn't have the time to read them. If she's doing sports, she'd be reading books as well because if someone is interested in his/her health, then s/he is knowledgeable, reads general culture books too. She reads magazines as well. One said she would read magazines but not books (of love, detective, art, sociology). She goes shopping, does manicure and pedicure, is flirty with men. Work, gym, and social activities are her focus. She listens to Demet Akalın (Turkish pop) type of music. She's not a very indifferent person, she cares about actuality, listens to news programs, watches TV. She's an active woman, she can play the guitar, listens to music and does lace and house work (although some said the opposite). Likes hanging out with friends. She eats sun seed flowers at home, while watching TV at the same time. At home she watches TV, listens to music, uses Internet, goes to the hairdresser's, cares for herself, relaxes. Men would be after her, she'd hang around with them. She wouldn't do any usual housework or cooking, she'd make someone else do it for her. She'd watch advertisements and read magazines all day. She'd do sports (in a sports club or walking racetrack, she could meet up with people in parks with sports equipments), go to salad bars, eat diet food in cafes and sandwich houses. She's a multi-sided person. Watches soap operas and contests, but not news on TV. Wouldn't do conservative things. Likes putting on make up. Lives life fully.

The answers for the question "where was she before and after coming to this picture", the following answers were given: she came to the sports center and will go meeting her boyfriend afterwards. She's worked, then went to the gym, in the evening will go meeting her friends. She comes from home, goes to the gym, after the picture she will work as an actress. She'll go modeling. She's been at the hairdresser's, drinking coffee, having a total care. She'll go to a bar. She has a social life, she'll go back to her luxurious life.

She is thought to hang out in Nişantaşı, Etiler, Yeşilköy, Maslak, Levent, Cadde, Mecidiyeköy, Taksim, Avcılar and the like (modern areas in İstanbul). She is said to be seen in Simit Sarayı (Turkish bagel shop) or shopping malls.

The views about the sincerity of the picture were two folds, one was about the woman in the picture, the other one was about the advertisement altogether. There were some who found the picture very natural and sincere, some others who didn't. One found it in between. About the sincerity of the look of the woman, some thought these kinds of women are only in the ads, while some others thought these kind of women are all around us in real life. So some could identify her with themselves while others couldn't.

Finally about the advertisement, respondents thought that this could be sportswear, underwear ad or ad of a sports center, and ad about make up, shampoo, or some kind of ad to do with hair care. The ad didn't provoke any purchase intention in some of our respondents, while it did so in others.

Among the comments that the interviewees have made about the second picture were the following ones:

She's a traditional woman, one of the new women with headscarf: she's against the old headscarf beliefs, she accepts wearing make-up and being modern while wearing the headscarf but she is not successful in that. This woman would find a rich husband and go around with Range Rovers. She's graduated from the university, she has studied fine arts. She's the girl of a conservative family. She's not very social, introverted. 25 years old, waiting for a husband. Should she be working, she'd have been a sales lady in a boutique.

She would have been a colleague at work. This woman could be seen in common places such as shopping malls, dinners, cocktails etc. She also could have been a relative or friend. She wouldn't have been anybody in my surrounding. She could have been my sister, my auntie's or uncle's daughter, anybody I met on a bus (cos there's no one in my surrounding, I don't see any woman go around like this after 10:00 pm, they usually go around with their families). I could see her on the street, there is a lot of them on the streets. She could have been a parent in the school I'm working in. She wouldn't have been a family member. She could even have been a friend of mine. She could have been a neighbor only. She could have been my cousin, sister, friend. She doesn't remind me of neither my mother, nor my sister nor friend.

The answer to the question "where could this woman actually be from?" has been answered by the interviewees in the following way: She's not even Turkish, could be Greek or Russian. She's from Rize (Black Sea region of Turkey), Istanbul, Beşiktaş, Bakırköy, occasionally Nişantaşı, Bagdat Street (on the Asian side), Ortaköy. She's not from the east of Ankara-Adana line; that is she's either western or from the mid-Black sea region (she's moved from the Black sea region to the Marmara region). She's a White Turk too. She's from Manisa or Afyon (Aegean region). She's from Anatolia or Russia. From Ordu. She's Turkish, but could also be from Europe, could be from a city or is foreign. Comes from the southern region. All women in Sirinevler (a part of Istanbul) are like her, educated, wearing make-up. The woman is from everywhere, could be from all over Turkey, there are many like her in Turkey. She's from the Black sea region. She could be foreign too (maybe from Arabia). Maybe from the Princes Islands. She's from Kayseri (a city known for its successful tradespeople, it's conservative and rich).

As for her education level, the interviewees have said the following: She's left high school without graduation. University student or graduate. Higher education in applied arts. She's graduated from a religious high school. Could be

anything from primary school to university. Graduate of secondary school. Primary or secondary school. The woman in the other ad is more educated.

About her profession, they've said the following: She doesn't work, she's a dietician candidate. She should definitely be working, and driving a Jeep in Fatih. She's a government official. She could be a marketer, advertiser. She doesn't work, she only wanders around or is a fashion model, artist. She could have been a municipality worker or a government official if she's educated. She could be working in shopping malls or in hospitals. Doctor, engineer, architect. A mum, housewife. Fashion designer, shop owner, saleswoman, working at a hairdressers for conservative women, a course (computer, painting etc.) teacher, sociology teacher, working in public relations or accounting, a lawyer. She's got money, so she won't work. She's thought to be either engaged or single (because she's young).

For spare time activities, respondents have said the following: this woman would read only popular books, She wouldn't read the Kur'an, she'd have a lot of plastic surgery operations. She'd be going to a Kur'an course. She'd not wash the dishes or laundry. She'd go around, shopping, having a leisure time. She's very social, she reads religious and history books. She'd know all about the latest shopping trends and all the brands, spending time on the Internet, or watching TV. These kinds of girls read more than our modern girls because they want to prove themselves to the public. Her personal care is important for her. Many women like her wear the headscarf because of societal pressures. Therefore it's possible that she's not reading the Kur'an or do any praying.

As to the question regarding what the ladies were doing before and after coming to this picture, the respondents said the following: She came from home, and is going to work, going to meet her friends. She wasn't wearing a headscarf before coming to the picture at all, she'll get ready, open her head and meet her friends after the picture. She was dealing with design issues and will keep doing so after coming to the picture. She was engaged with some religious rituals before and after the picture. In the morning she has woken up, did her housework, collected some flowers from her garden, is going to meet her friends afterwards and do some gossiping (if she's a housewife). If she's working, she'll have got out of work (she's a saleswoman or the owner of a shop), she could be the owner of a shop conservative clothes boutique. She goes home and spends time with her family.

These girls hang around in Fatih, driving Jeeps or in Bagdat Street, İstinye Park, she buys a lot of luxurious things. She's in Büyükçekmece, Küçükçekmece, Yenibosna, Şirinevler, and Eminönü.

Views about the sincerity of the woman in the picture and the ad in general were as follows: The picture is beautiful but classical. It doesn't provoke any purchase intention. It's not a natural ad. If it's an ad for conservative wear, then they should rather have used a Turkish model, we have wonderful Turkish models. It's not a natural ad, it's a show. Whatever it is that it is aiming at showing it's doing it by stressing religion, it's using religion in order to sell something, which I don't like. If the picture is real, then it's in between two societies. The woman in the second picture has been evaluated aesthetically as well as ethically by our respondents. There were opposing views on these two grounds. Some found the woman's clothes very ugly (her skirt is like a table cloth, her top is like a picnic table cloth) while others found her clothes aesthetically pleasing (especially

those ones who were wearing headscarf themselves). Colors were not matching for one. The necklace was too big. The woman's face and hands looked extremely well cared for, which was thought to be very modern. Aesthetically some found her not natural at all, they found even the flowers very superficial. One didn't like her glance, and her eyelashes either fake or exaggerated. Isn't in line with conservative clothing. Here, some ethical dilemmas were prevalent in many of our interviewees' minds. They thought that by looking extremely modern (make up, well cared for nails) but also wearing conservative clothes was in fact a contradiction in itself, it was insincere and reflected confusion, superficiality, was giving contradictory symbols (she's a peasant trying to be modern), could even be the result of societal pressures. These two are two different, contradictory paradigms. The conservativeness in our custom and manners are not like this, modernity is also not this. A conservative interviewee said that the clothing of the woman didn't have anything to do with conservative clothing, he claimed that it should be a home dress but another conservative oriented interviewee claimed that it's perfectly normal (but the hair shouldn't be seen from the outside), another one said the way she's tied the headscarf is not a standard way of tying it (normally it should be extended down until on top of the breast, however here it doesn't and it would be more attention drawing than the modern women without headscarf, so this must only be a home dress). The headscarf looks as though it is going to get opened up when she bends down. She was claimed to have moved from her basic identity. Among other claims was that the woman seems like she would in fact get rid of this clothing very easily, she could even wear an open swimming suit, a night dress, a bridal dress one day, she's only wearing these clothes for either societal pressures or for showing up, or only for style purposes. The necklace was of concern of many of our interviewees in that the Arabic writing on the necklace was thought by some to be either too sacred to be worn on a daily basis (because one cannot go to places where they'd drink alcohol -which these women can do sometimes, they can be seen in places like Reina at night- and even visit the toilet with that on) and it was in fact disrespectful from a religious point of view or it was there just for showing off purposes. It was meaningless for some because they didn't know what was written on it, and even if it was God's word, it wouldn't make sense unless it was openly understood. If it's a kind of worship, it shouldn't be commonly seen. The fact that the woman looks like a western woman and not like a typical Turkish woman was also ethically incorrect for some. She was said to look indecisive and in search for something. She could have been more correct if she was conservative the way our grandmothers were. Some found it normal and ethical though. A woman with a modern-conservative look is much better than the others. It's important that they get in accordance with modernity. Those who don't are dangerous. Make up, nails, eyes (contact lenses), necklace, bracelet are all superficial. Being conservative is not about covering up the body. She doesn't look innocent. About the advertisement, they said it could be one for conservative women, could sell clothes, shirt or skirt, mascara or sweets and flowers. It's obvious that she's a model.

Discussion

In both pictures that we've shown our interviewees, the women can be said to have a young, attractive and beautiful woman image. The interviewees in our study can be said to have demonstrated the stereotypes they had in their minds with respect to the women on the pictures. In this sense, it can easily be seen that outer appearance can be very directive in many occasions. The morality of the outer appearance of the women in the pictures have also been a question at hand that has been posed to the interviewees. They've expressed different views on this topic. Some find it a dilemma that the woman with the headscarf is also wearing make-up. They found this neither morally correct nor sincere. However, some found it exactly morally correct because this woman was in fact uniting modernity while keeping up with traditional values and exactly this was what's needed by the society. Here we see the concepts of morality and sincerity come together. Some found the style of the woman in the first picture morally correct but the second one incorrect because they were against women with headscarves, usually because they found it against their secular ideals. Another ethical problem about the pictures could be that in both pictures, western looking young women have been used. This might pose a dilemma especially for the second picture as the woman in the second picture is a traditional looking woman. Some of the interviewees also found that irritating and insincere. There could be two reasons for that. One is that the fact that the woman with the headscarf is a western looking woman could mean that western beauty ideals are being tried to be imposed on the conservative audience. The other might mean that this could be a reflection of the eastern ideals/fantasies of seeing western women in headscarves. The question as to if these women would be seen in their surroundings, many said that they actually would be seen so in this sense for many, these women were sincere.

Limitations and further research

The study has been carried out in İstanbul, which is a limitation. However, the reason for selecting İstanbul was that it is a highly cosmopolitan city with a lot of people from Anatolia, some of which have joined our study. The number of the interviewees was 22, which is another limitation. A higher number could have brought different results or insights. These people were selected by simple random sampling from the surroundings of the researchers. Although people of different conservative orientations have been tried to be selected, this could have brought a bias. Generalization to an entire population is naturally not possible. However this doesn't (necessarily) bring the value of the findings down because the main purpose is to bring to the surface various perceptions that have been formed.

Three other limitations are about the way the two women look. Normally, the only variable for the study was thought to be the 'headscarf'. However, there happen to be 3 more differences between these two pictures. One is about the body language of the women. The first woman is in a sitting, while the second one in a standing position. The first one has her hands introverted, and the other extroverted. The first looks in what can be called a seductive way. The second one looks dull and static and carries a basket. The difference in body language means the first one is in fact saying "I am powerful, individualistic, serve myself first and I also have power over other people, I can even influence, shape them

when appropriate” and the second one saying “My basic goal is to serve others. Community comes first, serving them is my mission and I go on living together with them (collectivism)”. The other difference between the pictures is that the woman in the first picture promotes a sportive and healthy lifestyle, which could be giving the message “I take the power from my own body”, whereas the other one could be promoting a lifestyle full of religious values (only if her necklace contains prayers or the like), which in turn could mean that this woman is taking her power mainly from collectivist values. The third difference between the pictures is about the colors of the clothes that the two women are wearing. The colors could have shaped the interpretation of the message. The first one is wearing vibrant and the other one dull, pastel colors. This could have shaped the perception of power, innocence, sincerity etc. It is even possible that one is perceived like a “bad woman” and the other one “good woman”, for the first woman in the pictures is wearing strong colors and could have been perceived as for instance making people do what she wants and the second woman in the second picture is wearing soupy colors, which might bring to mind cleanness, purity and the like. Aside from these differences, other variables almost seem to be the same. Maybe the fact that the models are looking western could also be another limitation.

One last limitation could be about the way the questions were asked to the interviewees. Should the questions have been asked in a different way, different parts of the participants’ perceptions probably could have come to the surface.

Further research can be carried out on the effects of religiosity levels on stereotype building and sincerity perception. Variables other than the headscarf can be tested with respect to stereotype and sincerity perceptions. Another point of further research can be around the discussion of the co-creation or dialectic between imagery and stereotyping, about which one triggers the other one and in which sectors and for which products this dialectic changes. Ethical considerations about most advertisers’ overreliance on western women in eastern outfits some areas of the world could be reflected upon and evaluated from an orientalism perspective. In certain cases western looking women may be aspirational for the target audience but in certain cases they can be disassociative. Further research can be conducted in order to find out if usage of western women as aspirational or disassociative images and for which target groups.

Conclusion

Imagery is very important in advertising, especially in the last decades’ image economy. Images need to be used correctly in order to convey required messages to targeted consumers. Reference groups are taken into consideration when doing this. Advertising agencies and companies need to manage their budgets well and spend wisely. Images in the ads usually refer to some kind of stereotypes in the minds of the perceivers of those ads. These stereotypes can serve advertisers’ commercial purposes well if they happen to refer to relevant reference groups of the targeted consumers. Especially in print advertisement, images need to be used in a really careful way, because visuality is the main component thereof.

It is commonly the case that imagery can be interpreted very differently by different kinds of consumers just as any form of language can be interpreted differently by different people. Therefore careful research needs to be undertaken about the needs, wants and drives of the target consumers before advertising texts of any kind (whether visual or not) are being prepared. Perceived ethicality issues of the visuals in advertisements also need to be considered well, as inconsistent messages of any kind can be perceived by audiences (sub)consciously and they happen to affect the influence of the advertisement right away. The stereotyping in audiences needs to be undertaken really well as these stereotypes can convey certain messages effortlessly and well, when used correctly.

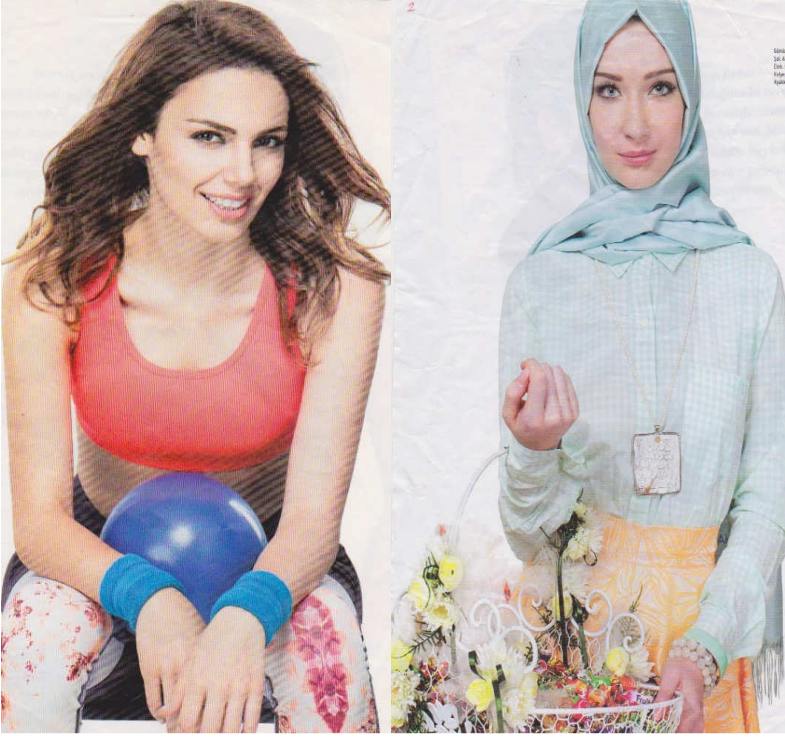
Bibliography

- Branthwaithe, A. (2002). "Investigating the power of imagery in marketing communication: evidence-based techniques", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp: 164-171.
- Coltrane, S. and M. Messineo (2000). "The perpetuation of subtle prejudice: Race and gender imagery in 1990s TV advertising", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 42, Nos. 5/6.
- Firat, A. F. (1992). "Fragmentations in the Postmodern", in NA - *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 19, eds. John F. Sherry, Jr. and Brian Sternthal, Provo, UT : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 203-206.
- Kang, M.-E. (1997). "The portrayal of women's images in magazine advertisements: Goffman's gender analysis revisited", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 37, No. 11/12.
- Karaca, Y. and N. Papatya (2011). "The woman image in advertisements: an evaluation related to national television advertisements", *the Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp. 479-500.
- Lanis, K. and K. Covel (1995). "Images of women in advertisements: effects on attitudes related to sexual aggression", *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, Vol. 32, Issue: 9-10.
- Meenaghan, T. (1995). "The role of advertising in brand image development", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 23-34, MCB University Press, pp: 1061-0421.
- Merskin, D. (2001). "Winnebagos, Cherokees, Apaches, and Dakotas: The persistence of stereotyping of American Indians in American advertising brands", *the Howard Journal of Communications*, 12, pp. 159-169.
- Oğuz, Y. G. (2000). "Cinsiyet rolleri ile ilgili stereotiplerin televizyonda sunumu", *Kurgu Dergisi*, Sayı 17.
- Sandıkçı, Ö. and G. Ger (2005). "Aesthetics, Ethics and the Politics of the Turkish Headscarf," in: Suzanne Kuechler and Daniel Miller (eds.), *Clothing as Material Culture*, Oxford: Berg, 61-82.
- Schroeder, Jonathan E., *Visual Consumption in an Image Economy. ELUSIVE CONSUMPTION*, Karin Ekstrom, Helene Brembeck, eds., Berg, 2004. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=499082>

Internet Resources:

Pittard, V. (2013). "Using reference groups in marketing"
<http://www.business2community.com/marketing/using-reference-groups-in-marketing-0427866#!bStQkb> (retrieved 10 ,September 2014)

IMAGES USED FOR THE STUDY



First image

Second image

Emine Çobanoğlu, PhD.

Associate Prof. of Marketing at Marmara University Faculty of Business

Ressam Namık İsmail Sok., No.1, Bahçelievler, İstanbul

Tel: +90 212 677 74 00

İlke Kocamaz, PhD.

Lecturer of Marketing at Marmara University Faculty of Business

Ressam Namık İsmail Sok., No.1, Bahçelievler, İstanbul

Tel: +90 212 507 99 25