



Unveiling Emotional Resonance: A Pathos-Centric Analysis of Domino's Advertisements on Instagram

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Abstract

This study uses a pathos-centric analytical framework to explore the emotional resonance evoked by Domino's Pizza advertisements on Instagram. Understanding the emotional impact of textual and visual content is critical for brands looking to increase consumer engagement and loyalty as digital marketing increasingly uses social media platforms. The study identifies and classifies the emotional appeals used in Domino's Instagram advertisements, evaluating their efficacy in grabbing viewers' attention and promoting favorable brand perceptions through a methodical analysis of a representative sample of the ads. The study shows how Domino's strategically uses Happiness, Love, Patriotism, Victory/Defeat, Affection, and Friendship to resonate with its target audience. The results emphasize how crucial emotional appeal is to digital advertising.

Keywords: Emotional Appeals, Domino's India Advertisement, Instagram Post

Introduction

The emergence of media in human existence has reshaped the notion of advertising. With the vast use of the internet, conventional media methods have taken a backseat, giving rise to online advertising. The extensive engagement with social media has facilitated commerce directly on these platforms or through their endorsement (Bas & Macit, 2023). As the digital age continues to reshape consumer behavior, understanding the emotional dimensions of advertising becomes very important. Domino's, a global pizza giant, has used the maximum potential of Instagram to showcase its creative aspect in marketing and carry viewer's emotions. This study seeks to uncover the subtle intricacies of Domino's emotional appeals on Instagram, delving into the strategies that harness pathos to forge a more profound connection with the audience. By adopting a pathos-centric lens, this paper aims to analyze the emotional triggers of Domino's Instagram advertisements, exploring how these appeals contribute to brand loyalty, consumer engagement, and overall market positioning. Through a comprehensive analysis of visual elements, storytelling techniques, and the overall thematic undertones, this research aims to shed light on the emotional tapestry woven by Domino's in the digital realm. As we navigate through the visual rhetoric employed by the brand, we hope to unveil the psychological impact of these emotional appeals on the Instagram audience and contribute valuable insights to the evolving landscape of digital marketing.

Why Domino's?

The popularity contest among pizza brands in India has been long-standing. Domino's is one of the most admired brands for pizzas. (Domino's India, 2021) Undoubtedly, Domino's holds the title of the leading pizza brand in India and its global retail sales position it as a contender for the world's top brand. With a vast network of over 18,000 stores spanning 90 markets, Domino's has witnessed exponential growth since the 1960s. Their

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extensive experience and knack for crafting locally tailored pizza options have been instrumental in their success. Domino's dominates the Indian marketplace, with 70% of the market being pizza. They also account for 16% of the entire QSR (quick-serve restaurant) marketplace. (Sunaina, coupon hippo).

Instagram as a tool of Advertising

Social media marketing has become crucial for brands and individuals in today's business landscape. Following the rise of social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook in the early 21st century, Instagram entered the scene in 2010, offering marketers a distinctive avenue to engage with their audience through visual content and captions. With its innovative approach, Instagram swiftly gained global popularity, particularly among a distinct demographic, making it a preferred platform for marketers seeking to maintain connections with their customers and target audience. Instagram offers a valuable platform for companies to promote their products or services. It offers a variety of features and services, which makes the advertisements more creative (Bevins, 2014). Its emphasis on visual content sets Instagram apart from other social media platforms (Hird, 2013). The core of Instagram revolves around photography (Linenschke, 2011), making it a powerful tool for marketing as visuals can convey messages effectively (Silva et al., 2013). Moreover, utilizing Instagram for marketing can save brand design costs, as the platform offers various editing and filtering features for product images (Herman, 2014). Furthermore, Instagram's use of hashtags (#), as highlighted by Barnes (2014) cited in Dennis (2014), simplifies the process of locating relevant photos and videos related to a business's products. It is a powerful marketing channel that brands should use to its fullest extent. As it stands, Instagram is the right solution for marketing at the right time (Singh, 2020).

Role of Emotional Appeal in Advertising

Emotional marketing is intended to strengthen the bond between customers and a brand. This taps into people's emotions to create relevance and urgency, sparking a connection with your audience to take immediate action. Appealing to your audience's emotions with advertising makes it easy for them to relate personally to the brand. Thus, purely informative advertising is something that many people cannot relate to. Your audience will trust you more if you can relate to their emotions. There are various emotional appeals that marketers use, whether its fear ad campaigns like what we see with smoking ads (especially towards younger people), or uplifting video content about love and joy between our fellow men; maybe even a nostalgic article on how great things were in the good old days. All these categories of emotional persuasion naturally target specific emotions and desires related to the audience. (Strate, 2022)

Statement of problem

To Explore the emotional resonance in Domin's India advertisements on Instagram.

Review of Literature

- Unee Q Digital Humans, 2021, in their article 'Emotional resonance in advertising is hugely valuable – so why is it so rare throughout the rest of the customer journey?' writes that About 31% of the top-performing advertising campaigns analyzed by USC focused on emotional content. In contrast, only 16% used rational content to promote their products.
- David Vrtana and Anna Krizanova, 2023 in their research paper 'The Power of Emotional Advertising Appeals: Examining Their Influence on Consumer Purchasing Behavior and Brand–Customer Relationship,' conclude that the current trend in marketing communication is the use of emotional advertising appeals by various brands, which has become a crucial aspect of contemporary marketing strategies. Studies have shown that emotional appeals in advertisements notably impact Generation Z consumers, generally aged 18 to 25. This indicates that an effective advertising strategy with emotional components can create a strong connection between the consumer and the brand.
- Tapan K Panda and Kamalesh Mishra, 2013, in their research paper 'Does Emotional Appeal Work in Advertising?', writes that several studies have found emotional appeals to be superior in assisting the formation of favorable attitudes. The correlation between a product's emotional resonance with consumers and its brand value is pivotal for achieving global brand success. Positive emotions such as joy, contentment, curiosity, and absence of annoyance consistently correlate with increased advertising effectiveness and brand recognition.

- Raj Vinaika and Dhruva Manik, 2017 in their research paper ‘How Instagram is Changing the Way Marketing Works?’, discuss that Among the widely used social networking sites, Instagram stands out as a significant player, especially as a mobile application. It is highly popular on mobile and web platforms, facilitating national and global interactions. This platform offers marketers a distinctive way to engage with their customers.
- Busra Bas and Dr. Huseyin Bilal MACIT, 2023 in their research paper ‘A BRIEF REVIEW ON INSTAGRAM ADVERTISING,’ say that in today's world, traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and TV are being overshadowed by Internet advertising. With its strong visual appeal, Instagram has become a significant force in this transition. Both individuals and businesses use its advertising tools to grow followers or increase sales. Instagram offers a powerful marketing opportunity that brands should take full advantage of. Therefore, Instagram is the ideal platform for marketing today (Singh, 2020).
- Cody Strate, 2022 in their article says that Emotional appeals in marketing aim to forge a strong connection between customers and brands by evoking specific emotions. These appeals can create relevance, urgency, and a bond that prompts action. By understanding and leveraging various emotional appeals, marketers can craft compelling campaigns that resonate deeply with their target audience.

Theoretical Framework

Pathos-Centric Analysis: Aristotle’s Rhetoric Model

Pathos, a fundamental aspect of Aristotle's persuasive techniques, is the second pillar within the Rhetoric communication model, directly translating to "emotion." Pathos involves the speaker forging an emotional rapport with their audience, aiming to create a sense of unity and resonance. The premise underlying pathos is that effective communication necessitates an emotional bond, wherein listeners feel understood and connected. Whether instilling confidence, sadness, anger, or other emotions, pathos in communication endeavors to evoke a profound emotional response from the audience. In advertising, pathos evokes emotional reactions from the audience, ultimately shaping their perceptions and behaviors toward the advertised brand or product (Panovski, 2023). This framework will focus on unraveling the emotional resonance in Domino's Instagram advertisements. It will explore how emotions such as joy, excitement, hunger, nostalgia, etc., are strategically employed to engage and persuade the audience.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the emotions used in Domino’s India's Instagram post.
2. To study the visual and textual elements contributing to these emotional appeals.

Significance of the Study

This study will benefit both researchers and industry practitioners as well. For academics, it further develops a stream of literature on social media advertising and the role of emotional appeals in digital marketing. This provides a rich description of how pathos can be employed in Instagram advertisements. This gives advertising professionals helpful advice on the kinds of emotional ads that resonate well and drive consumer behavior by making their content more relevant. The findings highlight the role and significance of pathos concerning contemporary advertising strategies using a particular social media channel, Instagram.

Methodology Adopted

A qualitative content analysis was conducted through selection of Domino's Instagram advertisements to achieve the objective. The analysis focused on identifying the emotional appeals present in the advertisements. Furthermore, the study explored the visual and textual elements contributing to these emotional appeals.

Domino’s Pizza India (dominos_india). https://www.instagram.com/dominos_india?igsh=MW5vOWt2emJxNWYzZg==

40 posts were analyzed within 4 months, from 01 January 2024 to 30 April 2024.

Data Analysis

Total Posts from 01 January 2024 to 30 April 2024.	Number of Posts which used Pathos as their Appeal	Images	Reels
73	40	31	09

Emotions Used	Description
Love	One of the perfect emotions to capture the young audience in February is Love, where Domino's introduced the Limited-edition love-loaded menu, which contains heart-shaped pizzas and heart-shaped Choco lava cake. Also, they have some interesting lines like 'Choco Lava is beautiful like Old Romance,' 'First Hellos Happens only with Pizza,' 'Green Flag and Red Flag,' 'Love at First Slice' and #LoveLoadedIsTheSolulu.
Happiness/Celebration	Domino's, on January 1, 2024, wished their audience the perfect caption: All set for hot and fresh deliveries in 2024. Later, on January 14, when four major festivals of India, Makar Sankranti, Lohri, Uttarayan, and Bihu, fall on the same day, they posted by writing Different Flavors, One Emotion. Following the same pattern for celebration and to show Eid's happiness, they posted 'Manifesting the Sweet Eid' with the caption 'Our sahi tukda is the choco lava cake tukda that is the most chocolatey. They also took advantage of IPL 2024 by offering free delivery during IPL time. Also asked the audience to celebrate every win with the slice of cheesy pizza. One of their caption says 'The only thing sweeter than two Choco Lava Cakes is getting them with Free Delivery.'
Affection	Domino's smartly used affection to target its audience by calling their audience to Join Instagram Live and represent their city during IPL with the tag #HarMatchKaPerfectMatch. This was done due to the affection between Indian youths for cricket in our country and people supporting their favorite team during the IPL. In a few of their posts, Domino's showed a perfect family bond and affection towards each other. The advertisement uncovered the importance of pizza for the Fam-Jam celebration.
Friendship	Several advertisements of Domino's highlight the importance of pizza between two friends. One of their Reel shows a fight between two friends over the missing pizza in the fridge. Here, Domino's attracts its audience with the caption, 'Be super careful about the drop of sauce.' On April Fools Day, they appeal to the audience that 'Time to say, Domino's treat on me to my bestie' #AprilFoolsDay. In their various posts, Domio maintained a perfect blend of joy, laughter, sadness, and emotions to show the value of friendship.
Patriotism	Domino's marked Republic Day with the perfect line: 'Nothing makes mornings more special than Republic Day Parade and an early pizza treat! Or can it?' They also offered flat Rs.125 off (MOV 699)

Victory/Defeat	Several Domino's posts during IPL used Victory/Defeat as an appeal to target the audience. This was carefully done during the time of IPL 2024. They connected every loss/win with the mood to eat Domino's pizza with various ranges.
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Data Interpretation

The research centered on analyzing secondary data extracted from the official Instagram page of Domino's Pizza India ([dominos_india](#)). A total of 40 posts were scrutinized within a four-month timeframe, spanning from January 1st, 2024, to April 30th, 2024. During the specified period, Domino's Pizza India published 73 posts. Among these, the analysis focused on the posts that employed Pathos as their appeal. Pathos, as an appeal, aims to evoke emotions in the audience. The posts were further categorized based on the type of content they presented, namely Images and Reels. This indicates a substantial emphasis on visual content leveraging emotional appeal, with both Images and Reels being utilized effectively to engage the audience emotionally. In addition to examining the appeal strategy, the analysis delved into the specific emotions invoked by the posts. The emotions observed in the content are Happiness, Love, Patriotism, Victory/Defeat, Affection, and Friendship. These emotions represent a diverse range of sentiments Domino's Pizza India targeted in their Instagram content during the specified period. Each emotion serves Domino's Pizza India's target to establish a connection with the audience, potentially influencing their perception and engagement with the brand. Within four months, Domino's connected its audience through various themes. From the New Year in January to Valentine's Week in February, they targeted IPL 2024 for March and April. IPL became the most prominent theme in the advertisement as it showed various emotions like happiness, celebration, unity, and friendship. Overall, the analysis provides insights into the strategic use of emotional appeal and the varied emotions employed by Domino's Pizza India in their Instagram content strategy, contributing to a better understanding of their approach to audience engagement and brand representation on social media.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the age of digital marketing, where consumers are flooded with several advertisements daily, every brand tries to stand out from one another. Looking towards the fast-food industry, every big brand uses various methods to last long in their audience's mind. In the same category, Domino's mastery of using emotional appeal in its Instagram advertisements exemplifies how a well-crafted emotional appeal can elevate a brand's marketing strategy. By consistently tapping into the emotional dimensions of its audience's lives, Domino's promotes its products and builds a loyal customer base that associates the brand with positive and meaningful experiences. The study "Unveiling Emotional Resonance: A Pathos-Centric Analysis of Domino's Advertisements on Instagram" studies the emotional strategies employed by Domino's India in their Instagram advertisements. A pathos-centric perspective examined how emotional appeals are utilized to engage and connect with audiences on social media platforms. In advertising, pathos often evokes various emotions. For a brand like Domino's in the competitive food industry, appealing to the emotional aspects of eating and sharing meals is essential for standing out from competitors and building brand loyalty. One key finding in the study was the prevalence of positive emotions such as joy, excitement, and satisfaction in Domino's advertisements. These emotions were often evoked through vibrant visuals, catchy slogans, and scenes depicting delicious pizzas. By eliciting positive emotions, Domino's aimed to create an association between their brand and feelings of happiness and pleasure, thereby enhancing brand affinity and customer loyalty. Various advertisements run on Instagram daily, likely thousands per day, across many designs and messages. They carry a straightforward concept, but what stands out in this creative style compared to others is that they are trying to rely more on emotional triggers. These advertisements usually show scenarios relating to the viewer's daily life and aspirations. For example, an archetypal Domino's ad might depict a family sitting around the dinner table eating pizza while laughing and high-fiving. This visual effect advertises the product and associates it with emotions and social connections. This drives home the point that Domino's is more than just pizza but a means to an end—a way for people to come together and share happy experiences.

Moreover, the study highlighted the significance of relatable and authentic content in fostering emotional resonance. Domino's advertisements often featured everyday scenarios and relatable characters, making them more accessible and appealing to a broad audience. This authenticity helped Domino's establish a genuine connection with consumers, as they could see themselves reflected in the advertisements. Additionally, the researchers observed the strategic use of storytelling techniques in Domino's advertisements to evoke empathy and emotional engagement through narratives focusing on themes such as friendship, celebration, and togetherness; Domino's created emotional hooks that resonated with viewers personally. By getting into universal human experiences, Domino's forged deeper emotional connections with its audience, ultimately driving brand engagement and loyalty. Embracing a pathos-centric approach and prioritizing emotional resonance can help brands cultivate more robust connections with their target audience, ultimately leading to greater brand loyalty and long-term success in the competitive digital landscape.

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