

Function Mechanism of Emotional Appeal in Marketing Communication on Brand Loyalty

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Abstract: This paper explains the function mechanism of emotional appeal in marketing communication and its relevance to brand loyalty. Emotional appeal is, therefore, a concept under the reach for marketing communications that seeks to appeal to consumers' emotions to encourage a tight bond between consumers and brands. The emotional appeal retailing strategy demonstrated in the study discusses the effects brought about by the appeal, its impact on the consumers, and how they can lead to brand loyalty. By reviewing the current paper's extant theories and empirical evidence, this paper has explained the complex association between emotional appeal and brand loyalty, which offers insight for marketers intending to establish long-term consumer relationships.

Keywords: Emotional appeal, marketing communication, brand loyalty, consumer behavior, brand attachment.

1. Introduction

The competition in the market is growing daily, which is why it looks to set and sustain unique links with the buyer. Logical and traditional media advertising practices have mainly been informative, pointing at the use-value of the product. However, recent studies indicate that the use of emotions in advertisements significantly influences brand perception of brand and customer loyalty. Emotional appeal has been postulated to mean one way of appealing to a consumer's feelings and thus encouraging them to buy things (Zhang et al., 2014) [1]. This paper also aims to reveal which emotional appeal operates in marketing communication and influences brand loyalty.

2. Literature Review

Emotional appeal as a marketing communication strategy and its effects on brand loyalty have been described in detail in extant literature. This section is a literature study encompassing theoretical concepts, prior research, and modern discoveries concerning establishing the link between

emotional marketing techniques and consumer engagement concerning brand loyalty as an outcome.

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks

The following theoretical frameworks form the basis for crafting and understanding emotional appeals in marketing. One prominent theory is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which posits that individuals process persuasive messages through two routes: the elaboration likelihood model, which includes the central processing route, and the peripheral processing route that was developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) [2]. It is considered that emotional appeals may use the peripheral route of communication since feelings and existing heuristics may affect consumer decisions rather than thorough evaluations. This model assists in understanding why, in some cases, appeal to emotions works better than appeal to reason, especially in cases where the main goal is to provide information that can change consumer perception and, in the long-term, leave an impression that will want the consumer to stay loyal to the particular brand (Hsu et al., 2018). [3]

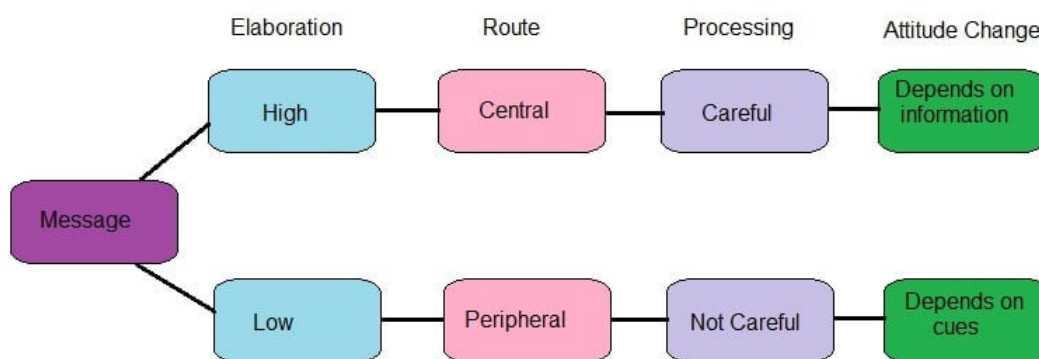


Figure 1. Elaboration Likelihood Model

Another framework that may be useful is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which focuses on intrinsic

motivation as a driving force behind consumers (Ryan & Deci, 2000) [4]. Appeals to the emotion that will be built on

consumers' fundamental properties, passion, belonging, and achievement increase their attachment to the brand. This intrinsic relationship not only works on the vertical level of brand choice processes but also helps create long-term consumers' habitual brand loyalty based on the identified affective (subjective) congruence between the consumer and the brand (Babić-Hodović et al., 2023) [5].

2.2. Real-Life Cases on Emotion-oriented Appeals

The persistence of empirical evidence supports the importance of emotional appeal in enhancing consummate loyalty among consumers. In a paper entitled: Hope, Glory, and the Battle for Dominance: A Study by Jiang et al., (2023) [6] analyzed the results of the survey conducted which indicates that emotional appeals positively influence brand trust and brand loyalty through the mediating the variable of brand identity. Their studies agree that brand consumers who have an emotional connection to a brand are likely to remain loyal because it fosters possession by the brand owner.

In addition, Zhang et al., (2014) [1] examined the influence of emotional appeal on a consumer's behavior concerning different types of products. The study revealed that emotional advertising not only enhances brand salience and the overall evaluation of the brand but also bears a direct relationship with brand commitment. On this basis, it becomes evident that marketing strategies should incorporate emotional aspects in order to create and maintain long-term consumer loyalty.

Furthermore, Poushneh and Vasquez-Parraga (2019) [7] explored the link between emotional marketing and customer loyalty aimed at Starbucks. The authors focused on the fact that marketing communications promote emotional relationships, and they concluded that if the brand can trigger emotions, it can create a more loyal consumer base.

2.3. Emotional Appeals and Brand Loyalty Mechanisms

The ways by which emotional appeals contribute to subsequent brand loyalty are numerous and far-reaching. One major route is the personal attachment formation process. Alnawas and Altarifi (2016) [8] pointed out that when consumers develop an emotional bond with a brand, they will repurchase frequently since they have a bond feeling with it. This emotional bond can be built by storytelling, business messages relevant to people's lives, and referring to the values and memories of consumers.

Furthermore, brand love as one that captures people's emotional attachment to a brand has also been postulated as a critical determinant of brand loyalty. Merging with the link between emotional connection and brand loyalty, Babić-Hodović et al. (2023) [5] propose that consumers who feel emotionally connected to the brands will be loyal and advocacy-driven.

Furthermore, the role of emotional marketing is now considered in more detail in the context of digital media. Similarly, Li and Zhang (2023) [10] observed that social media-related emotional experiences effectively strengthen brand equity and loyalty. A born-digital consumer participates in brand conversations online, and emotional content changes

the role from a weapon to how brands converse with their audience and build loyalty.

2.4. The Current Research and Future Research Suggestions

Current research suggests that marketers increasingly realize that brands should develop effective emotional messages due to shifting customer orientations and technological developments. This paper posits that the growing adoption of digital media evokes new ways for brands to elicit emotional appeal with consumers and emphasizes the need for marketers to align their approaches to this changing reality.

Hsu et al. (2018) [11] state that brands should employ social media to elicit effective responses because today's consumers demand sincerity. Therefore, the increasing and changing nature of emotional marketing requires constant research to discover new emotions and their impact on different cultures.

Shifting focus towards theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence will help marketers comprehend how emotional connections impact consumers' decision-making and enhance brand loyalty. Therefore, emotional appeal is still indispensably significant in the formation of the new scope of marketing.

3. Methodology

The function mechanism of emotional appeal in marketing communication and its influence on brand loyalty is the subject of this study, which adopts a qualitative research approach. The research method comprises identifying cases, data collection, reviewing the existing literature and theories, and empirical studies. Such a research design means that all the factors underpinning the use of emotional appeals in consumer psychology and the subsequent creation of brand loyalty are covered.

3.1. Case Study Selection

Choosing the cases is an elemental part of this research because it determines the significance of the findings on the appeal to emotions in marketing communication and its influence on brand loyalty. Leveraging the above analysis of Coca-Cola, Apple, and Nike, three of the most successful global brands in implementing exciting and effective emotional marketing practices were selected for this study. These brands have high global awareness and have tested the methods of appealing to emotions to build deep customer relationships.

Emotional branding is the best-known form of affective marketing; we will focus on Coca-Cola here, where happiness, unity, and memory have long been the key visual metaphors. Such 'Share a Coke' examples show how the brand has achieved the correct association with consumers with an emotional appeal (Zhang et al., 2014). This campaign enticed customers to look for their names in the bottles to make them happy with the product, leading to brand loyalty. Emotional appeal in Coca-Cola's marketing creates an extended active target consumer base through positive brand recall associated with happiness in life (Babić-Hodović et al., 2023) [5].



Figure 3. Coca Cola Emotional Branding

The emotional brand of Apple, which has been highly developed, is known for innovation, creativity, and empowerment. The firm's adverts typically focus on its product's ability to change customer's lives and become part of an innovation family. Specifically, previous advertisements

like the 'Think Different' also find a psychological connection as consumers are seeking a brand that fits their self-identity and personal values. It has led to the acquisition and retention of a strong and customized client base that occasionally sticks to the brand despite competing choices.

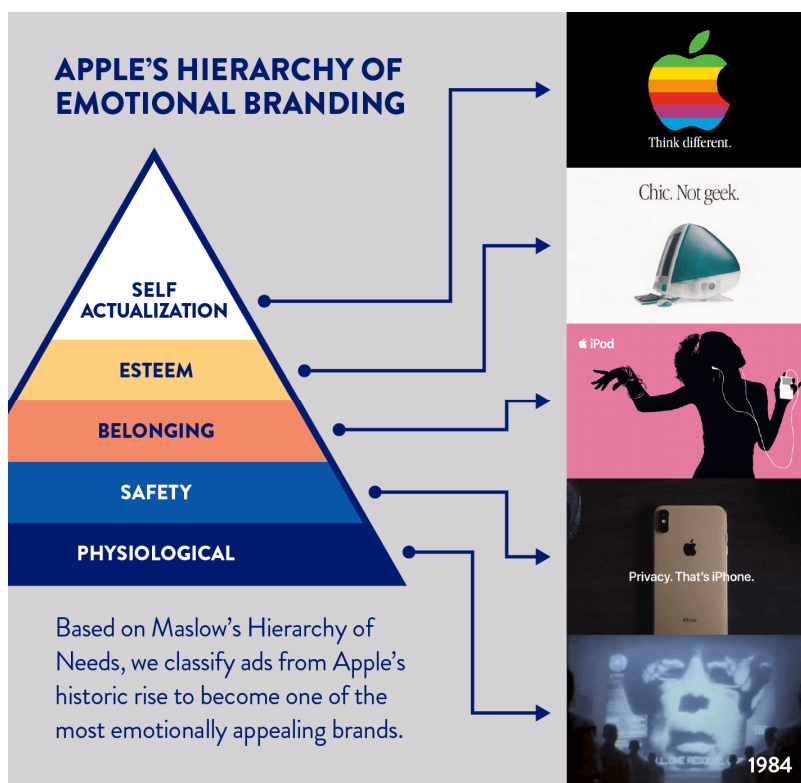


Figure 3. Emotional Branding- Apple

Nike is one of the good examples of how emotional appeal works in the marketing of sporting products, as it plays an inspirational aspect with powerful themes such as perseverance and achievement, as well as an effort to empower oneself. "Just Do It" is one of Nike's most famous slogans, inspiring, motivating, and giving everyone a sense of

determination to give their best. Nike's campaigns often incorporate a strong narrative that ties individual athlete's experiences to the systematized message of overcoming the odds. In this case, Nike increases brand commitments and builds a community of consumers who harmonize with Nike's 'just do it' message.



Figure 3. Emotional Branding- Nike

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection for this study was done through a review of the literature and other documents, such as marketing reports and published cases on the use of emotional appeals in marketing communication. The following methods were employed:

1. Literature Review: To gain an appreciation of the understanding of the appeal to emotions, consumer behaviors, and brand loyalty, this time, a scan of the academic literature was done in a bid to search for the relevant articles, journals, and books that will present these concepts. This review also aimed to give theoretical support to the understanding of the connection between emotional marketing and brand loyalty.

2. Case Study Analysis: An in-depth analysis of specific marketing campaigns was conducted for each selected brand. This analysis included:

Campaign Objectives: Understanding the goals of each campaign, such as increasing brand awareness, driving sales, or fostering emotional connections.

Emotional Triggers: Identifying the specific emotions targeted in each campaign and the strategies used to evoke these emotions (e.g., storytelling, visuals, music).

Consumer Responses: Examining consumer reactions to the campaigns through surveys, social media interactions, and sales data to assess the effectiveness of emotional appeals in fostering loyalty.

3. Qualitative Data Analysis: The collected data was analyzed qualitatively to identify patterns and themes related to emotional appeal and brand loyalty. This analysis included:

Thematic Analysis: Key themes emerging from the data were categorized and analyzed. This approach helped identify common emotional triggers used across different campaigns and their corresponding impact on consumer behavior.

Comparative Analysis: A comparative analysis of the selected case studies was conducted to highlight differences and similarities in emotional marketing strategies and their effects on brand loyalty. This analysis provided insights into the effectiveness of various emotional appeals across different industries.

3.3. Limitations of the Methodology

While this methodology provides valuable insights into the function mechanism of emotional appeal in marketing communication, there are limitations to consider:

1. Subjectivity of Emotional Responses: People experience emotions differently; therefore, it is not easy to express how emotional appeals affect them precisely. The method of investigation utilized in this study is qualitative, which means that it does not encompass all the variations of consumers' responses to stimuli.

2. Contextual Factors: Emotionally appealing messages may depend on several factors, including culture, the economy, and current trends. In this research, there is a major focus on well-established brands, in which the competition of the new brands may need to be fully captured.

3. Evolving Nature of Marketing: The marketing landscape continually evolves, particularly with the rise of digital and social media. As such, the findings may only partially capture the latest trends and consumer behaviors influenced by emerging technologies.

4. Discussion and Findings

In this paper, two aspects have been revealed as essential for the function mechanism of emotional appeal in marketing communication: its impact on brand loyalty and the application of the insights from the analysis of Coca-Cola, Apple, and Nike cases. The following section of this paper deliberates on the implications of these studies, analyses the process by which EA elicits consumer response, and reflects on these findings' impact on marketers in pursuit of increased brand loyalty.

4.1. Emotional Appeals as Drivers of Brand Loyalty

Emotional appeals are significant in branding as they contribute to developing attachment between the consumer and the brands. As the examples illustrated in the case studies show, brands that post effective emotional marketing messages are likely to make prospects feel happy, throw down memory lane, or aspire to be or possess something. For instance, Coca-Cola has adopted happiness signs and togetherness as more of a brand icon populace. Such feeling conveys the brand as meaningful, which is why it becomes linked to important stages in consumer's lives, thus leading to brand loyalty (Zhang et al., 2014) [1].

Furthermore, emotional appeals are consistent with consumers' self-actualization by their needs and ideals. Apple does this well in its marketing approach in identifying its apparatus as elements of creativity and invention. The target customer audience is attracted by the commercial tendencies towards the expressed personality and inclusion and by creating a basis for further loyalty and devotion to Apple. The people are willing to defend their brand regardless of contest from competitors if they believe it symbolizes them, making it their identity (Hsu et al., 2018) [3].

4.2. The Role of Brand Love and Emotional Attachment

Brand love and emotional attachment are important elements of studying the dependency between emotions and

how consumers identify with a brand. Babić-Hodović et al. (2023) [5] show that favorable emotional associations with brands result in higher levels of customer loyalty caused by consumer ownership and commitment. For instance, Nike's commercials cover the theme of triumphs and struggles with

consumer emotions tied to such a storyline. Besides the repurchase behavior, this bond also makes customers brand promoters by recommending it to their friends and acquaintances.



Figure 4. Emotional Appeal and Brand Attachment

In this context, brand affection moderates the relationship between brand image and brand loyalty. When consumers have an emotional attachment to a brand, they tend to have brand loyalty and will continue to purchase and recommend it to others. Love-resistant strategies that elicit positive responses, such as feelings of love, can build strong bonds beyond a mere transactional relationship with consumers.

4.3. Mechanisms of Emotional Marketing

1. Storytelling

One of the key emotional marketing strategies is the ability to tell a compelling story. Coca-Cola and Nike's examples promise that their audiences will be positioned in a way that appeals to them emotionally. These stories represent common purpose, occurrence, and goals in life; hence, the user and the brand get to share a bond created as well articulated by Jiang et al. (2023) [6]. The criteria that directly relate to storytelling abilities include increasing the memorability of the brand and customer loyalty because the consumer will never forget a brand that has touched his or her emotions.

2. Personalization

Emotional appeal is another key mechanism that is closely related to personalization. "Share a Coke" by Coca-Cola is a powerful example of how such personalization signifies an emotion because it makes the consumer search for names on the bottles. Besides, this kind of approach not only increases engagement but also creates a specific attachment to the brand and product services. Whenever consumers perceive that a brand is endorsing their unique needs and wants, the extent to which they are emotionally committed to the brand also increases, which leads to loyalty.

3. Community Engagement

Directing several people to embrace a brand because of the community being cultivated behind the brand is an excellent way of strengthening the appeal of the brand based on emotion. Nike's marketing, in particular, is based on providing a product that encompasses values of inclusiveness and the ability to empower individuals, thus collectively making a community out of consumers. Emotionally, people feel committed to the community as the consumer feels like

belonging to a large group. Such relations are vital in brand loyalty since consumers will continue patronizing brands that embrace them as productive community members (Hur et al., 2011) [11].

4.4. Implications for Marketers

The results of this study also suggest that marketers need to include emotional appeals in their marketing mix to boost brand loyalty. Terminating with the target consumer, marketers must effectively comprehend their desired consumers' feelings, values, and concerns to excavate qualitative and attractive stories. This is an excellent way through which brands can develop an emotional connection that will lead to brand loyalty through storytelling, personalization, and assistance in the community.

Furthermore, even the ongoing growth of the digital sphere adds the imperative of changing emotional marketing approaches according to new platforms and consumer activity. Social platforms are exceptional for the brand because they provide a unique way of communicating with the consumer and directly marketing without time constraints and limitations. Well-managed and sustained, the social web promises to deliver higher levels of loyalty and advocacy for brands that seek to leverage these platforms for emotional connection.

5. Conclusion

In summation, emotional appeal is one of the key marketing communication strategies that has a major impact on the formation of brand craving. Therefore, brands need to tap into the emotional aspect when creating messages that resonate with their target consumers, fostering interaction and building lasting relationships. Emotional appeal coupled with brand loyalty adds to the rationale of relationship marketing, consumers' psychology, and the application of suitable promotional techniques. As the marketplace becomes increasingly competitive, brands that invest in empathy as a component of consumer attachments will be better placed to create sustainable consumer relationships.

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