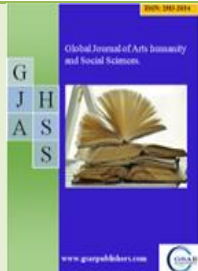


OPEN ACCESS	Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences			
	ISSN: 2583-2034			
	Abbreviated key title: Glob.J.Arts.Humanit.Soc.Sci			
	Frequency: Monthly			
	Published By GSAR Publishers			
Journal Homepage Link: https://gsarpublishers.com/journal-gjahss-home/				
Volume - 5	Issue - 4	April - 2025	Total pages 384-390	DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15286546

The Reflection of Visual Culture Elements in the Advertisements of Online Food Delivery Applications

By

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Article History

Received: 14- 04- 2025

Accepted: 21- 04- 2025

Published: 23- 04- 2025

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Abstract

In the digitalized world, food delivery applications have evolved beyond mere service platforms, becoming significant tools that shape consumer behavior, aesthetic perceptions, and cultural representations. This study aims to evaluate the images used in the advertisements of online food delivery applications from the perspective of visual culture. The aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural meanings of the visual elements in these advertisements are examined. While addressing how advertising images influence individuals' lifestyles, values, and consumption preferences, the study also analyzes the societal and cultural functions of these images. The findings reveal that visual elements not only carry aesthetic value but also play an active role in shaping consumer culture. This research offers a valuable perspective for readers seeking to understand the interaction between digital platforms and visual culture, as well as the impact of advertising images on society. It contributes to studies in the fields of visual culture and advertising strategies while providing a foundation for understanding the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of advertising imagery.

Keywords: Visual Culture, Digital Advertising, Food Delivery Applications, Advertising Images, Aesthetic and Symbolic Meanings.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology and the widespread use of the internet have led to profound changes in many aspects of daily life (Turancı, 2021; Küçükvardar & Aslan, 2021). One of these changes is observed in food ordering habits. Online food delivery applications, which have replaced traditional methods, enable users to easily access their desired meals while offering businesses new opportunities to develop marketing strategies (Erdem, 2023; Erdoğan, 2022). Thus, online food delivery applications have not only transformed the user experience but also brought significant innovations in the fields of visual culture and advertising (Çat & Yücedağ, 2022; Avcı, 2024; Özdemir Süzer & Kirişçi, 2023).

Advertising has historically been a mirror of societal and cultural dynamics. In the digital age, advertisements reach large audiences through digital platforms and directly influence consumer behavior (Manavcıoğlu, 2022; Ergin & Alkış, 2024). Particularly, the images used in the advertisements of online food delivery applications play a critical role in shaping visual culture and

forming consumption habits (Çat & Yücedağ, 2022; Feldman & Goodman, 2021). Images not only offer aesthetic values but also represent certain lifestyles, values, and consumption patterns (Bülbül, 2021; Kahraman et al., 2023).

This article aims to evaluate the images used in the advertisements of online food delivery applications from the perspective of visual culture. During the evaluation process, the aesthetic and cultural codes of the advertisements will be examined, and the societal impacts of the images used, as well as their reflections on consumer behavior, will be addressed. Additionally, the visual strategies employed in creating these images and their effects on the target audience will be analyzed in depth.

Understanding how visual culture evolves in digital media and how online food delivery advertisements contribute to this evolution is of great importance for comprehending modern advertising and marketing strategies. This article seeks to explore the cultural and societal dimensions of the visual elements used in the advertisements of online food delivery applications, aiming to



contribute to academic studies and practical applications in this field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the article *"The Power of Images and the Rise of Visual Culture"* by Parsa (2004), the impact of images on visual culture is examined. The study concludes that visual images are communicated faster and more effectively than words in many languages, as the human brain has a natural tendency to process and remember visual information. Therefore, powerful and effective images leave deeper impressions on people's memories and shape their thoughts. The article highlights that images create profound and complex effects in modern societies, and understanding and effectively managing images are crucial for success in communication, art, politics, and other fields.

In the article *"21st Century Images in the Context of Advertising and Art"* by Ulutürk-Yaşar and Onur (2016), the increasing importance of images in the 21st century and their role in advertising and art are examined. The article discusses the historical transformations of images and how visual culture has been shaped by societal changes and technological advancements since the early 20th century. It questions who produces images today and how they influence society, analyzing the role of advertising and art in this process. The article also explores how images are used in the context of consumer culture and advertising, and how this usage affects societal structures. Additionally, it examines how art conveys messages to society through images and the effects of these messages on society. The study concludes by highlighting how the production and use of images in the 21st century are shaped in the context of advertising and art, and their impacts on society.

In the article *"The Interaction of Advertising Posters as Visual Culture Elements with Societal Processes"* by Çitci and Eraldemir (2017), the two-way interaction between advertising posters and society in the context of visual culture is examined. The study emphasizes that poster designs interact with society, and this interaction is bidirectional. While societal processes influence posters, posters also contribute to societal change. Advertising posters are noted to be more effective in transforming and directing society compared to other types of posters. The article analyzes how advertising posters interact with societal change processes, concluding that posters either reproduce existing societal structures or contribute to change by critiquing societal norms. The study highlights the role of advertising posters as significant elements of visual culture and their interaction with societal processes.

In the article *"The Impact of Covid-19 Fear on Eating Habits and Online Food Ordering Intentions"* by Manap-Davras (2023), the effects of fear during the Covid-19 pandemic on individuals' eating habits and their intentions to order food online are examined. The study analyzes how health and hygiene concerns during the pandemic influenced food choices and eating habits. It investigates whether Covid-19 fear affected individuals' decisions to order food online and evaluates online food ordering behaviors during the pandemic. The article concludes that individuals with healthy

eating habits were less likely to order food online. The study sheds light on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on individuals' health perceptions, consumption behaviors, and eating habits, providing valuable insights into how fear influenced daily habits and digital consumption behaviors during the pandemic.

In the article *"The Power of Images in the Advertising World: The Universe Created by Robot Characters in Arçelik and Vestel Advertisements"* by Olgundeniz and Parsa (2014), the imaginary universe created through robot characters in the advertisements of Arçelik and Vestel is examined. The study analyzes the impact of images, particularly robot characters, on consumers and their place in visual culture. The meanings represented by the robots and the messages conveyed to consumers are examined within the framework of semiotic theory. The study concludes that the robot characters reinforced the brands' innovative image and created a positive impact on consumers. These characters helped the brands establish an emotional connection with their target audiences and provided a competitive advantage.

In the article *"The Role of Mass Media in the Transformation of Visual Culture into Global Culture"* by Erdoğan (2021), the use of visuals as a form of communication and the role of mass media in this process are examined. The article discusses the role of visual culture in information transmission and communication in modern societies. It emphasizes how visuals not only enhance expression and communication but also shape the perspectives of societies and individuals. The study explores how visual content reaches large audiences through mass media, contributing to the formation of a global culture that transcends national boundaries. It highlights the emergence of new ways of seeing due to the increasing use of visuals and the transformation of visual culture into global culture. The article concludes that the use of visuals as a communication tool plays a significant role in influencing the mental world of the audience and establishing communication. Mass media contribute to the emergence of new ways of seeing and the transformation of visual culture into global culture.

In the study *"A Semiotic Analysis: Exploring the Verbal Signs Found in Fast Food Online Advertisements"* by Be (2023), the verbal signs used in fast food online advertisements are examined. The study aims to identify and evaluate the importance of verbal signs in fast food advertisements. Texts, slogans, and expressions used in advertisements are analyzed, and their impact on consumers and the success of the advertisements is examined. The study provides valuable insights for researchers and marketing professionals seeking to understand how linguistic elements in online fast food advertisements are used and how they influence consumer behavior. It concludes that verbal signs play a significant role in effectively conveying brand values and identity, creating a strong impact on consumers, and increasing sales. The semiotic analysis reveals that these signs help brands establish emotional connections with their target audiences and clearly communicate the value and advantages of their products.

In the article *"Digital Food Culture, Power and Everyday Life"* by Feldman and Goodman (2021), the effects of digitalization on food

culture and how this transformation occurs in the context of everyday life and societal power relations are examined. The study discusses how food-related practices (cooking, sharing recipes, eating habits, etc.) are transformed and gain new meanings in the digital environment. It explores how food becomes an aesthetic and cultural object of consumption through digital platforms (Instagram, YouTube, food blogs). The role of digital platforms in the globalization and popularization of food culture is analyzed, along with the marketing strategies used to influence consumer behavior. The article concludes that digitalization transforms food culture at both individual and societal levels, creating strong effects in aesthetic, cultural, and economic dimensions. Food has become not only a consumption object but also a tool for identity, power, and cultural production in the digitalized world.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The aim of our study is to evaluate the state of visual images used in the advertisements of online food delivery applications from the perspective of visual culture. In the digital age, understanding how advertisements shape societal perceptions and consumer behavior is targeted. In this context, the aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural meanings of visual elements are examined, and the effects of advertising images on consumption habits, lifestyles, and societal values are analyzed. Additionally, how these images are communicated to the target audience through visual strategies and their societal reflections are evaluated.

The scope of our study includes examining various dimensions of visual culture elements in the advertisements of online food delivery applications. While analyzing aesthetic and cultural codes, the societal functions of advertisements, the role of visual elements in cultural representations and consumption habits are emphasized. Furthermore, an evaluation is made on how advertising, especially in sectors like food delivery applications, transforms societal and cultural structures in the digitalized world.

METHOD

Research Model

Within the scope of the research, scale questions for the article were created and sent to three expert academicians for their opinions. The scale questions were applied separately to different scenes for each advertisement film. The study was concluded based on the data obtained from the analysis.

Research Questions

In line with the main problem identified within the scope of the research, answers to the following questions were sought.

- How is color used as a design image in the advertisement films of online food delivery applications?
- What is the usage status of visuals in the advertisement films of online food delivery applications?
- How are imagistic elements used in the advertisement films of online food delivery applications?
- How are cultural elements used in the advertisement films of online food delivery applications?

- How is gender used in the advertisement films of online food delivery applications?

Limitations

The study focuses on the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of visual images used in the advertisements of online food delivery applications. The research is based solely on the advertisements of specific online food delivery applications, and digital advertisements from different sectors are excluded. Additionally, the analyzed advertisements are taken only from digital platforms, and traditional media channels are not included in the research scope.

Data Collection and Analysis

In the research, visual analysis and content analysis methods were used to examine the aesthetic and cultural dimensions of visual images used in the advertisements of online food delivery applications. The names of the companies providing online food delivery services were coded for data analysis. The selected advertisements consist of films broadcast in Turkey throughout 2024 and reaching large audiences.

During the data analysis process, advertisement images were divided into three main categories: aesthetic design elements, symbolic meanings, and messages targeting the audience. Through visual analysis, design elements such as color, visual elements, imagistic elements, and cultural elements in the images were examined. Within the scope of content analysis, the societal and cultural representations of the visuals were evaluated. The findings were interpreted by comparing them with existing studies in the literature.

Tool Development

Within the scope of the research, a "Online Food Delivery Applications Review List" form was created specifically for the study. The form consists of three main sections: 5 questions for the examined advertisement information, 7 questions for advertisement analysis, and 3 questions for cross-comments, totaling 15 questions. While developing this tool, support was received from academics related to the topic, and the tool was finalized based on their feedback.

FINDINGS

Color Usage

The colors used in the advertisement films examined within the scope of the study were analyzed, and the findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Prominent Colors in Advertisement Films

Colors	RF01	RF02	RF03	RF04
Black	*****			
Pink	*****			
Brick		*		
Mustard		*		

White		**		***
Red		*		
Blue		**		
Beige		*		
Yellow			*****	
Purple			****	
Orange				***

As seen in Table 1, RF01 had the most prominent color usage among the advertisement films. RF01 particularly emphasized two colors (black and pink). In general, it can be said that the use of two colors is common in the advertisement films. However, RF02 stands out as an exception, using six different colors (brick, mustard, white, red, and blue). Despite the wide color palette, no single color was prominently emphasized in RF02, creating a balanced but less impactful brand identity. RF03 used vibrant colors like yellow and purple, creating a strong brand identity, while RF04 prominently featured orange.

Visual Usage (Visualization)

The visual elements used in the advertisement films examined within the scope of the study were analyzed, and the findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Prominent Visual Elements in Advertisement Films

Visual Elements	RF01	RF02	RF03	RF04
Home Rooms	*****		*****	*
Furniture	*****	*****	*****	**
Mobile Phone	*	**		*
Boy	*			*
Workplace	*	*****		*
Food & Beverage		**		*
Girl			*	*
Brand Name			***	
Other Elements	**		**	*

The examination of visual elements presented in Table 2 reveals distinct thematic emphases across the advertisement campaigns. RF01's commercial prominently features domestic comfort and personalized dining experiences, effectively communicating the ease of integrating food ordering within family life. The visual narrative strikes a balance between individual meals and shared family dining, with smartphone ordering convenience serving as a central visual motif.

RF02's campaign demonstrates a stronger emphasis on dining out and fast food consumption patterns. The visuals accentuate the speed and convenience of mobile ordering, strategically targeting young adults and consumers who prefer restaurant dining. This represents a deliberate marketing approach catering to specific demographic preferences.

RF03's advertisement maintains the home comfort theme while attempting to encompass a broader lifestyle spectrum compared to RF01. The visual composition suggests an expansion of the domestic narrative to include diverse living situations.

The RF04 campaign uniquely combines home and workplace ordering scenarios within its visual framework. A notable strategic element emerges through the prominent display of brand identity, indicating a conscious effort to enhance brand recognition. The commercial employs strong brand markers as a distinctive visual component.

Cross-commercial analysis reveals two predominant spatial settings: domestic environments and professional workspaces. These locations emerge as primary backdrops across all four campaigns, reflecting consumers' routine spaces of food consumption. Furthermore, the spatial arrangements and environmental designs in all advertisements constitute significant visual elements worthy of note, demonstrating careful consideration of mise-en-scène in constructing commercial narratives.

Imagistic elements

The imagistic elements used in the advertisement films examined within the scope of the study were analyzed, and the findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Prominent Imagistic Elements in Advertisement Films

Imagistic Elements	RF01	RF02	RF03	RF04
Coupon Code	*****			
Discount		*		
Win		*		
Advantage		*		
Queue		**		
Opportunity		*		
Order		*		
Brand Name			**	*

As evidenced in Table 3, the RF01 advertisement campaign prominently features coupon codes as its primary imagistic element, strategically emphasizing consumer savings through discount incentives. This price-conscious approach positions the brand as economically advantageous for potential customers.

The RF02 campaign similarly prioritizes discount-related messaging, maintaining continuity with RF01's value proposition framework. However, it introduces an additional competitive advantage by highlighting the elimination of waiting queues for online orders - a distinctive value proposition in the food delivery sector.

Notably, RF03 and RF04 demonstrate a divergent strategic approach, with brand naming emerging as the dominant imagistic element. This shift suggests a transition from price-based appeals to brand-centric marketing strategies, potentially indicating these campaigns' focus on brand recognition and loyalty building rather than immediate price incentives.

Cultural elements

The cultural elements used in the advertisement films examined within the scope of the study were analyzed, and the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Prominent Cultural Elements in Advertisement Films

Cultural Elements	RF01	RF02	RF03	RF04
Modern Workplace				*
People		**	***	*
Food & Beverage				**
Table				*
Girl				*
Modern Home	*		****	*
Colored Wall	*			
Boy	**			
Computer	*			
Toy	*			
Book	*			
Coffee Table	*		*	
Mobile Phone	*			
Modern Restaurant		****		
Technology		*		
Street			*	
Bank			*	
Kitchen			**	

City			*	
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The examination of cultural representations reveals distinct thematic patterns across campaigns. RF01 incorporates select domestic elements including a male child, vibrantly colored walls, and contemporary home interiors within its visual narrative. Supplementary items such as toys, books, mobile devices, and side tables appear as singular decorative components rather than central motifs.

RF02 cultivates a distinctly youthful ambiance through its depiction of modern restaurant settings and technological integrations. The inclusion of diverse human subjects suggests a strategic emphasis on cultural pluralism and inclusivity within the brand's messaging framework.

RF03's visual composition foregrounds three primary elements: contemporary living spaces, culinary preparation areas, and urban landscapes. This tripartite representation seeks to position the service as emblematic of efficient, metropolitan lifestyles. Supplemental imagery features generic human figures and consumable products as secondary visual anchors.

RF04 presents a professional-domestic duality, equally emphasizing corporate environments and modern residential spaces through strategic placement of office furniture and dining tables. Familial representations emerge subtly, particularly through the inclusion of female child figures, though these remain peripheral to the dominant narrative of workplace efficiency.

Gender Representation in Advertisements

Within the scope of the study, the gender distribution employed in the analyzed advertisement films was examined, with the findings presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Prominent Gender Representation in Advertisement Films

Gender Elements	RF01	RF02	RF03	RF04
Female			***	
Male	***	****	**	*
Equal Distribution	**	**	***	***

Analysis of Table 5, which presents gender representation across four distinct companies' advertisement films, reveals that both genders were actively utilized in the campaigns. However, the findings demonstrate that male figures were predominantly featured in RF01 and RF02 advertisements, whereas RF03 exhibited greater representation of female figures. Finally, RF04 displayed approximately equal representation of both male and female figures, indicating balanced gender portrayal.

Cross-Analysis of Advertisement Imagery

An examination of the thematic deployment of imagery across the analyzed commercials reveals distinct representational patterns. In RF01, the "modern home concept" and "solitary male" images

emerge as predominant motifs. This constructs a potent representation of male autonomy, depicting an independent, self-sufficient individual capable of making personal decisions. The advertisement further reinforces conventional imagery of convenience and speed, emphasizing the ease with which consumers can obtain desired meals within their domestic comfort zones.

The RF02 commercial similarly features a confident, modern male protagonist. The narrative establishes a conceptual parallel between the rapid processing of online food orders and the quick preparation of fast food items. This dual emphasis on speed and convenience is noteworthy. The foregrounding of the male figure serves to position masculinity as emblematic of contemporary, fast-paced lifestyles.

A markedly different gender dynamic appears in RF03. The commercial showcases traditional gender roles through its depiction of a woman preparing breakfast in the kitchen while a man consumes the meal. This visual rhetoric perpetuates conventional domestic paradigms - the woman's culinary labor representing entrenched service norms, while the man's effortless consumption reinforces established role distributions within societal structures.

In contrast, RF04 presents a progressive representation through its workplace setting. The advertisement features gender-balanced imagery, with male and female colleagues collaboratively working and sharing meals. This constructs an imagery of solidarity, cooperation, and workplace harmony. Notably, the commercial adopts an egalitarian mission that consciously challenges society's divisive gender stereotypes, positioning itself as a counter-narrative to traditional representations.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the functionality and societal impacts of visual culture elements within the advertising strategies of online food delivery applications in the context of digital marketing communication. The findings demonstrate how visual semiotic components in advertising design play a critical role in shaping consumer perception and reproducing representational politics.

The analysis of color usage in the examined commercials reveals its significant function in defining brand identities and target audiences. Strategic color selection not only shapes how brands appeal to their demographics but also facilitates the creation of strong brand personalities. Vibrant color schemes (such as black, pink, and yellow) project energetic and dynamic brand images, while more diverse palettes create balanced impressions, though potentially at the cost of distinctiveness.

Visual elements serve as direct conduits to target audiences, supporting brand messaging and delivering value propositions. The intentional selection of visuals that align with core brand values creates lasting impressions on consumers. Notably, the prominence of domestic and professional environments reflects brands' emphasis on practical lifestyles, while effective use of promotional

elements like discounts and special offers enhances attention-grabbing potential in price-sensitive strategies.

Symbolic elements emerge as crucial factors influencing consumer perception, deliberately designed to prompt specific user actions. These components strategically direct attention toward key conversion drivers such as promo codes, queue-skipping benefits, and ordering processes, demonstrating how marketing strategies are meticulously crafted to drive engagement.

Cultural elements reveal advertisements' societal positioning and their methods of establishing connections with target demographics. The inclusion of modern lifestyles, family structures, and workplace environments showcases brands' integration with contemporary sociocultural values, confirming that advertisements serve not only as promotional tools but also as shapers of social norms.

Gender representations present a complex picture, with some campaigns associating male figures with themes of speed and independence while others reinforce traditional female roles. However, the inclusion of equitable representation in certain commercials suggests transformative potential in gender portrayals, indicating that gender discourse remains a prominent feature in advertising narratives.

The strategic deployment of chromatic choices, visual components, and symbolic elements directly informs marketing approaches, with each commercial serving specific objectives. Recommendations include enhancing visual diversity, emphasizing price-based incentives for cost-conscious consumers, and incorporating broader cultural elements to appeal to diverse societal segments.

For future research, studies incorporating neuroscientific techniques, cross-cultural comparative analyses, and consumer-focused qualitative research would provide valuable insights. Additionally, developing ethical representation standards in digital advertising warrants further examination. This study offers a multidisciplinary perspective for academics and marketing professionals while proposing a novel methodological framework for researchers investigating the sociological implications of digital visual culture. The findings underscore the need for optimized visual strategies in digital marketing communication and a reconsideration of advertising ethics in terms of social responsibility.

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