

The Brand Image Perception of Indirect Comparative Advertisements: Lipton Ice Tea “Don’t Choose the Easy Way” Ad Case

Dolaylı Karşılaştırmalı Reklamların Marka İmajı Algısı:

Lipton Ice Tea “Lipton İç, Kolaya Kaçma” Reklam Vakası

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ABSTRACT

Comparative advertising is to make comparisons between two brands by making indirect or direct explicit references to the product of a certain brand. Comparative advertising is used to reveal the advantages, differences and qualities of a certain product or brand in a way that will attract the attention of the consumer. The impact of comparative advertisements on brand image has been discussed by advertising agency managers and in academic researches for many years. For this purpose, a sample of 18 participants, 9 males and 9 females, aged 22-59, from different professional groups was selected for the study using purposive sampling. In the research where the content analysis method was used, the brand image perception of indirect comparative ads was examined through Lipton Ice Tea's 'Drink Lipton, Don't Choose the Easy Way' advertising case. According to the findings, the participants above middle age have a more positive attitude towards comparative ads and the purchasing intention of the female participants, especially mothers, increased after watching the ad.

Keywords: Social Media Advertising, Comparative Ads, Brand Image Perception, Advertising Research, Advertising Analysis.

ÖZ

Karşılaştırmalı reklam belirli bir markanın ürününün dolaylı ya da doğrudan açık göndermeler yaparak her iki marka arasında kıyaslamalar yapmak ve mevzubahis ürün ya da marka üstünlüklerini, farklarını, niteliklerini tüketicinin dikkatini çeken bir biçimde ortaya koymaktır. Karşılaştırmalı reklamların marka imajı üzerindeki etkisi uzun yıllardır reklam ajansı yöneticileri ve akademik araştırmalarda tartışılmaktadır. Bu çerçevede; orta sınıf genç, orta yaşı ve orta yaş üstü kadın ve erkek katılımcıların oluşturduğu araştırmaya, amaçsal örneklem yoluyla 22-59 yaş arası 9 erkek ve 9 kadınının olduğu toplamda 18 katılımcıdan oluşan farklı meslek gruplarından bir örneklem seçilmiştir. İçerik analizi yönteminin kullanıldığı araştırmada; Lipton Ice Tea'nın 'Lipton İç, Kolaya Kaçma' reklam vakası üzerinden dolaylı karşılaştırmalı reklamların marka imajı algısı incelenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara göre orta yaşı üzeri katılımcıların karşılaştırmalı reklamlara karşı daha olumlu tutuma sahip olduğu ve kadın katılımcıların özellikle annelerin reklamı izledikten sonra satın alma niyetinin arttığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya Reklamcılığı, Karşılaştırmalı Reklam, Marka İmajı Algısı, Reklam Araştırmaları, Reklam Çözümlemesi.



Introduction

Although the history of comparative ads begins with commerce, the first examples of such ads are seen in the USA. When the comparative ads first appeared, the name of the competing brand was not pronounced. However, the competing brand was aggressively vilified in order to dissuade consumers from their habits and to draw attention to the product and brand (as cited in Khattri & Tewary, 2018). In indirect comparisons, the name of the competing brand is not directly pronounced, but indirect references are made through various allusions. Although there are different types of direct comparative ads, the name of the competing brand is clearly revealed in such ads and the advantages and differences are revealed between the two brands in a positive or negative way. Comparative advertising was legalized in the United States in the 1970s (Barry, 1993, p. 20). Comparative ads are also legal in our country, although they do not date back to a very long time (Tüketicinin Korunması Hakkındaki Kanun [TKHK], 2013). Ads generally have a transformative effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image (Malik et al., 2013). Comparative advertising is effective in terms of creating the intended perceived image differences (Yagci, 2000). According to Mehra & Jain (2021), before making a decision consumers consider the rewards of the products. They suggest that brand image is the sum of the all representations and perceptions the consumer has within his/her mind regarding the products or services. The brand image is a picture that the consumers remember providing a good impression to the brand and which is referred to be checked by consumers (Mehra & Jain, 2021). Brand image generally encompasses what consumers think about the intangible characteristics of the brand rather than its functional characteristics. In other words, the characteristics that meet the psychological and social needs of consumers constitute the content of the image. Image is the sum of associations. For this reason, the associations created for different abstract areas create the image through the connections between them. These associations can occur directly as a result of the experiences of the consumers themselves or

indirectly as they hear from ads, public relations news and reference groups (Tosun, 2010, p. 88). According to Park et al. (1986), the construction and maintenance of brand image is essential to brand management. This research analyses consumers' brand image perceptions of indirect comparative ads based on 18 semi-structured interviews using the content analysis method. The universe of the research is consumers from different occupational backgrounds whose ages are in between 22-59 years living in Türkiye. The respondents of the study are 9 female and 9 male consumers selected through purposive sampling.

The History and Impact of Comparative Ads

The History of Comparative Ads

The history of comparative advertising dates to the beginnings of trading. Traders have historically highlighted the various advantages and benefits of their products by comparing them to competing products (Singh, 2014, p. 54). Although some evidence of comparative advertising is thought to have emerged in England in the 18th century, the first typical examples of comparative advertising describing competing products as unhealthy or harmful were found in the US at the beginning of the 20th century. In the 20th century, some advertisers in the US took aggressiveness way too far in comparative advertising. This situation created concerns about the reliability of ads and created problems for the media (as cited in Khattri & Tewary, 2018). Towards the 60s, the name of the rival company began to be pronounced directly in comparative ads. The "We Try Harder" campaign launched by Avis against Hertz, its number one competitor with the highest market share, marked this period and had wide repercussions. From the mid-60's to the early 70's, more and more companies were pronouncing the name of the rival company. In the early 1970s, comparison ads were banned from being shown on TV channels other than NBC, but later the American Federal Trade Commission (FTC) persuaded networks like ABC and CBS to give comparative ads a one-year trial period (Beard, 2013, pp. 120-148). In 1972, the

use of direct comparison in ads was legalized in the US, with the FTC declaring that comparative ads are informative, contributing to the purchasing process and therefore beneficial to the consumer, supporting comparative ads (Barry, 1993, p. 20; Belch ve Belch, 2003, p. 183). In the 1980s, comparative ads were now an accepted type of advertising. After the 90s, the use of comparative ads continued to increase rapidly. In addition, new legal regulations were made regarding litigation, and it was ruled that a lawsuit could be filed only in case of misinformation about the products or services of competing products (Beard, 2013, p. 163). In our country, making comparative ads is legal within the framework of certain rules. According to Article 61 of Law No. 6502 Regarding the Protection of Consumers (TKHK, 2013), "competitive advertisements of competitive goods or services that meet the same needs or for the same purpose can be made." Regulations on comparative advertising are made in the Turkish Commercial Law No 6102 (Türk Ticaret Kanunu [TTK], 2011). According to this law, "disparaging others or their goods, work, products, prices, activities or business affairs with false, misleading or unnecessarily offensive statements"; "unnecessarily vilifying a competing brand" or "comparing goods, work products or prices with others, goods, work products or prices in order to benefit from its reputation or putting a third party ahead in similar ways" is unfair competition (TTK, 2011). According to Article 8 of the Turkish Commercial Advertisement and Unfair Commercial Practices Regulation (Türk Ticari Reklam ve Haksız Ticari Uygulamalar Yönetmeliği [TTRHTUY], 2015), comparative ads should not include "competitors' product name, brand, logotype, trade mark, business name or other distinguishing elements;" these ads should not be deceptive or misleading, leading to unfair competition, meet certain needs, compare an issue that will benefit the consumer, be objective, not disparage or discredit the goods or services of competitors, be from the same geographical location, not cause confusion regarding commercial references and products and services, and should not be contrary to the principles set by the advertising board. In food advertisements,

the subject being compared should not be related to health (TTRHTUY, 2015). In general, regulations have been made that the issues to be considered in comparative ads should not be disparaging to the competitor's brand, misleading, or deceiving the consumer and leading to unfair competition; even if a comparison is made, it is emphasized that the consumer will benefit from it.

Comparative Ads and Their Impact

We can define comparative advertising as a form of advertising in which one product or service is compared directly or indirectly to another implying that the advertised brand is comparable or superior in comparison to the competing brand. This comparison is made to suggest that the advertised brand is the same or better quality than the competing brand to increase sales. This fact stimulates competition by keeping the prices low and improving products, and it promotes market transparency. These ads aim to change the consumers' mindset and increase sales (Khattri & Tewary, 2018). There are two types of comparison ads: Direct comparison ads and indirect comparison ads. Direct comparison ads are those in which the competing brand name is clearly pronounced. Indirect comparative ads are comparative ads that reveal the quality or price differences between two products by including implications. Examples of indirect comparative ads are the 'We work harder' campaign of Avis which positions the brand as the number 2 best brand (Marketing Turkey, 2023); Sensodyne's 'No. 1 toothpaste brand recommended by dentists', ads positioning the brand as the number 1 brand preferred by experts (Sensodyne, 2023), and Fairy's campaign against Pril which is making comparisons with references like 'best-known brand' or 'competing brand' (Kobitek, 2023). Other types of comparative advertising are positive comparative ads and negative comparative ads. In the positive comparative ads, the advertiser portrays the rival brand's properties attributing appropriately and declaring that consumers are going to benefit from their product. In negative comparative ads, the brands humiliate the quality and value system of the rival products or services

and mislead the consumers (as cited in Gürdin, 2020). Comparative ads contribute to the industry in areas such as introducing innovations, improving competition and sustainability, and are important in terms of benefiting consumers in terms of price, product quality and innovation. In a study in which Grewal et al. (1997) reviewed 22 years of (1975-1996) empirical research on the effectiveness of comparative advertising covering more than 100 published and non-published documents, comparative advertising is more effective than non-comparative advertising in general. Grewal et al. (1997) found that in comparison to non-comparative ads, comparative ads generally draw more attention to the ad, raise greater message and brand awareness, increase information processing as well as purchasing intentions and result in increased purchasing behaviour. On the other hand, according to the results of this study, comparative ads evoke lower source believability and less positive attitudes towards ad credibility (Grewal et al., 1987). Furthermore, according to research (Smith & Hunt, 1978; Swinyard, 1981), although comparative advertising is considered less credible and evokes more counterarguing than non-comparative advertising, the acceptance and message yielding of two-sided (positive plus negative) claims are higher than one-sided (positive only) claims. More recent studies suggest that comparative advertising is more effective in certain cases. According to a study by Donthu (1998) focusing on cross-country differences, the recall of comparative ads is high among consumers. However, especially in countries where comparative ads are not widely used or rarely used, the attitude of consumers towards these ads is negative. According to Priester et al. (2004), comparative ads in which the consumers perceive the comparison brand and the sponsor brand dissimilar lead to greater elaboration. In their studies, Khattri & Tewary (2018) found that in comparison to non-comparative ads, comparative ads are more involved in nature and lead to a higher purchase intention. However, their believability is usually lower and may lead to negative attitudes towards the ads.

Brand Image

In their well-known article, Gardner & Levy (1955) crystallized the brand image concept giving detailed information about the concept. In their article, they criticized previous research for being too superficial and stereotypical regarding purchase decisions and proposed that more enduring motivations for purchase need to be identified. They suggested that products had not only a social and psychological nature but also a physical one and that the consumers' feelings, ideas and attitudes about brands were the "image" of brands, which were crucial in purchasing decisions (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Brand image is the perceptions regarding a brand that are reflected by the brand associations carried in the consumer memory. Brand associations are the informational nodes that contain the meaning of the brand for consumers and are linked to the brand node in memory. The dimensions of brand associations like favorability, strength, and uniqueness play an important role in building brand equity, especially in terms of high-involvement decision situations (Keller, 1993). In general brand image can be defined as what the product means for the consumers and how it functions in terms of differentiating the firms' offerings from the competitor's offerings (Padgett & Allen, 1997). In the development of the brand, brand image has an important role. The reason to this is because the consumer tries or uses a product or service depending on the brand image considering the reputation and credibility of the brand. The result of the trial and consumption by consumers leads to brand experience, which determines whether the consumers will gain brand loyalty or switch to another brand. The brand image represents the consumers' information and knowledge regarding the brand and their overall perception. It is closely related to the attitudes and beliefs that lead to brand preference (Wijaya, 2013). On the other hand, the brand image cannot be regarded as simply a perceptual phenomenon that is shaped by the firm's communication activities alone. Instead, it is the consumers understanding that derives from all the brand-related activities the firm engages in (Park et al., 1986). A brand that has been able to

show its distinctive features that create awareness in the market can reach its target audience with properly planned marketing communication practices and can establish positive and trust-based communication with its customers if it can fully convey the intangible brand values that reflect its quality, benefit, and originality. When a brand gains the trust of the consumers, it also gains a very important advantage over its competitors in the purchasing decision process. By this means the decision processes regarding the purchase of the brand in question are processed faster. At this point, the perception of the consumers towards the brand and the way of defining the brand, namely the brand image, shows itself as a determinant of making the purchasing decision and acting (Elden, 2009, pp.116-117). According to research a favourable brand image and ad have a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior (Malik et al., 2013; Fianto et al. 2014; Angela, 2022).

Methodology

This research aims to reveal the brand image perception of the audience towards comparative ads through the "Drink Lipton, Don't Choose the Easy Way" ad (Nodesis, 2019), which is an example of comparative advertising. Although the comparative advertising culture is very old, it has made itself visible again in Turkish culture, especially with Lipton, which has compared itself with Coca-Cola in recent years and given messages regarding this field. In the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants through the "Drink Lipton, Don't Choose the Easy Way" commercial series. Research data were collected through the semi-structured interview technique, which is a data collection method that is frequently used among interview techniques (Galletta, 2013, p. 75). Relevant data were coded by the content analysis method. Apart from the people who watched and remembered the ad, for those who did not watch the ad or watched the ad but did not remember, the ad was made available to be watched again before the interview. Although the duration of the interviews conducted on different days was not the same, all interviews were carried out in 99 minutes. Open-

ended questions were asked to the participants in the study, which was based on the criteria of 18 years and older. Thus, the participants were provided with more detailed information on the subject. The question form and its order in the research and the technical conditions regarding the questions were organised by adhering to the flow suggested by Polat (2022). The sampling was selected following purposeful sampling, which is a frequently used sampling style among qualitative methods (Etikan et al., 2016; Sarker & Al-Muaalemi, 2022), the study was limited to 9 male and 9 female, aged 18 and above.

Data Collecting Tools and Analysis

The data of the research was collected face to face. These interviews were held between 04.05.2023 and 09.05.2023. Before the interview, the Lipton ice-tea ad was shown to the participants by the researchers. Emphasized in the semi-structured interview technique, the data collection tool was prepared by following the stages of determining the prerequisites for the use of the semi-structured technique, obtaining, and using the previous information, formulating the guide before the interview, testing the guide and presenting the final semi-structured interview form (Kallio et al., 2016, p. 2954). In the final question form of the research, upon studies in the literature (Pechmann & Stewart 1990; Grewal et al., 1997; Donthu, 1998; Yagci et al., 2009; Khattri & Tewary, 2018) 10 questions prepared by the researchers on the subject were asked to the participants. While these questions were being answered, new questions were added during the interview process in order to make the answers more specific or to get more detailed information about a highlighted situation. Furthermore, permission was obtained to record the interviews of all participants on a voice recorder. In the analysis of the data, the relevant data were coded and analyzed by content analysis through the MAXQDA program, which is widely used in the analysis of qualitative methods. In the analyzes made, the suggested context and citation/referencing method was preferred for the semi-structured interview technique (Schmidt, 2004, p. 254). The identities of the people participating in

the study are not explicitly given throughout the text in terms of both personal data protection and academic ethics. M coding was done for the male participants and F for the female participants. In the study, which included 18 participants, nine M and nine F participants were coded.

Findings

'Drink Lipton, Don't Choose the Easy Way' Ads

In Lipton's "Drink Lipton, Don't Take Choose the Easy Way" ad series in the summer of 2019, a reference was made to Coca-Cola with explicit and implicit messages. Here, Coca-Cola was constantly referred to both through the body language of the actors as per the script and the language in the script. The commercial series, starring Cengiz Bozkurt, was shared on Lipton's social media accounts as well as traditional media. In the ad content, various messages were given by reminding the audience of Coca-Cola ads. Here, a reference is made to Coca-Cola, with the sentence that Lipton is placed on the dining table, not the table, and that table is furniture, but the meals that are prepared without escaping the easy way make that table dinner table. One of the ads also referred to Coca-Cola Zero. The act of Tarkan in his red and white dress in the Coca-Cola ad has also been tried to remind the audience with both brand colours and movements. Social media streams (no make-up, no filter, challenge) were also referred to in the advertisements (Nodesis, 2019). In the ads, dishes belonging to Turkish culture, the Ramadan table and sayings referring to children (Huh, I swear I will not bring you again) were transferred to the audience (Lipton Çay, 2019).

Socio-Demographical Attributes and Product/Advertisement Awareness of Participants

The gender distribution of the participants participating in the study was homogeneously distributed. Seven participants were in the age range of 22-35, six participants were in the age range of 36-50, and five participants were in the age range of 51 and above. In the study, in which mostly university graduates participated, 11 participants stated that they were aware of the product features before watching the ads. On the other hand, while seven of the participants did not remember the old ads of the brand, the rest stated that they remembered partially or not at all.

Table 1
The Demographic Attributes of the Participants and Product/Advertisement Awareness

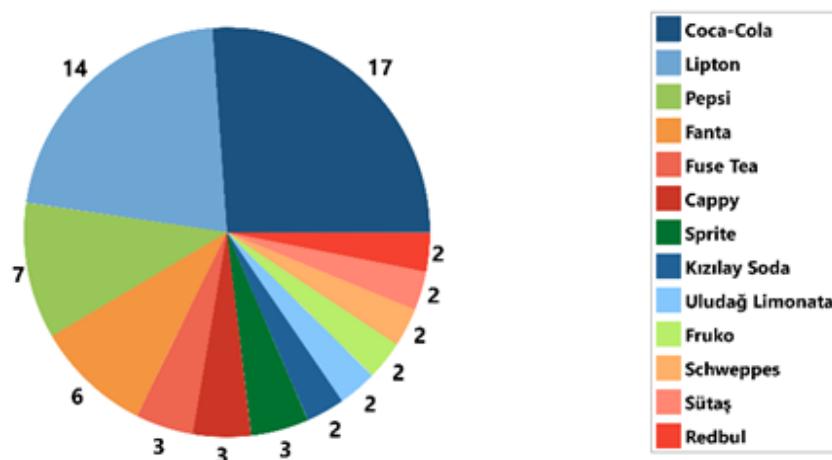
	Category	Number
Gender	Male (M1 – M9)	9
	Female (F1 – F9)	9
Age	22-35	7
	36-50	6
Educational status	51 and above	5
	Secondary education	2
Educational status	High school	6
	University	9
Product awareness prior to watching the ad	PhD	1
	Yes	11
Remember the previous ads of the brand	No	7
	Yes	5
Remember the previous ads of the brand	Partly	6
	No	7

Figure 1
Frames from Lipton Ads



Reference: Lipton Çay, 2019; Nodesis, 2019

Figure 2
 First Five Brands that Come to Mind



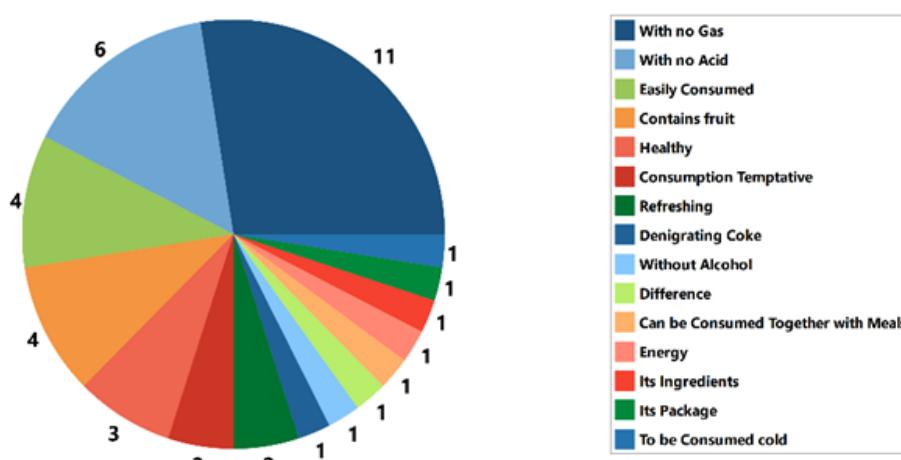
Coca-Cola received the highest number of brands that come to mind first in the non-alcoholic cold drink category of the participants. Lipton, Pepsi, Fanta and Fuse Tea were the first five brands that came to mind, respectively, after Coca-Cola, which came to almost every participant's mind. It was also observed that the participants expressed the brand as ice-tea instead of Lipton. Therefore, it is suggested that there is a generic brand connotation for the name of the brand and that the brand should work on this point.

After watching the ad of the brand, the product features that attracted the attention of the participants were noncarbonated, acid-free, easy to drink, fruity and healthy, respectively. Looking at the relevant order, it is seen that the participants

actually express the opposite of the features found in Coca-Cola. Therefore, it can be said that the brand is positioned at the point as an alternative beverage to Coca-Cola, even though the drinks are not in the same category and therefore we can state that the comparative ad reaches its positioning aim regarding brand image perceptions of the audience at this point.

The participants in the research stated that the product left associations in mind in terms of being noncarbonated, offering an alternative to cola, refreshing, consuming cold and keeping it cool. Figure 4 shows all the associations that come to mind.

Figure 3
 Ad Attributes that Draw Attention Regarding the Product



Comparative Ad Awareness and Reactions

The comparison with Coca-Cola, which is the main theme of the ad, was evaluated by the participants from different perspectives. One of the participants evaluated this situation in terms of tea consumption and branding in Turkish culture and stated that the ad was effective. The participant stated his views (M1) as follows: "*I think it is effective to compare the product with Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola is a very major brand with a long history. In my opinion, it is a brand that is at the forefront of the branding process. A worldwide brand... In this respect, I think it is important that it compares with a very good brand. It compares something that is in our culture, and I felt that it was healthier and accepted more quickly. It's not surprising at all. I think it's a very fair thing to compare it to easy... Coca-Cola has completed its branding process and has already landed in people's minds. Lipton is a brand that came out a long time ago. Despite that, I think Lipton compares itself to it (Coca-Cola) and accepts its superiority. This whole process also paves the way for the branding of the product. Comparing himself with the best brand also strengthens his brand image.*"

Another participant stated that whenever Coca-Cola comes to mind, the connotation of Lipton will also come to mind which makes the ad successful. "*I think the comparison of the ads' (of product) with Coca-Cola is effective. After all, everyone's first choice when they sit down is Coca-Cola, but here's what they did as a second alternative. Thanks to this ad, those who choose the easy way will also think of Lipton*" (M3) and find the ad successful.

Participants also made comments that a sweet competition between different brands took place for these two brands as well. "*Comparative ads already existed. There are also among the Mercedes-Audi. We can even see this in today's football clubs. When brands compete with each other, it becomes a better ad*" (F8). "*Generally, the perception is comparing Coca-Cola and Pepsi, but I can say that it was a good ad here to show Lipton's presence in the market*" (M6). In addition

to all these, some found the ad too ambitious, exaggerated, and humorous. "*The ad was too ambitious. There is a claim that I am above Coca-Cola. What was the company's reaction to this? The ad was very brave*" (F5). "*The comparison of advertising to easy is humorous,*" (F9). Here, it is seen that the comparative advertising studies between brands in the past years are reminded by the participants.

Some participants negatively evaluated the comparison of the relevant ad. The common point among these participants was that products' contents and brands were different. According to participants F1, M2 and F2; "*I don't think comparing advertising to Coca-Cola has been very effective. However, it is only emphasized that it is noncarbonated and alcohol-free,*" (F1). "*I don't think comparing the ad to Coca-Cola has been effective. No matter how effective this ad is, people will still drink Coca-Cola. It's about the habit because that's the case. Coca-Cola's brand loyalty is higher than this company,*" (M2). "*I don't think it's nice for the ad to compare two different brands. Because Coke and Ice Tea are products in two different categories. One is acidic and noncarbonated, and the other is non-acidic and carbonated. Therefore, I did not like the comparison. Here, the brand should go and talk about itself, and should not be interested in the fact that there is the acid in the other. It is not nice to assert the advantages of one's own product and denigrate the other*" (F2). "*I don't think comparing the ad to Coca-Cola has been very effective. I think they are very different. In fact, the message in the ad suggests that Coca-Cola is a bigger brand. Lipton here reminds me of Coca-Cola and says it is my competitor. The main comparison here has been in the point of taste. The ad states that it should be tried by highlighting its taste for those who have never tasted the product. The biggest advantage of the product is that it is noncarbonated. In my opinion, the product should not compare itself with something, it should walk with itself. While comparing it to a fizzy drink today, it reminds me that tomorrow it will compare itself to a still drink. This situation affects my feelings*

and thoughts negatively," (M4). "I don't think comparing it to Coca-Cola has been effective. Coca-Cola is normally acidic, and I don't prefer it, because it is unclear what it contains" (M5).

Views Regarding Celebrity Endorsement Comparison

Lipton's emphasis on Tarkan in ad content attracted the attention of the participants. Particularly female participants expressed more opinions about this situation. Considering the number of participants who found the connotation of the famous negative, the number of those who found it positive was more. Below are the verbal statements of the five participants on the subject. "Using Tarkan's image reminds me of Coke, but I don't think it will be very effective" (M4). "The fact that Tarkan is a popular and well-known artist and the brand's use of this draws attention to the ad and makes the ad memorable," (F3). "Tarkan is a world star, likewise Coca-Cola. But being a world star doesn't mean you'll be the best. I like the actor who acts in Lipton more than Tarkan. I think there is a comparison here as well. So, it's nice that he joked about Tarkan. This always reminds me of the Coca-Cola-Pepsi wars. There, Micheal Jackson was against the celebrity Britney Spears. I think it has been more effective that a local actor is chosen from a lower level instead of choosing Sertab Erener for Lipton ice-tea. If it had been Sertab Erener, maybe it wouldn't have drawn so much attention. This way it has become a more local, my country type of thing," (F7). "I think the reference to Tarkan is funny and catchy," (F6). "Highlighting Tarkan made the ad amusing," (F9).

Healthy Drink: Lipton

One of the most emphasized issues by the participants regarding the product was that it is a healthy drink. Participants stated that Lipton was healthier than Coke. "I think it fits perfectly. Because it puts something else, which is thought to be healthier, against the first thing that comes to everyone's mind. This has also increased its memorability," (M1). "This ad gave me the impression that it was opposite Coca-Cola and Pepsi. In other words, the ad gave me the

impression that it was against them. I don't drink a lot of Coke, but it is better for the health of the nation if they give up the others and drink these." (M2). A participant, who knew the harms of Coke before the ad, stated that she already has made her preferences accordingly. "When you say coke or cold tea, I say cold tea. I think Coke is harmful. Healthier at least. My preference has always been cold tea," (F3).

Those who find it healthy have mentioned that Coke is carbonated and acidic. In addition, it has also been emphasized that the ad has the role of informing individuals rather than being just an ad. The opinions of the four participants were as follows: "It shows that there is an alternative to carbonated drinks. It gives the message of a better alternative in terms of health. After all, carbonated drinks harm the stomach. Still, drinks are softer drinks," (M7). "There is a notice in the ad. It talks about not drinking Coke because it's acidic. They made it look healthier in comparison. After watching the ad, I might prefer Lipton a little more than Coca-Cola. It is also because it's healthier," (F9). "I try to consume less Coke because it is harmful. I don't find carbonated drinks healthy. So, I consume less. I may prefer Lipton over Coke because it is healthy. There is also the same refreshment, the same cold drinking thing," (F8). "As a mother, I want to keep acidic drinks away from my children. I prefer Lipton ice-tea more at home. Because it is acid-free. I find it more appropriate for children to drink. The fact that it is acid-free is also very well emphasized here. I think it could be aimed at children, too," (F7).

Reactions Regarding Previous Ads

In recalling Lipton's previous ads, most of the participants recalled the ads when they were given the name of the celebrities, who endorse the product. It has been observed that Hayko Cepkin's hint is effective in remembering the ad for the product. However, it was stated that the old advertisements did not leave connotations in the mind despite these: "After watching the ad, I did not have any associations with the product that remained in my mind. I did not remember the old

advertisements and the features of the product in those ads. Because the ad scenario was in the village, maybe I didn't remember it because it was a life far away from us," (M3). "I don't remember if the product features in the old ads existed. But it was evident in this ad," (M9). "The product features are more prominent in this ad compared to their previous ads," (M2). According to the opinions of the participants, they stated that only the use of celebrities was effective in remembering the old ads and that the 'Drink Lipton, Don't Choose the Easy Way' ad series presented a more successful image in terms of product features rather than celebrity.

The Change in Attitudes and Thoughts After Watching the Ad

In the case of the ad changing the attitudes and thoughts of the people, the participants put forward different opinions. According to this;

"In comparison to Coke, the ad did not change my attitudes and thoughts. After watching the commercial, my feelings did not change, but if there is a choice on the basis of a drink, I would prefer this one," (M2); "My feelings towards the product did not change after watching the ad. I always keep 1.5 litres of the product at home anyway. I enjoy drinking it because Lipton's is easy to drink and does not cause bloating in between meals," (M7) views were followed with also this; "The fact that the ad was comparative slightly changed my thinking about the product. The fact that the product is positioned as healthy here only attracted me," (F1). On the other hand, some are in favor of the product; "My attitude did not change after watching the ad. But if it did, I would prefer Lipton. Lipton, of course, in comparison to Coke. Because we know that there are drugs in cola, there is the acid in cola, we do not know the formula of what it is made of, they say various and various things," (F4).

Purchasing Intentions After Watching the Ad

The ultimate goal of ads is to make consumers buy the advertised product and service. Here, too, the participants expressed different opinions. In

addition to those who stated that they would buy the product after watching the ad, some stated that they were already a consumer of the product, so the ad was not a guide in the development of purchasing behavior. The views of M4, M6, F6 and M7 participants on the subject were as follows: "After watching the ad, I can consume this drink as an alternative to Coke. But this drink makes me gain weight because of the sugar. That's why I'm not drinking right now. Still, the ad made me buy Lipton. Even now, I'm going to buy it when I go home, I craved it," (M4). "After watching the ad, frankly, I want to try it too. I mostly consume Coke again, but maybe I will increase the number of cold tea to once a week," (M6). "My purchasing behavior hasn't changed after watching the ad. I was already buying it," (F6). Since I have already been buying the product, there has been no change in my purchasing behavior," (M7).

Some of the participants have stated that they did not buy the product even though they watched the ad and that they would never consume this product. In this segment, some stated that the taste of Coca-Cola and Lipton were not the same, that they had made up their mind, and that they could not think of tea as cold and could not accept this situation. The prominent verbal statements of M3, M9 and M8 participants are as follows: "After watching the ad, I had a positive feeling for the product. After watching the ad, I will prefer Coca-Cola again. Because they taste different. I also have habits. I didn't buy a Lipton even after watching the ad," (M3). "Despite the ad, if I want something acidic more than advertising, I drink Coke, if I want something non-acidic, I drink Lipton," (M9). "My feelings about the product did not change after watching the commercial. Even after watching the ad, I will still consume Coke. Because I am a very extreme Coke consumer. Way too much. It's my habit. I start the day with it, and I always drink Coke at dinner. I can't think of tea as cold," (M8).

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, a semi-structured interview was carried out for Lipton's ad 'Drink Lipton, Don't

'Choose the Easy Way', aiming to reveal the brand image perception of consumers through comparative ads. Nine male and nine female who participated in the study gave different answers to the questions asked about the subject. It has been determined that younger participants prefer the brand less in the category of non-alcoholic cold drinks, and this beverage brand is preferred with several other brands as the age progresses. This situation can especially be expressed as young consumers have weaker brand loyalty in comparison to the higher brand loyalty of the above middle age segment.

The brand appeared in front of the target audience with the name Lipton in the ad, but while the participants were listing the top five brands besides Lipton, they also pronounced a brand name like ice-tea. In fact, ice-tea has preceded Lipton's brand name, which has caused the brand to be referred to as a generic brand. In this context, it is suggested that the brand produces ad content regarding this opportunity in the future advertisements of the product. It can even act to evoke the Lipton brand with the words iced tea and ice-tea.

After the ad about the product, it is striking that the main thing that remains in the minds of the audience is the conversations between the actors and the voices expressed in the ad. Therefore, it can be argued that the language of the ad and the scenario are effective in helping consumers remember the ad later, keep it in mind, and know its basic messages.

In the case of comparative advertisement awareness, some of the participants stated that they did not understand the message of preferring Lipton over Coca-Cola in the ad. The obvious thing here was the age and education factor. The segment with higher education level and younger people have noticed this situation more easily.

It has been seen that the participants, who consume Lipton drinks see Lipton as harmless when compared to Coca-Cola which is an

important determinant of positive purchasing behavior towards the product. Those who watched the ad stated that they might prefer cold tea rather than Coca-Cola because of the claim of a healthier alternative to Coca-Cola, and this would lead to a change in their purchasing behavior. In terms of brand image perception, some of the participants also stated that after watching the ad, they would prefer not to prefer Coca-Cola because this product is non-carbonated, alcohol-free, and healthier. In this context, it can be said that the ad also carries an informative message. The change in purchasing intention with this information shows that this not only occurs through Lipton's product content but also the reverse reasoning regarding Coca-Cola. In addition to purchasing the product, most of the participants also stated that their feelings about the product changed positively after watching the ad. In this change, the healthy presentation of the product has created the purchasing intention regarding the product.

Some participants think that reminding the image of Tarkan in the ad has been more beneficial for brand awareness, while others have claimed that it has no effect. Therefore, we can state that celebrity endorsement in comparative ads lead to a positive awareness for the brand; on the other hand, the thesis that it is weaker for the actors in the rival ads can be put forward in this context. Celebrities and colours used by the brand in the ads have also been memorable in the minds of the consumers. In Lipton's previous ads, Hayko Cepkin and his ads in a yellow environment have been the most memorable factors in the minds of consumers.

Based on the statements of the participants that they found the ad entertaining, the humorous content of the ad has also affected the positive attitude towards the brand.

Comparative ads of the product have caused some participants to interpret the product as a substitute product. The fact that this substitute product was presented through comparative advertising has not created a negative attitude towards the product or purchasing, and the

audience liked the ad. Lipton's positioning itself as a substitute for Coca-Cola, as well as its producing products as a substitute for tea in summer, is a successful cultural adaptation strategy. The previous experiences of the consumers were also decisive in the comparison of the product with Coca-Cola regarding the ad including the acidity of Coca-Cola, the doubt about what is in it, etc... Due to these factors, the consumer already has a prejudiced view against Coca-Cola. Although Lipton tried to highlight itself here by way of comparison, in fact, as the participants have stated in the interviews (F2, M2), being the leader in its own product group and consuming different flavours at this point could have been prioritized.

Participants have stated that through comparison, the brand actually has expressed its aim of replacing Coca-Cola through implicit and explicit messages. The brand has tried to impose on the consumer that you can experience the pleasure you experience while drinking Coca-Cola in the same way, and that it is healthier. One of the participants stated that those who consume non-alcoholic cold drinks are also informed in the ad (F9). It is underlined here that the message of not drinking Coca-Cola due to the fact that it's acidic and unhealthy is tried to be given to consumers.

In the study, female participants have found the product healthier in comparison to male participants. Especially those who pay attention to their forms and are mothers have acted more sensitively here. Therefore, in this context, we can state that the brand can focus more on the market of products for this target audience. In addition, females have interpreted the use of Tarkan comparison in the ad more than males. There are those, who consider the reference to Tarkan successful as well as those, who consider it unsuccessful. In addition to all these, there were differences in terms of gender in purchasing intention: Males have been more rigid in the case of purchasing the product after the ad, and females have stated that they can consume this product in the future.

In this study, the research was carried out based on the Lipton constraint. In future studies, examples of competition between different brands can be explored. Apart from this qualitative study, a quantitative study can measure the effects on attitude towards the brand, impact on brand images and purchasing intention related to the Lipton – Coca-Cola ad comparison. On the other hand, due to the inability to generalize the findings obtained in qualitative research, interviews can also be conducted with new samples based on the same ad.

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