

EVALUATION OF EMOTIONAL APPEALS IN TAKEATASTE AND FIZZ TO LIFE'S TV COMMERCIALS IN BRAND POSITIONING OF COCA-COLA AND PEPSI BEVERAGES

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Abstract

This study evaluated the emotional appeals used in Coca-Cola's #TakeATaste and Pepsi's Fizz to Life television commercials and their influence on the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages. The study was anchored on Emotional Appeal Theory. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, involving a structured questionnaire administered to 375 Nigerian consumers and indepth interviews with marketing and media professionals. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that Coca-Cola's #TakeATaste television commercials predominantly employed emotional appeals such as happiness/joy nostalgia and friendship/connection. It further found that consumers generally responded positively to emotional appeals, particularly when the messages reflected culturally familiar experiences. Emotional advertising enhanced brand perception, emotional connection, and social engagement, with many respondents indicating willingness to discuss the adverts and interact with brand content. However, 26.7% of respondents reported difficulty relating to some emotional portrayals, while 25.6% identified cultural differences as affecting interpretation. Additionally, 26.7% agreed that excessive emotional focus sometimes reduced message clarity. Although emotional appeals strengthened consumer engagement and brand positioning, their direct influence on purchase decisions and loyalty was moderate. The study concludes that emotional appeals remain an effective strategy for the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages in Nigeria. The study recommends that both brands continue using emotional appeals while ensuring television commercials reflect relatable Nigerian experiences and maintain message clarity.

Keywords: Emotional Appeals, Television Commercials, Brand Positioning, Advertising Strategy, Consumer Behaviour.

Introduction

The beverage industry is undoubtedly one of the most competitive consumer products market due to the nature of the products, as a consumer's need for beverages is a regular occurrence.

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Among various beverages, carbonated drinks have continued to gain more prominence and are the most widely consumed globally as companies such as the Coca-Cola distribution chain record high profits and continuous growth despite varying revenue performance trends in recent reports (PT Graha Prima Mentari Tbk, 2024). Data from industries related to hospitality, food, and other FMCG products also reveal that consumers demand and consumption of beverages have remained stable and even on a continuous upswing (BPS, 2024).

Promotional strategy is quite instrumental in informing consumers about product attributes, as well as differentiating the products and their brands from that of competitors. This, in turn, has a tendency to influence consumers to purchase a given product (Rahmi et al., 2019). Advertising has moved beyond a function that creates awareness in a highly competitive environment such as beverages, it helps in determining the perception that consumers have about a brand and also determining where to place a particular brand in the consumers mind. This is what is referred to as positioning and this help firm create a unique identity and attach some emotional connection to its brands so that its brands would differ from their competitors.

In terms of identifying the appropriate promotion tools, tv advertisement remains one of the efficient ones as they have combined visual, sounds, music, storyline, and emotions to persuade consumer perceptions and attitudes (Bruce et al., 2020). 78.2 percent of all advertising expense in Indonesia went on tv in 2021 (DIGIADS, 2021). Today, both Coca Cola and Pepsi have leveraged this emotional connection in their TV commercials by using emotional advertising strategy in their tv advertisements like the #TakeATaste campaign of Coca-Cola and the Fizz to Life campaign of Pepsi. Coca-Cola used #TakeATaste campaign in order to positioning itself as happiness, togetherness, joyfulness and good shared moments and the Pepsi used Fizz to Life campaign in order to position itself around young energetic, lively and fun life styles. Thus, this study analyses emotional appeals used in #TakeATaste and Fizz to Life tv advertisement and positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi brands.

Problem Statement

While advertising campaigns of Coca-Cola and Pepsi is very popular, a few problems make advertising targeting emotions in Nigeria not as efficient as expected. First, the great ethnic and cultural diversity that exists in Nigeria creates difficulties for advertising that relies on emotions. This diversity covers language, value system, belief system, social experiences, and even humor styles. Thus, an emotion message that would perfectly match consumers of a given region would probably not be suitable for consumers of another region and it is challenging for any marketer to create a unique emotional appeal for all consumers of the country (Adegoke, 2019). Therefore, in the quest to connect and position its brand stronger on the market using emotional appeal, marketers would have to confront these cultural disparities. In addition, huge funds are often poured into advertising by the companies, yet the

extent to which audiences perceive and interpret emotional advertisements and the effect on the perception and brand positioning of the advertisements is not often deeply assessed. Moreover, concerns about public health on sugary drinks, the price increases in beverage products, proliferation of counterfeit products, and intense rivalry of audience attention can also negatively impact the effectiveness of advertisements that are using emotions. Thus, these factors might diminish the emotional connection that consumers develop with beverage products especially with a brand when its commercials are entertainment and memorable (Smith, 2018).

A significant number of existing research is cross-sectional and conducted in countries different from Nigeria, as example is a study conducted by Eka Yuliati¹ (2023), Despite this, these researches offer very significant information about emotional advertising but none of this study analyses how emotions are interpreted and perceived in Nigerian context by the viewers and how this influence brand perception as well as impact on brand positioning. In other words, less research is focused on the contribution of emotional advertisements in beverage brand positioning in Nigeria, hence, this study would aim at evaluating the impact of emotional appeals used in television advertisements *TakeATaste* by Coca-Cola and *Fizz to Life* by Pepsi on the positioning of beverage brands Coca-Cola and Pepsi respectively.

Objectives of the Study

This study is guided by the following objectives

1. Identify the types of emotional appeals used in Coca-Cola's *TakeATaste* and Pepsi's *Fizz to Life* television commercials.
2. Examine how consumers interpret the emotional appeals embedded in Coca-Cola and Pepsi television commercials.
3. Determine the influence of emotional appeals in *TakeATaste* and *Fizz to Life* on the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages.
4. Investigate the challenges affecting the effectiveness of emotional appeals used in Coca-Cola and Pepsi television commercials in influencing brand positioning.

Review of Literature

Concept of Emotional Appeal

This refers to an important strategy used by advertisers for persuasive communication is emotional appeal which seeks to provoke emotional reactions from a targeted audience which can consequently influence their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors concerning a particular object or issue. When advertisers focus on the emotional appeal aspect of advertising, they can manipulate stimuli such as visuals and pictures, music, language, storytelling, and to evoke a range of feelings in their audience such as happiness, nostalgia, excitement, and even love, as well as fear or pride, thereby establishing a psychological bond between the consumer and the advertising brand (Kusuma & Purnomo, 2020).

Again, Hidayattuloh and Sumargono (2021), explain that one of the functions of an emotional appeal is to stimulate feelings that go beyond the purely rational and facilitate the making of a decision. This is based on the argument that human behaviour is not entirely rational and that emotions play an essential role in the construction of a person's preferences, attitude, and choices. Consequently, advertisements tend to focus on feelings and emotions, as a means to

circumvent the cognitive defences. Emotional advertising is, to a large extent, based on the psychology and the culture of the target audience and is, therefore, able to connect to people on a personal level.

An emotional appeal will elicit a reaction of various sentiments which may be positive or negative. Even sentiments which are positive and of a higher order such as joy, warmth, and affection are tied to personal triumphs, celebratory events, and aspirational relationships with family and friends. On the other hand, sentiments such as fear, guilt, and sadness are negative and are triggered in situations which require a person to be cautious and urgent, such as in public health communications. Regardless, positive emotional appeals are dominant in advertising, which is because they are believed to create affinity, aid in recall, and increase commitment over time (Utama, 2020).

Concept of Brand Positioning

Brand positioning refers to the strategic process of creating a distinct and favourable image of a brand in the minds of consumers relative to competing brands. It involves designing and communicating a unique identity that differentiates a product based on its values, benefits, personality, and emotional meaning (Nurdiyanto & Malik 2019). In essence, brand positioning explains how consumers perceive a brand and why they prefer one brand over another in a competitive market.

According to Schnurr et al., (2017), brand positioning goes beyond physical product features and focuses on the mental and emotional space a brand occupies in the consumer's mind. A strong brand position enables consumers to easily recognize, recall, and develop preference for a brand, especially in markets where products are similar in function, such as the beverage industry. Aaker (2016) explains that effective brand positioning is a key driver of brand equity because it shapes how consumers perceive quality, trust, and emotional value. When a brand has a clear and consistent position, it becomes easier for consumers to form strong associations and long-term loyalty. Similarly, Ries and Trout (2011) argue that positioning is not what companies do to the product, but what they do to the mind of the consumer. This means that brand positioning is primarily about perception management rather than product modification. Therefore, successful brands focus on creating strong mental associations through consistent communication and emotional messaging. (Belch & Belch, 2018).

Review of Empirical Studies

Eka et al., (2024) examined emotional branding in the visualization of Coca-Cola Zero television advertisements and its influence on consumers' purchase interest in Indonesia. The study was anchored on Marc Gobé's Emotional Branding Theory and adopted a qualitative descriptive research design. Using content analysis, the researchers analysed the visual and emotional elements embedded in Coca-Cola Zero television commercials to understand how the advertisements created emotional connections with consumers. The findings revealed that the advertising visualization sought to build emotional branding through strategies such as establishing relationships with consumers, creating multisensory experiences, reinforcing brand vision, and stimulating imagination as a means of self-expression and self-actualisation among consumers. The study further found that delivering memorable messages that differentiated the product from competitors contributed to the creation of consumer needs and increased purchase intention. The study concluded that emotional branding plays an important role in enhancing consumer interest and influencing buying behaviour toward

Coca-Cola Zero products. The study recommended that companies should continue to develop emotionally engaging advertising messages capable of creating strong relationships with consumers and differentiating their brands in competitive markets. Although the qualitative approach provided rich insights into emotional branding strategies, the study focused primarily on purchase intention rather than the role of emotional appeals in brand positioning. Furthermore, the study examined Coca-Cola Zero advertisements alone without comparing emotional appeals across competing beverage brands. In addition, the study was conducted in Indonesia, making it difficult to generalise the findings to Nigerian consumers and the advertising environment in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. These conceptual, empirical, and geographical gaps justify the need for the present study, which evaluates emotional appeals in *#TakeATaste* and *Fizz to Life* television commercials in the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages. Herter et al. (2021) conducted a study to examine the role of specific emotions particularly sadness and embarrassment in influencing individuals' intentions toward healthy behaviours, including diet, smoking cessation, and physical exercise. The objective of the study was to determine how these emotions could shape behavioural intentions and whether cognitive factors, such as the level of mental construal, would moderate these effects. The study was grounded in the theoretical framework of Construal Level Theory (CLT) and Emotion Theory. Methodologically, the study employed a quantitative experimental design. Participants were exposed to scenarios designed to elicit specific emotions, such as sadness or embarrassment, related to health behaviours. The findings revealed several key insights. First, sadness was found to enhance positive behavioural intentions across the health-related behaviours studied. The study concluded that emotional appeals in health-related messaging can be strategically used to encourage positive behavioural change. The study recommended that public health campaigns, marketers, and behavioural change programs incorporate emotional triggers.

Herter et al. (2021) investigated the role of specific emotions, particularly sadness and embarrassment, in influencing individuals' intentions toward healthy behaviours such as healthy dieting, smoking cessation, and physical exercise. The study aimed to determine how emotional responses shape behavioural intentions and whether cognitive factors, such as the level of mental construal, moderate these effects. The research was anchored on the Construal Level Theory (CLT) and Emotion Theory. Methodologically, the study adopted a quantitative experimental research design in which participants were exposed to scenarios specifically developed to elicit emotions such as sadness and embarrassment in relation to health-related behaviours. The findings revealed that sadness significantly enhanced positive behavioural intentions across the health behaviours examined, suggesting that emotional appeals can effectively influence decision-making and behavioural outcomes. The study concluded that emotional appeals in communication messages can serve as strategic tools for encouraging positive behavioural change. Consequently, the researchers recommended that public health campaigns, marketers, and behavioural change programmes should incorporate emotional triggers into their communication strategies to improve audience response and behavioural outcomes. Although the experimental design provided strong evidence of the causal effects of emotions on behavioural intentions, the study focused on health communication rather than advertising and brand positioning. Furthermore, the research examined the influence of emotions on health-related behaviours rather than consumers' perceptions of brands and advertising messages. In addition, the study did not investigate the use of emotional appeals in television commercials or compare emotional strategies across competing brands. These conceptual and contextual gaps justify the present study, which examines the emotional

appeals employed in *#TakeATaste* and *Fizz to Life* television commercials and their influence on the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages.

Otamendi and Martin (2020) examined how advertisements elicit unconscious emotional responses and how these responses influence consumer engagement and liking of advertisements. The study aimed to measure the extent to which basic emotions such as joy, attention, and valence are expressed in response to advertising messages and to determine the influence of demographic factors, particularly age and gender, on these emotional reactions. The research was anchored on Emotion Theory and Neuromarketing frameworks, which propose that unconscious emotional responses can predict consumer engagement and preferences. Methodologically, the study employed a quantitative experimental approach using psychophysiological indicators to measure levels of attention, valence, and engagement among participants exposed to different advertisements. The findings revealed that senior women exhibited significantly higher levels of positive emotions and engagement compared to other demographic groups, suggesting that emotional responses to advertisements vary according to age and gender characteristics. The study concluded that advertisements can be designed and tailored to maximise emotional impact among specific demographic segments. Consequently, the researchers recommended that marketers should consider demographic sensitivities and audience characteristics when developing emotionally engaging advertising campaigns. Although the study provided valuable insights into unconscious emotional reactions to advertising, it focused primarily on consumer engagement and advertisement liking rather than the role of emotional appeals in brand positioning. Furthermore, the use of psychophysiological measures emphasised emotional responses without examining how such emotions contribute to the development of brand image and consumer perceptions of competing brands. In addition, the study did not specifically investigate television commercials within the beverage industry or compare emotional advertising strategies between competing brands such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi. These conceptual, industrial, and contextual gaps provide justification for the present study, which evaluates emotional appeals in *#TakeATaste* and *Fizz to Life* television commercials in the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Emotional Appeal Theory. The theory explains the advertising practice in which emotions such as happiness, joy, excitement, nostalgia, pride, humor, fear and belonging are utilised to elicit a desired response from consumer with regards to a product and brand. The emotional appeal theory postulates that a consumer's decision to purchase or develop a preference towards a brand is not based purely on rational factors such as cost, quality or attributes, but also on emotions. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), emotional advertising facilitates in establishing strong and durable connections between brands and consumers thereby reinforcing memory, loyalty, trust and repeat purchasing behaviors of consumers towards their favorite brands.

The theory is therefore applicable to the present as many television commercials commonly rely on emotional messages to build and sustain certain impressions in the minds of consumers, particularly those aimed at positioning products and brands in the market. In advertising campaigns for the beverage industry such as Coca-Cola's *#TakeATaste* and Pepsi's *Fizz to Life*, the two companies deploy elements of emotion that are inclusive of joy, excitement, humor, friendship, youthful association, and musical elements to build favorable

perceptions and strengthen brand positions (Hidayattuloh & Sumargon 2021). Consumers who develop favorable emotional connection to these ad messages, tend to recall the associated brands better, consider them favorably, and distinguish them from competing products. However, some scholars have posited some limitations to Emotional Appeal Theory. For instance, the theory appears to over emphasize the role of emotion as a factor influencing consumer behaviors and brands positioning and neglects other relevant factors such as product quality and cost, price, product availability, cultural background of consumers and prevailing economic condition of the economy (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Specifically in developing countries such as Nigeria, consumers might express positive attitude towards the emotional ad messages but may not be able to patronize the products due to factors such as affordability, price and varying consumer priorities. Besides, Emotional Appeal Theory assumes that consumer's emotional responses tend to be consistent and similar to each other whereas consumers might exhibit differences in emotional response based on age, gender, culture, and personal experience. Notwithstanding, the Emotional Appeal Theory remains highly relevant to this research as it offers a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how the emotional appeal in Coca-Cola's #TakeATaste and Pepsi's Fizz to Life TV commercials contributes to the brand positioning of the beverage companies.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of emotional appeals in Coca-Cola's #TakeATaste and Pepsi's Fizz to Life television commercials in brand positioning. The study population comprised residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, aged 18–45 years, who are regular viewers of television and social media advertisements. Based on the National Bureau of Statistics estimate of 4,292,712 residents in the FCT, the sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula at a 5% margin of error, yielding a sample of 400 respondents. A multistage sampling technique was employed. First, Abuja was purposively selected due to its urban character, diverse population, and high media exposure. Second, stratified sampling was used to divide the population according to the six area councils of the FCT (AMAC, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Kwali, and Abaji). Third, respondents within each stratum were selected through simple random sampling. Finally, purposive sampling was used to select six key informants for the qualitative interviews, including marketing professionals, advertising experts, media practitioners, and brand consultants. Data were collected using two instruments: a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured IDI guide. The questionnaire consisted of demographic items and questions addressing advertisement awareness, emotional reactions, and the influence of emotional appeals on purchasing decisions. The IDI guide explored expert perspectives on advertising strategies, emotional resonance, cultural relevance, and campaign effectiveness. Questionnaire were administered in person with the assistance of trained research assistants, while interviews lasting approximately 30–40 minutes were conducted with selected experts and audio-recorded with participants' consent for transcription and analysis. Secondary data were obtained from scholarly journals, textbooks, industry reports, newspapers, company publications, and credible online sources to complement the primary data. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, particularly frequencies and percentages, to identify patterns in consumer awareness, emotional responses, and purchasing behaviour.

Data Presentation

This section presents and analyses the data collected from respondents. A total of 400 questionnaires were administered to residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, selected in accordance with the study's sampling procedure. Of these, 386 questionnaires were properly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 96.5%, while 14 questionnaires (3.5%) were either not returned or were excluded due to incomplete responses.

Table 1: Showing Emotional Appeal Noticed in Coca-Cola #TakeATaste Adverts

Emotional Appeal	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Happiness/Joy	99	26.4
Nostalgia	98	26.1
Friendship/Connection	96	25.6
Excitement/Energy	82	21.9
Total	375	100

Field Survey, 2026

The findings indicate that Coca-Cola's #TakeATaste campaign predominantly employs positive emotions such as happiness, nostalgia, and friendship to strengthen emotional connections with consumers. This suggests that the brand positions itself as a symbol of joy, togetherness, and memorable experiences, thereby enhancing consumer attachment and brand recall.

Table 2: Showing Emotional Appeal Noticed Most in Pepsi Fizz to Life Adverts

Emotional Appeal	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fun/Playfulness	102	27.2
Adventure/Excitement	96	25.6
Togetherness/Friendship	92	24.5
Surprise/Novelty	85	22.7
Total	375	100

Field Survey, 2026

The findings suggest that Pepsi's Fizz to Life campaign primarily employs fun and playfulness to create an energetic and youthful brand image. This indicates an effort to position Pepsi as a vibrant and exciting brand that resonates with consumers seeking entertainment, excitement, and contemporary lifestyles.

Table 3: Showing Likelihood of Choosing Coca-Cola or Pepsi after Viewing Adverts

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very likely	102	27.2
Likely	83	22.1
Unlikely	91	24.3
Very unlikely	99	26.4
Total	375	100

Field Survey, 2026

The findings suggest that while emotional advertising contributes to consumers' preference for Coca-Cola and Pepsi, its influence on purchase decisions is not uniform across consumers. This indicates that emotional appeals can strengthen brand attraction and positioning but may not necessarily translate into actual buying behaviour.

Table 4: Showing Likelihood of Talking About the Adverts with Friends/Family

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very likely	97	25.9
Likely	103	27.5
Unlikely	83	22.1
Very unlikely	92	24.5
Total	375	100

Field Survey, 2025

The findings suggest that emotional appeals in Coca-Cola and Pepsi advertisements encourage interpersonal discussions among consumers, indicating their effectiveness in generating word-of-mouth communication and enhancing brand visibility and recall.

Table 5: Challenges Relating to Emotional Appeals in Coca-Cola and Pepsi Adverts

Response	Frequency	Percentage
The emotions feel unrealistic or exaggerated	100	26.7
The situations shown do not reflect my real-life experiences	93	24.8
The emotions are understandable but not personally meaningful	88	23.5
I do not experience any difficulty relating to the emotions	94	25.1
Total	375	100

Field Survey, 2026

The findings suggest that while emotional appeals in Coca-Cola and Pepsi advertisements resonate with some consumers, a considerable proportion of viewers perceive them as exaggerated, unrealistic, or disconnected from their everyday experiences. This indicates that the effectiveness of emotional advertising may depend largely on its authenticity and relevance to consumers' lived realities.

Insight from Qualitative Data

The interview findings, drawn from six respondents comprising marketing professionals, advertising experts, media practitioners, and brand consultants, indicate that emotional appeals play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and strengthening the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages.

Theme 1: Emotional Appeals Employed in #TakeATaste and Fizz to Life Campaigns

From the interviews, it was observed that Coca-Cola and Pepsi utilise different emotional strategies to establish distinctive brand identities and connect with consumers. Respondents noted that Coca-Cola's #TakeATaste campaign predominantly employs emotions such as happiness, togetherness, nostalgia, and friendship, while Pepsi's Fizz to Life campaign relies more on fun, excitement, youthful energy, music, and entertainment.

A participant (P1) stated:

"Coca-Cola consistently focuses on happiness, shared moments, and human connection. The brand tries to position itself as part of everyday joyful experiences."

Similarly, another participant (P2) explained:

"Pepsi tends to use excitement, fun, music, and youthful energy. Their adverts are designed to make consumers feel active, modern, and entertained."

The findings suggest that both brands deliberately employ emotional appeals to differentiate themselves and create unique positions in consumers' minds. This finding directly addresses the first research objective concerning the emotional appeals used in Coca-Cola's *#TakeATaste* and Pepsi's *Fizz to Life* television commercials.

Theme 2: Consumers' Responses to Emotional Advertising

Interview participants observed that Nigerian consumers generally respond positively to emotional storytelling, particularly when the emotions portrayed reflect local culture, shared experiences, and social realities. Respondents explained that consumers are more likely to connect with advertisements that mirror situations familiar to their everyday lives.

Participant 3 (P3) noted:

"When the emotions feel authentic and culturally familiar, Nigerians easily connect with the message and remember the brand." Another respondent (P4) stated: "People enjoy adverts that make them laugh, feel nostalgic, or remind them of moments spent with friends and family."

These responses indicate that emotional appeals can increase consumer engagement, improve message recall, and strengthen emotional attachment to brands when they are perceived as authentic and relatable. The findings therefore support the study objective relating to consumers' emotional responses to the selected television commercials.

Theme 3: Emotional Appeals and Brand Positioning

Interview participants unanimously agreed that emotional advertising contributes significantly to brand positioning by influencing how consumers perceive and differentiate brands. Respondents explained that emotional messages allow consumers to associate brands with particular lifestyles, values, and experiences rather than merely viewing them as products.

Participant 5 (P5) explained:

"Emotional advertising makes consumers see Coca-Cola and Pepsi as lifestyle brands rather than just soft drinks." Similarly, another participant (P6) stated: "When consumers develop

emotional connections with adverts, they tend to trust the brand more, remember it better, and talk about it with other people."

The findings suggest that emotional appeals contribute to favourable brand perceptions, stronger consumer attachment, and improved brand recall, all of which are essential components of effective brand positioning. This finding directly addresses the study objective concerning the influence of emotional appeals on the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages.

Theme 4: Challenges Associated with Emotional Advertising

However, interview responses also revealed several challenges associated with the use of emotional appeals in television advertising within the Nigerian context. The major concerns identified by participants include lack of realism, limited cultural relevance, and excessive focus on emotions at the expense of product information.

Participant 2 (P2) stated:

"Some adverts look attractive but do not reflect everyday Nigerian realities, making it difficult for many viewers to relate to them." Another respondent, Participant 4 (P4), explained: "Nigeria is culturally diverse, so an emotional message that works in one region may not necessarily resonate with audiences in another region."

Participants also expressed concern that some campaigns focus so heavily on emotional storytelling that consumers sometimes remember the emotions but forget the actual product being promoted. These findings suggest that although emotional appeals can strengthen consumer engagement and brand positioning, their effectiveness depends largely on authenticity, cultural relevance, and a balance between emotional storytelling and product communication. The findings directly address the research objective concerning the challenges associated with the use of emotional appeals in television commercials for brand positioning.

Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study and relates them to the research objectives and existing literature on emotional appeals, advertising, and brand positioning in the beverage industry. The discussion focuses on four major areas: the emotional appeals employed in Coca-Cola's *#TakeATaste* and Pepsi's *Fizz to Life* campaigns; consumers' interpretations of these emotional appeals; the influence of emotional appeals on brand positioning; and the challenges affecting the effectiveness of emotional advertising.

The first objective was to identify the types of emotional appeals used in Coca-Cola's *#TakeATaste* and Pepsi's *Fizz to Life* television commercials. The study found that both brands rely heavily on emotional advertising, although they differ in the emotional themes they emphasise. Coca-Cola primarily uses happiness, nostalgia, friendship, and emotional warmth, while Pepsi focuses more on fun, excitement, adventure, and youthful energy. The findings suggest that both brands use positive emotions to create memorable experiences and favourable brand associations. Coca-Cola's emotional strategy appears to position the brand as part of joyful moments, relationships, and shared experiences, whereas Pepsi seeks to

position itself as energetic, youthful, and exciting. These findings support the arguments of Kotler and Keller (2016) who observed that emotionally appealing advertisements are more memorable and effective in creating strong consumer connections. The findings also agree with Pham et al. (2013), who argued that successful brands differentiate themselves through unique emotional identities rather than relying solely on product characteristics.

The second objective was to examine how consumers interpret the emotional appeals embedded in Coca-Cola and Pepsi television commercials. The study found that consumers generally respond positively to emotional advertising when the messages are authentic, relatable, and culturally familiar. Many respondents indicated that they experienced the intended emotions communicated in the advertisements and were able to connect with the stories and situations presented. However, some respondents felt that certain emotional portrayals were exaggerated or disconnected from their daily experiences. These findings suggest that consumers actively interpret advertising messages through their personal experiences and cultural backgrounds rather than passively accepting them. This finding aligns with Hofstede's cultural theory, which argues that cultural values significantly influence how audiences interpret communication messages. Similarly, Holbrook and Batra maintained that emotional advertising is most effective when audiences perceive the emotions as personally meaningful and relevant to their lives.

The third objective was to determine how emotional appeals influence the brand positioning of Coca-Cola and Pepsi beverages. The study found that emotional appeals contribute significantly to positive brand perceptions, emotional attachment, and brand recall. Respondents generally reported feeling connected to the brands after exposure to the advertisements and expressed willingness to engage with brand-related discussions and content. The findings suggest that emotional advertising enables consumers to view Coca-Cola and Pepsi as lifestyle brands associated with happiness, celebration, excitement, and social interaction rather than merely as soft drink products. This finding supports the work of Micu and Plummer (2010), who argued that emotional advertising strengthens brand equity through positive emotional associations.

The fourth objective was to identify the challenges affecting the effectiveness of emotional appeals in Coca-Cola and Pepsi television commercials. The study found that unrealistic portrayals, limited cultural relevance, and excessive emotional storytelling reduce the effectiveness of emotional advertising among some consumers. Many respondents perceived some emotional situations as exaggerated or difficult to relate to, while others believed that cultural differences affected their interpretation of the advertising messages. These findings support Hofstede's (2011) argument that advertising effectiveness varies across cultural contexts and that emotional symbol may not be interpreted uniformly by diverse audiences. The study also found that excessive focus on emotions sometimes reduces message clarity and distracts consumers from important product information. This finding agrees with De Pelsmacker et al. (2017), who argued that emotional appeals should be balanced with functional product information to avoid weakening message effectiveness. Similarly, Batra and Ray (1986) observed that emotional appeals lacking cultural relevance or contextual appropriateness may fail to achieve the intended persuasive outcomes.

Several practical implications emerge from these findings. Coca-Cola and Pepsi should continue to utilise emotional appeals in their advertising campaigns because of their ability to strengthen brand positioning and create emotional connections with consumers. However,

advertisers should ensure that emotional messages are authentic, culturally relevant, and reflective of consumers' everyday experiences. The findings also suggest the need to balance emotional storytelling with clear product communication in order to maximise both emotional engagement and message effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study examined the emotional appeals employed in Coca-Cola's *#TakeATaste* and Pepsi's *Fizz to Life* television commercials and their influence on the brand positioning of the two beverage brands in Nigeria. The findings revealed that both brands utilise a variety of emotional appeals, including happiness, nostalgia, friendship, excitement, fun, and youthful energy, to create emotional connections with consumers and differentiate themselves within the competitive beverage market. The findings further revealed that emotional appeals generally contribute positively to consumers' perceptions of the brands by enhancing emotional attachment, improving brand recall, and encouraging consumer engagement and interpersonal discussions about the advertisements. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings showed that emotional advertising enables consumers to perceive Coca-Cola and Pepsi as lifestyle brands rather than merely as beverage products. However, the findings also indicated that emotional appeals alone do not necessarily translate into purchase decisions or long-term brand loyalty, as factors such as price, product availability, taste preferences, and competing alternatives continue to influence consumer behaviour. The study therefore concludes that emotional appeals have become an important strategic tool for brand positioning in the Nigerian beverage industry. However, their effectiveness depends largely on the extent to which the emotional messages are authentic, culturally relevant, and capable of creating meaningful connections with consumers. Consequently, Coca-Cola and Pepsi need to continue developing emotionally engaging campaigns that reflect Nigerian realities while maintaining clear and effective product messaging in order to strengthen consumer relationships, enhance brand positioning, and support long-term consumer loyalty.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings and conclusion the following four recommendations are being proffered.

1. Coca-Cola and Pepsi should continue using emotional appeals in their campaigns, as they are effective in capturing attention and building brand engagement.
2. Coca-Cola and Pepsi should diversify emotional appeals to include both positive relational emotions (like friendship and togetherness) and energetic emotions (like fun and excitement), depending on the target audience.
3. While emotional appeals strengthen brand perception and engagement, they should be balanced with clear product information to directly influence buying decisions.
4. Coca-Cola and Pepsi should avoid overemphasis on emotion to the extent that the product message is unclear. Emotional storytelling should complement, not overshadow, product information.

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