

# Purpose, Semiotics and Rhetoric: A Study of Select Brands

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## Abstract

With more competition than ever before, customer buying habits are changing, and a lot of brands are facing an identity crisis. Only by putting purpose at the centre of actions and taking into account the needs of customers, partners, and communities alike can brands create long-term value, make themselves stand out, and emotionally connect with consumers. This study reviews the literature on brand purpose, examines persuasive appeals in purpose-driven brand advertisements using Aristotle's rhetorical triangle, and lastly blends semiotic theories with marketing to understand how these brands generate high-impact communications that emotionally engage consumers and affect their behaviour.

**Keywords:** Brand Purpose, Higher Order Meaning, Rhetorical Triangle, Roland Barthes Theory of Semiotics

**JEL classification:** M31, M37

## 1. Introduction

Coronavirus and the worldwide economic turmoil have shaken businesses to the core. The growing macroeconomic challenges (poverty, unemployment, climate change, etc) and concern for a better and safer planet have not only stirred debates at global forums like the United Nations but also changed consumer behaviour and purchase patterns<sup>1</sup>. Not only is the new consumer scrutinizing the brand for its products but also its values and meaning. Brands unlike products do not provide any tangible benefit to consumers, rather they reside in the heart and mind forming powerful emotional connections. As the demand for connections intensifies, consumers perceive brands in a new light. All this has prompted brands to develop new communication with their consumers, not with an aim of short-term sales but to strengthen and deepen existing relationships.

In a world where there is not much difference in price and quality between brands, *Brand Purpose* becomes an

important deciding factor for the product that ends up in the shopping basket<sup>2</sup>. Brand purpose explains why your brand exists or simply put its reason for being<sup>3</sup>. The purpose is important to consumers and businesses alike. Not only is it linked to consumer empowerment but brand growth and business results<sup>4</sup>. Kantar Group in their research<sup>5</sup> determined Brand Purpose as a central element of brand strategy that ensures new competitive advantage, product innovation, and provides continuous long-term value and deeper and long-lasting relationships with its customers. To meet the needs of their customers as well as to "make the world a better place", business leaders and marketers must place purpose at the centre of all they do.

Advertising has long been thought to establish a relationship between communicators and receivers. However, the most effective advertisements are those that highlight the functional, emotional and social benefits of the products and services. According to a different school of thinking, in order to influence consumers, marketing

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must use Aristotle's rhetorical triangle<sup>6,7</sup>. Furthermore, there has long been a close relationship between semiotics, branding, and advertising, and articles assert that the employment of connotation strengthens and persuades communication patterns. This research reviews the literature on brand purpose, investigates purpose-driven ads for rhetoric appeal (ethos, pathos, and logos), and lastly, using Roland Barthe's theory of semiotics<sup>8</sup>, discusses how higher-order purpose is used in ads to emotionally connect consumers to brands at levels beyond the product category.

The paper proceeds as follows: In Section 2, the objectives and research gaps are discussed. The materials and methods, including literature reviews and the study's methodology, are covered in Section 3. Section 4 analyses purpose-driven commercials for rhetorical appeal (ethos, pathos, and logos) followed by Section 5 that discusses how higher-order purpose (by connotation) is derived for select advertisements. The conclusion, limitations, and future research objectives are covered in Section 6, which is the last section.

## 2. Research Gaps and Objectives

Understanding how consumers act, feel, and have goals has always been key to effective marketing. The field has developed from a straightforward argument to demonstrate how a company's brand offered the best value for that market segment to a deeper understanding of the role that emotions play in customer decision-making and, ultimately, what touches a customer's higher nature and aspirations for community and compassion. Brand purpose has been part of many consultancy surveys and advertisement awards, but academic research on the topic is scarce and new. The fundamental purpose of this study is to better understand consumer behaviour and their higher order aspirations through brand purpose in advertisement using applications of semiotic and persuasion theories. The paper investigates the significance of brand purpose in the lives of not just consumers but also brands, which use connotation to create higher-order meaning. The study has three broad objectives:

- To examine the concept of brand purpose and assess its relative importance in the lives of customers and brands.
- Examine prevailing persuasive appeals in purpose-driven brand commercials using Aristotle's rhetorical triangle.

- Using Barthes' Semiotic Theory, describe and analyse the hidden higher order meanings (of dominant persuasive appeal) of advertisement subtext, that brands utilise to form a connection.

## 3. Materials and Methods

Today's commercial environment has grown more complex. It is now more important to communicate a purpose that is clearly stated than it is to reach the people with the specifics of a product. The modern consumer is not only someone who buys goods; they are also concerned citizens who wish to improve the world. As a result, the emotional resonance a brand creates with consumers is influenced by what it stands for and how it defines itself.

### 3.1 Brand Purpose: Meaning and Relevance

While scholars have long linked organisational purpose to firms' competitive advantage, worker commitment, job satisfaction, and consumer loyalty<sup>3,9</sup>, etc – the topic has witnessed a newly heightened interest in the marketing domain with special emphasis on branding. The American Association of Advertisers selected Brand Purpose as the "marketing word of the year 2018"<sup>10</sup>.

Deriving on the lines of organizational purpose<sup>11</sup>; the most agreed-upon way of defining brand purpose is "why the brand exists"<sup>12</sup>. Adding a few additional components, researchers have also defined purpose as: "an intention that creates a contribution"<sup>3</sup> or "why the brand exists and the impact it seeks to make in the world"<sup>13</sup>, or "brand purpose as the brand aim and activities directed towards challenging status quo principles and aimed at both user empowerment and the transformation of social practices"<sup>4</sup>.

"Purpose" takes the word "brand" to a whole new level. It appeals to the neocortex (part of the brain that controls behaviour and emotional connection)<sup>14</sup> and represents an opportunity to be relevant to customers by shifting the focus from selling to engaging. With a large number of brands moving into an identity crisis, purpose-driven branding can provide dwindling brands with a sense of identity<sup>15</sup>, serve as vehicles for social change<sup>4</sup> and earn their loyalty<sup>14</sup>.

Havas Media Group in its Meaningful Brands® Report<sup>16</sup> statistically linked profitability and performance to the brand's meaningfulness and revealed that brands

with purpose outperformed in the stock market by 206 percent over 10 years. Purpose-driven brands not only provide higher returns<sup>17</sup> but also help in strategic brand management, and guide brands' decisions, etc<sup>18</sup>. Consumers are also aligning loyalty and wallets behind brands with purpose. According to the Cone/Porter Novelli survey<sup>19</sup>, 66 percent of consumers would switch to a new product from a company with a purpose. For Millennials and Gen-Z consumers, this percentage rises to 91 percent and even higher, respectively. In actuality, Gen-Z consumers are 82 percent more likely to suggest a purposeful brand to their friends and family, 85 percent more likely to trust a brand, and 84 percent more likely to purchase their products. According to additional research, customers prefer to buy from brands with strong purposes approximately four times more often than from brands without such purposes<sup>20</sup>.

### 3.2 Purpose, Brand Connection and Advertisements

Connection is the new currency that drives the brand. In an increasingly divided society, connections matter more than ever, and people want brands to lead the way. A growing segment of customers is willing to build relationships with brands and engage with them on an emotional level provided brands have a higher purpose that aligns with customer's interests and concerns. When customers feel a connection with a brand, 57 percent increase their spending, 76 percent choose them over a competitor, and 64 percent are rewarded with increased loyalty<sup>21</sup>.

Advertisements establish connectivity between communicators and receivers<sup>22</sup>. In the past, ads sought to inform consumers about a variety of goods and services. Today, however, the purpose of advertising as a persuasion tool in mass communication is to sell a product and bring about the desired changes in the target market's behaviour. Advertising helps us buy more than just products or experiences; it helps us buy more than just consumption<sup>23</sup>. Advertisers use various persuasion techniques, but the most popular among them is the rhetorical discipline within advertising language<sup>24</sup>. Aristotle's rhetorical appeal, also known as the "Rhetorical Triangle", is a very common tool to study in advertising. Tom and Eves<sup>25</sup> suggested that "the advertisements that incorporate rhetorical devices perform better.

With the advent of purpose in marketing, purpose-driven ads are expected to develop a deeper rapport with their consumer base and create authentic connections based on shared values. Purpose-driven ads not only attract more views but also ensure higher engagement rates (0.31 percent as compared to 0.29 percent)<sup>26</sup>. Customers who identify with a brand's purpose and feel inspired by it are more likely to buy its products, have greater faith in it, and even work together to realise its objectives, which enhances society<sup>13</sup>.

### 3.3 Research Design and Data Collection

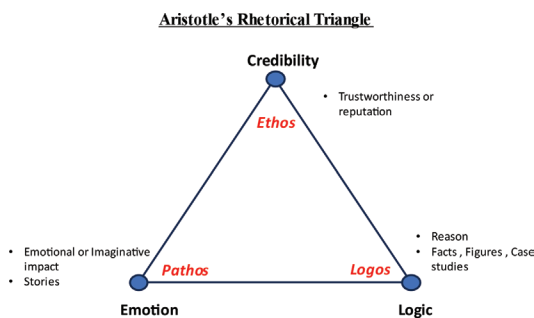
The study's non-numerical nature necessitates qualitative investigation, according to the authors. Researchers can acquire data about how other people see the world using textual analysis. When conducting textual analysis, McKee suggests that we make an educated estimate of some of the most plausible interpretations that could be given to that text<sup>27</sup>. Two of the four main approaches to textual analysis<sup>27</sup> are used in this work by the authors. The rhetorical appeals of pathos, ethos, and logos come first, helping us to better comprehend, interpret, and assess the persuasive powers of messages found inside texts. The next is qualitative content analysis, which combines semiotics theories and examines how brands engage emotionally with customers and communicate higher order purposes. Select advertisements are subjected to subtext analysis utilising Roland Barthe's semiotics theory. The authors examine how brands present their advertised product as a superior remedy for consumers' current problems while connotatively linking themselves to higher order purposes.

Ads selected for this study are video ads of India's top three most Purposeful brands in the FMCG sector (Kantar BrandZ India report 2021)<sup>28</sup>. Choosing purposeful brands ensures the presence of purpose in the brand advertisement making the study more relevant. A purposive sampling technique was used to select Hindi ads telecasted over TV and YouTube in the last year. Restriction criteria included Hindi Ad campaigns as Hindi is the most spoken language in India<sup>29</sup> and last one-year criteria was chosen to ensure recent developments in advertisements are known. The top three most purposeful brands in the FMCG sector, taken for this study are 1. Tata Tea 2. Surf Excel and 3. Taj Mahal<sup>28</sup>.

## 4. Data Analysis

### 4.1 Aristotle's "Rhetorical Triangle"

In any analysis of advertising, the term "rhetoric" is generally used to describe the verbal strategies, typically used to convince and impress people. The best-known definitions of it originate from Aristotle, 'who considers it a counterpart of both logic and politics and calls it the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion'<sup>30</sup>. Modern persuasion is largely founded on Aristotle's proofs who identified three methods in which people can be persuaded: *ethos* – an appeal based on credibility; *pathos* – an appeal based on emotions; and *logos* – an appeal based on logic<sup>7</sup>. Aristotle's rhetorical appeal, is a technique for organising thoughts and presenting them convincingly. Figure 1 explains the 3 point of triangle depicting the 3 appeals.



**Figure 1.** Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle.

**Ethos** establishes the author as an authority on the subject and explains why the audience or reader should trust the information and opinions the author gives<sup>7,31</sup>. *Ethos* aims to convince the audience that the advertiser is reliable and ethical.

**Pathos** is a persuasive technique that tries to convince the audience through emotions. Appeals to *pathos* are the "persuasive reasons in an argument that derive from a community's most deeply and fervently held values"<sup>7,31</sup>. In essence, *pathos* advertising strategies evoke the senses, recollections, sentimentality, or shared experiences.

**Logos** is logic, reasoning, or "rational argument". This section contains information and proof to back up the author's argument. It substantiates the impact of the effects of appealing to *pathos* and especially *ethos*; as an admirable sense of *logos* can help establish *ethos*<sup>7,31</sup>.

The next section explains semiotics and shows how higher order meaning is connotatively derived and how it also helps form emotional connections with consumers.

### 4.2 Semiotics and Connotative Meaning

Advertisements take place in a realm of fiction with specific conventions and narrative patterns, but the audience's associations with the actual world determine their meaning<sup>32</sup>. Semiotics can be used to identify and study these associations. Promoted by European linguist Ferdinand de Saussure<sup>33</sup> and American philosopher C.S. Pierce<sup>34</sup>, 'semiotics is the study of sign; as the basic building block of communication in which language, pictures, performance, and other forms of expression are used to convey meaning'<sup>35</sup>. As mentioned above, one objective of this research is to describe and analyse the hidden higher order meanings (of dominant persuasive appeal) of advertisement subtext, that brands utilise to form a connection (something beyond the meagre product offering). For this, the authors analyse the verbal components of the selected ads and carry out subtext analysis (the subtext of a text is the underlying, connotative meaning that underpins it, according to the current philosophy of texts.)<sup>36</sup> using Roland Barthes' Theory of denotation and connotation<sup>8</sup>. The translation and analysis are done in English to maintain unity across all brands.

Roland Barthes' extended Saussure's concept of signifier, signified, and sign and proposed two levels of signification: the first order, where signifiers relate to signified and result in a sign. Next, the signs of the first-order system become signifiers in the second-order system and relate to the signified to form a connotative sign<sup>8</sup>.

Language's most crucial element, meaning can be expressed in a variety of ways, including gestures, images, symbols, and more. There are two main ways to explain the meanings of words: Connotation and denotation. Denotative meanings, according to Saussure, are those that may be learned from physical things (anatomical principles, materials, and functions)<sup>33</sup>. Denotation, or the initial level of signification, is what this study refers to as an actual relationship between signifier and signified that is related to the use of language in which the meanings are clear, straightforward, and literal<sup>33,37</sup>.

When a word conveys more than its precise or exact meaning, it is said to "connote" or indicate extra meanings

**Table 1. Rhetorical Triangle Summary of Ads**

S.no.	Brand	Ad name	Ethos		Pathos		Logos		Dominant appeal
			Credibility	Emotion	Emotion	Logic			
1	Tata Tea	Jaago Re to Fight Climate Change	Actor Pankaj Tripathi and current pressing issue of climate change.	Emotional appeal is presented via child who urges present generation to change for the best of future generation	Logic	Logic	Logic is presented in form of stats to show climate change (newspaper clipping) and website provides ways to solve problem	Pathos	
	Tata Tea Premium	Desh ki chai celebrates #deshkagarv	Old original images of various achievement	How old achievements are proudly shared again (nostalgia and national pride)				Pathos	
	Tata Tea Agni	Tata Tea Agni - Master-Josh Jagaye har Roz	Actual players of women hockey team	Despite all hardships in life, zeal for game and life changed circumstances for the girls (passion and determination)				Pathos	
2	Surf excel	Surf excel Holi 2022 -Jo rang bachpan lautaye, woh #rangachhehai	Kids are assumed to be innocent and so is their intention	Talks about inner child of every human			Not directly - purpose of detergent is to remove stain	Pathos	
3	Taj Mahal Tea	Taj Mahal Tea New Promotional By Nirvana Films	Use of Indian singer The importance of self-love and musical terms to portray the art of relaxation	The importance of self-love			Implied importance of Pathos taking a break/resting	Pathos	

**Table 2. Denotative and Connotative Analysis Summary**

S.no.	Brand	Ad name	Subtext	Functional purpose		Higher order Purpose
				Literal Meaning	Derived meaning to connect emotionally	
1	Tata Tea	Jaago Re to Fight Climate Change	Jaago Re	Tea gives you energy to get up and work through the day	Promote the idea of pre-activism, to awaken to social problems and pre-act	
	Tata Tea Premium	Desh ki chai celebrates #Deshkagarv	Desh ki Chai	Tea whose origins are Indian or Indian tea or tea for Indian's	Promotes the concept of Collective pride in the country, its achievements etc and also in tandem with make in India and go vocal for local campaign (as India's will choose what is made in India - desh ki chai)	
2	Tata Tea Agni	Tata Tea Tata Tea Agni - Master - Josh Jagaye har Roz	Josh Jagaye har Roz	Taste of strong tea provides energy/enthusiasm to work each day	The fire inside you, spirit of strong energy/ enthusiasm to work each determination and passion helps you to work hard and follow dream every-single-day	
	Surf excel	Surf excel	Daag aache hain	Stains are good	Gateway for unleashing human potential, practise good habits and learn by experience	
3	Taj Mahal Tea	Surf excel Holi 2022   Jo rang bachpan lautaye, woh #rang aache hain	Jo rang bachpan lautaye, woh rang aache hain	Colours are good - make things beautiful and bright	Inner child like happiness is pure and honest and one must break the social norms of acting age appropriate	
	Taj Mahal Tea	Taj Mahal Tea New Promotional Film By Nirvana Films	Sukoon se mulaqaat karaye, Taj mahal chal	Tea helps you to meet Peace	Encourages self-care and wellbeing and peace of mind with a cup of tea	

and values that are not explicitly stated in the definitions provided by most common dictionaries. Connotation opens the possibility of broad interpretation as it is formed when the signifier is associated with a variety of psychological aspects such as feelings, emotions, or beliefs. In other words, connotation means reading implied meaning<sup>37</sup>.

The following section first evaluates ads in the light of Aristotle's rhetorical triangle and then assesses both the denotative and connotative meanings of the subtext.

## 5. Discussion and Interpretation

The past two years have been a period of turmoil. The pandemic has prompted not only consumers but brands to re-examine their purpose: what they stand for and what they deliver to consumers, beyond the idea of making a profit for their shareholders. The consumers' expectations from brands have stepped up, not just in terms of delivering products and services, but also in terms of adding real meaning to their lives. Brands are now adopting marketing strategies that promote the brand in ways that look beyond the function of the product or service. This section discusses the dominant appeals in advertisement and how both functional and higher order meanings are showcased by brands (India's top three most Purposeful brands in the FMCG sector (Kantar BrandZ India report 2021) to connect emotionally. Table 1 presents a summary of the ads' rhetorical appeal, while Table 2 presents a summary of the denotative and connotative analysis.

### 5.1 Rank 1

#### 5.1.1 Tata Tea

*#JaagoRe #FightClimateChange*

In a market where brands were amplifying noise around functionality, the Jaago Re campaign brewed emotional connections and won the hearts of consumers. The campaigns have played a key role in sparking a social revolution over time by awakening an entire generation of Indians to socio-cultural concerns that affect them.

The new *#JaagoRe #FightClimateChange* campaign was released on World Environment Day (5<sup>th</sup> June, 2022)<sup>38</sup>. The ad is a fun banter between a father and son (played by Pankaj Tripathi and a child) highlighting the inconvenience caused by increasing the AC temperature inside the home. The advertisement makes the point that despite the fact

that a few extra degrees of heat can be uncomfortable in our houses, we might still be callously apathetic to the drastic climate change the earth is experiencing. The central message jolts us into awareness of climate change by serving as an urgent reminder for all parents to take action against it now, lest it be too late to protect their children's future. With the proposition '*Apne Liye Nahin Toh...Apne Bachon Ke Future Ke Liye JaagoRe*', the brand highlights the fact that climate change is pervasive, affecting families in every socio-economic stratum and urges citizens to pre-act on this social issue concerning all.

The ethos element of any ad highlights the credibility of the speaker or presenter, and it can be invoked by discussing issues important to consumers (helps build trust). In light of the current ad, the ethos element is observed when the advertiser discusses the pressing issue of climate change via a reputable actor like Pankaj Tripathi. It shows the seriousness of the issue. The pathos appeal is seen when the child urges the parent to change the present to secure his future. As a parent, a child's future safety is paramount, and one can do anything to protect it. The advertiser emotionally appeals to the current generation to mend its ways to help protect the future generation. The logos appeal is related to logic and reasoning and is presented through elements like a newspaper, a child talking about various repercussions of climate change and how the website of the brand provides solutions for the same. The ad is a perfect mix of the three appeals, but the dominant among them is pathos as the ad makes the audience feel the seriousness of the issue.

Coming to semiotics analysis; at the tactical level *jaago re* is used to show the effectiveness of tea, which helps us to get up in the morning. It shows the strongness of tea leaves to fight lethargy. The complete subtext '*Utho nahi - jaago re*' denotatively stands for "not just get up from sleep but to awaken". However, Connotatively '*jaago re*' is a plea for people to be wide awake not just to one's own problems but societal problems. In the light of current advertisement, the higher order purpose of '*Pre-activism*', is suggested by the brand which connects consumers to the brand at a level beyond the product (tea leaves). It promotes the idea of timely behaviour (pre-activity) to prevent the occurrence of unfortunate events in future, which again is in correspondence with the pathos appeal<sup>39</sup>.

#### 5.1.2 Tata Tea Premium - Desh Ki Chai

Tata Tea Premium, a flagship brand of Tata Tea, has been a pioneer of hyperlocal campaigns, catering to diverse taste

preferences and celebrating India's rich culture. It is very much in tandem with the "make in India" and "go vocal for local" campaigns of the Indian government, promoting Indian make products. Tata Tea Premium launched the #DeshKaGarv campaign<sup>40</sup> to honour India's wonderful post-independence path. The advertising campaign featured authentic photographs from a seven-decade journey that document famous occasions and events that not only made history at the time they occurred but also catapulted India onto the global stage. In an effort to immortalise these landmark moments and enable people to reflect on the magnificent history of the country, the company launched a limited-edition #DeshKaGarv collection of tea sets and tin packs as part of the campaign.

The ethos or credibility appeal of the ad can be seen via the use of original images of iconic moments. The ad's logos appeal is not very prominent however the pathos or emotional appeal again takes centre stage. The ad evokes nostalgia and pride (pride in one's origin); both being very strong emotions for any human. As the ad progresses one feels these strong emotions of nostalgia hitting and also pride in the achievements of the past.

At a functional level, it may seem to promote tata tea as an Indian tea but at a higher order level it promotes the concept of national pride, pride that is associated with one's place of origin, all its past achievements etc. The brand, through its #DeshKaGarv campaign, aimed to arouse 'nostalgia and collective pride' by illustrating the post-independence history of India, which is immortalised through some of these famous moments that foster strong emotional ties.

### 5.1.3 Tata Tea Agni

#### *Josh Jagaye har Roz*

In the broad portfolio of Tata Tea, Agni is the second-largest brand. Initially, it was marketed to price-conscious consumers, especially those who wanted to switch from loose to branded tea. Agni means fire, as suggested by its name. The campaign<sup>41</sup> tells the true tales of three Indian women's hockey team members. The ad showcases the innumerable problems (social, economic, etc) that the athletes face each day in their lives.

The ethos element of the ad can be established by the actual players of the Indian hockey team. When the story is narrated by actual experts, it creates validity. Like the previous advertisement, logos cannot be directly deduced. However, pathos or an emotional element is seen via the storytelling component. The

ad in a way represents women empowerment (another pressing issue of current times) who despite all odds, show strong determination and passion that leads to success. It caters to aspirational consumers (especially women) in the process of upgrading their lives with its new positioning.

The phrase '*Josh Jagaye Har Roz*' refers to the extra vigour and enthusiasm that extra-strong tea leaves offer. These tea leaves not only refresh the mind but also awaken the fire, or *josh*, within one to embrace and seize all possibilities that come one's way. Connotatively it brings alive the true spirit of strong determination and passion. It exhorts readers to recognise the significance of igniting one's passion and resolve and chasing one's dreams every single day. The company encourages its customers to live a meaningful life with strength and vigour, echoing the slogan of '*Josh Jagaye har Roz*'.

## 5.2 Rank 2

### 5.2.1 Surf Excel

As a market leader in the Indian detergent industry, Surf Excel has consistently innovated ahead of the competition and introduced new product forms to meet the country's consumers' evolving needs. In 2005, Surf Excel moved away from its functional proposition and extended its 'Dirt is good' campaign running in Brazil to '*Daag Acche Hain*' campaign for the Indian markets. Denotatively speaking '*Daag Acche Hain*' stands for stains are good and Surf Excel as a brand will take care of it. However, its connotative meaning is much deeper. Surf Excel believes that dirt and experiences are a gateway for unleashing human potential and encourages mothers to push their children to learn by experience. Also, for a long time, Daag was compared with women's 'pride' (at a cultural level) and it was believed that stains cannot be washed away, especially if you are a woman. The brand, made us accept our flaws and reminded us that flaws make humans, humans. Through its metaphorical campaigns, the brand equated the temporary nature of stains with problems or differences in relationships and propagated that both can be easily mended or washed away with little effort.

The latest campaign '*Rang Acche Hain*'<sup>42</sup>, redefines Holi in a pandemic. Addressing today's emotional need to connect with loved ones, the '*Rang Acche Hain*' campaign showcases how Holi colours bring people together. The ad revolves around the notion of adults being mature and acting their age and shows how the lady unconsciously



picks up colours to play Holi but leaves them thinking she is too old for this. The child in the ad sees this, and hugs her, making her white dress all colourful. The ad ends with ‘*jo rang bachpan lautaye, woh rang aache hain*’. The kids in the ad represent both the ethos and pathos elements. Kids are innocent and always have the best intentions thus showcasing credibility and their quest to get back their aunt’s childhood shows the pathos element. The logos is indirectly present where the advertisers try to tell the audience not to shy away from stains as the purpose of detergent is to remove them.

In semiotics, at the denotative level, ‘*rang aache*’ stands for ‘colours are good’ and they indeed are as they make things brighter and more beautiful, especially in our young days. At the connotative level, it shows that one must never leave the inner child within them and should enjoy everything with childlike innocence and curiosity. Here ‘*jo rang bachpan lautaye*’ relates to all those activities that help bring out the inner child in you and all such activities are deemed good.

### 5.3 Rank 3

#### 5.3.1 Taj Mahal

Broke Bond Taj Mahal, a Unilever brand, promises to foster excellence in every cup of tea. Taj Mahal ranked number 3 among the most Purposeful brands in the FMCG sector by Kantar BrandZ India Report 2021. The brand campaigns ranged from ‘*Wah Taj*’ appreciating the perfection of tea and juxtaposing it with one of the seven wonders of the world to the last campaign ‘*Fursat Wali Chai*’ which encourages to pace of this fast-moving world. The recent campaign ‘*Sukoon ka Riyaaz*’<sup>43</sup> features a popular Indian singer who usually practises her raga but urges to skip that practise and instead practise (riyaaz) peace in silence. The persuasion appeal of ethos is established by the singer herself quoting musical terms to practise peace. At the emotional level (pathos), the campaign reminds us to hit the pause button when life becomes too hectic and allow oneself a moment of peace and uncover the magic in the mundane. The logos element is indirectly deduced from the innate importance of taking a break or resting and the author’s quote *Sukoon ‘Se Bethna Bhi Ek Kala Hai’* i.e., even sitting in silence is itself an art.

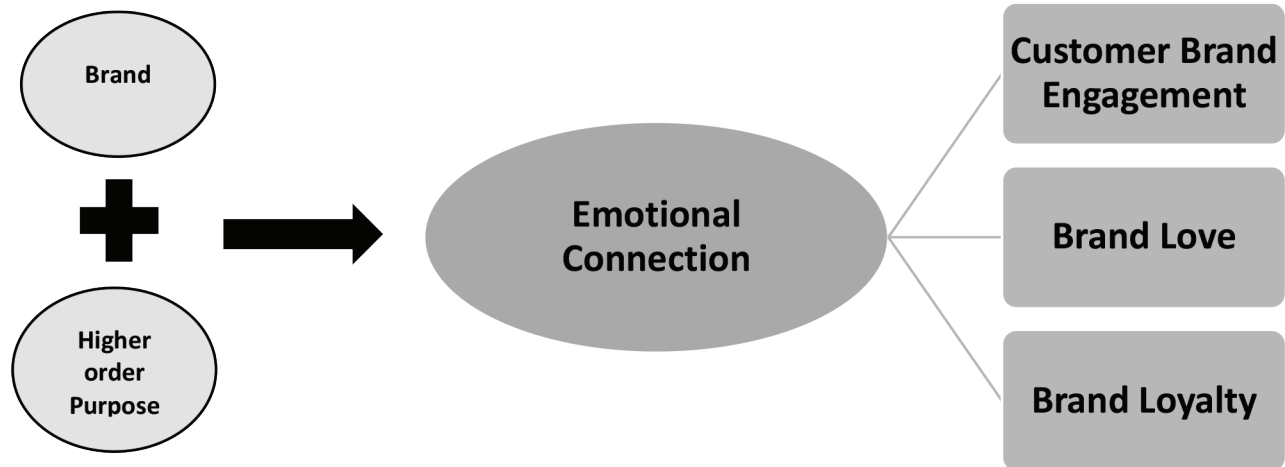
In its literal meaning, ‘*Sukoon ka Riyaaz*’ equates to practising peace. In the ad, the protagonist is seen speaking lines like ‘*Aaj Kuch Alag Riyaz Karte Hain, Suron*

*K Saath Nahi, Chuskiyon K Saath Karte Hain, Sukoon Se Bethna Bhi Ek Kala Hai, Aaj Issi Ka Riyaz Karte Hai*’ which equates to a doing a different practise, not with usual musical keys but with a sip of tea. She adds that sitting in peace is also a talent and today we must practise this. This implies the brand at a deeper or higher order level encourages self-care and wellbeing through a beautiful composition of peace, solitude, the beauty of nature and that warm cup of tea. We live in a world that celebrates speed and where keeping busy and chasing dreams is a measure of happiness. But life’s most rewarding moments aren’t found in grand plans or great adventures, instead, they are found when we are in our own company, breaking away from our schedules. The campaign reminds us to hit the pause button and allow oneself a moment of peace.

Even though Romanova and Smirnova<sup>44</sup> advise using three persuasion strategies to get the desired outcome, the data reveals that pathos appeal predominates, particularly in the chosen purpose-driven advertisement. Since pathos creates a sense of familiarity and a bond between the speaker and the listener, it is the quickest approach to grab the attention of the audience. Furthermore, all of the brands connotatively convey their higher purpose in addition to their functional purpose, highlighting the emotional and social benefits of adopting that brand—yet another indication of the predominance of pathos or emotion. Further research has demonstrated the superiority of pathos appeals over others. According to Lee and Heere<sup>45</sup>, emotional advertising was more effective than rational and combination advertising at influencing consumers’ attitudes towards the commercial, brand attitudes, purchase intentions, and consumption of goods. Rahman and Pail<sup>46</sup> concluded that the majority of consumers are influenced by both emotional and logical appeals in advertising. They also added that those who are “less than 30 years old” and “students” were more susceptible to emotional arguments than to intellectual ones.

## 6. Conclusion, Limitation and Future Research Agenda

This paper aims to pique interest in brand purpose research moving forward since we believe it might radically change how society, businesses, and consumers interact. Since purposeful communication drives ‘why your brand exists’ it encourages customers to become part of something bigger than making a profit. In fact,



**Figure 2.** Relation of Brand Purpose, Emotional Connection, and Brand Outcomes.

many young consumers think that brands have the power to effect positive social change<sup>4</sup>.

Consumers regard brands not merely as means to an end but also as a method of achieving higher-order objectives (life goals and personal values), which play a significant role in their daily lives. They interact with brands in certain ways<sup>47</sup>, and they do so not only for their practical benefits but also for their symbolic significance<sup>48</sup>. Emotional considerations focus on symbolic benefits, that satisfy consumers' high-level needs and engage them in additional meaningful ways<sup>49</sup>. This emotional connection is a crucial component of the relationship since it has the potential to develop to the point where customers develop a strong emotional affinity with brands, a feeling known as "brand love"<sup>50</sup>. A strong emotional connection fosters "loyalty beyond reason" and is increasingly important as technology advancements make it harder to differentiate purely based on practical advantages<sup>51</sup>. Additionally, research indicates that customers are more likely to engage with businesses that appeal to their emotions<sup>49</sup>. This is because customers view brand purpose as a potential partner to obtain not just functional values but also emotional and social values. A clear sense of purpose engenders emotional connections which go across borders and a community of fans and turn them into ambassadors. Zeno's APAC Strength of Purpose study<sup>20</sup> showed that 81 percent of consumers consider purpose when deciding to engage with a brand on social media. Since brand purpose precedes emotional connection, it might be essential for brands to have a purpose to benefit from its favourable effects. The proposed relationships can be investigated quantitatively in future studies (Figure 2).

Despite several contributions, certain limitations are also associated with this research. First, the lack of generalisation of findings represents a key limitation of qualitative research<sup>52</sup>. The research evaluates three brands concentrating mainly on consumer goods. Also, textual analysis results in varied interpretations, which may lay the foundation for the next set of researchers to study the same object and possibly find different interpretations (resulting in enlarging the knowledge) but again creates a problem of generalization. Therefore, future research should include diverse industries and adopt quantitative methods, including econometric modelling along with experimental research to establish universal findings.

The pandemic has made consumers more conscious about brand ethics and purpose, making the concept of brand purpose an important factor in consumers' purchase decisions. To connect with consumers, advertisers make persuasive advertisements in the language that the target understands. Purpose-driven advertising focuses on what consumers anticipate from a company, the stories it tells about the difference it has made, and ultimately the emotional connection it develops with its audience. All of these will ultimately reap financial benefits. Purpose is not only instrumental to positive societal change but provides a point of differentiation that consumers want, streamlines decision-making as well as aligns and motivates employees.

The current study throws light on dominant persuasion appeal and uses semiotics to analyse connotative meaning built into the subtext of selected advertisements. The result of this analysis is given shape in the form of interpretation which suggests emotional appeal or pathos to be dominant, especially in purpose-

driven advertisement and how advertisers derive higher-order meaning through subtext to emotionally connect with consumers. Literature suggests the result of semiotics can vary in interpretation and these varied interpretations throw light on the various social overtones and current cultural implications prevalent in the economy. All this information will be valuable for businesses as it can be used to prepare positioning strategies not only for current products but for new products. Therefore, purpose-driven advertising can be a crucial step towards a more conscious market that propels progressive change in the era of more aware citizens and more mindful business activities.

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