

AN EXAMPLE TO THE USE OF MYSTICAL METAPHOR FOR BRAND IDENTITY IN TURKEY: THE EVIL EYE BEAD

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Abstract

Basically the mysticism which is associated with areas like religion, philosophy, literature today has taken part more and more in our lives by means of the popular culture. It has a potential for reaching large masses with its wide concept, due to the subjects which highlight the spiritual emotions such as superstitious beliefs, entombed saints, wish trees, evil eye beads, amulets, yoga, meditations, quantum, reiki, reincarnation being included in the mystical marketing. Mysterious matters such as enlightening the truth behind the mysterious, unknown, metaphysical powers and events, reaching the unknown, foreseeing the future, exploring the insight power are not overlooked by marketing communicators and brand managers who strictly follow the agenda. In this study the use of mystical metaphor which is a part of the popular culture for brand identity in Turkey has been examined and evaluated over the evil eye bead example.

Keywords: Mystical metaphor, brand identity, popular culture's metaphor, the evil eye bead, evil eye

Introduction

The mysticism, which is a philosophical phenomenon asserting that it is possible to understand the life's meaning via emotions, intuition instead of mind, logic, science, takes its power from the curiosity to those unknown, can't be explained. Mysticism is defined as a search for a direct communication by using experiences, intuitions, insights and the powers peculiar to this area with intent to realize, understand and recognize the metaphysical world, body and spirit relations, the final truth, the reality of the universe, together with the association of religion, theology, psychology, Sufism and holiness. People's interest in mysterious issues, curiosity for having knowledge about the future has also attracted the attention of

enterprises, has emerged as a strong marketing and branding strategy and has been entered in the literature as mystical marketing term.

The mysticism, which is a part of the Turkish culture memory, while being a passion for many individuals born and raised in these lands, as a natural result of this it turns into an opportunity for marketers. The individual has beliefs depending on mysticism behind many feeling, thought and behavior regardless of how a modern and rationalist life style is carried on. It is being set forth in this study with the example of evil eye beads that it is being applied to legends, unknown things, mysteries and various beliefs for being able to influence the consumer and to attract them to the products/services at the backstage of the marketing world.

The evil eye belief, which has maintained its existence from past to present, is continuing its existence in the daily life in almost every corner of Turkey and in full blast. Today among the people various superstitious beliefs are implemented such as having the hodja write charms, pouring lead etc., using various amulets like evil eye beads, perforated stones, horseshoes, egg shells against the evil eyes. The evil eye (nazar) word, of Arabic origin means glance in Turkish, is described as occurring a negative impact such as crippling, breaking on an object; sickness, disability, even death on a living thing upon a look at a person, an animal or an object with these characteristics of some people having harmful powers in their glances (Boratav, 1997, p. 103). It is believed that the evil eye is more influential on healthy and robust children; those attracting attention with their beauties and skills; intelligent, clever students successful in their lessons; those successful in their jobs; those who buy new car, house; favored by fortune; happy couples etc. moreover field, yard or garden yielding good harvest; nice-looking, sweet-smelling plants and flowers; productive cows with respect to milk; any household goods etc. properties admired by everybody. The belief is dominant in occurrence of the negative effect of the evil eye in the event of anybody's looking filled with jealousy towards living or non-living things having these properties (Ciblak, 2004, p.103)

The reflection of popular culture's mystical metaphors to brand identities

The popular culture, which helps to explore the shortest way going to the hearth of consumer and to create strategies towards the consumer, is getting its share from the mysticism in great amounts. The marketers have been also appealed with the influence of reflection of mystical elements to the popular culture and they have begun to ornament their brands (services/products) with mystical elements depending on the culture in which the brand will be offered. Mystical elements in Turkish culture are pretty diverse. Entombed saints, wish trees, evil eye beads, charms are the most

known things. The evil eye bead is not accepted as a taboo in terms of religion among others. For this reason it becomes one of the symbols most commonly used by marketers and appears to be an identity item of many brands from different sectors.

The brand identity is dealt with a reference framework helping to identify the meaning, orientation and purpose for the brand in terms of brand management theory. Aaker (1996) defines the brand identity as “unique” brand associations set. The important concept included in this definition is “associations”. Because brand associations are the (every) “thing” relevant to the brand in minds of shareholders and consumers. Hence the brand identity covers all aspects of the brand; puts forwards the necessity for considering the whole rather than parts concerning the brand. According to Aaker, the brand identity is regarded as an expression of subjectivity of the brand, long term purpose and goals, continuity, values, basic beliefs, distinctive signs and provides direction, objective and meaning to the brand. The brand identity should assist in establishment of relationship between the brand and the customer by creating functional, emotional and self-expressing value proposal.(Aaker, 1996, p.68).

There are six basic and general properties required to be available in all elements for the brand identity studies being able to achieve its purpose, to materialize the strategies. These are: Rememberability, and being recognizable, meaningfulness, adorability, transferability, adaptability and being protectable. (Keller, Aperia and Georgson, 2008, p. 130) Mystical metaphors, which generate a strong effect in remembrance, recognition of the brand, create a powerful impact in emotional sense by bearing the traces of the culture wherein the consumer is mingled and constitutes an attitude towards the brand.

Psychoanalyst Slavoj Jizek suggests that the thing make the customer to purchase product in new marketing concept can be achieved with adding mystical value to the product. He gives the Kinder surprise chocolate as an example for this. “An object comes out from inside after breaking the egg. This, for me, is a strategy treated masterfully completely. Because every product seen is not just of what is seen, it contains more than this, there is a mysterious part. Hence they give this mystical part directly here. You purchase the chocolate but more than this is hidden inside. There is a hidden treasure in it and yes you can possess it! message is given. Therefore we see that advertisements referring only to ‘positive’ properties such as ‘Our chocolate contains the most cacao.’, ‘Ours has been produced organically.’, ‘Ours is the best’ are useless. You must head towards mysticism, you must give more. I don’t know what this is but you must add something enabling us to imagine the product”. (<http://www.dunya.com/sadik-musteriye-giden-yol-mistisizmden-geciyor-207422h.htm>)

Nowadays, consumers purchase not only the product but also the emotional meaning borne by the product. If this emotional meaning contains also the mystical elements of the culture where the consumer is living, it is inevitable to create a positive impact on preferability, by enhancing the awareness level of the brand. Strong brand identity has a multifaceted and dimensional structure covering the physical structure, culture, relationship structure, customer characteristics and self image. Kapferer presents the brand identity concept with 6-corner identity prism. According to this prism the brand identity is; composed of personality, physical structure, relationships, reflection, image and culture. Mystical metaphors can be evaluated in the culture dimension of brand identity. As well as it varies from society to society, their significance levels also change. Mystical values bear sanctity in Turkish community, hence it is important. Entombed saints, amulets, wish trees, evil eyes are the most common ones.

Mysticism is a good product to be used as a totem. It is not in need of a private group to speak to. Because the products generated for presentation of mystical philosophy has been existing in the genes of consumers for centuries. The only task of the marketing is to unearth them. For example the evil eye bead represents the same thing for the people in all groups irrespective of class difference and meets the same expectation for everybody has a faith. This expectation is to be protected against malicious glances. It is a totem and the thing needed to be done is to attract attention by converting this into a necessity.

The findings with regard to the use of evil eye bead image at brand identities in Turkey

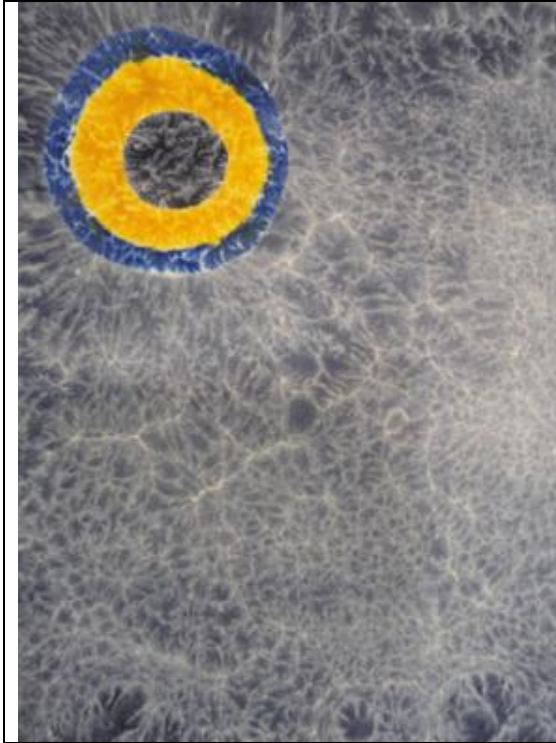
Although it is cost-effective to create somatic cursors in the brains of consumers with respect to marketers, at the same time it is plain and practical as an implementation area. While the somatic cursors, because of creating associations between two items seems unlikely to reconcile, obtain a more permanent place in our minds on the one hand, attract our attention on the other hand, allow us to perceive and make sense of the influential ties between these two items, aim to establish ties. (Akova, 2011, p.149) Advertisers and marketers are spending serious working hours on behalf of creation of somatic cursors for their brands. It has been proved with the studies made that the most common somatic cursors were contrast, repellency, humor and horror, and the advertisement campaigns were conducted mostly over these feelings (<http://www.truvainegi.com/2011/04/somatik-imlecler.html>). One of the most successful fear-driven somatic cursors is no doubt those made by using mystical metaphors. The evil eye bead, which is believed as warding off the evil eye, bad eye, calamity, accident, is one of the oldest mystical values of Turkish culture.

The brand identities, which are prepared by using this element, will enhance the awareness by creating selectivity in the perception also with the effect of cultural memory.

The use of evil eye beads among mystical metaphor objects in Turkish brand identities appears to be a marketing strategy raising the brand value. The evil eye bead image, a part of the Turkish cultural memory, affects positively the perceived quality of the brand and enhances the recognition. For this reason Turkish brands use this image frequently while creating their brand identities. These images, which strengthen the brand association, affect positively the preferability of the brand compared to competitive brands.

The brand value concept is an interdisciplinary concept. Not only marketing experts but at the same time finance experts are interested with this subject. Because the brand value has a financial data qualification for those engaged in finance. From the finance viewpoint, while it explains the current value of all future financial inputs that can be provided from the use of a brand by the brand owner, from the marketing viewpoint it expresses the place of a strong brand name in the mind of consumer. (Yuksel&Mermod, 2005, p.6) The brands, which strengthen their brand image with the mystical metaphor image evil eye bead, provide increase in cash flow in parallel with this and guarantee the continuity of sales.

The companies desiring to make their brands permanent, are struggling in order to create a synergy in brand perception by using icons which can reminiscent of the relevant brand in human brain, by bringing together the brand and religious rituals. The companies; which are desiring to carry out advertisement activities based on mystical, religious or superstitious beliefs undergirding the brand perception, causing emotional connotations with sound and image combinations aware of the importance of the sound, image and synergy in brand perception, are catching the human psychology at the most sensitive places by using the evil eye bead metaphor. In this way, the feelings such as responsibility, duty, belonging, fear towards the brand would also be created in consumers.



For example *Royal Hali*, which is a trademark of Naksan Holding among leading industrial organizations in Turkey, appears to be one of the most important symbols of Turkish carpet sector. Royal Hali has been manufacturing and offering for sale the carpets bearing the evil eye bead image on special occasions (Valentine's day, mothers day, fathers day) since 2009. This trademark, which has made this a marketing strategy, has been repeating this theme on every special days based on the thought of "the people you value must be protected from bad luck and all kind of evil". While this ritual helps the trademark is remembered with this image, it also increases the sales potential on special occasions.



While the chewing gum sector caught a growth rate exceeding 10 percent in 2012, experts say that the growth will continue also in 2013. It is being proven in the researches that especially our innovation speed in the chewing gum sector is mostly higher than the European market. When the momentum of all these studies and launches united with the figures in the export, it has appeared that it acquired a turnover more than 500 million TL in 2012.

(<http://www.dunyagida.com.tr/haber.php?nid=3173>)

It is differentiating from brand competitors by using this metaphor which is a part of Turkish cultural memory in an environment where competition is so intense, and increases the preferability by strengthening its image.



The manufacture and sale of fresh mushroom is an important item for the fresh fruit-vegetable market. A wide variety of mushrooms are raised in Turkey due to climate convenience and productivity of natural resources. Still because of mushroom poisoning deaths are being experienced in Turkey resulted from flexibility of controls and this causes a hesitant approach particularly to fresh mushrooms. *Boncuk Mantar* trademark is using evil eye bead image in order to break up this hesitation.

Nazar company, which is importing abroad, is a trademark using the evil eye bead image for the brand identity. This trademark has a wide range of products. By using the symbol of Turkish culture, it constitutes an attitude towards the product through the cultural image especially in Turkish citizens living abroad and enhancing it preferability. (<http://www.kulesucuklari.com/urunler.asp?ANACATID=1&ALTCATID=3>)



Atasay Kuyumculuk, which is an important brand in Turkish jewelry sector, is the first domestic jewelry trademark. This brand has become the

single brand took part in the jewelry sector in the list of “The Most Valuable Brands of Turkey” declared by Brand Finance international brand evaluation organization. (http://www.atasay.com/tr#/content_pages/?con_page=ilkler) The company is using evil eye bead image frequently on its products as a brand identity element. Particularly the brand knowing the admiration and demand to the evil eye bead of the Turkish people, is decorating its designs with this image. The evil eye bead image, which is believed to protect against the “evil eye and bad luck” is often used in products designed for agreement in marriage, engagement, marriage.



The intense belief in the evil eye in Turkey reflects to the brands mostly associated with baby products in the market. Presence of evil eye beads in the gift to be bought for the newborn baby is a custom in Turkish culture like baby clothes, bedding sets, baby toys, bedrooms even wall papers etc. For this reason many brands of Turkish origin are using this image on their products. And parents in particular prefer these products.





The first brand using the evil eye bead metaphor in its logos and campaigns is *Elidor*. The brand has initiated a great change campaign which will enhance awareness, strengthen brand value, and different as far as known and familiar. The brand, which is offering solutions that can meet with hair structure and need in many different qualifications, used the evil eye bead having an important place in Turkish culture in their advertisements and product packaging by organizing an advertising campaign with slogan delivering the message “Your hair will be so good, that they will always look”.



Elidor’s campaign experts, who positioned the evil eye bead in the center of advertising campaign, explain that mysticism is an important tool for reaching the loyal customer. “The use of symbols containing mystical elements in marketing strategies will facilitate the meeting of the brand with customer in achievement of aimed targets and will provide major benefits in constitution of loyal consumer masses.” (Akova, 2011, pp. 141-148) However there is an important point that must be considered here. Mystical elements should be used carefully in societies like Turkey where sensitivities

felt for values, prohibitions, taboos are excessive. Otherwise it is likely to confront with a giant crisis instead of marketing campaign.



Another brand which is emphasizing the evil eye bead in brand identity is *Mavi Jeans*, the leading brand in Turkish Textile sector. Mavi had used the evil eye bead through two different strategies in marketing intercommunication. The first one among these was the use as a visual symbol and promotional material for positioning itself a Mediterranean trademark under the concept of “Maviterranean” in USA and Canada markets, on the way of being an international brand (1999-2000). The evil eye bead became the visual element standing out in the global campaign conducted by Olivero Toscani after taking place in premium brand generation at sales points (2007). It was used in the same direction also in the advertising movie of “Kafana Gore” campaign shot by Emir Kusturica towards the domestic market (2008). It was carried on the product by being added as enameled accessory and embroidery on Jeans rivets. Its different applications had been made also in other visual communication elements such as showroom, fair stand, and showcase until 2010.



The city is *Izmir* which benefited from the evil eye bead image while creating the city brand identity. The evil eye bead, which is believed to protect people against evil eye and glance and equating with villages of Gorece from Menderes with Nazarkoy from Kemalpaşa, has been presented as the new logo of Izmir. (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/20697414.asp>) The city, which is called as the pearl of Aegean region of Turkey, has represented a pioneering mentality along the history as of its characteristic. It has become the cradle of leadership, civilization. Izmir, the city of pioneers, is also a city containing the most beautiful shades of blue in the sea and the sky. It highlights these features with the blue evil eye bead and virtually wants to protect its unmatched beauty with evil eye bead.



Turkey has composed its 2013 visual identity, by using the evil eye bead which is part of its culture, in a great sports organization as FIFA U-20 World Cup known worldwide. This image, which has equated with Turkish culture, actually appears to be a part of Turkey's brand identity.

Conclusion

The obstacles in front of manufacturing and consumption of any goods and services in any place of the world have been removed now substantially with the globalization of technology, information and capital. Today, emergence of any industry in any country of the world within a very short time is now accepted normally. To be capable of producing goods or services are no longer in the monopolies of only some economies. The competition subject of the new economic order is not the skill for production, it is branding. The branding is one of the most basic indicators of competitiveness in new economic order. Consumer may behave also with the motive of preferences beyond the material properties such as price, quality, and functionality of that product or service when purchasing goods or services. For example, he/she can prefer a product representing a life style catching the fancy of her/him even if it is expensive or being reflected the images which are a part of consumer's cultural memory by the brand's identity can affect the choice. Yet, the weight of the sense of belonging occurred between the brands containing mystical elements with himself/herself, due to the consumer's faiths are a representation of the mindset, can direct the consumer to consume the relevant products.

To direct to the product/service by arousing the consumer's passion and desire to explore the unknown has been appearing as an important strategy since a very long time for marketing which necessitates following the consumer trends very closely. The mankind's curiosity towards the unknown has made brands compulsory to use mystical things in different shapes. Some as a symbol according to the culture where the brand is offered for sale, some as a brand character, some by reflecting colors, shapes tries to attract attention of the consumer. Trademarks are using frequently these values as an identity element especially in Turkish community where mystical values are considered important. The most common among these is the evil eye bead.

Today, it is seen that evil eye belief is maintaining its existence prevalent in regions less developed in economic, social and cultural aspects. On the other hand, those having higher education levels and in a better status economically, albeit they have adopted more rationalist way compared to traditional so rural environments in their daily lives, they are believing in evil eye, and bearing the influence of this belief, even though it is not intense, in daily actions, behaviors and attitudes. Hence, evil eye and amulet faith is still maintaining its validity widespread in almost every segment (Ciblak, 2004, p.103).

For this reason, today many Turkish brands from different sectors are preparing their brand identities and marketing strategies by using the "evil eye bead image" which is the most common and known among the mystical

metaphors left a mark in Turkish cultural memory. All kind of marketing communication study prepared by using this image plays an important role in creation of awareness, informing, creation image about the brand and ensuring the brand loyalty. As well as the product’s tangible benefits and appearance were effective in purchase decisions in the past, for being able to exist in today’s global markets; the use of superstitious beliefs’ elements, which are a part of cultural memory and metaphors loyal to our emotions, influencing our perceptions in creation of brand loyalty and ensuring the sustainability of brands, will have effective and successful consequences in terms of the future of trademarks.

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