

1-1-2016

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### Recommended Citation

Khan, N. A., & Moiz, J. (2016). The discourse: Doing it differently– The Oreo Princess Campaign. *Business Review*, 11(1), 85-93. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.54784/1990-6587.1080>

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## CASE STUDY

### The Discourse: Doing it Differently– the Oreo Princess Campaign

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#### Abstract

*Using the three rhetorical elements of Aristotle's model of persuasive communication, namely, Ethos, Pathos and Logos, this article evaluates how the Oreo Princess Campaign has affected existing norms of communication and advertising in Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** *Persuasive Advertising, Children Advertisements, Global Branding, Food Advertising, Emerging Markets, Pakistan*

#### Originality

The originality of the study stems from it being one of the very few analyses revolving around a single communication principle and evaluating the applications of a validated age-old Aristotelian model of communication. The fundamentals of the model have been very keenly applied to the Oreo television commercial [TVC] in order to discern whether or not the model can provide fundamentals for an effective ad production, and could it be applied to other similar brands and their communication strategies. Furthermore, the study also evaluates the effectiveness of the advertisement to suit the Pakistani market. It takes a principal advertisement into consideration and evaluates how 'adaptation' and 'globalization' has made the ad relevant to the local mindset. In the same vein, it aims to uncover how with the use of the Ethos, Pathos and Logos has generated a following among the youth and has taken on board the emotions of both the parents as the key decision makers when making the purchase. Oreo Pakistan is set to establish a trend of its own, as it has achieved globally. The research deems to inquire the core essence of this established brand in an emerging market.

#### Introduction

“Successful advertising appeals to both head and heart, to reasons and emotions”

– Beatson 1986.

Advertising to children has been researched on several parameters, globally all children are being exposed to food marketing at very high frequencies and volumes. Food advertising is considered to be the number one contributor of obesity in children (Just & Payne, 2009). Children are not entirely aware of persuasive advertising and consider it to be truthful. Evidence from psychological research suggests that in most countries food which cannot be proclaimed as healthy or nutritional is the one being advertised more. Use of cartoon characters in advertisements helps gain children's attention and is creating a greater brand recall. Humor is being used to appeal to the target audience (Sugiyama, Healy, Dunstan, Salmon, & Owen, 2008).

According to study by Kelly et al. (2010) if children watch two hours of television, within this time frame they are expected to be exposed to more than 56 food ads per week. It can be inferred that there can be links between advertising, children choices, and

consumption. Young consumers are not an easy audience to target. They seek out for things that belong to their world, hence elements such as “fun” and “play” in advertising inculcates in children that sense of belonging. According Cook (2005, p. 19): “Fun food, in its contemporary iterations, succinctly denotes a food item or category as belonging foremost to children and to a children’s world”

Advertisers today combine food and play aimed to attract children. They use various others symbolic attractions such as tonality, colours, structures, sounds, jingles, language and other variables (Kelly, et al., 2010). Attribution of entertainment with food is not a new phenomenon rather it has been around since the 1950s. The use of fun has become more sophisticated but is substantially same all across borders. Advertisers today use various elements from domestic culture in order to enhance the likeability factor of their ads also the study of Lulio (2010) investigated the meandering tactics that advertisers utilize in catalyzing the children’s cosmos by transforming food products into food for children particularly making it ‘fun food’. Since early 1950s the western world has catered to young teens or children by accentuating the joyfulness and euphoric realm of food consumption, thus coupling entertainment and children merry making with such products (De Lulio, 2010).

Food advertisers today are also using a parent-child combination. This is in line with the expectation to target both the user and the purchaser. A vast range of emotional and visual marketing techniques are being used to attract children. Celebrities and cartoon characters also influence child behavior on the whole (Hebden, King, & Kelly, 2011).

Marketing to children is full of challenges. Most of the advertising campaigns that are targeting children are of confectionary products, snacks and toys. Now, many soap products have started targeting children. Getting to target the right age is critical for the success of an advertising campaign. This is a very dynamic age group where tastes and preferences change constantly. The vocabulary this audience use changes with age along with the visual imagery. Therefore, market and media fragmentation are the most critical challenges. Research suggests that children begin to respond to advertising between the ages of 3 to 5. The second challenge is that users are not the purchasers. Hence the advertisement has to be persuasive enough be converted into a purchase. Also, parents seek different qualities from a product than children, therefore the brands must appeal both hence taking a toll on media effectiveness and its efficacy in achieving the key objectives. This market is evolving fast and advertisers prey to those who buy these products and those who consume (Fletcher, 2004).

### **The Subcontinent Viewpoint**

The subcontinent has been considered as ‘masculine’ and male dominated culture (Hofstede, 2001), typically the influence of men in most of the food choice decisions for their children including choosing which school they should go to. According to Soni & Singh (2012), the TV viewing is under the authority and jurisdiction of parents and in buying of food products they play a consequential part, uncommonly the ‘fathers’ (Soni and Singh, 2012).

A research on young Indian children was carried out to highlight the themes used in children advertisement today in the sub-continent. The most prominent appeals used were of fun and happiness. Being cool is the new upcoming phenomenon these days. Happiness, colours, smell and fantasy are used to gauge the attention of young consumers. Food promotion is being carried out in a similar manner in the developing countries as that of the developed. Indian lifestyles are changing, thus processed and packaged food is slowly making its way into the household and has a big potential. Health and nutrition factor on the whole is

being ignored. Marketers are not highlighting the nutritional aspects, due to which persuasion is playing a key role in the industry rather than informed decision making (Soni & Vohra, 2014)

### **Perspective from Pakistan**

Asian countries have masculine culture with decision power largely dominated by men in the bottom of the pyramid. Another research gathered the perspective of fathers of Pakistani children and their views on advertising. In a Pakistani society advertisers have to be careful to communicate a message in such a way that it doesn't create a conflict between the parents and children. Respondents believed that TV advertising is having a negative influence on children's eating and buying habits. It is triggering the demand for unhealthy food and diet. They believe that the frequency of food commercial targeted towards children should be reduced in order to promote healthy habits amongst young consumers. (Kashif, Ayyaz, & Basharat, 2014)

Biscuit market has been developing into the snack range and is consumed by all ages. Consumers today ignore the rational nutritional facts about biscuits and consume biscuits produced from modern factories. The appealing nature of biscuit is unhealthy; however biscuit consumers have strong associations both in personal consumptions and social display. The consumption of this category helps consumers build an imaginary escape from everyday life to an idealized perfect moment. However with the advent of organic foods the biscuit category can also take a leap towards healthier options for its consumers. (McIntyre & Schwanke, 2010)

### **Oreo- A Global Brand**

Oreo is a 100 year old brand that was first launched in USA. It is a billion dollar brand with an approximate global sale of \$2.3 billion. The brand ensured that its presence is felt locally. Oreo has been a renowned brand and has been able to capture the top of mind recall of consumers for many years. Before the official launch it was available in the market through other sources. But its proper launch by CBL brought it into the running with several other competitor brands in Pakistan. Pakistan is a big biscuit consuming nation with biscuits consumed at various occasions. In such a scenario the entrance of Oreo in the local market felt like a breath of fresh air. Pakistan being a developing marketing has set consumption patterns, therefore the availability of the world finest cookies at an affordable price with the same or matching quality, was none the less a treat to the average consumer. To maintain the quality CBL has invested Rs. 1.1 billion to erect a state of the art production plant in Sukkur (Euromonitor International, 2015).

### **Oreo Campaign in Pakistan**

In 2014, Oreo Pakistan launched the 'Oreo Princess Campaign' (OPC) in the first quarter of that year and made millions smile with their endearing concept, and heart-warming execution. The ad has managed to hit a chord with the audience and build an emotional connection in a short span of time. Oreo's Princess Campaign throws light on the unconditional companionship between a father and a daughter.

The advertisement is an imaginative and heartening work by Circuit Draft FCB, and features one of Pakistan's renowned television model/actor, Fahad Mirza, performing the role of a loving father. The theme revolves around the father-daughter duo, sharing some loving moments over an Oreo. The cute, chubby princess with her contagious smile and even better dialogue delivery Twists, Licks and Dunks her way into the audience's hearts; what better way to learn how to eat an Oreo, than through the instructions of this Oreo Princess. The

sequence begins with the daughter playing the role of a princess in her beautifully decorated room. The father returns from office, and his compulsive need to indulge and pamper his daughter leads him to follow each instruction that the cute, little 'princess' throws his way. After following each instruction, the ad ends with the 'princess' proudly declaring that her father is not yet ready for the yummy Oreo delight! [Refer to Exhibit 1 and 2]

### **Positioning-Dunking it Right Where it Counts**

Oreo, globally, as well as in Pakistan has been positioned to celebrate the love a parent shares with their child and promote family togetherness. After the father-son campaign, Oreo has followed up with a father-daughter relationship to match this positioning. We believe, that the ad employs a slice-of-life approach and a mundane moment made special because of the combination of love and the Twist-Lick-Dunk (TLD) routine of the magical Oreo. The ad ends on an endearing note leaving the consumer feeling emotionally connected with the brand.

### **Connecting with the Audience via Simple Insights**

In Pakistan, Oreo is positioned towards socio-economic classes A and B, predominantly settled in the urban sectors, with the core market tending children and young teenagers. The idea is to ensure young kids as the future brand evangelists, carrying the 'TLD' tradition forward, when they bond with their kids. Fletcher (2004) states that the advertisers have no option but to concurrently cater to needs, demands and fantasies of both the parents and children; hence that is what OPC instituted through its advertising message.

Oreo inspires moments of childlike delight because of its delicious combination of crème and chocolate biscuit and the interactive "TLD" routine that kids love so much. Naturally, the insight that parents love what their kids like doing, they too, would indulge in this childlike behavior to share fun-moments as a family. The "TLD" has become a symbolic benefactor of Oreo, bringing families together. According to the advertising agency of OPC, 'You don't just eat an Oreo, you enjoy it' and that is what the company wanted to communicate with the audience as well.

### **Objective**

The core objective of the ad was to gain a larger market share of the biscuit industry in Pakistan by cementing Oreo's presence in the market since. This is only the second campaign after the product launch in 2013, and the core objective was to increase sales of this globally favorite cookie.

### **Analyzing the Advert on Various Parameters**

The ad's appeal builds on emotions, with a touch of humor that parent usually share with the child. Father-daughter, mother-son, an age old concept-yet Oreo has been able to breathe new life into the simple concept by leveraging the love and unconditional affection of the father- and the spirited, I-know-he-loves-me freedom of the assured daughter. Humor comes in with the witty dialogues of the daughter, who, first admonishes her father for saying "umm", and then refusing to share her cookie with him by coming up with an excuse.

However, the ad's underlying focus on the TLD sequence also sheds light on the functional benefits of Oreo; the chocolate sandwich, the rich, cream filling and Oreo's age-old association with milk makes it all-the-more attractive to parents, who may elect Oreo just for their kid to have a healthy glass of milk, in the process. This useful insight is strongly built into the core essence of Oreo as a brand, and the ad doesn't let the association go missing. It naturally follows that the ad, along with the overall campaign, holds high relevance for the

target audience since it is a regular scene from a household with kids. Simplicity also follows through, since fatherly affection and a young girl's playacting is easy to understand and appreciate within the time span.

There is no customary call-to-action at the end of the advert because the whole ad is a call-to-action (further discussed below); we believe that the TLD routine teaches kids how to have Oreo along with a glass of milk. It is highly likely that the target audience will be heavily influenced by the advert, maybe using their "pester" power to coerce their parents to buy them Oreo just to try the routine since the advertisement follows from the father-son campaign in 2013. The ad is not necessarily disruptive. However, there is an element of uniqueness associated with the portrayal of a daughter instead of a son in a campaign in Pakistan. Predominantly, it is a young boy who is shown along with his mother in an ad. Moreover, the emotion of love, and fun mixed together, along with the distinctiveness of the TLD routine itself makes the ad adequately disruptive. The ad brings forth multiple bond associations of a parent-child love, chocolate-cream filling, the TLD routine, the tagline and Oreo's linkage with milk. The scope of the advertisement is immense, as discussed in the following section. The advert formed the basis of an extensive campaign involving other media towards 360 degree advertising.

#### **The Ethos-Pathos-Logos Triangle:**

Ethos, Pathos and Logos, for an extended period of time have been linked with figures of speech. Ethos has been referred to as the reflection of what a speaker, writer or communicator intends for the audience. Aristotle deliberated that a compelling ethos encapsulating brilliance, immaculate reverence and benevolent personality is transfused through a communicator or speaker. Pathos and Logos are the 'figures of speech' validating writer/communicators to assemble, outline and link ideas that road-maps a silhouette of a solicitous and rational person whose impressions should be measured acutely. They present the instruments corresponding the brilliance, immaculate reverence and benevolent personality, as aforementioned by Aristotle (Kallendorf, 1985)

Ethos is the appeal of a speaker's character or authority which persuades the audience. It allows the audience to connect with the message via its presenter's aura – trusting and relating to it. In the absence of any real celebrity, the advert does focus on how Oreo is a "princess" choice – a choice that young kids would very well aspire to fulfill. Pathos is an appeal to the audience's emotions. Consequently, drawing the audience to be one with the speakers; and in doing so empathizing with their concerns. Here one feels the cross currents of the prior, ethos, adding profusely to the other. The ad is all about the emotional-connection encircling the father-daughter, the "authority" of the make-believe "princess", a father's hug, and finally, the joyous TLD routine. Collectively, espousing a sense of belonging towards the ad- an awe moment for the audience. Logos is a logical appeal typically marked by facts, figures, and data – an appeal to the human intellect. It could include literary or historic analogies or citing certain authorities. Oreo doesn't use any of that in the advert itself, though it has used its claim of being the "world's number 1 biscuit in the world" in other mediums. (Braet, 1992; Higgins & Walker, 2012; Hebden, King, & Kelly, 2011)

The three cornerstones collude, if not explicitly so, to communicate the context of the message. Having established the foundation of the three Aristotelian principles, we must further scrutinize its significance in relation to the contemporary market. As established before, an argument could be made, particularly in contemporary media discourses with its excessive out-flux, whereby the audience is bombarded with innumerable statistics and cost-benefit analysis, leading to an added tolerance of the consumers to such recurring motifs. This particular ad does not integrate factual details, logos, to differentiate the product, rather, and

more importantly so, fuses the prior two to communicate a more effective mix. Moreover, it helps permeate the overall consistency of the ad. The blend of emotional and ethical appeals fuses adequately to convey the inherent persuasive thrust of the ad. Therefore, the omission of an explicit call to reason here is reasonable in itself and very much in sync with the market trends.

### **Mediums**

With a considerable amount of advertisement spending, Oreo's team made sure that the presence of the brand was felt by consumer in the major metropolitans. They used an integrated marketing communication strategy and made the best use of every medium to promote their brand. From billboards to cardboard it seemed as if Oreo was leaving no stone unturned. The billboards focused more on the launch element while the TVC followed the global trend. The billboards were placed at all heavy footfall areas of big cities. They used all large sized billboards using the 'princess' or daughter in the ads with the product display. Also many other billboards only had the product with the famous tag line of twist-lick-dunk and eat. The same was used in print form. The print ads appeared in all the leading newspapers and in children magazines. The radio adverts used the audio version of the princess campaign. However, the team concentrated largely on out-of-home [OOH] and television commercial [TVC]. ("Oreo bombards Karachi with billboards and TVC", 2013)

The launch was done with two PR events, a media launch at Avari Towers<sup>1</sup>, Karachi and was organized by Syntax Communication. This was followed by a mega launch at Carlton Hotel, Karachi with several celebrities. They also carried out several BTL activities at eminent malls like Dolmen mall to attract consumers, increase awareness and generate trial. The mall activations were focused on children with several games and prizes. Highlighting the twist-dunk-eat concept and aesthetically decorated in the brand's colours – blue and white. Oreo also partnered with Transformers which was the biggest launch of 2014 in which they initiated themed packaging. This was a global deal that was also carried out locally. (MediaPoondi, 2014) [Refer to Picture 1 for the Launch Invite].

The brand was extremely active on social media during that campaign. They have an official page with the name of Oreo Pakistan that captures the Facebook audience and engages them in various ways. They carried out several contests and informed the consumers about the ongoing activations. In addition to these, the team went active on Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. The brand also advertised heavily online using websites which attracted their target audience. The brand operated an official website with several attractions for its users. It entailed the consumers through superior design and easy accessibility for increased interactions.

The overall effectiveness of the campaign clearly translated into the ultimate goal of sales. With a market so cluttered with several brands Oreo was able to gain market share from cut throat competitors and have posted sales of more than a billion rupees. The brand had a high recall amongst its target populations, the tagline penetrated well and the emotional connection translated into the establishment of the brand in the grounds of Pakistani market.

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<sup>1</sup>Avari International Hotels offers the modern business traveler every comfort and convenience at its market leading properties. The Avari portfolio of properties include, the award winning & recently renovated 5-star **Avari Towers** in Karachi; the 5-star **Avari Lahore**, which has won six consecutive World Travel Awards for the "**Leading Hotel in Pakistan**"; the historical and legendary **Beach Luxury Hotel** in Karachi (in operation since 1948); the cozy and comfortable **Avari Xpress School Road Residence** and the Avari Xpress 7th Avenue Residence - both in Islamabad. Source: <http://www.avari.com/>

### **Findings**

According to the research findings, the advertising agency responsible for the TVC may not have had the idea of rhetoric communication in mind and worked principally on its thoughtful consumer insights. However, analyzing the Princess TVC through the lens of rhetoric communication, it could be said that the ad has worked wonders as it accidentally seems to fall into the tri-partite model of persuasive communication. But, it is to be considered that had the agency used this model fully while developing the storyboards, the success would have been manifold. Nonetheless, analysts have provided a positive feedback expecting the new product launch to be a big success. Due to its big production, marketing and distribution investments, Oreo is expected to see an increase in demand and further grow the market for biscuits. Its strong global brand name will be a significant contributing factor to its success (Market research provider, Euromonitor International, 2014).

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Despite the research delving deep into the specifics of Oreo's communications, it has some lags which could definitely be worked upon by making this a base for other researches to build upon, and add value to the understandability of global brand development. The research is limited to understanding the communication models and adaptive measures with respect to a particular brand and its prime communication alone. As such, whether different communications spread over different time periods or other brands have not been discussed. This limits one to conclusively concur whether or not the communication model used is solely responsible for the success of the advertisement. Several other possible factors could be credited for a favorable response to the advertisement, the brand's global standing being one of them. Nonetheless, the research provides a strong premise to function as a foundational resource for other research efforts to be based upon and to further furnish the idea of establishing global brands in emerging markets.

### **International Arena**

The case of OPC internationally is a perfect depiction of how brands make their way into the hearts and minds of consumers. The proprietary tag line, superior quality and taste coupled with brilliant marketing campaigns have made it one of the most consumed cookies in the world. The success story doesn't quite end as yet, the brand has penetrated into about a 100 countries catering to various cultures with the same appeal.

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**Exhibit 1: Print Poster Oreo Princess Advert 2014**



Source: Agency Circuit DRAFTFCB, Karachi

**Exhibit 2: Few of the Oreo's Billboards all over the country**

**2 a**



**2 b**



Source: Agency Circuit DRAFTFCB, Karachi

**Picture 1: Oreo Launch Invite at Avari Towers, Karachi**



Source: Agency Circuit DRAFTFCB, Karachi