

Investigation of Communication Languages of Global Brands Specific to Erg Theory:

The Case of McDonald's

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Abstract

The world has seen many different technologies in the historical process and has undergone great transformations in the continuation of these technologies and has taken its current form with a cumulative structure. Especially in the last century, the frequency and diversity of innovations, which have remained silent and unchanging for most of human history, has increased. This has made every point of the world accessible and has expanded the target audience and target market scale of brands and institutions. Brands that eliminate physical borders with transportation have also solved the limits of communication with the advantages provided by technology. The global brand phenomenon is a phenomenon that has emerged as a result of these and similar processes. However, even if we can address every market in the world, it is not possible to address all of them in the same way. Factors such as culture, social life, economy, etc. change and affect this. In this study, the differences in the communication languages of global brands were examined by using content analysis specific to the ERG Theory, which was developed by Clayton Alderfer as a critical approach to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In this context, the five most watched videos on the global and Turkey Youtube pages of the McDonald's brand were examined with the content analysis method, and the effects of cultural differences on the communication language were tried to be determined.

Keywords: Corporate communication, Internet, Digital communication, Social media, ERG Theory

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Introduction

Technology is a concept that is constantly confused with digital and computer-based structures among society, and it is wrong. Although there are many different definitions of technology, both technical and philosophical, it can be defined as all kinds of tools and equipment that make human life easier (Çelikçapa, 1992). In this direction, due to the fact that human beings are both a social being and their desire to express themselves, they have constantly changed their ways and forms of communication in the historical process and gained new features.

In the field of communication, the discovery of colors and the invention of the alphabet can be shown as examples of the first technological breakthroughs. Here, the discovery of paint in the primitive sense took the forms of communication from a verbal structure and made them non-verbal and permanent (Atik, 2019).

After that, people have constantly changed their communication styles in parallel with technology with the effect of daily life dynamics. The transition to daily life has brought the concepts of ownership and belonging to the communication process, and new communication concepts and forms have emerged with new technologies. In the historical process, the interaction of technology and communication progressed in a static way until Jonas Gutenberg invented the printing press. (Erdoğan, 2005)

The interaction between technology and communication styles has continued to gain momentum in every process since this date. In 1890, radio was discovered by Guglielmo Marconi, and in 1923, with the work of Viladimir Zworkyn, the first example of the mass communication tool called television in the modern sense emerged. (İspir, 2013)

It has not only been the forms of communication that the phenomenon of technology has changed. In this process, it has also constantly changed the forms and processes of production, which are an important element of human life today. The effect of the changing production processes, which is important here, is not limited to the understanding of production, but has also changed the most important factors of society such as consumption habits, culture and economy (Mokyr, 1999).

With the realization of the first industrial revolution in the 1800s, production began to become massive, and inaccessible parts of the world became accessible. In this way, the foundations of the global world structure were laid (History, 2019). After the second industrial revolution.

Along with mass production, there has been a need for mass consumption, brands have emerged in the primitive sense, and new forms of communication have been created under the umbrella of public relations to create this consumption demand. Although the third and fourth industrial revolutions differ technologically, they are similar in terms of social impact (Waghorn, 2011).

Today, as a result of all these processes, the world has become a global structure and global brands have emerged with the advantages of both communication and transportation technologies. The necessity of these brands to appeal to people from every culture and society, both locally and globally, has become a phenomenon that exists as a condition of the globalizing world (Toros, 2016). The aim of this study is; To analyze the communication styles of global brands that vary from region to region in the context of Alderfer's ERG Theory and to make inferences about whether there is any truth to the inferences about the change of the concept of need defended in this theory by being affected by environmental factors.

In order to realize these inferences, the relationship between persuasion and communication, motivation and need phenomena will be explained, and in this context, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Alderfer's ERG theory will be mentioned. At the end of the study, it will be tried to determine the effect of the concepts of need and environment on the reasons for the differences between the discourses of a global brand in different regions.

Literature Review

The Relationship between Persuasion and Communication

The concept of persuasion has a great importance in human history. The effect of persuasion can be seen at the basis of many of the great human events. Living things are constantly interacting in order to meet both their emotional satisfaction and physiological needs. With the existence of the communication process, persuasion also has a great effect on the realization of behaviors in a way that serves the emotions and wishes conveyed by communication (Bahar, 2020).

Although there are different definitions of persuasion in the literature, it is actually shaped by a few basic emphases that are emphasized and given importance in terms of content. To define persuasion; To change the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs or behaviors of the person or persons who are in the position of receiver by the person or persons in the position of source in the desired way, or it is a comprehensive set of communication and actions carried out to direct it to the desired side (Elcil, 2012).

The most important emphasis on persuasion is not the change in behavior, attitude, thought or belief, but rather the fact that this change takes place at the end of the communication processes carried out by taking into account the needs of the people who are in the position of receivers, not by force, pressure or manipulation. The phenomenon of consent in persuasion is the factor that distinguishes manipulation from persuasion. As a result, persuasion is not a secretive process, but rather a process that must be carried out transparently and reliably (Seki, 2017).

In the historical process, persuasion has been used for different purposes in many different fields in different disciplines and continues to be used today. As a result of many studies carried out in different disciplines, the concepts that are the basis of persuasion and persuasion have become a field of study in itself.

Since persuasion can be interpreted and applied, it has been the basis of communication and has been used in the functioning of the social structure. It has been used by the church in the historical process, and persuasion has been used to increase the effectiveness of the religious call. As a supporter of propaganda activities in World War 2, a lot of research has been carried out on how persuasion takes place. (Deneçli and Deneçli, 2014).

In the early 1900s, several different important historical events occurred that caused the phenomenon of persuasion to gain importance. The first of these are the industrial revolutions. With the industrial revolutions, humanity can now produce more than it needs. For this reason, a presidential discipline that needs the application of persuasion outside the scientific and political sphere has also been economics. Until that day, it served to persuade people who had only made need-based purchases to consume more than they needed (Nas, 2013).

Edward Bernays, who is considered the founder of public relations, carried out studies to direct, mobilize and persuade the masses to consume at that time. During this period, Bernays and his colleagues had to convince the society of many things. In this context, Bernays took the first steps to persuade a mass that buys only as much as they need to become a consumer society by basing his studies on the foundations of psychology and sociology and was quite successful (Peltekoğlu, 2007).

There are many factors in the success of persuasion. Success is not just about what the discourses are in the messages produced for persuasion purposes. The psychological and physical state of the target can also have a great impact on the realization of persuasion. On the other hand, it is essential to manage a successful communication process.

Table 1: 4 Key Factors in Effective Persuasion

<p>Source</p> <p>If the purpose of the messages sent in the communication process is to persuade, the credibility of the source is among the factors that increase the effectiveness of the message. On the other hand, the source must be reliable as well as credible, as well as being considered an expert in the field or knowledgeable about what he says for the purpose of persuasion. These elements are important elements of persuasive communication as well as correct communication.</p>
<p>Reliability of the Message</p> <p>In the persuasion process, the reliability of the message is not that it is based on scientific data or that it is semantically provable. What is meant by reliability is basically the perception of the messages sent by the person or people who are trying to be persuaded. The receiver must receive the message, perceive it, and be able to make sense of it. In a process that fails at these stages, the recipient will not trust the message and persuasion will not occur.</p>
<p>Environmental Factors</p> <p>Processes that disrupt communication may not only be related to the source and message. In the communication process, unexpected external factors can often be the source of failure at the time of persuasion. Absolute control over environmental factors cannot always be achieved. The source should try to keep noise and similar elements to a minimum as much as possible so that the messages to be transmitted to the other party are not disrupted due to both semantic and technical reasons.</p>
<p>Buyer</p> <p>The last of the elements that affect each other in persuasive communication is the recipient of the message that is planned to be persuaded. The message must be accepted by the recipient. If the recipient does not have sufficient information about their physical condition, psychological condition, beliefs and values and if there are no messages that are appropriate for these, persuasion will not be possible. The more information is known about the recipient in persuasive communication, the higher the probability of being persuaded.</p>

Source: (Berger, 2002)

Need and Motivation Concept

In order to talk about motivation, first of all, we need to talk about the existence of some needs and concepts in the individual. At the beginning of these phenomena is the concept of «need», the most basic structure that must exist for the realization of motivation is the effort to eliminate the discomfort caused by a deficiency (Ergül, 2005)

As long as the needs are not met, there is a situation of tension, and motives must come into play to eliminate the tension. Motives are the basic structures that direct the individual to behavior. In the motivation process, it forms the main part of the mobilization to be motivated (Antalyalı and Bolat, 2017).

Motivation comes from the Latin word «motus». The Turkish word is words such as motive, motive, reason and justification. It is defined as a whole of all the elements that activate the person and covers all concepts such as desire, desire, need, impulse, and motive related to human beings (Öner, 2021).

It's not just physical deficiencies that elicit motivation. Psychological and sociological deficiencies are also a source of motivation, and in some cases, physiological deficiencies may also have an effect on them. Many different motivational approaches have been produced regarding the prioritization of these imbalance situations (Alan, 2006)

These theories are grouped into two groups as scope theories and process theories. Scope theories

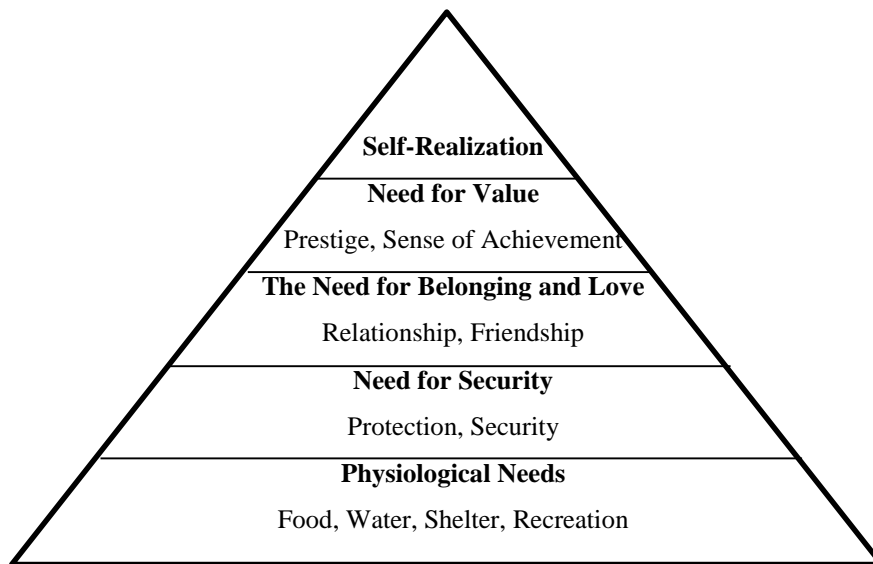
focus more on what motivates the individual and make their explanations based on the sequence of these factors. Process theories, on the other hand, examine the processes from beginning to end by saying why and why. Individual differences are important for these approaches (Tekin and Görgülü, 2018).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Among the theories of needs, the most popular and most famous is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The theory is also the origin of Aldfer's ERG (UG) theory. It is necessary to look at Maslow's needs model to understand the ERG theory. There are two approaches in the Maslow model; First, the reason for every behavior is need-based. Second, these needs have a hierarchical structure.

As can be seen in the figure below, Maslow's model is shaped like a triangle. The main emphasis in the transfer of the model in this structure is to represent the order that shows that there is a hierarchical structure between needs (Karadoğan Doruk, 2015).

Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Source: Öner, 2021

Maslow argues that one cannot move to the next level without meeting the need in a lower level. It also makes its ranking accordingly. On the other hand, another detail that appears in the table

There is also a ranking of physical, psychological or sociological causes of the concept of «need». Maslow says that psychological needs such as love and belonging cannot be met without meeting physiological needs such as food, shelter, etc. (Taşdemir, 2013)

Alderfer's Erg Theory

The theory was developed by Clayton Alderfer in 1969 based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The theory takes its name from the concepts of Existence, Relatedness and Growth.

Although Alderfer started directly from Maslow's model, the ERG theory is simpler. The needs, which consist of five stages in Maslow's model, are grouped under three headings in the ERG theory. Alderfer developed his own model after obtaining the conclusion that Maslow's model was incompatible with real life (Karadoğan Doruk, 2015)

Table 2: ERG Needs Classification

The Need for Existence
They are the needs at the most basic level. They are mostly material and physiological-based, physiological needs necessary for human survival and requirements such as shelter and security. In Maslow's model, it corresponds to the physiological and safety need.
The Need for Relationship
It is a need to improve relationships between people. The individual establishes a relational bond with other individuals so that he can share his feelings and thoughts and obtain feelings of love, respect and belonging. In Maslow's model, it corresponds to the need for belonging and love.
The need for development
In Maslow's model, it coincides with the stage of self-realization. The individual is more advanced. He wants to reach levels and use the abilities he has.

In addition to being a model used in the examination of employee motivations in business areas in general, it is also used in psychological and organizational structure examinations. In this context, it tries to see what motivates employees (Tekin and Görgülü, 2018).

In Alderfer's approach, there is no rigid hierarchical structure as in Maslow's. Sometimes two different needs may arise at the same time. Both the need for relationship building and development can be met at the same time. In Alderfer's approach, contrary to the structure in Maslow's model, there can sometimes be a reverse flow in the case of upward progress as a need is satisfied. As long as development does not meet the needs, the individual feels pressure on himself and becomes withdrawn. Afterwards, he can return to the bottom step and try to be satisfied by meeting his relationship needs. Mentioned here in the motivation process. Even if the deficiencies are not eliminated, they are tried to be replaced with a structure that will replace them (Taşdemir, 2013).

In Alderfer's approach, the cultural structure that is not in Maslow's and the effect of environmental situations in the process of determining and prioritizing the need are conveyed. In the ERG theory, the severity of the existence and relational needs in the first two stages decreases as they are met, while the need for development becomes more severe as it is satisfied. Due to these distinguishing features, the model has an important place in motivation studies (Tekin and Görgülü).

Methodology

One of the most important features of today's society today is that they have a consumption-based structure. Changing social structure and production forms in parallel with technology also have an important effect on achieving today's dynamics, which are called consumer society.

In the process divided into the Fordist period and the post-Fordist period in terms of economic and production, the content of the communication as well as the meanings created have changed. Individuals, who were initially tried to be mobilized based on rational purchases, are now tried to be motivated through emotional propositions. Thanks to new media technologies that provide a significant advantage for brands in the process of targeting and recognizing the target audience, global brands can carry out communication studies in terms of individual or regional characteristics.

Within the scope of the study, video content ads published on the Youtube page of the McDonald's brand will be examined. In this review, Alderfer; An analysis will be carried out on the idea that the needs may not be in the same order and level for everyone, and that the external environment and cultural factors also have an effect on the process. For this, some restrictions have been determined regarding the selected video content.

In order to perform a comparative analysis, the selected videos were taken from both the global Youtube page of the McDonald's brand and the Turkey page. The number of videos to be analyzed is limited to 5, and the criteria for determining the selected videos are that the videos have the highest viewing rate on the relevant pages. In this way The element of "liking" did not have to be limited according to time and subject, and a meaningful choice was made.

Related videos were examined in terms of existence-relationship-development needs within Afderfer's ERG Theory, and visual and auditory elements were interpreted in terms of cultural and environmental differences. The content analysis method was determined as the method to be used in the research, and it was seen as more appropriate to carry out a qualitative research since the aim was not to obtain numerical values.

Investigation of Communication Languages of Global Brands in Context of ERG Theory: The Case of McDonald's

Aldefer's biggest criticism of Maslow's theory of needs has been for the hierarchical structure between needs. Although the needs are satisfied, it is not necessarily necessary to move on to the next stage. Similarly, these needs are not the same for everyone. While the needs are formed, they are affected by the environment and culture and are shaped accordingly. For this reason, the global discourses of the brand cannot be the same as the regional discourses.

In the research design, the images on the left are positioned as the cover design and name of the video published on McDonald's global Youtube account, and the images on the right are positioned as the cover design and name of the advertisement published on the Turkey Youtube page. For the sake of clarity and convenience in the process, global page ads are coded as G1, G2, G3, G4 and G5 in order of expression, while Turkey ads are coded as T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5.

Advertising Analysis



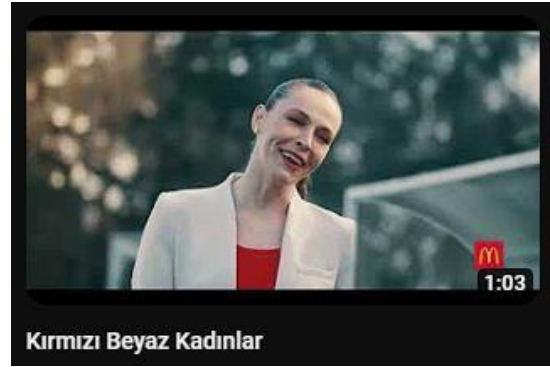
The first ads are the ones with the most views on both pages. In ad number G1, the discourse and focus is focused on the naïve product, which has a place in American culture and is identified with McDonald's. In addition, the variety of sauces and sauces that will be needed for pleasure and emotional satisfaction rather than rational benefit in the consumption process is emphasized. In this advertisement, there is an emphasis on the emotional meaning of the product rather than its functional features. Persuasion is tried to be carried out through emotional satisfaction, not through needs such as price, satiety, etc. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements to satisfy the development needs in the ERG Theory.

In the second ad, T1, the emphasis is clear and precise. First of all, it is not a continuous and traditional product that has penetrated into the culture. Here, the discourses are rationally oriented. It has been reported that it is new and served with new sauces. The most important emphasis in the advertisement is that it is carried out as an announcement activity focused directly on price.

Advertising is a communication effort that does not contain any personal or symbolic elements and is aimed at meeting physiological needs based on price. It certainly does not make emotional promises

to consumers. Persuasion is tried to be carried out with communication messages that appeal to the mind, focusing on price and content. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements aimed at satisfying the needs of existence in the ERG Theory.

Advertising Analysis



In the advertisement made under the name food at home on G2, the content focuses on emotional messages, as in the first advertisement. It is an advertisement in American culture that supports the brand image through the ritual of eating dinner at McDonald's or similar fast food restaurants, and although it talks about content, the purpose is to create emotions and emotional satisfaction.

Here, too, there is no mention of any specific product. Only items such as pickles, onions, etc. in hamburger menus are mentioned between the house and McDonald's establishes a semantic connection. The child, who is the only person in the ad, smiles when he sees the McDonald's logo, showing a sign of happiness. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements to satisfy the development needs in the ERG Theory.

T2, on the other hand, has a non-standard content. This ad is a special day ad. For this reason, emotional messages are conveyed instead of rational discourses. Eda Erdem, the captain of the Volleyball A National Team, which was successful in Turkey at that time, was determined as the main element in the advertisement. The persuasive elements have changed according to both national feelings and periodical characteristics. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements to satisfy relationship needs in ERG Theory.

Advertising Analysis



The G3 Ad is a road story. It is organized into a similar concept as the strategy followed in the G2 video. America is a country suitable for this type of travel concept in terms of surface area. At the same time, the ritual of making long journeys with friends is also a habit that exists in America in general. The music, visual tone and discourse used are the same as the previous advertisement. This shows that this concept is very successful in terms of attractiveness. The focus is again on emotional messages and emotional fulfillment. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements to satisfy the development needs in the ERG Theory.

T3 Advertisement, on the other hand, is designed with rational content that contains sharp and clear messages. With the most watched price-oriented advertisement, the same verbal and visual language was used as the concept and design of this advertisement. Persuasion messages are sent to meet physiological needs. Similarly, they are persuaded by rational messages and nothing emotional is said. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements aimed at satisfying the needs of existence in the ERG Theory.

Advertising Analysis



G4 Advertising is a process that has an ethnic problem in America on the global page. This ad is not a product advertisement. It is the only ad that focuses on environmental elements within the global page and does not directly focus on brand products. It contains social discourses on Latin culture and their media coverage. It is a communication study focused on American culture in itself. The purpose of this communication study can be evaluated within the scope of the social responsibility activities of the brand. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements to satisfy relationship needs in ERG Theory.

In T4 Advertising, the basic strategy and discourses are on rational features and price. However, unlike the previous price-oriented advertisement, the message here is constructed in a more memorable way with an element of humor. Auditory messages that express the brand's appreciation of its consumer are included here, compared to previous advertisements that convey only rational emphases. But basically, the focus is not on persuading the consumer with emotional discourses, but on capturing them through rational features. Therefore, in this advertisement, the focus is not on emotional satisfaction or friendship, but on physiological satisfaction. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements aimed at satisfying the needs of existence in the ERG Theory.

Advertising Analysis



G5 Ad is the last ad to be addressed on a global level. Among the ads evaluated on a global page-specific basis, this ad is the only one that includes the price element. Although the advertisement is price-oriented, the discourses aimed at persuasion are carried out through emotional emphases. The Turkish translation of the advertising slogan focuses on showing that you love you without saying I

love you. Although it directs purchasing through a rational element, the way it constructs and creates the message is not rational. Using romantic emotions, the emphasis here is again on emotional fulfillment. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements to satisfy relationship needs in ERG Theory.

The T5 Ad is the last ad to be evaluated in the local context. As with all the advertisements analyzed, this ad focuses on rational discourse. Here, again, sales development studies were carried out in order to convince the price-sensitive consumer and the campaign made through this advertisement was announced to the target audience. Since it is a pandemic advertisement, it is emphasized that there are elements such as rational information about the product and contactless payment. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it contains messages for both physiological and security needs. Advertising contains visual and auditory elements aimed at satisfying the needs of existence in the ERG Theory.

Conclusion

As Aldermer mentions in his ERG theory, people's needs and the importance they attach to their needs vary. On the basis of this change, besides individual characteristics, culture, economic environment, education, beliefs and attitudes in the external environment are affected. Looking at both pages of the brand, these differences can be clearly seen.

In the G1 advertisement, there are discourses that will support and satisfy the discourses of a habit and attitude through the product called nagit, which has become a cultural element. Here, the nagite product is not rationally introduced in a way that satisfies a physiological need, but is positioned as an element that meets the needs of development. In the T1 advertisement, even if the brand and product scale are the same, the most popular content is the advertisement with price-oriented and rational messages. This shows that people's needs are affected by external factors.

Although T2 Ad is the 2nd most watched ad on the McDonald's Turkey page, it has a variety of messages that almost never include product-oriented discourses.

Although the emphasis on national success and unity is not included in the most popular advertisements in the world, it is at the top of the Turkey page. This situation tells us that even the content of the persuasion message used in the process of satisfying the needs varies from culture to culture.

Although G3 Ad and T2 Ad are structures arranged to meet similar needs, the designs of the messages are different. This example can be presented as a proof that Alderfer's criticisms of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory are correct.

Another difference is that the content has been identified specifically for the G5 Advertisement. While 4 out of 5 of the content on the Turkey page are conveyed through price-oriented and rational discourses, only 1 out of 5 advertisements on the Global page contains the phrase price. Although the G5 Ad is an advertisement with a single price element, it focuses its persuasive messages on emotional satisfaction and is aimed at satisfying the need for a relationship.

As a result, among the 5 global pages examined and a total of 10 advertisements on the 5 Turkey pages, the needs that are intended to be satisfied with the messages of the advertisements on the global page are relationship and development needs, while the needs of the Turkey page are predominantly physiological needs. If interpreted in the context of these results, Alderfer's criticisms of the ERG Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory are valid.

When evaluated in terms of brands, although we are talking about a global world structure and market diversity, it is not possible to address every region and person with the same messages. Such a strategy would cause confusion about what needs would be satisfied. In today's world, with digitalization, brands are now realizing their targets more successfully, going beyond mass thinking and making individual discourses. In this way, communication messages can be created for the needs of each individual in the target audience. Today, it is aware that every institution that exists as a global brand

should act with this idea.

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