‘We just know!’: Tacit knowledge and knowledge production in the Turkish advertising industry

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Abstract
Drawing on interviews with advertisers in three Turkish advertising agencies, this paper analyses the knowledge production practices of these agencies in order to understand how tacit knowledge has become the main source of differentiation for survival in the advertising sector. Relying on Pierre Bourdieu’s definition of common sense and Alfred Schutz’s social theory of knowledge, I argue that the production of implicit or tacit knowledge – non-verbal, or otherwise unarticulated and intuitive forms of knowledge – is understood not merely as a business strategy and a battleground within and between agencies, but as a socially constructed form of power, working through discursive practices in advertising business. Thus, tacit knowledge, as a practical strategy, is employed for the purposes of improvisation and invention within the structured social order of the advertising field. In advertising, explicit or codified knowledge depends upon and privileges tacit knowledge in knowledge production processes, which are profoundly based on strategies of typification, human capital, common sense and everyday experience.

Keywords
knowledge production, tacit knowledge, advertising, Turkey, advertising agencies

Since the mid-20th century, scholars have begun to view the social organization of consumption – including the meanings circulated through advertising and consumer culture – as a key framework for understanding modern societies. This is seen as a significant shift in emphasis from earlier social and cultural analyses, which viewed social relations as being largely determined by the social organization
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