AN APPLICATION OF THE SIX-SEGMENT MESSAGE STRATEGY WHEEL TO BRAND POSTS ON INSTAGRAM[1]

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ABSTRACT

Instagram is one of the most important platforms to reach social media users today. Brands can use Instagram for paid partnerships and sponsored posts. They can also use their profiles to reach and engage with consumers by posting photos and videos about their products and services. This study employs Taylor's (1999) six-segment message strategy wheel to explore how brands are using their Instagram profiles to convey brand messages to their target audiences. 10 brands from various product and service categories are selected and a total of 300 brand posts from February to May 2018 were analyzed. The findings indicate that transmission message strategies are used more than ritual strategies. Ration strategy was most frequently used strategy (75,9%), followed by sensory (45,4%) and routine strategies (33,7%). Ego is the least used strategy (4,3%). General-informational was most frequently used creative approach (62,3%), followed by general-transformational (17,7%) and use occasion (10,0%). It is also revealed in this study that informational creative approaches were used with transmission strategy. Transformational creative approaches' were used mostly with ritual strategy with the exception of is "Use Occasion" strategy.

Keywords: Message Strategy, Social Media, Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel, Brand Communication.

ALTI PARÇALI MESAJ STRATEJİSİ ÇEMBERİNİN INSTAGRAM'DA YAYINLANAN MARKA GÖNDERİLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR UYGULAMASI

ÖZ

Günümüzde Instagram sosyal medya kullanıcılarına erişmek için kullanılabilecek en önemli platformlardan biridir. Markalar Instagram'da ücretli ortaklıklar ya da reklamlar yayınlayabilir. Markalar buna ek olarak Instagram'daki profillerine ürün ve hizmetleri ile ilgili fotoğraflar ve videolar göndererek tüketicilere erişmeye ve onlarla etkileşim kurmaya çalışabilirler. Bu çalışmada Taylor'ın (1999) altı parçalı mesaj stratejisi çemberi kullanılarak markaların hedef kitlelerine mesajlarını Instagram üzerinden nasıl aktardıkları ele alınmıştır. Farklı kategorilerden 10 marka seçilmiş ve bu markaların Şubat-Mayıs 2018 tarihleri arasındaki toplam 300 gönderisi incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, aktarım stratejisi, ritüel stratejisine göre daha fazla kullanılmaktadır. En sık kullanılan mantık stratejisini (%75,9) duyusal (%45,4) ve rutin stratejileri (%33,7) izlemektedir. Ego, en az

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kullanılan stratejidir (%4,3). Yaratıcı yaklaşımlarda ise sıralama genel bilgisel (%62,3), genel dönüşümsel (%17,7) ve kullanım durumu (%10) şeklindedir. Buna ek olarak, bilgisel yaratıcı yaklaşımların en çok aktarım stratejisi ile; dönüşümsel yaratıcı yaklaşımların ise, kullanım durumu stratejisi hariç olmak üzere, aktarım stratejisi ile birlikte kullanıldığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mesaj Stratejisi, Sosyal Medya, Altı Parçalı Mesaj Stratejisi Çemberi, Marka İletişimi.

INTRODUCTION

Brands aim to be close to their target audiences. Today, social media takes an important role in communicating brand messages. Among the various social media sites and apps, Instagram gradually became one of the most used ones (Constine, 2018), surpassing Twitter. Facebook still enjoys the number one spot with 2.45 billion monthly active users , while Instagram (which is also owned by Facebook) enjoys 1 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2020).

There are several ways for both big and small brands to use any social media platform. Brands may advertise on the platform, create paid partnerships or sponsor posts. However, the simplest way is to create an account and start posting brand related content. It is reported by Instagram (2020) that 90% of its users follow at least one business on the platform. Thus, it is important to understand how brands are communicating on Instagram. In this study, our aim is to analyze brand posts on Instagram using Taylor's (1999) six-segment message strategy wheel and to explore the models applicability to the context of social media.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Instagram and Brand Communication

Instagram is a rising star among the social media platforms. While it was initially started as a photo sharing application for mobile phones, it is used for much more than photo sharing today: People started blogging, vlogging, sharing news, conducting simple polls and interacting with their followers in various ways. It was a mobile alternative to Flickr when it started, but it is able to take roles of many social media sites (including Snapchat, Twitter, Blogger and YouTube) in its current form. It can be said that as its owning platform, Facebook, wanted to become a one stop shop for everyone in social media, Instagram also wants to do so. According to the Global Mobile User Survey by Deloitte (2019), WhatsApp (which is also owned by

Facebook) and Instagram are top platforms that are being used at least once in a day. More than one third (40%) of the participants reported that they were visiting Instagram hourly. Turkey is also the first among 20 countries included in the survey in terms of Instagram usage (49%), followed by Argentina (36%), Brazil (36%) and India (33%).

The rich ways to use Instagram is not only benefiting its users, but also brands that use the platform. Instagram's visual nature is an opportunity for brands to showcase their products. Brands can post photos, videos and "stories" to engage with their potential customers on Instagram. It can be said that there is a shopping mindset on Instagram too. Instagram also lets brands have more control on their accounts with tools tailored for businesses (Later, 2019).

1.2. Message and Creative Strategies

Although some studies use message strategy and creative strategy terms interchangeably, others argue that the former is about "what to say" and the latter is about "how to say it" (Kim, McMillan & Hwang, 2005: 46).

Several academics tried to split message strategies and creative strategies into categories. As Aaker and Norris (1982: 61) pointed out, advertising is generally divided into two categories: The first category is Informational/Rational/Cognitive, and the second one is Image/Emotional/Feeling. Vaughn (1980: 30) names these categories as "thinking" and "feeling", Puto and Wells (1984: 638) proposed "informational" and "transformational" labels. Laskey, Day, and Crask (1989: 38) also employ Puto and Wells' classification scheme. Taylor (1999: 8) on the other hand, uses "transmission view" and "ritual view" categories to represent similar concepts. In addition to dichotomous approaches, some researchers suggested multi-category typologies (e.g., Simon, 1971; Frazer, 1983). Simon suggested ten categories of messages: Information, Argument, Motivation with Psychological Appeals, Repeated Assertion, Command, Brand Familiarization, Symbolica Association, Imitation, Obligation and Habit Starting (as cited in Laskey et al., 1989: 37). Frazer (1983: 37) developed a typology consisting of seven strategies: Generic,

Preemptive, Unique Selling Proposition, Brand Image, Positioning, Resonance, and Anomalous/Affective.

Puto and Wells (1984: 638) proposed a two-part approach: Informational and Transformational. According to them, informational advertisements are the ones which provide brand data to consumers in an open, logical, fact-checkable way; which helps consumers trust in their own purchase decision. Even though an advertisement is designed to provide information, if it is not perceived as such, it can't be categorized as informational. To be categorized as such, an ad should bear three traits: It should convey relevant and fact based information; it should convey important information for the prospect; and it should convey information that is perceived as verifiable. The key for transformational advertisements are associating the consuming experience with "a unique set of psychological characteristics which would not typically be associated with the brand experience to the same degree without the exposure to the advertisement". They labeled this category as "transformational" since advertisements "transform" the experience of using advertised the product. The advertisements in this category must make consumers recall the experience generated by the advertisement whenever they remember the product. The authors caution the readers that similar concepts like image/emotional/feel advertising are not sufficient to represent a transformational advertising. They suggest that "the transformation occurs when these descriptors are explicitly related by consumer to the experience of owning or consuming the advertised brand."

1.3. The Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel

Taylor (1999:12) suggests a dichotomy of "transmission" and "ritual" views. Taylor's strategy wheel is divided into two parts, each consisting of three segments. Ration, acute need and routine segments belong to transmission view. Ego, social and sensory segments belong to ritual view.

Figure 1. Taylor's Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel.

TRANSMISSION   RITUAL

Ration   Ego

Acute Need   Social

Routine   Sensory
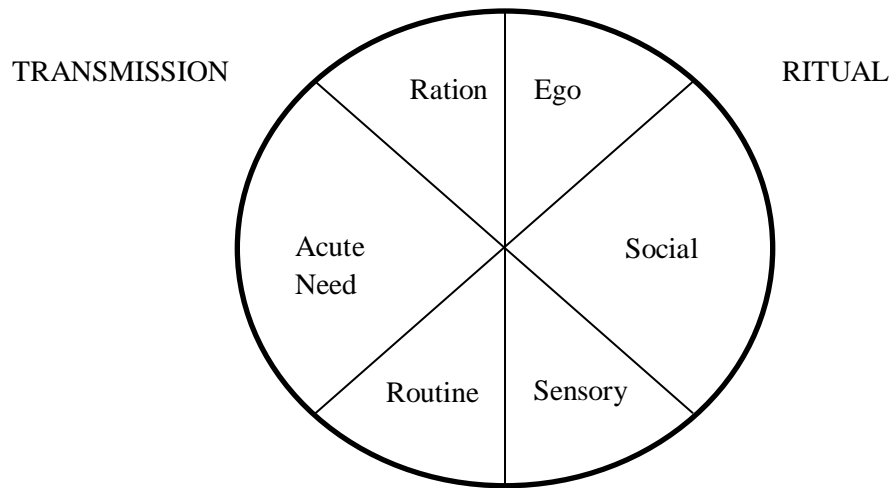
Source: (Taylor, 1999:12).

Each segment will be detailed below (Taylor, 1999: 12-13):

- Ration: Consumers are assumed to be rational, conscious, calculating and deliberate. They desire high levels of information. Appropriate creative approaches are generic, preemptive, unique selling proposition, and positioning. In this segment, the role of communication is to inform and persuade consumers.

- Acute Need: As the name suggests, this segment is related to the acute need to buy a product. There is a desire for information, but there is a time limit that hinders both information gathering and deliberation process. Consumers may choose the familiar, low priced or the advantageous brand among alternatives. Consumer decision is also affected by product distribution, P.O.P (Point-of-Purchase) information, and in-store recommendations made by store personnel. The role of communication is to create familiarity and recognition.

- Routine: This segment is about habitual buying. Consumers do not invest large amounts of time to deliberation. When the brand in question is new to the consumer, communication provides a cue to

how consumer needs can be satisfied. If the consumer has a habit of buying the brand, communication's role is to remind the consumer.

- Ego: In this segment, purchase decisions are emotionally important for the consumer. Ego segment is about making a statement. Consumers make a statement to themselves about who they are. Ego related products fulfill the emotional needs of consumers. Possible creative strategies include user image and use occasion.

- Social: This segment is also about making a statement. However, in this segment, consumers make a statement to other consumers. Products need to be visible to others to be able to fulfill consumers' emotional needs. Appropriate creative strategies are "social" use occasion, "social" user-image and resonance.

- Sensory: This segment is about five senses: Taste, sight, hearing, touch and smell. In sensory segment, products provide moments of pleasure. Communication should present the way product produces sensory pleasures.

Taylor (1999: 11-12) tried to fit creative strategy typologies offered by researchers working in the field to the six segment message strategy wheel. One of the better fitting typologies he used was offered by Laskey et al. (1989: 38-40). Their typology consists of two main segments, informational and transformational. Informational segment consists of five approaches: comparative (where competition is explicitly mentioned), unique selling proposition (where there is an explicit claim of uniqueness), preemptive (where there is a testable claim of superiority), hyperbole (where the claim of superiority is untestable) and generic informational, which focuses on product class with an informational message. Transformational segment consists of four approaches: user image (the focus is on user), brand image (the focus is on brand personality), use occasion (the focus is on usage occasions) and generic transformational, which focuses on product class with an transformational message. These creative approaches were also employed in this study in addition to Taylor's (1999) six segments. Taylor 's (1999) model have been used in various studies.

Hwang, McMillan and Lee (2003) analyzed 160 corporate web sites using Taylor's model. Their findings indicate that routine to be the most popular message strategy among corporate web sites (73,1%), followed by ego (37,5%), ration (36,9%), and social (30%).

Golan and Zaidner (2008) examined 360 viral ads based on a convenience sample. They found ritual strategy in 58,3% and transmission strategy in 23% of the ads. They found ego strategy to be used in 51% of the viral ads, followed by ration (24,4%) and acute need (16,4%). Social strategy is close to acute need strategy with 16.1% usage ratio. Least used strategies are routine (1,4%) and sensory (1,6%) strategies.

Lancaster (2010) studied whether six-segment message strategy wheel can be applicable to public service advertisements (PSAs). A total of 65 advertising campaigns in four categories, namely Health and Safety, Education, Community and Historic were analyzed. The findings suggest that six-segment message strategy wheel provides a solid basis for development of message strategies. Most recorded strategies are ego, social and ration. Acute need and ritual were the least used strategies.

Lee, Taylor and Chung (2011), studied financial service advertising in magazine advertisements and found that between 2005 and 2009, financial service organizations in the United States shifted from transformational to informational creative approaches. They found that before 2008, ego, routine and social were the most common message strategies. However, after 2008 (i.e. after the mortgage crisis) ration and ego found to be used more. The authors conclude that their work supports the argument that advertising is a form of information for the consumer and the nature of information depends on economic conditions.

Tsai and Lancaster (2012), studied six-segment message strategy wheel in the context of DTC (direct-to-consumer) pharmaceutical advertising. They analyzed 96 television commercials and found ration and ego strategies to be most common. Sensory and social strategies were the least used ones.

Chen and Taylor (2012), analyzed Chinese award-winning print advertisements from 1982 to 2009. Their results indicate that sensory and ration strategies are the most common. They also found that message strategies used in Chinese advertising shifted towards ritual view. The authors divided the sample into two periods. In the first period (1982 to 2001) ration strategy was employed by almost half of the advertisements (49,2%). However, in the second period (2002 to 2009) this was down to 19,9%. The use of sensory strategy was lower in the first period (35,2%) compared to second period (52,7%).

Ahn, Wu and Taylor (2013) applied six-segment message strategy wheel to 100 cosmetic surgery websites. They observed no routine or acute need strategy. Ego strategy (27%) and sensory strategy (26%) were most used strategies under the ritual strategy. Ration strategy was the most used strategy (43%) among both parts of the wheel.

Ju and Park (2015) applied Taylor's model to DTC prescription drug advertising that were published in print media. They found ration and ego strategies to be most common in DTC print advertising. Sensory and acute need strategies were the least used ones. In terms of creative approaches, general-transformational, general-informational and user image approaches were recorded most in DTC advertising. The use of preemptive, brand image and comparative approaches were low and there were no ads employing resonance and use occasion approaches. They also found that message strategies were associated with creative approaches.

Brito and Pratas (2015:128-129) examined front covers of tourism brochures from around the world and found that the majority of the brochures employed preemptive creative approach, followed by positioning. Comparative approach was not used in any of the brochures. The usage of generic and affective approaches were below 10%.

Daniel Jr. et al. (2018: 103-105) studied online vaping communities in relation to six-segment message strategy wheel. Their study featured 34 videos of different vapers. The authors analyzed comments made under these videos. They found that most common segments to be sensory and social.

Uluğ-Yurttaş and Özkoçak (2020) applied Taylor's model on Turkish television advertising. They studied 320 commercials on five different TV stations. Their study revealed that transmission strategy was used by 65% of the commercials. They found ration strategy to be the most common (29,4%), followed by routine (20,3%) and acute need (15,3%). It should be noted that these top three strategies are all belong to transmission half of the six-segment strategy wheel. Social strategy, from the other half of the wheel is at fourth place (13,8%) followed by sensory (12,2%) and ego (9,1%).

Most (seven out of eleven) of the aforementioned studies examined advertisements. Lancaster (2010) examined PSAs, Lee, Taylor and Chung (2011) examined financial service advertising in magazine advertisements, Tsai and Lancaster (2012) examined DTC (direct-to-consumer) pharmaceutical commercials, Chen and Taylor (2012) examined award-winning print advertisements, Ju and Park (2015) examined print ads of DTC prescription drugs, and Uluğ-Yurttaş and Özkoçak (2020) examined television commercials. Golan and Zaidner (2008: 965) examined 360 viral ads "that were widely viewed and distributed through e-mail and social networks by Internet audiences between 2004 and 2006". Two studies examined web sites; Hwang, McMillan and Lee (2003) analyzed 160 corporate web sites and Ahn, Wu and Taylor (2013) analyzed cosmetic surgery websites. One study examined brochures (Brito and Pratas, 2015). Lastly, one the study (Daniel Jr. et al., 2018) analyzed comments made under YouTube videos.

2. Method

A content analysis of brand accounts on Instagram is conducted. Sampling procedure, coding scheme and reliability analysis are discussed below.

2.1. Research Questions

Based on the literature, the following research questions have been purposed:

RQ1: What type of content do the brands publish in their Instagram accounts?

RQ2: What message strategies do the brands use most frequently?

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RQ3: Are there any relationship between message strategies and creative approaches?

2.2. Sampling Procedure

10 brand accounts were selected from the list of Social Brands Turkey. These brands represent a variety of sectors such as cosmetics, finance and retailing. A total of 300 brand posts were analyzed, starting from May 31, 2018 and going back with a limit of maximum 30 posts per brand.

2.3. Coding Scheme And Reliability

The coding scheme for message strategies and creative approaches were adopted from Taylor's (1999) Six Segment Message Strategy Wheel, which was developed to categorize message strategies used in advertisements. It consists of two parts and six segments. Transmission category includes "Ration", "Acute Need" and "Routine" while Ritual category includes "Ego", "Social" and "Sensory". Creative Approaches are split into two categories as "Informational" and "Transformational". The first category includes "Comparative", "Unique Selling Strategy", "Preemptive", "Hyperbole" and "General Informational". The latter category includes "User Image", "Brand Image", "Use Occasion" and "General Transformational". It should be noted that the comparative strategy was omitted from the findings below since there were posts using this strategy among our sample. The final coding scheme includes six message strategies and eight creative approaches. Since an Instagram post may include multiple approaches, a binary scale was used for coding where 1 means yes and 0 means no.

General information about the post was also coded, which includes the type of the post (photo or video), the number of likes, posting date and the number of comments.

Percent agreement was calculated to determine inter-coder reliability of the two coders. The values for all coding categories (message strategies and creative approaches) ranged from 80% to 100%.

3. Results

A total of 300 posts from 10 brands were covered. These brands are listed in Table 1. Of the 300 posts, 71% of the posts are photos, and 29% are videos. Turkcell, a GSM operator brand in Turkey, has the highest number of videos. Turkcell posted more videos (70%) than photos (30%). It should be noted that some videos that are posted by brands are closer to animated GIFs than videos: Very short and often without sound.

Table 1. Type of Brand Posts and the Number of Likes and Comments

Brand	Photo	Video	Likes	Comments
E-Bebek	24 (80,0%)	6 (20,0%)	122520	26404
Avon Türkiye	22 (73,3%)	8 (26,7%)	81109	20084
Deichmann Türkiye	28 (93,3%)	2 (6,7%)	94195	7717
Jolly Tur	27 (90,0%)	3 (10,0%)	17819	374
İkea Türkiye	19 (63,3%)	11 (36,7%)	112153	4706
Migros Türkiye	21 (70,0%)	9 (30,0%)	18471	459
Starbucks	25 (83,3%)	5 (16,7%)	92896	2364
MercedesBenz	27 (90,0%)	3 (10,0%)	166817	936
Turkcell	9 (30,0%)	21 (70,0%)	37197	1716
Akbank	11 (36,7%)	19 (63,3%)	21662	729
Total	213 (71,0%)	87 (29,0%)	764839	65489

"Likes" that the single brand posts get range from 33 to over 80k (with a mean of 2549) and comments range from zero to over 10k (with a mean of 218). Total number of likes and comments for each brand can be seen in Table 1. Top brand in terms of likes is Mercedes Benz. However, E-Bebek comes second in likes and first in comments. The reason for high number of likes and comments in some posts are contests that are held by brands, where winners are selected on a basis of their number of likes and comments.

Table 2. The Use of Transmission View and Ritual View

		Transmission		Ritual	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
E-Bebek	N	26	4	13	17
	%	86,7%	13,3%	43,3%	56,7%
Avon Türkiye	N	27	3	15	15
	%	90,0%	10,0%	50,0%	50,0%
Deichmann Türkiye	N	28	2	29	1

	%	93,3%	6,7%	96,7%	3,3%
Jolly Tur	N	28	2	24	6
	%	93,3%	6,7%	80,0%	20,0%
İkea Türkiye	N	27	3	15	15
	%	90,0%	10,0%	50,0%	50,0%
Migros Türkiye	N	30	0	9	21
	%	100,0%	,0%	30,0%	70,0%
Starbucks	N	20	10	23	7
	%	66,7%	33,3%	76,7%	23,3%
Mercedes Benz	N	11	19	23	7
	%	36,7%	63,3%	76,7%	23,3%
Turkcell	N	23	7	8	22
	%	76,7%	23,3%	26,7%	73,3%
Akbank	N	17	13	13	17
	%	56,7%	43,3%	43,3%	56,7%
Total	N	237	63	172	128
	%	79,0%	21,0%	57,3%	42,7%

Transmission message strategies are used in 79% of the cases. Ritual message strategies are used in 57,3% of the cases. Table 2 breaks down the use of transmission strategies and ritual strategies by the brands. Migros Türkiye uses transmission strategies in all of the 30 posts (100%) included in this study. It is followed by Deichmann Türkiye and Jolly Tur as transmission strategy was recorded in 93,3% of the posts published by these two brands. This strategy is used least by Mercedes Benz (36,7%)

Ritual strategy on the other hand is used mostly by Deichmann Türkiye (96,7%) and Jolly Tur (80,0%). The lowest percentage for the use of this strategy belongs to Turkcell (26,7%). As presented in Table 2, Deichmann Türkiye and Jolly Tur scored high on transmission view too. It should be noted that a brand post may contain more than one strategy; hence totals are more than 100%.

Table 3. The Use of Taylor's Six Segments

		Transmission			Ritual		
		Routine	Acute Need	Ration	Ego	Social	Sensory
E-Bebek	N	13	1	24	0	0	11
	%	43,3%	3,3%	80,0%	,0%	,0%	36,7%
Avon Türkiye	N	9	0	27	3	4	12
	%	30,0%	,0%	90,0%	10,0%	13,3%	40,0%
Deichmann Türkiye	N	3	1	28	4	3	26
	%	10,0%	3,3%	93,3%	13,3%	10,0%	86,7%
Jolly Tur	N	25	12	27	1	1	23
	%	83,3%	40,0%	90,0%	3,3%	3,3%	76,7%
İkea Türkiye	N	14	8	22	0	3	14
	%	46,7%	26,7%	73,3%	,0%	10,0%	46,7%
Migros Türkiye	N	28	7	30	0	0	9
	%	93,3%	23,3%	100,0%	,0%	,0%	30,0%
Starbucks	N	1	0	19	0	3	22
	%	3,3%	,0%	63,3%	,0%	10,0%	73,3%
Mercedes Benz	N	1	0	10	5	7	17
	%	3,3%	,0%	33,3%	16,7%	23,3%	56,7%
Turkcell	N	3	1	23	0	7	1
	%	10,0%	3,3%	76,7%	,0%	23,3%	3,3%
Akbank	N	4	0	17	0	12	1
	%	13,3%	,0%	56,7%	,0%	40,0%	3,3%
Total	N	101	30	227	13	40	136
	%	33,7%	10,0%	75,7%	4,3%	13,3%	45,3%

Table 3 lists Taylor's (1999) six segments. Ration was most frequently used strategy (75,9%), followed by sensory (45,4%) and routine strategies (33,7%). Ego is the least used strategy (4,3%).

All brands except Mercedes use ration strategy for more than half of their brand posts. This strategy is recorded most on the posts made by Migros (100%) and Deichmann Türkiye (93,3%). Avon Türkiye and Jolly Tur follow these brands by 90% each. The lowest percentages belong to Mercedes (33,3%) and Akbank (56,7%). It can be said that brands aim to provide information for the rational side of consumer in social media brand posts.

Sensory strategy is used by most of the brands, but Turkcell and Akbank have only one post (3,3%) using this strategy among the 30 posts analyzed for each brand. Deichmann Türkiye uses this strategy most (86,7%).

Table 4. The Use of Creative Approaches

		Informational				Transformational			
		USP	Preemptive	Hyperbole	General-Inf.	User Img.	Brand Img.	Use Occ.	General-Tra.
E-Bebek	N	2	1	0	27	0	0	0	3
	%	6,7%	3,3%	,0%	90,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%	10,0%
Avon Türkiye	N	0	1	0	22	4	2	4	8
	%	,0%	3,3%	,0%	73,3%	13,3%	6,7%	13,3%	26,7%
Deichmann TR	N	0	0	0	27	2	0	0	6
	%	,0%	,0%	,0%	90,0%	6,7%	,0%	,0%	20,0%
Jolly Tur	N	0	0	1	29	0	0	1	5
	%	,0%	,0%	3,3%	96,7%	,0%	,0%	3,3%	16,7%
İkea Türkiye	N	0	0	1	19	0	0	2	8
	%	,0%	,0%	3,3%	63,3%	,0%	,0%	6,7%	26,7%
Migros Türkiye	N	1	0	0	29	0	0	0	0
	%	3,3%	,0%	,0%	96,7%	,0%	,0%	,0%	,0%
Starbucks	N	5	1	0	8	2	1	11	4
	%	16,7%	3,3%	,0%	26,7%	6,7%	3,3%	36,7%	13,3%
Mercedes Benz	N	0	3	2	5	6	9	4	5
	%	,0%	10,0%	6,7%	16,7%	20,0%	30,0%	13,3%	16,7%
Turkcell	N	4	2	3	8	0	2	8	6
	%	13,3%	6,7%	10,0%	26,7%	,0%	6,7%	26,7%	20,0%
Akbank	N	0	7	0	13	0	2	0	8
	%	,0%	23,3%	,0%	43,3%	,0%	6,7%	,0%	26,7%
Total	N	12	15	7	187	14	16	30	53
	%	4,0%	5,0%	2,3%	62,3%	4,7%	5,3%	10,0%	17,7%

In terms of creative approaches, general-informational was most frequently used (62,3%), followed by general-transformational (17,7%) and use occasion (10,0%). Comparative approach is not included in Table 5 since there were no brand posts employing this approach.

Table 5. Relation between message strategies and creative approaches

		Transmission			Ritual		
		Routine	Acute Need	Ration	Ego	Social	Sensory
Informational Creative Appr.	USP	2	0	10	0	1	6
		16,7%	,0%	**83,3%**	,0%	8,3%	50,0%
	Preemptive	6	0	14	1	1	4

		40,0%	,0%	**93,3%**	6,7%	6,7%	26,7%
	Hyperbole	0	1	5	1	0	3
		,0%	14,3%	**71,4%**	14,3%	,0%	42,9%
	General-Informational	89	29	175	5	9	87
		47,6%	15,5%	**93,6%**	2,7%	4,8%	46,5%
Transformational Creative Appr.	User Image	2	0	7	6	8	9
		14,3%	,0%	50,0%	42,9%	57,1%	**64,3%**
	Brand Image	1	0	6	1	2	12
		6,3%	,0%	37,5%	6,3%	12,5%	**75,0%**
	Use Occasion	4	0	22	2	1	14
		13,3%	,0%	**73,3%**	6,7%	3,3%	46,7%
	General-Transformational	8	1	17	7	27	27
		15,4%	1,9%	32,7%	13,5%	**51,9%**	**51,9%**

Informational creative approaches are expected to be associated with transmission message strategies. Similar association is expected for transformational message strategies. The findings suggest the existence of such an association. It can be said that the only exception is "Use Occasion", where this approach recorded more (73,3%) with ration strategy.

As it can be seen on Table 5, informational creative approaches were recorded more on transmission subdivision of the strategy wheel, especially on the ration segment. Similarly, transformational creative approaches were recorded on more one ritual subdivision, with the exception of aforementioned "Use Occasion" approach.

CONCLUSION

Research Question 1 aimed to examine what type of content do the brands publish in their Instagram accounts. Instagram started as a smartphone application to share photos, but later allowed short videos to be shared. Out of the ten brands accounts examined in this study, only two accounts (Turkcell and Akbank) contained more videos than photos. Although videos might be more engaging, production costs

are much higher. As mentioned in the results section, most of the videos shared were either short animated clips or commercials that were produced for television.

Brands use contests to gather likes and comments. Most of the posts by brands do not have many comments but the posts which are announcing contest gather thousands. E-Bebek, for instance, has posts that have less than 10 comments, but they also have posts that have more than 4000 comments, up to 10449.

Research Question 2 aimed to examine what type of message strategies brands use most frequently. Most used message strategy was ration (75,9%). This result is similar to the findings of Ju and Park (2015: 549). However, in contrast to their study, ration is followed by sensory (45,4%) and routine (33,7%).

An interesting finding of this study is the low usage of ego strategy. It can be said that, even on ego related products, the use of ego strategy is low. Mercedes Benz (16,7%), Deichmann Türkiye (13,3%) and Avon Türkiye (10%) uses this strategy most among the ten brands analyzed. Another pair of researchers studying marketing communication of Turkish brands, specifically, Turkish TV commercials, Uluğ-Yurttaş and Özkoçak (2020: 10-11) found ego strategy to be used least (9,1%) among the commercials analyzed. Several researchers (e.g., Golan and Zaidner 2008; Lee, Taylor and Chung 2011; Tsai and Lancaster 2012; Ju and Park 2015) found ego strategy to be among the most commons strategies used. It should be noted that none of these studies were concuted on brand posts on social media and this study was the first in doing so. There might be a role of cultural differences in this result. More studies should be conducted to reveal the reasons behind the difference in the usage of ego strategy.

Research Question 3 aimed to examine the relation between message strategies and creative approaches. Informational creative approaches were used with transmission strategy. Transformational creative approaches were used mostly with ritual strategy. The exception here is "Use Occasion" strategy, where more of the brand posts using this strategy employed transmission strategy, especially ration strategy. The reason behind this result might be the sample that is analyzed, i.e. social media posts. These are not advertisements but posts made by brands on their

own Instagram accounts. A comparison of advertisements and social media posts in a future study might reveal more about such differences.

Taylor's six segment message strategy wheel appears to be suitable for identifying message strategies. However, it can be said that brand posts on Instagram are not carefully thought out as in TV commercials or magazine ads. It appears that brands are still treating social media as an online catalog. Posts are lacking depth in terms of creative approaches and mainly there to give information or remind the followers about offers.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is limited to top 10 brands from the list of Social Brands Turkey and the selected brands represent a variety of product and service categories. Future studies may focus on one of these categories.

Another limitation of this study is the type of content analyzed: This study focuses on the posts, and not the stories. Stories have become an important way of sharing brand messages and information as well as a way of interaction and engagement. Future studies should include the content shared in stories.

In future studies, scholars working in this field might find valuable insights by comparing the social media brand posts to the advertising of the same brands on traditional media. A comparison of the usage of creative approaches and message strategies might be suggested.

As presented in the discussion section, there is a difference on the reported use of ego strategy among studies from Turkey and rest of the world. Future studies might compare ads or brand posts from various countries to reveal differences among cultures.

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