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Rhetorical Strategies and Discursive Constructions in Nigerian Consumer Goods Advertising: A Critical Analysis of Persuasive Appeals

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Abstract: This study examines how Nigerian consumer goods advertisements engage audiences while transmitting and reinforcing socio-cultural ideologies. Advertising in Nigeria, particularly for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs), is a pervasive site where societal values, gender norms, and class distinctions are both reflected and normalized. Despite their significance, there is limited research on how multimodal strategies in these advertisements shape perceptions of identity, tradition, and consumer behavior, revealing a critical gap in postcolonial media studies. The study aims to investigate how Nigerian FMCG advertisements construct meanings related to gender, culture, and social status and how these messages intersect with neoliberal consumer ideologies. A purposive sample of twelve television and digital advertisements was analyzed using African communication theory, rhetorical analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis. Findings indicate that advertising in Nigeria conveys messages beyond mere product promotion, reflecting broader social themes: women are primarily associated with domesticity and beauty, whereas men are depicted in terms of success, performance, and social elitism. Cultural traditions are regularly adapted to align with market trends, positioning consumption as a vehicle for achieving identity, mobility, and moral duty. Advertising thus functions as a quasi-governmental force, influencing societal attitudes and regulating norms through visual and affective appeals. The study concludes that greater cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and ethical standards are essential in Nigerian advertising. Policymakers, media practitioners, and civil-society actors are encouraged to consider the societal implications of persuasive media, integrating ethical frameworks into regulation and practice to promote equity, social responsibility, and culturally respectful representations in postcolonial contexts.

Keywords: Discursive Constructions; Rhetorical Strategies; Critical Discourse; Advertising; Consumer Culture.



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1. Introduction

Advertising is not just an informational tool for consumers about commodities or services; it is a dynamic semiotic and linguistic activity that creates realities, identities, and aspirations (Cook, 2001; Williamson, 1985). The turning point in the construction of meanings and social values in culture through consumer commodities is advertising, which involves persuasive appeals through linguistic, visible, and symbolic discourses (Leiss et al., 2018; Myers, 1994). In this regard, advertising extends beyond the commercial aspect and serves as a site of ideology production, where

language, imagery, and social location all interact to shape consumer practices. Both advertisements and the consequences of advertising activities in Nigeria's dynamic consumer economy are embedded in the country's socio-cultural forces. Nigerian advertisements for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) exhibit a diverse range of stylistic features, as they aim to attract consumers who are increasingly diverse in a population of over 200 million with growing media viewership (Asemah, 2022).

Appeals in such advertising largely rely on ethos, pathos, and logos, as in ancient rhetoric (Aristotle, 2007), while simultaneously conveying culturally local discourses that appeal to local aspirations, norms, and values (Akpabio, 2003). From nationalist and gender appeals through broadcasting the ideology of consumerism as achievement, Nigerian advertising constructs persuasive narratives that blend localism and globalisation in tone. This paper critically examines how some Nigerian consumer advertisements utilise rhetorical and discursive strategies. Drawing on the theories of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and rhetoric analysis, the paper challenges how language and imagery coalesce to appeal persuasively. It analyses the process through which the consumer subject is constructed and wants are normalised through the intersections of ideology, representation, and commodification (Van Dijk, 2006; Fairclough, 1993). By examining a corpus of advertisements that appeared in the print and TV media disseminated in Nigeria's urban hubs, the paper adds to the existing literature on advertising discourse in Africa (Salawu, 2015; Olatunji, 2018). It further questions the convergence of power and rhetoric in postcolonial consumer societies, where advertisements serve as the vehicle for economic globalisation and the hybridity of culture.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Advertising as Rhetorical Practice

Advertising is widely recognised as a site of persuasive communication where rhetorical strategies are deployed to construct consumer identities, manipulate desires, and shape public consciousness. Drawing from classical rhetoric, scholars have extensively analysed how ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic) function in advertising to legitimise brand claims and appeal to consumer psychology (Cook, 2001; Aristotle, 2007). However, contemporary analyses of advertising increasingly go beyond identifying rhetorical forms to interrogate how these appeals operate ideologically within socio-cultural and economic contexts (Scott, 1994; Leiss, Kline, Jhally, & Botterill, 2018). What emerges from this shift is an understanding of advertising as more than a technical exercise in persuasion. It becomes a symbolic process that organises meaning through both verbal and visual signs. Persuasive messages are embedded in narratives that frame consumption not only as a practical need but also as a marker of identity, aspiration, and cultural belonging. The examination of rhetoric in advertising highlights the performative function of language, how messages not only describe but also do things in the world.

2.2. Advertising as Discourse: Ideology and Representation

In addition to the rhetorical approach, the critical discourse tradition theorises advertising as a discursive construction of power-laden meanings in which meanings are constituted and circulated. Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (2006) assert that advertisements not only reflect but also reproduce ideological positions, and this is done through the appropriation of existing discourses and the reconfiguration of these within society. In this situation, advertising can be viewed as a tool that allows the normalisation of hegemonic discourses related to gender, class, modernity, and success, making them appear as common sense. As empirical evidence suggests, the repeated use of women as passive or decorative elements of visual advertising is not accidental, but instead is more to do with ideology, as Scharf, (2011). Then, Goffman (1979) argues that the persistent framing of modernity through symbols of consumption and global aesthetics contributes to the neoliberal discourse that ties personal worth to material acquisition. From this perspective, advertising is implicated in the discursive production of hegemonic values, subtly positioning consumer goods as solutions to social, emotional, and even existential needs. Such ideological framing is often lost in such aesthetic ingenuity, hence making critical interrogation essential. Their textual anchorage, the visual register of the ads, and narrative architectures have a synergistic effect on the audiences who are interpellated into positions that align with the ideologies of the brands. Thus, discursive construction of consumption is not neutral but depends on the cross-cutting social, economic, and political logics.

2.3. Rhetorical-Discursive Hybridisation in Nigerian Advertising

In the Niger context, there are certain local cultural and linguistic peculiarities that further influence the global processes mentioned above. Advertising discourse in Nigeria is a good example of an ecologically hybrid communicative structure in which the Western stylistic norms are combined with indigenous linguistic forms of expression and mythic traditions (Akpabio, 2003; Olatunji, 2018). Such hybridity is more than just a simple aesthetics; it is well-crafted to stir a resonance in a very diverse electorate that is marked with high levels of multilingualism and a strong social stratification. Through empirical studies of Nigerian advertisements, it has been found that there is a

continuum in culturally rooted appeals that anchor brand messages: proverbs, communal patterns of speech, family images, and religious themes (Kenechukwu et al., 2013). These plans increase the degree of emotional attachment and support the spread of certain cultural presumptions and social standards at the same time (Olayemi 2017; Samuel & Kue, 2020). For example, gendered appeals often internalize the traditions of patriarchy, and ideas of success are often expressed in terms of paradigms of conspicuous consumption and urban mobility. The invocation of Africanness in advertising, whether through apparel, geography, or language, operates within a contradictory arena. Although it seemingly serves as a means of cultural pride, it is also a branding tool that commercializes tradition to generate revenue. Such practices thus raise critical questions regarding the reality and ideological contingency of cultural allusion in commercial language.

2.4. Rethinking Persuasion: Beyond Function to Ideology

Although rhetorical analysis explains that persuasive strategies are aimed at altering consumer behaviour, it often underestimates the ideological implications of these processes. On the other hand, discourse analysis, a method that is inclined to put structural criticism on the centre stage (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk & Poell, 2013) can fail to pay sufficient attention to the micro-level art of persuasive appeals. The combination of these approaches in synthesis produces a stronger perception of ads as being both persuasive and ideologically motivated discourses. Wodak (2009) and Kress (2001) promote a holistic approach to viewing communication as a socio-semiotic phenomenon, as opposed to the pure transfer of meaning, which is shaped by power, culture, and context. In this regard, advertising is a form of semiotic labor through which social values are encoded, disputed, or reinforced. This interaction is particularly pronounced in the Nigerian setting, where historical post-colonial relations, regional economic ambitions, and global factors all coexist.

Yet, despite the growing literature on advertising in Africa, many studies remain descriptive or narrowly focused on content appeal (Abiodun, 2024; Kenechukwu et al., 2013; Mahmud, 2017; Robert, 2013). There is a need for more critical and theoretically grounded work that interrogates how rhetorical strategies in Nigerian advertising participate in broader discursive processes of meaning-making, identity construction, and ideological legitimation. Recent studies have applied the intersection of rhetoric and CDA to unpack how advertising constructs consumer subjectivities and normalises capitalist logics (Gunther R. Kress, 2001; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). This paper positions itself at this interdisciplinary intersection with the aim of demonstrating that rhetorical strategies used in advertising of Nigerian consumer products play a greater role than persuasive apparatuses, as they may also serve as vehicles of ideological representation.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

This study is situated at the intersection of rhetorical theory and critical discourse analysis (CDA), drawing on key contributions from Stuart Hall's theory of representation, Norman Fairclough's model of discourse as social practice, and indigenous perspectives on African communication systems. These theoretical lenses enable a multidimensional analysis of how Nigerian consumer advertising constructs meanings, identities, and persuasive appeals within broader ideological frameworks.

3.1 Stuart Hall's Representation Theory

The representation theory of Stuart Hall offers the essential instruments to comprehend the fact that language and representations of advertising not only reflect but also construct reality. Stuart Hall (1997) points out that representation is production of meaning using language whereby signs and symbols are mobilised in systems of meanings to influence the manner in which the world is perceived (p. 15). This theoretical model places advertising in an ideological-encoded context, where producers code something that they want people to be in agreement with, and decode it in a manner that will either be in agreement or against the message. The encoding/decoding model proposed by Hall is especially applicable in studying the construction and the reception of persuasive messages in a culturally diverse environment like the Nigerian environment. In this context, advertisers code consumerist ideals into their messages and in many cases, they simply equate product consumption to modernity, success and desirability. Meanwhile, viewers bargain or resist these messages based on their cultural placement, socioeconomic conditions, or experiences (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996). The model backgrounds the active, contesting character of media meaning-making and thus enables this study to ask not only what is communicated but how and to whom.

3.2 Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough provides a complementary approach to advertising as a discursive practice that not only exists within power structure, but also creates it. According to Fairclough (1995), discourse is both shaped by and shapes social relations, institutions, and ideologies. His three-tiered model, textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, enables a systematic exploration of how language in advertising reflects institutional intentions and broader societal ideologies. Within this framework, advertisements are not merely

isolated texts but part of a larger network of meaning-making that legitimises consumerist ideologies, social hierarchies, and behavioural norms. The discursive strategies employed, such as personalisation, nominalisation, modality, and intertextuality, are analysed in terms of how they normalise certain values such as material success, gender roles, and beauty standard, while marginalising others. For instance, the frequent use of high-status urban imagery or light-skinned models (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010) may reflect and reproduce class and colour hierarchies that exist in Nigerian society.

CDA thus allows this study to move beyond surface-level rhetoric and ask deeper questions about whose interests advertising serves, which ideologies it perpetuates, and what power relations it sustains or disrupts.

3.3 African Communication Paradigms

While Hall and Fairclough offer foundational Western critical perspectives, this study also engages with African theories of communication to contextualise advertising discourse within Nigeria's unique cultural terrain. Some scholars like Akpabio (2003) and Ugbojah (1985) in Salawu (2015) argue that African communication is inherently based on communalism, oral transmission, metaphor, and performance. For television advertisements, Mahmud (2017, p.107) lists these stylistic features of the language of advertisement as ellipsis, substitutions, coordination, contraction, repetition, simple sentences, and declarative sentences. These components are part of the forces that influence the formation and reception of persuasion messages among African people. The advertising industry in Nigeria often portrays these native features of communication in its advertising mechanisms through the use of proverbs, narrative traditions, kin relations, or appeals to the community. According to Robert (2013), both linguistic and non-linguistic features are typically employed in newspaper adverts to drive and compel consumers to purchase goods, whether good or bad (p. 61). The linguistic forms comprise the manner and style of text composition, lexical choices, use of figurative expressions, simple diction, and the use of proper names and emotive expressions. The non-linguistic forms, on the other hand, are the graphic and graphological features that are put into significant use to evoke emotions and further capture the attention of readers/customers; examples include the special use of punctuation, colours, pictorial images, and figures. These features have a profound impact on the message conveyed, resonating in the eyes and minds of the reader (Robert, 2013).

Besides, these factors intensify the affective appeal of adverts and, at the same time, indicate underlying cultural logic. As an example, collective identity is prioritised over individual autonomy, which fits the idea of "ubuntu" in African philosophy, which is based on interdependence and relationship existence (Genot, 2018, p. 359). However, the integration of indigenous peoples in the Western advertising systems raises serious issues of commodification and symbolic appropriation. This perhaps informs Abiodun (2024) position that advertisers in Nigeria should be more honest by emphasising contextually relevant and unobtrusive advertisements intended to help rather than inundate consumers. In line with this, the paper employs a post-colonial communication approach to challenge the selective deployment of local cultural codes in the service of the logic of global consumer capitalism. This perspective enables a critical assessment of advertising discourse as a site where tradition and modernity, resistance and assimilation coexist in a state of constant tension.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research paradigm grounded in critical multimodal discourse analysis (CMDA) to investigate the use of rhetorical strategies and discursive configurations in a selected sample of Nigerian consumer goods advertisements. The approach combines tools of rhetorical criticism, critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed by Fairclough, and the multimodal discourse model by Kress (2001), thus enabling a thorough questioning of both text and image elements. This inquiry requires a qualitative design, as such a design enables a contextual and interpretive analysis of meaning-making mechanisms that occur as part of a real socio-cultural milieu (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

3.2. Study Area

The research focuses on analyzing advertisements aired and disseminated in the metropolitan centers of Nigeria, namely Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt. Such urban areas have highly developed consumer cultures and extensive media coverage. Additionally, they have multilingual and multicultural economic backgrounds, providing a favorable environment for studying how advertising messages are tailored to different audiences in terms of class, ethnicity, and geographical differences.

3.3. Data Selection and Sampling

A purposive sampling method was employed to compile a corpus of twelve advertisements promoting fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs), including beverages, household items, and personal care products. The advertisements were selected based on several criteria: their popularity and frequency of broadcast on television channels such as NTA, Channels TV, and AIT, as well as their circulation across digital platforms including YouTube, Instagram, and

TikTok; the presence of multimodal elements, such as language, voice-over, music, visuals, celebrity endorsements, and cultural motifs; and their representation of socio-cultural values, including gender roles, wealth, cleanliness, health, and success. The sampling period spanned from January 2022 to December 2024, enabling an analysis of recent post-pandemic advertising trends and the growing influence of digital media.

3.4. Data Collection

Advertisements were sourced from publicly available broadcast and online archives. Where possible, the original video files and corresponding transcripts were obtained for triangulated analysis. Supplementary data, such as viewer comments and brand statements, were also consulted to enrich contextual interpretation.

3.5. Analytical Framework and Procedure

The analysis was guided by an integrative three-level model adapted from Fairclough (1995) and Kress (2001):

3.5.1. Textual Analysis (Micro-Level)

This stage involved close reading of verbal language (slogans, taglines, dialogue) and rhetorical devices such as metaphor, parallelism, appeals to ethos/pathos/logos, and repetition. For instance, the study examined how product benefits are framed as logical necessities or emotional desires, and how celebrity endorsements lend credibility to brand messaging.

3.5.2. Visual/Semiotic Analysis (Multimodal Level)

Visual frames, camera angles, colour schemes, dress codes, body postures, and gestures were analysed to decode how imagery supports or contradicts verbal messages. This stage drew on Kress's (2001) semiotic grammar, which links design choices to social meanings. For example, images of smiling light-skinned women in domestic settings were interpreted for gender and colour ideology.

3.5.3. Discursive Practice and Social Context (Macro-Level)

The study examined the broader discursive environment and how the ads draw on or reinforce social ideologies such as consumerism, patriarchy, neoliberalism, or religious values. This level incorporated intertextuality and cultural referencing, interrogating how the advertisements position the ideal Nigerian consumer and what socio-political messages are implicitly conveyed. The triangulation of these levels enabled a detailed examination of persuasion in Nigerian advertising discourse, encompassing both the how and the why. The researcher employed this method to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of interpretations. First, peer debriefing was conducted with two communication scholars familiar with Nigerian media discourse. Second, iterative coding of texts revisited interpretations for consistency. Third, reflexive memoing, where the researcher documents and reflects on their positionality, assumptions, and evolving insights during analysis. All data were collected from publicly available sources. No personal or private information was used. Copyrighted material was cited under academic fair use for scholarly critique (International Communication Association, 2020).

4. Results

The corpus of Nigerian consumer goods advertisements reveals a rich field of rhetorical and discursive practices embedded in ideological frameworks that sustain unequal power relations, postcolonial capitalist values, and normative identity categories. Drawing from Hall's (1997) representation theory, Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis, and African communication paradigms (Akpabio, 2003). The comprehensive data presentation and analysis matrix for the 12 advertisements is presented below. It provides a structured breakdown of each ad's rhetorical strategies, semiotic features, discursive themes, and ideological messages, allowing you to compare persuasive patterns across gender, class, tradition, and consumer identity.

Table 1. Sampled Digital Advertisements

No.	Title	Rhetorical Strategy	Semiotic Features	Discursive Themes	Ideological Messages
1	Drip Soap	Logos, Pathos & Ethos	vitality, freshness, luxury	Beauty, femininity colourism	Neoliberal logic Patriarchal expectations

					Colourist hierarchies
2	Life Lager Beer – Obiagu (Heart of a Lion) New Look Credential Ad	Ethos, Logos, Pathos	Athletic visuals, high-tempo cuts	Masculinity, energy	Performance culture
3	Mom's Pride Nigeria. Seasoning cubes – Share the pride	Pathos, Ethos	Family kitchen, warm tones	Tradition, family values	Cultural continuity
4	City Fresh Bleach – White is Right	Logos, Pathos	Laundry visuals, clean whites	Cleanliness, gender	Middle-class pride
5	Toothpaste – Shine Your Smile	Pathos, Ethos	Wedding, smiling couple	Marriage, grooming	Romantic rewards
6	Noodles – Quick Taste of Home	Logos, Pathos	Hostel scenes, quick meal	Time, family care	Survivalism, convenience
7	Air Freshener – Scent of Success	Ethos, Pathos	Luxury setting, mist effect	Independence, success	Female success
8	Juice	Logos, Pathos	Yoga mats, natural elements	Wellness, hybrid identity	Commodified tradition
9	Milk – Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders	Logos, Pathos	Classroom, Nigerian flag	Education, growth	Nutrition success
10	TrustSan Pads – Be Unstoppable	Ethos, Logos, Pathos	Public stage, lighting focus	Empowerment, menstruation	Corporate feminism
11	Bottled Water – Life in Every Drop	Logos, Pathos	Running child, splash imagery	Vitality, health	Health privatisation
12	Detergent – For the Woman Who Knows	Pathos, Logos	Household, praised wife	Domestic gender roles	Domestic labour valorised

The Drip Soap Africa campaign exemplifies how modern Nigerian soap advertising blends textual, visual, and discursive strategies to construct meanings of beauty, health, and aspiration. Product names such as Papaya Brightening Soap and Gold Soap function as rhetorical devices, drawing on metaphors of nature, scientific descriptors like "Vitamin C" and "kojic acid," and affective appeals to radiance and prestige. Using such an ethos based on natural authenticity, the ad depicts beauty as both a logical necessity and an emotional desire associated with self-value and social recognition. The visual aspect of the campaign is based on the globalised advertising aesthetics, reinforcing the textual arguments supported by the author. Saturated, bright colours (orange, green, gold) indicate vitality, freshness, and luxury; the soap is brought to the foreground of the image through close-ups that make it a tangible and consumable product. The slightest minimum forms of styling and polished photography localise the product in the existing international advertisement norms, and smiling female models with flawless complexions embody the expected results of the soap. These multimodal choice decisions align with Kress and van Leeuwen's analyses on how visual composition directs attention in conveying cultural values, thereby foregrounding beauty as something that can be achieved through consumption.

As part of the larger course of Nigerian soap advertising, Drip Soap also reconfigures the tropes that have been firmly established in the history of advertising. Similar to Joy Soap in the 1980s and Premier Soap in the 1990s, it positions beauty as a channel to respectability and modern life, reflecting Delta Soap in its emphasis on radiance and desirability, ideally linked with colorist ideals. Drip Soap differentiates itself through a hybrid discourse, which combines references to indigenous fruit and herbal remedies with smooth, global aesthetics, thereby creating an image of the ideal Nigerian consumer that is both ethnically rooted and cosmopolitan. As a direct result, the ad engages with the broader cultural discourses of consumerism, patriarchy, and neoliberal self-responsibility, naturalizing beauty as an indicator of social mobility and belonging to a global consumer class. The 2025 Life Lager Beer OBiagu Heart of a Lion New Look Credential Advertisement builds a strong narrative as it effectively blends textual messages, visuals, and cultural elements. On an associative level, the ad employs metaphors and imperatives, such as 'Heart of a Lion' and 'Our Spirit of Progress,' to equate consumption with attributes like strength, resilience, and ambition. By using key Igbo symbols - the rising sun, the Niger Bridge, and the Isiagu lion head - product identity is established on the basis of local culture and ethos, which is supported through endorsements from influential cultural icons and celebrities. Logos is also operationalized through references to the fine, triple-filtered flavor of the beer, thus combining quality assurance with cultural self-regard. The combination of metaphorical phraseology, repetition, and regionally oriented idioms appeals to consumers' pride while also presenting a quality argument about the product.

Visually, the advert deploys bold cultural imagery and performative energy to reinforce its textual claims. Traditional attire, ceremonial presence of royal fathers, and dynamic music performances underscore unity, pride, and authenticity. The semiotic choices, colours of renewal, active gestures, and communal gathering symbolically encode resilience and collective progress. At the macro level, the campaign situates the product within consumerist and neoliberal discourses, positioning Life Beer as a marker of ambition and modern success while celebrating Igbo heritage. By intertextually linking with music concerts, communal rituals, and regional pride, the advert crafts the ideal consumer as youthful, culturally conscious, and forward-looking. In doing so, it not only markets a product but also reinforces broader ideologies of resilience, identity, and progress in contemporary Nigeria.

The Mom's Pride Seasoning Cubes commercial draws upon a deeply emotional and culturally resonant narrative to position its product within the Nigerian domestic and culinary imagination. Textually, the advert deploys the imperative and affective tagline "Share the Pride" as both a directive and an affirmation, encouraging consumers to view the act of cooking with Mom's Pride as a source of familial honour and cultural continuity. Through the repetition of the brand name and the framing of its cubes as "Mama's choice," the commercial simultaneously invokes ethos, drawing credibility from maternal authority, and pathos, appealing to viewers' sense of warmth, trust, and cultural authenticity. The implication of the narration is the seasoning of the mom, which is filled with a caring tone and language that appeals to cultural resonance, is in fact, more of an additive than a guarantor of familial unity and preservation of cultural heritage. Graphically, the advert employs warm colour palettes, realistic depictions of kitchen scenes, and shared meals to set the product in the mundane setting of everyday life in Nigeria.

The visual narrative is highly characterized by high modality: family members are shown sharing a common meal, smiling; close-up shots show seasoning cubes dissolving into thick stews, and mothers as repositories of cooking skills. Such visual and non-verbal decisions elevate the seasoning cube into a food culture and its reproduction. On a macro level, the advert echoes bigger discourses of consumerism, nostalgia, and the sanctification of the maternal authority. The campaign aligns with the rhetoric of generational knowledge and cultural pride, in which the ideal consumer honors the past and defines themselves according to everyday choices. This way, the advert is no longer a mere advertisement of a product but rather a script of cultural belonging, home pride, and communal sustenance. The Hypo Bleach television commercial, entitled "Prevent the spread of germs in your home" or "Disinfect your environment with Hypo Bleach," rests on a discourse of health urgency that naturalizes disinfection as a discursive necessity and moral imperative. The advert employs directive language and a direct call to action, incorporating a combination of logos (rational appeal to hygiene) and pathos (emotional concern for family safety). The addition of the hashtag in the slogan transforms the injunction into a directive that can be shared socially, aligning household cleaning practices with broader trends of digital engagement and community responsibility. Repetition of the product name anchors the health benefits in a specific brand, effectively linking cleanliness with Hypo as a trusted household ally.

Visually, the advert employs bright, high-contrast imagery of sparkling domestic interiors and close-ups of the bleach in use, semiotically encoding efficacy and safety. Everyday household settings and intimate camera angles normalize the act of disinfection, framing it as an ordinary ritual of care. At a broader discursive level, the campaign reflects the neoliberal responsibilities of health by positioning individual households as the primary managers of hygiene, a framing reinforced by pandemic-era anxieties about germs and contamination. In doing so, the advert situates Hypo not only as a cleaning product but also as an emblem of civic virtue and responsible citizenship, embedding consumer behavior within wider cultural narratives of cleanliness, vigilance, and modern self-care. On the Toothpaste – Close-Up Nigeria ("Fresh Protection"), the advert foregrounds freshness and intimacy, with slogans like "Complete Fresh Protection" that combine rational appeals to hygiene with emotional promises of social confidence. The visual aspect of the advertising campaign can be described using bright smiles, close-up shots, and the obvious use of red and white colours, which evoke connotations of purity and vitality. On the discursive level, the close-up technique is employed to reproduce neoliberal discourses of self-presentation, where oral hygiene is linked to attractiveness, romance, and social capital. Accordingly, toothpaste is positioned as a facilitator of a specific lifestyle, rather than a health product.

The linguistic policy employed in the Indomie Mama Do Good campaign portrays noodles as a continuation of maternal care, as the word "Mama" is used to represent authority, love, and food. Domestic intimacy is supported by visual motifs of family events and a cosy household kitchen. The advert discursively incorporates noodles into the cultural discourses of gendered caring and convenience, thereby transforming a fast-food commodity into an icon of tradition and love, and thus naturalizing processed food within the context of Nigerian family life. The Godrej AER Power Pocket air-freshener ad features textual accents on convenience and modernity, summarized in the following phrase: 'easy to use, easy to love,' which is reinforced by the practical logos. Semiotic decisions related to compact design and lifestyle visuals align the idea of freshness with elegance and urban style. On a macro level, the campaign is indicative of the growing expectations of the Nigerian middle classes, in which the preservation of a fragrant home is positioned not only as a matter of hygienic obligation but also as a point of current domestic achievement.

The Chivita 100% advertisement asserts its authenticity by stating the claim of 100 percent authenticity, which is supported by international sports teams like Manchester United. Included in visual semiotics are the images of bright fruit, active families, and colourful packages, which altogether imply life and cosmopolitanism. The analysis of discourse

shows that the ad places the consumption of the juice in the context of the global trends in health and at the same time makes the use of the drink to be bound to the national pride, therefore, creating the aspirational identity that unites the global standards of health with the domestic patriotism. The campaign slogans used in the Peak Milk ad, i.e., "strength" and "strong bones," connect the consumption of dairy to personal and national health. Resources such as sports pictures and family scenes can be semantically encoded to convey milk as an aspirational good and a healthy food. At the macro level, Peak embeds itself in discourses of resilience and progress, utilizing celebrity endorsements to frame milk as a product that not only builds individuals but also fosters collective pride and benefits future generations.

Dr. Brown's (Wemy Industries) sanitary pads advertisement highlights comfort, dignity, and reliability, foregrounding the product as a trusted feminine ally. Semiotic elements often include serene female figures, soft palettes, and imagery of discretion, encoding reassurance and security. Discursively, the campaigns attempt to break silences around menstruation, while also situating menstrual care within consumerist discourses of empowerment, suggesting modern womanhood is inseparable from branded protection. The Bottled Water – Aquafina "Padi of Life" commercial textual metaphor personifies water as a "padi" (friend), suggesting loyalty and indispensability. Visuals of companionship, everyday use, and crystal-clear bottles semiotically signal purity and constancy. At the macro level, Aquafina reframes hydration as not just a biological need, but also as an emotional relationship, embedding bottled water consumption within urban discourses of friendship, lifestyle branding, and commodified well-being. Additionally, the textual claims of whitening and cleaning efficacy for Elephant Blue detergent are reinforced through humorous delivery by iconic cultural figures, such as Chief Zebrudaya. Visual semiotics centre on bright, clean clothes, humour, and everyday domestic settings. Discursively, the advert reflects a postcolonial consumer culture where cleanliness is equated with civility and pride, and where humour is harnessed to build brand familiarity, embedding detergent use into moral and cultural narratives of good homemaking.

5. Discussion

The analysis of Nigerian consumer goods commercials demonstrates that advertising operates simultaneously as a rhetorical practice and as a site of ideological production. As Aristotle's classical appeals remind us, ethos, pathos, and logos are visibly present across the adverts, but they are rarely neutral. Instead of operating independently, these phenomena are mobilized in larger discursive threads that naturalize gender roles, the desire to belong to classes, and consumerist values. As an illustration, the Mom's Pride, Share the Pride advertisement uses pathos to appeal to maternal warmth and ethos to appeal to the authority of Mamas choice, thus making the process of domestic labour a natural one and a natural identity. The current results support the claim by McQuarrie and Mick (1996) that the rhetorical mechanisms used in advertisements are not just persuasive mechanisms, but also symbolic resources that create consumer subjectivities.

By analyzing them, these campaigns exhibit a strong similarity with the model of discourse as social practice developed by Fairclough (1995). Advertisements like the Obiagu Heart of a Lion by Life Lager Beer do not revolve around the celebration of the Igbo cultural tropes; instead, they are recreated in the neoliberal philosophies of ambition, survival, and development. Cultural symbols, such as rising suns, bridges, and lion heads, are aestheticized and rebranded in this sense as a passage to contemporary success. This point confirms the arguments of van Dijk (2006), who argues that advertising maintains the ideological stance by embedding it in the discourses of daily consumption. However, meaning is not simply relayed but coded with readings of preference, as Hall (1997) reminds. Discipline and ambition, or Obiagu's advert, carries a celebratory tone, but this may be read in other ways to question the silencing of rural or non-elite masculinity. As such, the decoding of the audience continues to be a contested practice; however, the prevalence of polished, aspirational aesthetics often limits the avenues for anti-hermeneutic readings.

One of the common themes across the dataset is the commodification of tradition. Indomie, Mom Pride, and Elephant Blue ads are largely based on communal eating, kinship metaphors, and indigenous clothing to create authenticity. In line with Olatunji's (2018) criticism, these appeals to Africanness often reduce culture to branding material that repackages heritage as exotic signifiers of middle-class consumption. That way, advertising recreates what Kellner (1995) imply as postcolonial mimicry. The pride in culture and, at the same time, the conformity to the Eurocentric principles of civility, neatness, and cosmopolitanism. This dichotomy resonates with Akpabio's (2003) argument that Nigerian advertising is hybridized, as it incorporates both indigenous communicative practices and Western paradigms of style.

A campaign like Chivita 100 and Chivita 100% and the Aquafina Padi of Life can be identified as an example of consumerist modernity. The two utilise minimalistic design, cosmopolitan views, and international sports affiliations to indicate vitality and elite membership. Such manoeuvres represent symbolic capital, as described by Bourdieu (1987), in which consumption functions as a sign of social prestige. Such campaigns in the Nigerian context conceal structural differences by making bourgeois comfort a universal, echoing the encoding/decoding framework created by Hall. These exclusionary visuals encode the bourgeois aspiration, thus making it a normative one. This aligns with Scott's (1994) insight that advertising organizes meaning not merely to inform, but to legitimize consumer lifestyles as common sense.

Finally, the deployment of affective governance is most visible in advertisements related to health and hygiene. Hypo Bleach frames disinfection as a civic duty tied to family and national health, while Peak Milk and Close-Up tie everyday consumption to future strength, confidence, and even national development. The idea of such appeals sheds light on governmentality as described by Burchell (2008). According to which brands assume the functions of para-states, and they become teachers, guardians, and moral authorities within the framework of infrastructural lack. In this sense, advertising reflects what Wodak (2009) refers to as semiotic labour: one of those places where social fears of health, care, and progress are reworked into consumer subjection.

Comprehensively, these results support the effectiveness of a hybrid rhetorical-discourse analytic strategy. Rhetoric analysis underpins the artistry of persuasive appeals, and critical discourse analysis explains the ideological labour they entail. Thus, the Nigerian advertising brings a concept of abstract landscape in which tradition and modernity, empowerment and containment, aspiration and inequality overlap. Located within the framework of Hall's theory of representation, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, and African communication paradigms, this research explores the idea that commercials are more than mere means of selling goods; they are also coded as ideas of belonging, responsibility, and identity. Such representations, although aesthetically appealing, necessitate critical examination to comprehend how consumer culture subtly reconstructs values and subjectivities in contemporary Nigeria.

6. Conclusions

This paper critically analyzes the rhetorical practices and discursive formulations in advertisements of selected consumer goods produced by Nigerian companies, employing an integrated approach that combines rhetorical theory, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and African communication paradigms. They discover that advertisements do not simply appear as functional texts aimed at selling goods and services; instead, they are semiotic terrains that encode, circulate, and normalize ideologies of gender, class, tradition, modernity, and capitalist consumerism. These data indicate that Nigerian advertisements employ normative appeals (pathos, ethos, logos) not only to inform the audience but also to interpellate the audience into normative subject positions. In many cases, women are defined by the principles of domesticity and beauty, while men are promoted as energetic performers and achievers. The advertisements both objectify tradition and promote modernity, creating hybridized consumer identities that celebrate capitalist desires under the guise of cultural authenticity. Affective appeals are mobilized across the board to control consumer behavior by appealing to guilt, desire, fear, and pride, and thus reflect neoliberal logics of responsibility and the privatization of care.

The study is critical because it reveals how advertising functions as a discursive apparatus of power in post-colonial societies, such as in Nigeria. Instead of acting as passive mediums of communication, advertisements act ideologically in reproducing hegemonic values, naturalising the structural inequality, and reinterpreting social responsibility in the logic of market-based interactions. Not only do the rhetorical and visual techniques used by advertisers convince, but they are also aimed at influencing culture, regulating identities, and imposing soft governance through consumption. Critical enquiries into advertising as a place of ideological reproduction and symbolic power (multimodal and postcolonial approaches) should become more and more part of critical enquiries being conducted by media scholars. Advertisers should move beyond a narrow-minded stereotype by broadcasting inclusive and culturally sensitive stories that reflect the diverse social realities of Nigerians. Through representational ethics in advertising, regulators must integrate these ethics into their advertising policy to achieve equity and social responsibility in media content. Civil-society actors are encouraged to engage in a critical discourse on advertising by applying media literacy and advocacy to counter negative representations and adopt effective communication practices with the goals of decolonization and justice.

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