

**EMOTIONAL APPEAL AND CONSUMER RESPONSES TO BEAUTY CARE ADVERTISEMENT  
IN RIVERS STATE.**

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**Abstract**

This study examined the relationship between emotional appeal and consumer responses to beauty care advertisement in Rivers State. Two objectives, two research question and two hypotheses were tested; the study adopted correlational survey research design. The study adopted correlational survey research design. The population of this study comprised of the customers of the sixteen (16) registered beauty care outlets in Rivers State. A total of 400 customers were used on the basis of .25 customers per outlet. Reliability analysis was performed on the data using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and it stood at 0.98. The data collected for the study were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The multiple regression analysis was adopted; the findings revealed that both appeals had a significant effect on the consumer response. The results further suggested that humour appeal is more influential than fear appeal. This study concludes that emotional appeal significantly relates with consumer responses to beauty care advertisement in Rivers State. Based on the findings of the study, the recommends that beauty care managers should focus on emotional appeal to ensure that their companies address adequately consumer response and actions to enhance patronage.

**Keywords: *Emotional Appeal, Humour and Fear Appeal and Consumer Responses.***

**Introduction**

The beauty care industry in Rivers State, Nigeria, encompasses a wide range of products and services designed to enhance personal appearance, health, and well-being. Advertising plays a crucial role in this industry, serving as a primary means to communicate product benefits and influence consumer perceptions (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).

Emotional appeal is a strategic advertising approach that aims to evoke specific emotions in consumers to drive engagement and influence purchase decisions (Mowen & Minor, 2001). In the context of beauty care products, emotional appeals such as happiness, confidence, and attractiveness are often used to create a connection with consumers and convey aspirational lifestyle benefits (Lee & Thorson, 2008). According to the advertising literature, emotional appeals are usually highly effective on low involvement products whereas rational appeals are more effective on products with which consumers are highly involved (Baker & Lutz, 2000; Akbari et al., 2015). The findings from the previous articles showed that emotions played a significant role in generating intention in attracting viewers. Emotions play a large role in influencing the consumer's attitude towards advertisements that show up on social media platforms. This shows that the gravity of emotions present in an advertisement can be an effective utility that can result in a positive impact on engagements (Thompkins, 2019), highlight certain complex emotions such as humor (Thompkins, 2019), and is relied upon to cause high arousal (Thompkins, 2019).

Consumers in Rivers State exhibit diverse preferences and cultural influences that shape their attitudes towards beauty care products (Oyedijo et al., 2020). Factors such as socio-economic status, cultural values, and lifestyle choices influence consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior in this region. While emotional appeal is widely recognized as a persuasive advertising technique, empirical studies specific to its impact on consumer responses to beauty care advertisements in Rivers State are limited (Huang & Rust, 2018). Existing research often focuses on general advertising

principles rather than the unique context of beauty care products and consumer behavior in this region (Hartmann et al., 2018).

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap by investigating the relationship between emotional appeal in beauty care advertisements and consumer responses in Rivers State, Nigeria. By examining how emotions evoked by beauty care ads influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, this research aims to provide actionable insights for marketers to optimize their advertising strategies.

### Statement of the Problem

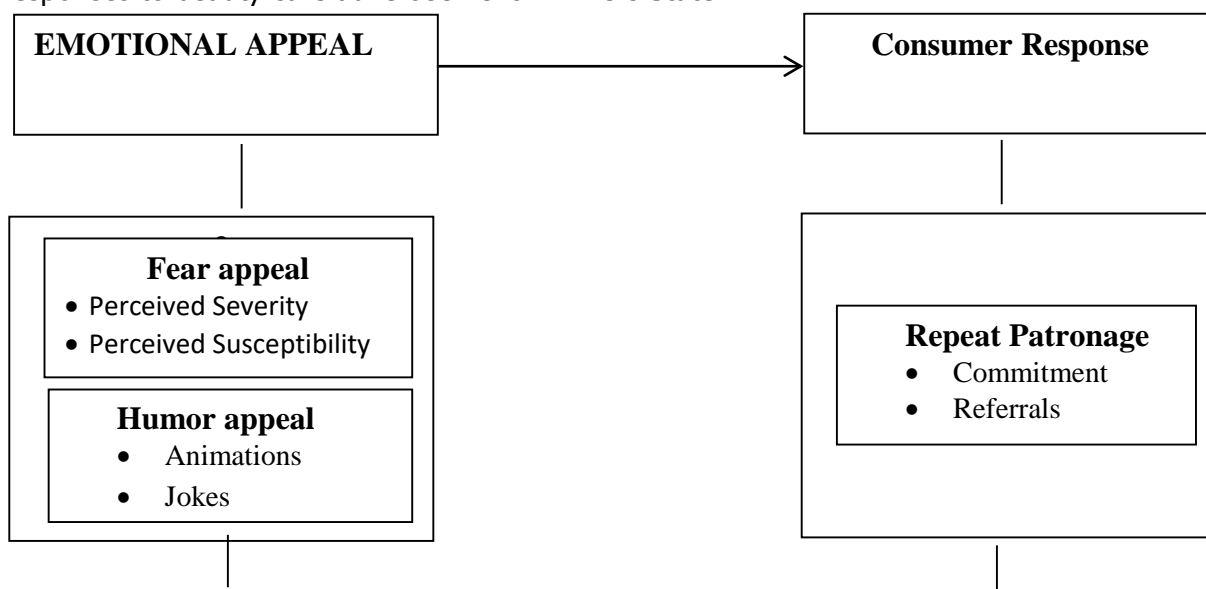
In the context of the beauty care industry in Rivers State, Nigeria, there is a growing reliance on advertising strategies that incorporate emotional appeal to promote products and influence consumer behavior. However, there is limited empirical research specifically addressing the effectiveness of emotional appeal in beauty care advertisements and its impact on consumer responses within this region.

Existing studies on emotional advertising often focus on general principles rather than the unique dynamics of the beauty care market in Rivers State. Therefore, a gap exists in understanding how emotional cues in beauty care advertisements shape consumer attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions among diverse consumer segments in this region.

Furthermore, the efficacy of emotional appeal strategies may vary based on socio-cultural factors, consumer preferences, and the competitive landscape within Rivers State. Thus, there is a need to investigate the specific nuances of emotional appeal in beauty care advertising and its implications for marketing strategies aimed at engaging consumers and driving sales in this market.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between emotional appeal and consumer responses to beauty care advertisement in Rivers State.



**Figure 1.1:** Conceptual framework of the relationship between emotional appeal and consumer responses.

**Source:** Garg, Wansink & Inman, (2007); Panda et al., (2013); Njite et., al., (2015).

### Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper is to determine the relationship between emotional appeal and consumer responses to beauty care advertisement in Rivers State. The specific objectives of the paper are stated below:

- a) determine the relationship between fear appeal and repeat patronage of beauty care advertisement in Rivers State.
- b) examine the relationship between humour appeal and referral of beauty care advertisement in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were put forward to address the objectives of the study:

- i. What is the relationship between fear appeal and repeat patronage of beauty care advertisement in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between humour appeal and referral of beauty care advertisement in Rivers State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were postulated to guide this study:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between fear appeal and repeat patronage of beauty care advertisement in Rivers State.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between humour appeal and referral of beauty care advertisement in Rivers State.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Concept of Emotional Appeal**

The term "appeal" represents "the power to attract, please, stimulate, or interest". Appeal borders on how entice customers and then keep them coming back and sharing the brand experience. An appeal can also be described as the persuasive framework selected by the advertiser to make an item attractive to customers. Wells et., al., (2006) states that appeal is the particular way in which a commercial associates with specific tastes and preferences of customer; a linkage between the emotions or logic of the advertisement and the consumer's reaction to the advertisement (Bulbul et al., 2010).

Emotional appeals address the consumer's need for stimulation, expression, and societal acceptance (Cutler & Javalgi, 1993). The goal of emotional advertisements is to stir up an emotional reaction in the message receiver in a variety of ways. Emotional advertisements can use fear, romance, humor, pride, guilt, or joy to do so (Cutler & Javalgi, 1993). Emotional appeals can aim to provoke either a positive or negative emotional response. The goal of using this appeal is to either encourage consumers to obtain the reward or avoid the punishment associated with the product (Davies, 2000). Hornik et., al., (2017) have created a hierarchy of appeals based on their estimated impact. In their study, they found that positive emotional appeals that used sex and humor were more effective than negative appeals that used fear. Overall, they found emotional appeals to be more effective than rational appeals. Emotional appeals are seen more often in service advertising than rational appeals according to Culter and Javalgi (1993). In addition, emotional appeals have the ability to create positive attitudes towards service companies; in particular, among new customers who do not have much experience with that company (Mattila, 2001). In general, they focus more on the experiential aspect of consumption and rely entirely on feelings and the reactions they stir up to be effective (Hornik et., al., 2017).

#### **Dimensions of Emotional appeal**

##### **Fear Appeal**

Fear appeal is a persuasive advertising strategy that aims to evoke fear or anxiety in the audience by highlighting potential negative consequences or threats associated with not using a product or service (Witte & Allen, 2000). Fear appeals work by triggering emotional responses related to self-preservation and risk avoidance. They emphasize the consequences of inaction or non-compliance

to motivate behavior change (Ruiter et al., 2001). Fear is one of the appeals which activate human behavior. It contains the perception of harm, threat, danger, loss, or refusal (Shaver, et al., 1987). Unlike Happy appeals, it produces stress, strain, and anxiety in the mind of the consumer. In the words of Rogers (1975), fear appeal describes the unfavorable consequences and it may result from failure to adopt the communicator's recommendations". Hence, fear appeals are categorized as negative allurements (Lucas & Benson, 1930). Fear appeals contain those messages that aim to create fear, abhorrent picture, and disgusting scene. It may present unfamiliar circumstances or situations that make the audience feared and vulnerable (Shaver et al., 1987).

### **Humor Appeal**

Humor appeal is a persuasive advertising technique that uses humor or comedy to capture attention, evoke positive emotions, and create a memorable impression of the brand or product (Weinberger & Gulas, 1992). Humor appeals leverage laughter and amusement to establish a connection with the audience, enhance message recall, and foster positive brand associations (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). In the views of Lazarus (1991) happiness is a positive feeling often related to joy. These feelings of happiness start with favorable consequences for self or one's social status (Shaver et al., 1987). So, happy appeals are considered positive messages, and these appeals are indicated by characters with smiling or laughing faces or images and depictions of pleasant and happy sceneries (Shaver et al., 1987).

### **Emotional Appeal and Consumer Responses**

The findings from the previous articles showed that emotions played a significant role in generating intention in attracting viewers. Emotions play a large role in influencing the consumer's attitude towards advertisements that show up on social media platforms. This shows that the gravity of emotions present in an advertisement can be an effective utility that can result in a positive impact on engagements (Thompkins, 2019), highlight certain complex emotions such as humor (Thompkins, 2019), and is relied upon to cause high arousal (Thompkins, 2019).

Emotions are one of the critical appeals that affect consumers' behavioral intentions (Han et al., 2019) and customer satisfaction (Han et al., 2019). Thus, researchers believed it is still relevant to know how the influence of emotional appeal on consumers affects a business's success rate (Sebastian et al., 2021). There is an argument that positive emotions of consumers would lead to better results, such as positive evaluations and behavioral intentions towards the product (Han et al., 2019). According to Poels and Dewitte (2019), anger versus sadness varied the preferences for products. Angry people reacted more positively when the product was advertised as active than sad people. Moreover, positive moods would only deal with specific and positive data and inhibit the negative ones for consistent positive attitudes (Han et al., 2019). Therefore, when a customer has a positive emotion toward a brand, their probability to engage in the experience is enhanced (Han et al., 2019).

### **Repeat patronage**

Repeat purchase describes customers' propensity to returns to a particular firm for more business after an initial trial (Nwiepe & Ateke, 2016). It is the willingness of individuals to re-patronize a firm (Wirtz & Lwin, 2009). Repeat patronage can be pictured as the positioning of a series of orders by a consumer from a distinct company; or the buying of a product by a consumer of the same brand. Repeat purchase customers constitute customers who attach satisfied emotional, intellectual, physical connection to a company's offerings which surpasses their contemplations. Wirtz and Lwin (2009) suggest that repeat purchase is a measure of a consumer loyalty to a specific brand and that it is a principal goal companies strive to attain. Caudill and Murphy contends that repeat patronage in buyer-seller relationships is built on trust, commitment and mutual respect; since customers revisit firms based on their belief that the firm will conduct its business in a manner that protects their interest (Nwiepe & Ateke, 2016). Repeat patronage is thus reinforced by favourable purchase

experience, meaning that customers will continue to return to a firm for further business as long as they (the customers) get a favourable experience with the firm (Nwiece & Ateke, 2016).

### **Theoretical Review**

The underpinning theory for this work is Love Marks Theory (Robert, 2004) which suggests that firms must go beyond creating a brand to creating a "love-mark" in order to build customer loyalty. Robert (2004) defined love-mark as a deep emotional connection that distinguishes a love mark experience from a brand experience. The theory states that, to create love-mark, a brand must provide consumers with three elements of experience: mystery, sensuality, and intimacy. This theory helps to identify the level of love, respect and experience consumer have for a product.

The justification of this theory is that emotional appeal positively contributes to creating love-mark experience which leads to consumers becoming avid fans of offerings of a company. It helps the firm to tap into consumers' rational and emotional perception and association with a particular brand. Customers' interaction is dependent on emotional appeal. Direct and indirect brand experience make customers to have a focus on intangible aspect of brands based on mystery, sensuality and intimacy as facet of cognitive, sensory and emotional dimension of a brand.

### **Empirical Review**

Ogonu and Didia (2020). Examined the degree to which brand appeal influences customer patronage of fast food firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The simple random sampling technique was employed to select 130 respondents from 65 fast food firms to participate in the study. The study utilized structured questionnaire to collect primary data. The study obtained a 79.4 per cent response rate. The simple regression statistic was used to test the hypotheses. The results suggest that brand appeal has a significant and positive influence on customer patronage in terms of patronage intention, actual patronage and repeat patronage. The study concludes that brand appeal, if emphasized in fast food firms can increase customer patronage. The implication for management of fast food firms is that they should focus on higher levels of brand appeal practices to attain optimal customer patronage. The study recommends that managers of fast food firms should focus on brand appeal strategies to attract customer patronage in the form of patronage intention, actual patronage and repeat patronage.

Udeze and Oko (2020) examined the relationship between advertising appeal strategies and customer loyalty in Nigerian Brewery Industry in south-south, Nigeria. Survey was drawn from customers/consumer of breweries brand in federal universities in South-south (university of Port-Harcourt, university of Calabar, and university of Benin). The data collection instruments were above 0.70. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used in testing hypotheses 1 to 5 using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 22.0. Result shows that sex appeal and humor appeal have a very strong positive significant impact on repeat purchase. But fear appeals have a very weak positive relationship with repeat purchase. This implies that the older a consumer, the lesser the impact of advertising appeals on his/her loyalty to a brand's advert. The study recommended that brewery firms should employ the service of seasoned advertising firms or personnel that can drive consumer via their advert message devoid of offence and invest more on sex appeal to boost and earn customer loyalty.

Harcourt and Ikegwuru (2018) investigated the influence of brand competency on brand performance in the Nigerian cosmetics and health products sector in Rivers State. The specific objective of the study was to establish the effects of brand attributes on brand performance. The population of the study was 271 cosmetics and health products firms in Rivers State of Nigeria. The Taro Yamane's formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 162 cosmetics and health products firms. 350 copies of questionnaire were sent out, from which 305 responses were retrieved. 245 questionnaires were useful for analysis. This gave a response rate of (80.3%). The analysis was executed by means of multiple regressions aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SPSS) version 22.0. The results revealed that brand attributes and brand value significantly affect brand performance, and concludes that the attributes of brand competency (brand attributes and brand value) have significant and positive effects on brand performance, and recommends that managers of cosmetics and health products should build strong and reliable brand attributes to enhance superior brand performance.

### Methodology

The study adopted correlational survey research design. Population is used in research and statistics to represent the entity to be investigated. The population of this study comprised of the customers of the sixteen (16) registered beauty care outlets in Rivers State. A total of 400 customers were used on the basis of .25 customers per outlet. Reliability analysis was performed on the data using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and it stood at 0.98. The data collected for the study were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The multiple regression analysis was adopted.

### Model Specification

According to Freedman (2009), regression analysis is concerned with the study of how one or more variables affect changes in another variable.

The formula for multiple regression:  $\psi = a_0 + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + e$  (3.1)

Where:  $\psi$  = index of outcome variable  
 a = constant term for the independent variables  
 b = index of predictor variable  
 x = coefficients  
 e = error level  
 f = function

### Presentation of Data and Analysis

#### Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

No. of Questionnaire Issued	No. of Questionnaire Returned	Useful Questionnaire	Not Useful	%
400	358	350	8	87

#### Source; survey Data, 2024.

The table above shows the questionnaire distribution and retrieval. The researcher issued 400 copies of questionnaire and from consistent visit, retrieved 358, 350 copies were useful. This represent 87% response rate and it was considered significant for the study.

### Bivariate Analyses

**Table 2: Regression Model Summary**

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.986 <sup>a</sup>	.973	.972	.14359	.104

a. Predictors: (Constant), FA; HA

b. Dependent Variable: RP

#### Source: SPSS output (2024)

The above model summary in table 2 produced a correlation coefficient; 'R' of 0.986<sup>a</sup> which shows that there is a very strong significant correlation between Fear Appeal (FA); Humour Appeal (HA) and Repeat patronage (RP) of beauty care firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The R<sup>2</sup> stood at 0.973 which implies that about 97% variation in Repeat patronage (CR) is attributed to changes in the

independent variable dimensions of fear appeal and humour appeal. The standard error is 0.14359, thus, measure of variation of the observation made from the (actual values of Y) around the computed value of Y' on the regression line is close to 0 and far from 1. The Durbin-Watson "d" = .104, is between the two critical values of  $1.5 < d < 2.5$  and therefore we can assume that there is no first order linear auto-correlation in the data. Hence the model is of absolute good fit.

**Table 3: ANOVA**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	257.320	4	64.330	3120.128	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7.237	351	.021		
	Total	264.557	355			

a. Dependent Variable: RP

b. Predictors: (Constant), FA; HA

**Source: SPSS output (2024)**

The probability value of 0.000 indicates that the regression relationship was significant in determining how Fear Appeal (FA); Humour Appeal (HA) impact on Repeat patronage (RP) of beauty care firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. The F calculated at 5 percent level of significance was 3120.128. Since F calculated is greater than the F critical (value = 2.4472), this shows that the overall model was significant.

**Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis on the Dimensions of Emotional Appeal Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.295	.032		9.196	.000
	FA	.173	.038	.176	4.574	.000
	HA	.444	.057	.472	7.732	.000

a. Dependent Variable: RP

**Source: SPSS output (2024)**

The regression equation in table 4 has established that taking; Fear Appeal (FA); Humour Appeal (HA) constant, repeat patronage (RP) will increase by 0.295 which is significant at 0.000. This shows that if all the dimensions of independent variable "emotional appeal" were held constant, repeat patronage will increase.

The regression result in table 4 shows a model constant (a) value of 0.295 and FA( $fa_1$ ) value of 0.173, indicating that, for every one percent increase in fear appeal, the dependent variable 'repeat patronage' will rise by 17%. T-value for FA( $fa_1$ ) produced 4.574, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of  $\alpha$  (0.05). Thus, hypothesis one is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between fear appeal and repeat patronage of beauty care firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Also, table 4 regression results shows a model constant (a) value of 0.295 and HA( $ha_2$ ) value of .444 indicating that, for every one percent increase in humour appeal, the dependent variable 'repeat patronage' will rise by 44%. T-value for HA( $ha_2$ ) produced 7.732, is significant at P value (.000), which is less than the chosen alpha of  $\alpha$  (0.05). Thus, hypothesis two is rejected meaning there is a strong significant linear relationship between humour appeal and repeat patronage of beauty care firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study revealed that emotional appeal should a significant and positive relationship with repeat patronage of beauty care advertisement in Rivers State. This finding is supported by the study of Thorson and Heiden (1990) assertion that emotional advertisements are in a position to influence the consumer's mindset in the direction of the advertisement, the notion approximately the relevance, the meaningfulness and the shipping capabilities of a product, the logo attitude and the shopping goal. Additionally, Thompkins (2019) stated that emotions played a significant role in generating intention in attracting viewers. Emotions play a large role in influencing the consumer's attitude towards advertisements that show up on social media platforms. This shows that the gravity of emotions present in an advertisement can be an effective utility that can result in a positive impact on engagements.

Again, the findings of the study revealed that humour and fear appeal should a significant and positive relationship with repeat patronage of beauty care advertisement in Rivers State. This finding is supported by the study of Ogonu and Didia (2020) who stated that that brand appeal using rational appeal has a significant and positive influence on customer patronage in terms of patronage intention, actual patronage and repeat patronage.

### **Conclusion**

This work focused on investigating the emotional appeal and consumer responses to beauty care advertisement in Rivers State. Both appeals had a significant effect on the consumer response. The advertisers and marketers should use both appeals in the advertisement for their brand. The results of this study suggested that humour appeal is more influential than fear appeal. Overall, the results suggest that humour appeal is more effective to influence consumer response as compare to fear appeal. This study concludes that emotional appeal significantly relates with consumer responses to beauty care advertisement in Rivers State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proffered:

- i. Beauty care managers should focus on emotional appeal to ensure that their companies address adequately consumer response and actions to enhance patronage.
- ii. Managers of beauty care advertisement should consider humour appeal as a powerful strategy for achieving customer patronage in their organizations.
- iii. Finally, in order to enhance emotional appeal in beauty care firms, managers should design humor and fear appeal advertising programs to enhance positive responses from consumers.

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