

***Is There Any Connection/Relation Between Ad Creativity and "Old Brain"?
Analyzing Awarded Advertisements through Neuromarketing***

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The European Business and Management Conference 2014
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Creativity is a central component of advertising success and in a close relation with the other components like getting interest and attention. Many awards in the advertising business focus on creativity, only a few focuses on the effectiveness of advertising. Neuromarketing is a new field of marketing and advertising research, which tries to understand consumer's mind. It's getting increased attention because to know how people make decisions, buy products or vote for someone etc. can be helpful for your persuasion effort to understand and reach the parts of the brain that decide. Brain can be defined as a "black box" of the consumer. Advertising professionals need to understand this "black box" to produce more appealing and convincing ads. The brain is divided into three primary areas. The neocortex is the brain's analytical computer, which processes data. The limbic system is where all emotions reside. The brain stem and other brain structures are responsible for your survival. This part of the brain is described by psychologist Robert Ornstein as the "Old Brain". The Old Brain quickly assesses situations to determine if you are at risk or danger. And, your Old Brain decides what gets noticed – what gets your attention. Therefore, you need to appeal to the Old Brain. According to Renvisé & Morin, (2007) old brain can be stimulated by six ways (and another stimulator is added to the model by corporatevisions.com). With this study, awarded print advertisements in Contest of Kristal Elma, Turkey in 2013 will be content analyzed according to seven categories.

Keywords: Neuromarketing, old brain, advertising, creativity

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Introduction

“Brain: an apparatus with which we think we think.”

Ambrose Bierce, Author

In recent years, human brain's based studies have been increased with the excitement arousing among academicians, practitioners and also consumers. Those studies are seen important because they open the black box of consumer's mind, which is a mystery. With a marketing viewpoint, human brain is the most responsible part of consumer behaviors. Understanding this “black box” can affect the consequences of marketing effort. So, marketing tries to benefit from neuroscience with emerging importance of brain based studies. For the last decade, there has been a new branch in the tree of marketing called “neuromarketing”. “The combination of neuro and marketing implies the merging of two fields of study (neuroscience and marketing). The term neuromarketing cannot be attributed to a particular individual as it started appearing somewhat organically around 2002.” (Morin, 2011:132). Du Plessis (2011:8) explains the term neuromarketing is “a very recent discipline - the word was only coined in 2002. It really is about the border between neuroscience and marketing. It forces marketers to review what they believe about the consumer's brain, and how this might affect their marketing activities.”

In fact, whole the story for getting attention to the brain from all over the world started with a book, *Descartes' Error* by Antonio Damasio in 1995. He was telling us human being couldn't decide rationally without emotions saying the opposite of Descartes. Damasio criticized Descartes' view “I think, therefore I am” which means “I am rational, therefore I am”. Damasio's book set a fire for a new discussion about brain, emotions and mind. After Damasio, lots of books were written and studies have been conducted related with brain, emotions, neuroscience, neuromarketing and so on. Renvoisé & Morin's *Neuromarketing* (2007) and M. Lindstrom's *Buy-ology* (2008) were leading books related with consumer behaviour published in marketing and advertising. Increasing attention and interest about brain may give the name for last decade!

What is “Old Brain”?

According to neuroscience human's brain has three primary parts despite the general belief about the left and the right brains. Human has three different brains, which work independently but in a balanced way. The new brain (neocortex) processes data, which means it's responsible for thinking. The middle brain (the limbic system) controls our emotions. The old brain (the reptilian brain) is the part that judges the data coming from the new and the middle brains and decides what to do. Old brain is called as “the true decision maker”. “Exciting new findings in brain research suggest that speaking to the true decision-maker, the old brain, will raise your effectiveness in communicating an idea or selling a product” (Renvoisé & Morin, 2007:5).

Brain is the most complicated organ and has a very complex system. There is a general distinction about human brain often made between the left and the right brain. The left one is linked to logic abilities and the right one has specialized centers for creativity. But, this organ also be categorized into three distinct parts which have a

specialized function. Renvoisé & Morin (2007:6) explains brain's parts as the followings:

- The new brain thinks*. It processes rational data.
- The middle brain feels*. It processes emotions and gut feelings.
- The old brain decides*. It takes into account the input from the other two brains, but the old brain is the actual trigger of decision.

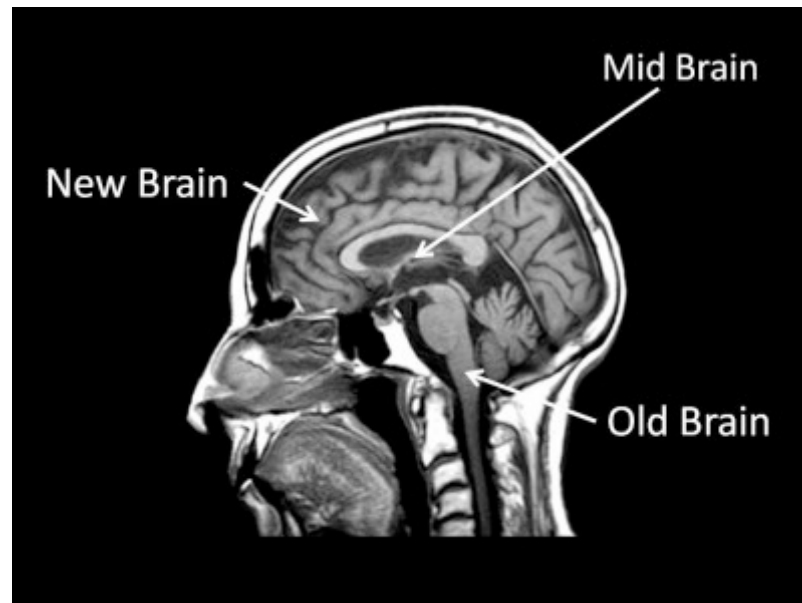


Figure 1: Brain and it's parts
(www.zihinselpazarlama.com/2012/02/27/eskibeyin/)

The old brain is called as “old” because it dates back to about 450 million years ago. “According to leading neuroscientist Robert Ornstein in *The Evolution of Consciousness*, our old brain is concerned solely with our survival, as it has been for millions of years” (Renvoisé & Morin, 2007:7). The old brain just works for its well-being. It searches around for danger, food, to feel safe, etc. and decides what to do.

Lots of studies shows the importance of the old brain in the decision-making process. Human brain scientist Leslie Hart states in his book *How the Brain Works*, “Much evidence now indicates that the old brain is the main switch in determining what sensory input will go to the new brain, and what decisions will be accepted.” (Renvoisé & Morin, 2007:7). Antonio Damasio underlines in his book, *Descartes' Error*, “Emotion, feeling, and biological regulation all play a role in human reason. The lowly orders of our organism are in the loop of higher reason.” In other words, survival-related functions play a role in the decision-making process (Renvoisé & Morin, 2007:7). Old brain is the main decision maker, can control your thinking and behaves according to the goal of surviving. In *Emotional Brain*, Dr. Joseph Ledoux points out that the amygdala-located in the old brain- “has a greater influence on the cortex than the cortex has on the amygdala, allowing emotional arousal to dominate and control thinking.” (Renvoisé & Morin, 2007:8). Recent studies showed that we decide with our emotions and then rationalize them. Actually, human beings hide the main reason behind his/her behaviors. They are dominantly emotion-based and triggered by our reptilian brain called “old brain”. Our emotions cause rationality. Old

brain decides instinctively to be alive like in the primitive ages and doesn't understand words. It processes visual stimuli.

“With all this scientific evidence, the challenge in marketing and also advertising becomes: how do you address a brain that is 450 million years old? Sales people, politicians, educators, advertisers, and even parents can testify how hard it is to convince people by simply using words. Words have been around for only about 40.000 years. Before that, man's communication was limited to a few grunts or gestures. It is even more difficult to try to influence your audience using written language. Why? Written words have only been around for about 10.000 years. That means the old brain is 45.000 times older than written words! There has not been enough time, in evolutionary terms, for written words to make an impact on our old brain.” (Renvoisé & Morin, 2007:8).

All around the world, there is a huge effort to persuade people to do something. In our standing point, marketing and advertising try to persuade people called consumers to buy products, services and ideas. In the related literature, you can see hundreds of books, researches about how can be consumers persuaded. Every year, too much money is spent on this effort. As it is summarized above, one of the new discovered ways is to speak to the old brain. Renvoisé & Morin (2007) suggest a new model to convince “old brain”, now it's recognized as the first Neuromarketing model. Model offers that if you speak to the old brain with six stimuli, you can reach the true decision maker. Renvoisé & Morin's (2007) model has six stimuli and seventh stimulator, simplicity, is added to the model by web site, corporatevisions (<http://corporatevisions.com/resources/article-archive/neuromarketing/>). So, to convince “old brain”:

1. Be Visual
2. Create Contrast
3. Use Firsts and Last
4. Use Emotion
5. Keep it Simple
6. Make it Concrete
7. Make it Personal.

As can be seen in the model suggested by Renvoisé & Morin (2007), it is not possible to convince old brain through using words. Rationality doesn't make sense for it. Complexity is the main reason for misunderstanding messages. People, who want to communicate with old brain, have to learn to speak new language. If you can reach the true decision-maker by using that seven stimulus, you can knock the doors of the decision-making process.

What is Creativity?

Creativity is a central component of advertising success and in a close relation with the other components like getting interest and attention. But, research on advertising creativity suffers from the common definition of the concept. Reinartz & Saffert explains creativity as (2013:4) “the extent to which an ad contains brand or executional elements that are different, novel, unusual, original, unique, etc.”.

Creativity has been described as “the main raison d’etre (reason for existence) of the advertising agency and the shiny apples at the front when it puts out its stall” (Bernstein, 1989:18). Advertising creativity is also the most controversial topic for both academicians and practitioners. Which can be seen creative? “It is known fact that there should be an element of creativity in an advertisement. This creativity is to create something new, unique, extremely attractive and appealing to the consumers. In fact, advertising itself is a creative process.” (www.ojcm.net/articles/23/231.pdf). There are a few logical reasons why creativity is important in advertising which are listed below:

- “With good visual effects it will attract the target audience attention that creates interest by establishing feelings of desire to bring about an action to purchase.
- It is a pillar to build the marketing mix - personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and sponsorship.
- It differentiates the 'me too' products by influencing attitudes and feelings to position the brand in preference above a competitors brand.
- It provides knowledge thereby stimulates thinking
- It can persuade, be relevant and meaningful
- It facilitates purchase and trial
- It creates loyal customers
- It transforms boring ads to interesting ads
- Creative ads achieve objectives”
(<http://www.redscommunications.co.za/resources/marketing-tips-blog/141-creativity-importance-in-advertising.html>).

Many awards in the advertising business focus on creativity, only a few focus on the effectiveness of advertising. Crystal Apple Contest is Turkey’s first creativity contest brings stakeholders of advertisement, marketing, media and communication industry together. Last year, it was organized for the 25th time and gave awards to the creativity.



Figure 2: Contest of Kristal Elma
(www.campaigntr.com/2013/04/16/40839/kristal-elma-kabuk-degistiriyor/kristal_elma_25-2/)

Every year, while Kristal Elma (Crystal Apple), a Turkish Association of Advertising Agencies organization and Turkey’s first creativity contest, is getting ready to meet sector representatives, it also regenerates and becomes a 4-day-festival in parallel with the change of the sector. They describe the organization as 4-day festival which

includes: “more than 60 events including conferences, seminars, panels, workshops, master class trainings, screenings and exhibitions organized, as well as more than 40 lecturers, who will give inspiring speeches in line with the Festival Theme, ‘To Make a Difference’.” Contest brings all the elements of the sector together: not only the advertisement professionals of the sector but also brands and customers (www.kristalelmfestivali.com/en/festival/hakkimizda).

Here, some examples of ads which were coded for this study. For example, in picture 1, there is an ad for Lipton After Meal Tea and has a message “whatever you eat, sleep well!”



Figure 3: One of the Awarded Ads (Brand: Lipton After Meal Tea)
<http://www.kristalelmfestivali.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/4900949f-100c-e311-8774-005056857981.jpg>

This ad is for CAN Hi-Fi system and has a message “feel the sound!” (Figure 4).

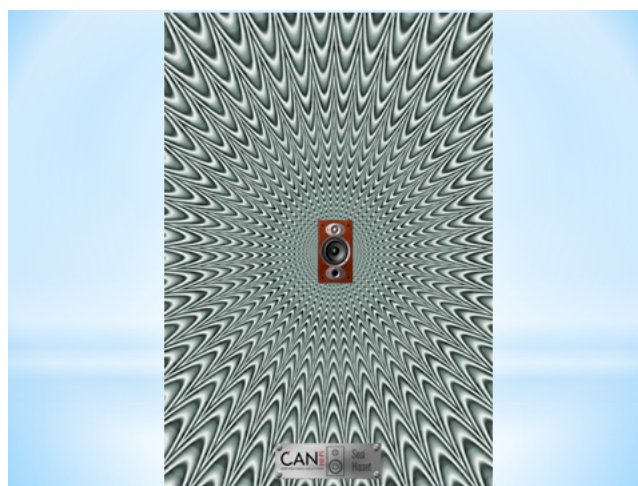


Figure 4: One of the Awarded Ads (Brand: CAN Hi-Fi system)
(http://timeantalya.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/kristal_elma_ses.jpg)

And last ad example gives information for McDonald’s discount announcement between the hours 12 am and 3 pm.

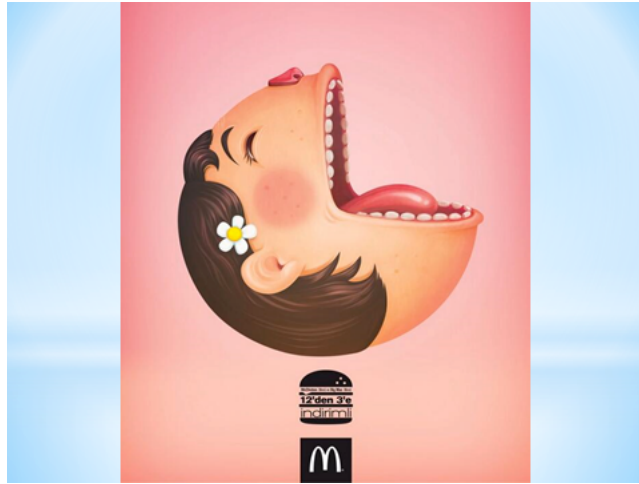


Figure 5: One of the Awarded Ads (Brand: Mc Donald's)
(www.campaigntr.com/2013/09/29/55220/25-kristal-elmanin-kazananlari/)

In figure 6, ad is for dental floss and it says nothing can hide among your teeth.



Figure 6: One of the Awarded Ads (Brand: TePe Dental Floss)
(www.campaigntr.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/tepe-dis-eti-2.jpg)

Methodology

Aim of the study is to examine relation between ad creativity and “old brain” via seven stimulators described by Renvoisé & Morin (2007). Identifying similarities and differences between awarded ads considering seven stimulators is also one of the major objectives of this research.

Awarded print advertisements in Contest of Kristal Elma, Turkey in 2013 were chosen as sample and content analyzed. 21 print ads were awarded in 2013. 21 awarded print ads were coded and content analyzed according to seven categories described by Renvoisé & Morin (2007). With this study, if there is a relation between awarded ads and addressing to “old brain” will be examined.

Research Question: Are ads awarded due to addressing our “old brain”? Are there any differences between ads in terms of addressing “old brain”?

Coding Process: For coding procedure, two PhD students studying in the area of advertising were trained and they studied 21 advertisements together. When disagreement arose, the coders discussed their interpretations and a final, consensual decision was reached. All the categories were created in the nominal scale. Using Cohen’s formula, the reliabilities were determined for seven categories which are described as the stimulators of “old brain” by Renvoisé & Morin, (2007). Intercoder reliability was 85%.

Operational Definitions

1. *Be Visual:* The old brain is visual. Neurons connect with one another at the speed of one millisecond, so the visual processing capability of our brain is near the speed of neuronal transmission. This makes the brain both extraordinarily fast and dangerously hasty. Since humans cannot rely on the speed at which the new brain process information, we are hardwired to make decisions that are mostly based on visual input. Data means numbers, so it has no effect on the old brain.

2. *Contrast:* The old brain is sensitive to clear contrast, such as before/after, risky/safe, with/without, or fast/slow. Contrast allows the old brain to make quick, risk-free decisions. Without it, the old brain enters into a state of confusion leading to a delayed decision or no decision at all.

3. *Firsts And Last:* The old brain enjoys openings and finales and often overlooks what is in between.

4. *Emotions:* The old brain is only triggered by emotion. Scientific studies show that emotions create electrochemical responses in our brains. These reactions directly impact the way we process and memorize information. We remember events better when we have experienced them with strong emotions. As Antonio Damasio says in *Descartes’ Error*, “We are not thinking machines that feel, we are feeling machines that think.”

5. *Simple:* The old brain like simple things and avoids complications.

6. *Concrete:* Since the old brain is not qualified to process written language, the use of words-especially complicated ones-will slow down the decoding of your message and automatically place the burden of information processing onto the new brain. The old brain needs tangible input. It appreciates simple, easy-to-grasp, concrete ideas like “more money”, “unbreakable”, and “24-hour turnaround time”.

7. *Personal:* The old brain is responsive to anything pertaining to self. Why? It is completely self-centered.

According to Renvoisé & Morin’s (2007) model the “old brain” reacts to only those stimuli. Incorporating these seven stimuli will give you fast access to the old brain and will immediately improve your ability to convince.

Findings

As can be seen in Table 1, 11 ads have 4 and more stimulating score for “old brain”. Only last two ones have score 1.

Table 1: Awarded Ads’ Product Categories and Their Speaking Scores to the “Old Brain”

Category	Score
1 Beverage	6
2 Beauty and Personal Care	5
3 Chocolate/Candy/Snack	5
4 Cleaning Products	5
5 Food	5
6 Retail, e-commerce	5
7 Social Responsibility	5
8 Construction and Materials	4
9 Decoration	4
10 Electronic	4
11 Medicine	4
12 Automotive	3
13 Banking	3
14 Culture & Art	3
15 Household Appliances	3
16 Corporate image	2
17 Media and Broadcasting	2
18 Other	2
19 Tourism, Transportation and Entertainment	2
20 Fashion and Accessories	1
21 Services	1

And Table 2 gives frequencies of awarded ads, which were coded due to stimulators of “old brain”. As it’s said before, 21 ads were coded. 19 of the ads have a simple message, 16 of the ads were visual, 14 of the ads have a tangible input (which means concrete), 8 of the ads were self-centered and 7 of the ads created contrast with their claim. 6 of them were appealing to emotions. And only 2 of the ads used first and last to get attention.

Table 2. Frequencies of Awarded Ads Due to Seven Stimulators of “Old Brain”

	Frequency	Percent
Be Visual	16	76.2
Create		
Contrast	7	33.3
First and Last	2	9.5
Emotions	6	28.6
Simple	19	90.5
Concrete	14	66.7

Conclusion

Advertisements appeal to the “old brain” can be seen creative. If an ad has at least 2 of 7 categories, which were described as stimulators of “old brain”, can be the key factor of getting attention for consumers.

If an ad is creative and also appeals to the “old brain”, it might have an award by the way it speaks to our “old brain”. Our brain is responsible for all our consumer behaviors, so advertising practitioners should be aware of this fact and design their ads which speak to our “old brain”.

It is important to note that the results of this study are not generalizable. This study was conducted in Turkey, with results of Crystal Apple Contest, 2013 awarded print advertisements. To obtain more accurate and generalizable results, it will be necessary to conduct further studies with more ads and from other contests and other cultures.

This paper covers only printed advertisements; thus, in future studies, content analysis could be conducted on other kinds of advertisements. The data analyzed in this study are also thought to guide future studies to be conducted to examine consumers’ attitudes within the scope of the features mentioned. For future studies, using the same methodology for previous and next years’ awarded ads in the same contest can be compared. In this way, it could be possible to answer the question “more creative ads appeal to old brain”.

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