



## Institutional Advertising in the Context of Social Representation Theory: The Case of Coca Cola

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### Keywords

social  
representation  
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### Abstract

Social representation emerges to provide needs of individuals understanding world. Production of social representations only can be provided by individuals and groups interact each other that is generally used in the field of communication. In this respect, this study attempts to analyze the institutional advertising in the context of social representation theory.

In this study institutional advertising of Coca Cola which is a well-known beverage company is inspected and evaluated. Three sample of Coca Cola' ads are examined. In this examination some symbolic elements are found, are showed an alteration according to the country where the ad is broadcasted and consists of symbols that can be understood by individuals living in this country. Coca Cola shows how it has a place in the daily life of individuals with just a showing images without words in Coca Cola' ad. As a result, this study demonstrates that institutions use basic mechanisms of social representation theory in a great scale in advertisements to introduce themselves to their target market.

### 1. Introduction

Institutions not only prefer advertisements to increase the sales and recognizability of a product but also use advertisements to be distinguished from their rivals and increase familiarities. These kind of advertisements do not concern introduction of a product or increase sales. Essential goal of these institutional advertising is not to gain profit by sales, but to put forward the institutional value, mission, and the philosophy of the institution and increase the familiarity. Actually institutional advertising are short, core and catchy redigeret advertisements provide various representations in audience's minds. Therefore by using specific symbols and signs, they aim to leave a mark in minds. In this case social representation theory of Moscovici underlie institutional advertising' theoretical base. In this study institutional advertising of Coca Cola which is a well-known beverage company is inspected and evaluated in case of social representation. Thus it will be inspected that if institutional advertising makes advantage of social representation or not.

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## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Social Representation Theory

Social representation was developed by Moscovici in early 1960's, describes unknown and abstract facts as known, identified concepts and facts. Social representation emerges to provide needs of individuals understanding world. Purpose of all representations is turning unfamiliar into familiar. These representations occurred and began to spread in very basic structures of society becomes accepted directly in time. According to Moscovici it is impossible representations to spread out in society without individuals. According to Moscovici production of social representations only can be provided by individuals and groups interacted with each other not people are isolating from society. Moreover social representations generated for once meaning of emerged, regenerated continuously by the way of loop, merger, interaction and repetition. (Moscovici, 2000). By the construction of social representations it is in question acceptance common denominator and symbols in a society. Thus it gives opportunity individuals to have common reference areas and understand each other. Social representations are sort of concepts and the values system varying the size and appearance of objects and social environments (Bulut, 2008). Every society by itself produce and spreads different social representations. For this reason it is important to be able to understand social representations to investigate them in their own natural environment which means in the society (Öner, 2002). As every society has been describing codes belong to them, meanings of shapes and signs related to social representations differs from societies to societies. To appear the social representations in a society usually an unknown fact is needed to emerge. But in such situations people start to identify and dominate unknown thing and start to investigate them. In the expansion process of social representations, various type of media has effected such as; oral, visual and aural media. As individual will investigate to learn and get information about unknown things and media is the first source comes to mind. Social representation actually is a communication network and concept connected to each other in various shapes constructed by people and media (Moscovici, 1988). Purpose of social representation is to make unfamiliar turn into familiar. To make unfamiliar turn into familiar there are various mechanisms are produced by society. These perceptual processes of cognition taking place in social representation theory involves anchoring and objectifying (Potter ve Edwards, 1999).

#### *Emerge Process of Social Representations: Anchoring and Objectification*

Social representations contribute individuals in way of speeches in specific subjects, behaviours and information about spoken topic, perception, and the signification process of events. At the end of this signification process spread out by communicating society between each other continuously, consensus is provided for the fact or event. But this consensus process actually consists of two stages: Anchoring and Objectification.

### **2.1.1. Anchoring**

Moscovici (1984) terms anchoring reducing process of unknowns to a simpler state of categories and images. People generally try to correlate and describe the facts and topics they do not have idea about with the things they knew before. It is also can be seen in transferring process of a new event in a society to other individuals. There are two stages in anchoring process. These are classifying and naming. Classifying, first stage of anchoring is comparing unfamiliar objectives with prototypes representing of a group (Cirhinoğlu, et al., 2006).

Here prototype is the perception in individual's minds present before. Individual try to identify things she/he does not know with the things she/he knew before. In this phase features of that object differentiate from similar ones. The fact belong to a public under a category specialize in its features. Final phase of anchoring is naming. Subsequently classified objects becomes identified. Naming a thing means saving it from uncertainty and make it gain an ancestry (Öner, 2002).

### **2.1.2. Objectification**

Objectification is to make an abstract object in thoughts concrete in our minds (Moscovici, 1988). Qualifications or connections which are abstract concepts turns into concrete objects with objectification. Objectified concept or opinion is regenerated as a form of symbol (Cirhinoğlu, et al., 2006). To turn an object into an objective form, to make it permanent with symbols can be carried out not only by individuals but also with institutions. Institutions compose their images with institutional advertising. With this study, in case of social representation institutional advertising of institutions will be investigated in the process of social image emergence to raise awareness in target market and to put forward the differences.

## **2.2. Institutional Advertising**

Institutional Advertising is a type of advertising aims to create a positive image and to prepare content for business which produce products and services instead of the actual product or service (Elden ve Yeygel, 2006). A prepared institutional advertising must aim to reveal difference of the organization. In this context, institutional culture, institutional identity and institutional image should clearly brought to the fore.

Cohen (1988), has listed the main reasons and advantages of the use of institutional advertising;

- Increases the awareness of institutional advertising agencies.
- Collects produced goods and products that provide the service under a single umbrella and allows to be seen.
- Inform the target audience in regards to what they do.
- Provide information about how the organization's products or services can be used more efficiently.
- The organization develops its relations with different target groups and the organization's products / services increase customers' motivation to use.

In fact, institutional advertising, bringing the abstract unseen side of organizations which are institutional philosophy and institutional identity by transforming it something concrete and offer it to the audience.

### 3. Institutional Advertising Analysis: Coca Cola

Indicators used in institutional advertising aims to create image and take place in persons' mind by making the abstract turn into concrete. In light of this information three of Coca Cola's institutional ads will be examined in the framework of the theory of social representations. In regards to the theory of social representation paradigms selected examples of Coca-Colas' institutional advertising will be evaluated. Thus, the intended purposes of these advertisements will be examined in terms of social representation theory.

**Figure 1:** Advertisement 1 (Ramadan)



Ref: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yw7qSJPTP5A&app=desktop> (Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016)

#### *Anchoring*

Representations of Ramadan are discussed in this advertisement. Coca Cola bringing people together is also emphasised. The month of Ramadan is seen as people spend their aspirations, also Coca Cola has been long awaited part of their table which is highlight in ad. Beverages are emphasized on the ad which is classification and Coca-Cola' logo means naming. In addition, Coca-Cola's

advertising to be published in many different countries despite Ramadan special with this ad just been published in Turkish in Turkey.

### *Objectification*

Advertisement shows the following; fulfilling each other' longing of Hacivat and Karagoz, coming together drummer and drum, bakers are making a Ramadan pita and people are coming together to meal (with Coca Cola), all these irreplaceable in Ramadan (The basic social representations are formed in the mind of the Turkish society about Ramadan). By this way they make an objectification. Thus, every thing associated with Ramadan in the mind of the community that can be seen in this ad. To further support to place of ad in the mind, local melodies of Turkish culture was used in jingle.

**Figure 2:** Advertisement 2 (brotherly love)



Ref: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0oYIOBun8UI> (Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016)

### *Anchoring*

In the advertisement, classifications made with emphasis on drinks and naming made by Coca-Cola logo. The content of advertisement built up on brothers who are not get along with each other. It make emphasis that Coca-cola ends disputes. The same ad from America, Brazil and Turkey up to many countries is presented with the world- famous singer singing the same song (Avicii, Hey Brother).

### *Objectification*

The older brother who continuously crushing, bothering younger brother while playing and never helps (moreover, puts headphone to place where younger

brother not able to reach) is seen in the foreground. On the other hand, he is helping his brother whose Coca Cola taken from someone else. This creates an image that Coca-Cola creates unite brothers together. This ad is shown in many countries without any changes shows that a representative of the brotherly love exists all over the world and seems to reinforce it by recognized singer with a very familiar song.

**Figure 3:** Advertisement 3 (the world over)



Ref: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIMFkdrnscM&app=desktop> (Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016)

### *Anchoring*

Classification is made by emphasis on people who continuously drinking something (drink ad ) and naming is made by occasionally seen Coca Cola logo. This advertisement contains "What is Coca Cola for?" question and give answers to that question. It emphasized that Coca Cola is with us from simple events to hardest times.

### *Objectification*

A young man came to the bar on a hot day and the old bartender sorts of the likely answers of “What is a Coca-Cola for?” question, which are “to make you smile, to break the ice, for something special or for day today, to refresh your memory, to share, to revive a spoke or to say today I’m do it” but the young man answered “I just love it”. The ad broascasted in United States highlights the accesibility of Coca Cola (by showing deserts to likely everywhere) and from all kinds of people from variety of nationality (by showing with slant-eyed, blacks and Indians human figures). This ad shows people having fun together, kissing couples, elderly black man sitting with his grandson, Indian wedding and young figure jumping ice in the sea from all religions, languages , races in general people can find something from themselves in a country like America, and become a institutional advertising.

If we think in terms of our representation of their own in this ad black figure, kissing couples figure, jumping young figure overboard with underwear, the desert figure or space figure cannot create the same impact in the United States and will create poor representation for Turkey so that Coca Cola does not offer this ad in Turkey.

### **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Institutional ads are used by many organizations to reflect the institutional identity to the audience, the establishment of institutional image in mind of people. The main purpose of these ads is to create a positive image for the institution in the minds of individuals. The ad prepared for this context give place to some representations items. Selected representation items, often previously recognized individuals within a society that consists of familiar and known symbols. Thus remain in the mind, will be easier to categorize and classify.

Three sample of Coca Cola’ ads are examined. In this examination some symbolic elements are found, are showed an alteration according to the country where the ad is broadcasted and consists of symbols that can be understood by individuals living in this country. Coca Cola shows how it has a place in the daily life of individuals with just a showing images without a words in Coca Cola’ ad. In the context of social representations, firstly due to the flowing water droplets means Coca Cola is a kind of cold drink (anchoring). Secondly, ads are accentuated to reaching people, effecting feelings of people and its logo (naming) in all Coca Cola’ institutional advertising. It has also been seen in institutional advertising that beliefs of social representation theory is applied. An institution that is less known or unknown wants to be well known and recognized by the society with putting forward its own philosophy and identification. That’s why institutions operating in the society have to use general familiar concepts and representations which took place in people’s minds. Thus; perception, understanding and commenting of delivering messages will be easier. Moreover it will provide institutions to be accepted in society and also make individuals leave a mark in their minds. This study demonstrates that institutions use basic mechanisms of social representation theory in a great scale in advertisements to introduce themselves to their target market.

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