

# Drama in Advertisement as a Tool for Telecommunication Networks

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## ABSTRACT

## Original research paper

Drama has been effectively explored by many industries in advertising their brands. This paper explores the effectiveness of drama-based advertisements in enhancing consumer engagement, brand recall, and loyalty within the telecommunication industry with MTN as case study. This article is anchored Social Learning Theory and Narrative Transportation Theory in treating the theoretical framework. Through a quantitative survey, the study investigates how narrative elements such as relatable characters, compelling storylines, and emotional appeal influence consumers' perceptions and purchasing decisions regarding telecommunication brands. Findings indicate that drama-based advertisements significantly improve consumers' emotional connections with brands, making them more memorable and fostering long-term loyalty. Additionally, these advertisements effectively position telecommunication services as integral to daily lives, enhancing brand relevance and consumer attachment. The study concludes that drama is a powerful tool for telecommunication advertising and recommends that brands invest in creating narrative-driven campaigns that relates and aligns with diverse consumer segments.

**Keywords:** Drama, Tdvertisement, Telecommunication networks, Consumer behaviour, Brand perception, Customer loyalty.

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## Introduction

Brand promotion is a thing synonymous with businesses, whether at a small, medium or large scale. Advertising is a fundamental aspect of marketing communication, aimed at influencing consumer behaviour and promoting brand awareness. The concept is a form of marketing communication that involves the use of paid, non-personal messages to promote or sell products, services, or ideas to a target audience. In a specific sense, advertising aims to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about a brand, ultimately to influence consumer behaviour. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), advertising is defined as "any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor" (American Marketing Association, 2017). Collaborating the foregoing provision, Belch and Belch (2018) assert that advertising plays a critical role in creating

awareness and shaping consumer perceptions, often leveraging a variety of media channels such as television, radio, print, digital platforms, and outdoor displays. It serves not only to introduce new products or services to the market but also to maintain consumer interest in established brands.

Be that as it may, over the years, brand promoters have adopted various creative strategies to reach their target audiences, among which, drama has emerged as a potent tool. According to Goldstein and McAfee (2016), drama, this is characterized by its emotional storytelling and human-centered narratives that engages viewers at a deeper level than traditional advertising methods. Drama has proven to be an effective way to enhance the memorability and impact of advertisements. When integrated into advertising for telecommunication networks, drama enables brands to convey complex messages in a relatable and captivating manner.

To remain in context however, it suffices to state that the telecommunications industry, which is characterized by intense competition and rapid technological advancements, faces constant pressure to stand out. Thus, Keller (2013) opines that with multiple companies offering similar services, branding and customer loyalty have become essential differentiators. Hence, telecommunication networks must find innovative ways to connect with consumers and communicate the value of their services. It becomes unequivocal to infer that one way to achieve this is by utilizing drama as a storytelling device. Through the use of dramatic narratives, telecommunication advertisements can highlight the emotional and practical significance of staying connected in a digital age, thereby, emphasizing the role of the network in enhancing relationships, business interactions, and everyday communication.

Drama in advertising naturally offers narrative techniques that provoke emotional responses, making advertisements more memorable and persuasive (Escalas, 2004). According to studies by Deighton, Romer, and McQueen (1989), emotional appeals in advertisements are more likely to evoke positive attitudes toward the brand and influence consumer behaviour. With the application of drama, telecommunication networks can position themselves as integral to the lives of their users by demonstrating how their services facilitate personal connections and resolve real-life challenges. For instance, in many regions, telecommunications advertisements incorporate relatable family, friendship, and community themes, showing how their network helps people maintain relationships across distances. In Nigeria, for example, brands such as MTN and Airtel have used drama-based advertisements to appeal to the emotions of their customers, depicting scenarios where people stay connected with loved ones or solve critical issues through reliable communication networks. These advertisements often become part of the broader cultural conversation, reflecting societal values and enhancing brand recognition (Okanlawon, 2020).

Granted the foregoing, this study is set out to explore the effectiveness of using drama as a tool of advertisement for telecommunication networks. Through a studious investigation of how drama engages consumers, conveys product benefits, and strengthens brand identity, this study hopes to dish out an understanding of the role of narrative techniques in the advertising strategies of telecommunication companies. It will also examine how emotional connections creatively forged through drama-based advertisements can impact consumer loyalty and brand preference, particularly in highly competitive markets like the telecommunication industry.

In the business world, competition is a constant conflict. Given this instance, it becomes unequivocal to make the mention that in the highly competitive telecommunications industry, companies are constantly seeking innovative ways

to differentiate their brands, build customer loyalty, and increase market share. With multiple service providers offering similar products such as voice calls, data services, and internet connectivity, advertising has become a critical tool for capturing consumer attention and standing out. Traditional advertising approaches, often relying on straightforward messaging and product demonstrations, have become less effective in engaging an increasingly sophisticated audience.

Granted the foregoing, drama, as a form of narrative advertising, presents a unique opportunity for telecommunications companies to emotionally connect with their target audience. By engaging audience with stories that reflect everyday experiences and challenges, drama-based advertisements can humanize the brand and highlight the essential role of telecommunication services in personal and professional life. However, despite the growing use of drama in advertisements by telecom companies, there is limited empirical research on its effectiveness as a marketing tool in this specific industry. The paucity of such research raises a critical question of its impact on the development of brands and the business aspect.

This study thus seeks to address these gaps by examining the use of drama as a tool of advertisement for telecommunication networks. It will analyze how drama-based ads influence consumer perception, recall, and emotional connection with the brand. The study will also explore whether the use of drama in telecom advertising has a measurable impact on customer loyalty and market positioning, especially in regions where the telecommunications market is highly competitive, such as Nigeria.

The aim of this paper is to examine drama as a tool of advertisement for telecommunication networks. Consequently, the following objectives will guide this study. It will equally assess the impact of drama-based advertisements on consumer engagement and recall of MTN's telecommunication brand, analyze how drama in advertising affects consumers' emotional connection with MTN's telecommunication brand and evaluate the role of drama-based advertisements in enhancing brand loyalty and influencing consumer purchasing decisions with MTN's telecommunication brand.

This article on drama as a tool of advertisement for telecommunication networks is not just significant for nothing, but is very relevant as it will benefit several stakeholders. Telecommunication companies will gain valuable insights into how dramatic storytelling can enhance their advertising strategies. This will help them engage more effectively with consumers and strengthen brand loyalty. Similarly, advertising agencies and professionals involved in creating telecom ads will also benefit, as the study will provide rich insights on crafting emotionally

compelling and relatable narratives for audience(s). Marketers and brand managers within the telecommunications sector will be equipped with knowledge on how drama-based advertisements influence consumer behaviour. This will in turn improve their decision-making in campaign/brand design and resource distribution. Academics and researchers in marketing and communication, and other interrelated fields will find this study as a useful contribution to the literature on advertising effectiveness. Thus, contribution to knowledge.

Basically, this article focuses on examining the use of drama as a tool of advertisement in the telecommunications industry. Specifically, the study will analyze how drama-based advertisements influence consumer behaviour, brand perception, and customer loyalty. The study will cover MTN's telecommunication networks, with a primary focus on advertisements in the Nigerian market, where telecommunication brands such as MTN, frequently use drama in their marketing campaigns. The study will explore the effectiveness of these ads by assessing consumer engagement emotional connection, and recall.

In a related interest, this study is delimited to the telecommunications industry and will not cover drama-based advertisements from other sectors such as retail, finance etc. Additionally, the study will focus on television and digital video advertisements, excluding other forms of media such as radio, print, or outdoor advertising. The study will also concentrate on the perceptions and reactions of Nigerian consumers only, thus limiting its findings to this geographical context. In all, it is important to note that the study will focus solely on the use of drama as a narrative tool in advertisements of MTN's telecommunication brand.

## Literature Review

### Concept of Drama/Theatre

In many cases, people see theatre as a building or outdoor area in which plays and other dramatic performances are given. Although not wrong, this widely carried view of theatre limits the subject to place and consequently, a noun. Be that as it may, Ejiofor (2007) observes that:

The ambience of theatre reaches beyond the physical location identified as Theatron (i.e. seeing place/physical structure). The context of theatre relevant to our purposes is a composite context which employs the arts of playwriting, directing, costume and make-up, acting, scenography, and theatre management in concert at performances for the sole purpose of communication (p.3).

Apt is Ejiofor's submission thus, theatre can be defined as a collaborative art form which combines words, voice, movement and visual elements to express meaning. Relatively, Agofure (2013) defines theatre as:

...a collaborative form of fine art that uses live performers to present the experience of a real imagined event before a live audience in a specific place. The performer may present this experience through the combinations of gesture, speech, song, music or dance while elements of design and stagecraft are used to enhance the physicality, presence and immediacy of the experience. Similarly, the specific place of the performance is also named by the word theatre as derived from the ancient Greek theatron, a place of viewing and theaomai, to see, to watch, to observe. (p.232).

It suffices to say however that the field of theatre encompasses not only live improvised and scripted work, but also dramatic forms such as film, television and other electronic media. Due to the increasingly pervasive influence of contemporary theatrical media, one can confidently say that theatre has enormous impact in its patron. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible for students to achieve media literacy without understanding and having hands-on experience with theatre. Theatre is about the examination and resolution of fundamental human issues, and is built on understanding and presenting interactions between people. No wonder Clive (2017) affirm that:

Theatre practice stimulates environmental awareness as well as provides a conditioned response to the shared aspirations of the people. Theatre practice goes beyond aesthetic and entertainment because it provides a framework for conscientization as well as socialization. The theatre at all times have provided directions out of difficulties (p.72).

Relatively, theatre work provides a vehicle for students to reflect on important aspects of life, in the process developing their sensitivity to and deepening their understandings of others' points of view. The broad, worldwide base of theatrical literature or repertoire ranges from classical forms such as Japanese Kabuki and Shakespeare, to folk forms such as traditional puppetry, to contemporary forms such as animated cartoons and movies. However, collapsing all the forms and granting a general statement is to necessary say that theatre is a very powerful tool for communication. It can be manipulated to suit a wide range of situations and audience as well. Through language and graphical representation of situations, drama appeals directly to the conscience of the people and has the capacity to cause them to take dependable action. Theatre spur people to be bold and confident and consequently reactive to threatening situations.

Counting the foregoing, it is thus forgiving to make the supposition that theatre can aid learning and improve child creativity. Whereas the above can only be achieved with quality theatre education, it is on course to reckon that quality theatre education is correspondingly broad-based. To be lucid and comprehensive is to state that theatre education should necessarily extend beyond the teaching of acting to develop

students' abilities in areas ranging from technical theatre to directing, and from researching the cultural and historical context of repertoire to creating their own improvised or scripted works.

Guner and Guner (2012, p.328) posits that "theatre, which is a significant leg in art education, have took place in schools as a year-end performance in a didactic way; however, it is not considered from the point of view of creativity, aesthetic and learning aspects. Theatre is an integral part performing arts as well as language arts, hence the foundation for theatre should begin at birth as children develop personal communication skills." Citing Guner and Guner (2012), Nutku (1998) having stated that the talent awareness of theatre is wide, affirms that for the theatre to earn a mark in the educational sector, it should be included in the education programs in a certain and effective way such as music and art. Relatively, parents and preschool and elementary teachers should encourage imaginative play and role-playing, both for their own sake and as important components of the learning process across the curriculum. All students should study creative writing, improvising and writing scripts; expressive public speaking, media literacy, theatrical production and interpretation; and other key communication skills as part of their basic primary school arts curriculum, and should deepen and apply these skills in formal theatre experiences under the guidance of expert theatre teachers. Secondary schools should incorporate theatre courses into their required curriculum, and also offer sequential elective courses in areas such as acting, technical theatre, script writing, animation and video/film.

To further state the essence and value of theatre will amount to a case of overemphasis. However, to be conclusive is to reflect on Guner and Guner (2012, p.329) statement that "while the theatre teaches the attendees to comment with thinking and cooperation, it instils the emotion of responsibility which is a must for the society life span.

## Characteristics of Drama

Drama, as a literary and performance art form, possesses distinct characteristics that differentiate it from other genres. One significant element of drama is its ability to represent life through imitation or "mimesis" (Aristotle, 335 BCE), where actions, emotions, and situations are portrayed by actors in a manner that reflects real human experiences. This performative nature requires the presence of a plot, dialogue, and characters that interact within a structured narrative (Esslin, 1976). Wole Soyinka, the renowned Nigerian dramatist, emphasizes the social and political relevance of drama, noting that it often serves as a medium for societal reflection and critique, particularly in African contexts (Soyinka, 1973). Drama also hinges on conflict, a driving force that generates tension and keeps the audience engaged (Brockett, 2007). In addition, it incorporates elements like setting, theme, and stage direction, which work in unison to convey the intended message or moral (Obafemi, 1996).

## The Artistic Processes in Drama/Theatre

### • Creating

Creating in drama/theatre is a process in which practitioners/students use the voice, body, and imagination to express concepts, ideas, and feelings. At its heart, creating in drama/theatre involves generating stories and "imagined worlds" that are communicated through words, voice, movement, aural elements, and visual elements. Whether stories are scripted or improvised, the creative process in drama/theatre begins with imagination; either individually or collaboratively practitioners/students pursue an idea through creative exploration and inquiry. The standards for creating emphasize that as ideas are developed, theatre artists make choices. Whether for the development of a script, design or character, practitioners/students' experience of the creative process in drama/theatre should include an exploration of the "how, when, and why" choices get made. Asking and answering those questions defines the purpose of each production, guides the production processes and ultimately ensures a contextual meaning at the end of the day. The creative processes culminate with rehearsals during which practitioners/students practice and refine their ideas as well as find solutions to design and technical problems. Exactly what the creative process looks and feels like will vary depending on the participants' level of creativity, perception and experience.

At the earliest stages, creating involves transitioning from reality to an imaginary elsewhere with guided support. The unfolding of a guided drama experience will happen in real-time with breaks to help young actors and practitioners in general contribute to the story that is unfolding and the human dilemmas it presents. As they mature, creating could involve collaborative processes to devise original theatre, writing plays, or developing designs for sets, costumes, and sound. At more advanced levels, practitioners/students research, experiment, plan, design, write, rehearse, revise and present their work as playwrights, actors, designers, and directors. Regardless of the level, creating in drama/theatre provides a vehicle for practitioners/students to reflect on important aspects of life and in the process develop sensitivity to others' points of view.

### • Performing

Stating typically, the core process of performing in theatre and drama refers to the myriads of choices an actor or technician makes to bring to life a character or visual design and present it to a specific audience. Such choices are at the root of the process component select, and are based on analysis and interpretation of a script or design. At the elementary stages, any level of performance given can be forgiving. However, as students develop proficiency through time and experience, acting choices are rooted in more sophisticated psychological concepts such as objectives, tactics, and given circumstances. Students may share improvised scripted or devised artistic work to communicate



concepts, ideas, and feelings effectively to an audience. The standards recognize that characters are developed through analysis of interconnected elements such as character relationships, pacing, and dramatic structure. It is often encouraging that performers to prepare their roles through a variety of exercises and techniques, the ultimate goal of which is to prepare a believable performance. In order to successfully perform, practitioners/students must use self-discipline to analyze, prepare, rehearse, and refine work while demonstrating skills in voice, body, and imagination. Ultimately, performing in theatre has to do with the process of making choices and preparing both the acting and technical elements to clearly communicate stories and ideas to an audience.

### • Responding

Responding in theatre involves practitioners/students in perceiving and interpreting drama and theatre work. Responding may include their reactions to ideas, stories, scripts, designs, artistic choices, performances, and actions of others. Key to this process is the idea that interpretations of and personal reactions to theatre have multiple influences. As a matter of standard, students should be able to describe how a theatre work can influence an audience, a community, or the creation of other works through observing, analyzing, evaluating, comparing and contrasting, and justifying their thinking. Cultural perspectives, beliefs, personal aesthetics, and preferences all factor into the process of making meaning from and evaluating theatre. Once again, what this core process will look and feel like will vary depending on the level of practitioners/students. In the early stage, practitioners/students might simply describe characters or compare personal emotions and choices to the emotions and choices of characters. However, when they grow adept of bigger things, practitioners/students are capable of greater sophistication. Thus, expectations for responding include the development and/or application of criteria to critique theatre works, offer constructive criticism to peers, as well as the ability to debate and justify preferences. At the most mature level, practitioners/students evaluate theatre through the lens of multiple aesthetics.

### • Connecting

The core process of connecting in theatre recognizes that drama/theatre work happens in a complex context comprised of societal, personal, and historical forces, all of which have an impact on the other artistic processes of creating, performing, and responding. The standards encompass a broad range of connections that can be made including production histories, personal experience/beliefs, culture, other disciplines, and relevant research. At the elementary stages, practitioners/students identify similarities between story, characters, and emotions in a drama to personal experience. At more sophisticated levels, the latter connect drama to culture and community. Relatively, they incorporate perspectives in a drama/theatre work and investigate how

cultural perspectives and personal beliefs impact the way a drama/theatre work is perceived. Research is another component of the core process connecting. Depending on the level of practitioners/students involved, it is expected that they might research alternative approaches to the same story as a way to inform creative choices or study a time period in which a drama takes place. At its core, the connecting standards ensure that practitioners/students explore, recognize, and incorporate the many influences that impact drama/theatre work.

## Advertisement

A complex device, advertising is a tool used in the business world to communicate messages about products, services, or ideas to a target audience. Broadly defined as a paid, non-personal form of communication by an identified sponsor, advertising has evolved to be one of the most important components of modern marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Advertisement serves as a vehicle for businesses to inform, persuade, and remind consumers of their offerings in an attempt to influence their purchasing decisions. According to Belch and Belch (2018), the main purpose of advertising is to create awareness about a product or service, generate interest, and prompt action from the target audience.

Historically, advertising has undergone various transformations, beginning with simple print advertisements in newspapers as far back in the 17th century (Batra & Keller, 2016). However, as technology advanced, so did the methods and practice of advertising. The development of radio and television in the 20th century offered advertisers new avenues to reach larger audiences through sound and visuals. Television, in particular, became a dominant force in advertising, as it allowed for the combination of audio-visual elements that could create powerful emotional connections with audiences. In today's world, digital advertising has become the most influential medium, owing to the rise of the internet and social media platforms. According to Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2019), digital advertising enables highly targeted campaigns, data-driven insights, and real-time engagement, which have redefined how brands communicate with consumers.

Granted the foregoing, it is important to note that, at its core, advertising aims to influence consumer behaviour by shaping their perceptions, attitudes, and actions. This can be achieved through a combination of creative strategies that involve emotional appeals, logical arguments, and memorable storytelling. Consequently, modern advertisers focus not only on the functional benefits of a product but also on the emotional connections that can be built between the brand and the consumer. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), successful advertisements come alive with consumers on a personal level, in the instance that it addresses their needs, desires, or pain points. This emotional engagement is what often leads to brand loyalty and long-term consumer relationships.

There are several types of advertising. With peculiar approach, each type of advertisement is personalized and organised to fit different audiences, mediums, and purposes. Print advertising, for example, remains effective for orthodox audiences (often aged people) who prefer traditional media such as newspapers and magazines. In reverse, broadcast advertising, which includes both radio and television, is widely recognized for its ability to reach mass audiences, making it ideal for brand-building campaigns (Belch & Belch, 2018). Digital advertising, however, has quickly surpassed traditional media due to its ability to target specific demographics with precision. Social media ads, search engine marketing, and influencer partnerships have transformed how brands interact with consumers, emphasizing engagement and personalization (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Outdoor or out-of-home (OOH) advertising, such as billboards and transit ads, also continues to be an effective medium for reaching large audiences (Percy & Elliott, 2016).

Granted the foregoing, it suffices to say that the role of advertisement in business cannot be overstated. The practice serves as an effective tool for creating brand awareness and positioning a company's offerings in the market. In Kotler and Keller's view, exposing consumers to a brand's message, advertising reinforces brand identity and differentiates it from competitors. Furthermore, advertising helps businesses inform consumers about new products or updates to existing ones. Be that as it may, in highly competitive industries, such as telecommunications, advertising can be the key to maintaining relevance and gaining market share.

In terms of influencing consumer behaviour, advertising works by guiding consumers through the decision-making process. The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) is a well-known framework used to describe how advertising attracts attention, stimulates interest, creates desire, and ultimately leads to action (Strong, 1925). For instance, in the telecommunications industry, companies often use drama in their advertisements to tell relatable stories that capture the attention and emotions of their audience. By this instance, telecommunications industries do not only raise awareness of their services but also position their brands as integral to everyday life, thereby, fostering stronger consumer loyalty (Percy & Elliott, 2016). Batra and Keller adds that emotional appeals, such as humour, nostalgia, or empathy, are widely used to engage audiences at a deeper level, making the brand more memorable and increasing the likelihood of purchase.

It is worthwhile to note that despite its effectiveness, advertising faces several challenges in today's media world. One such challenge is ad fatigue, where consumers become overwhelmed by the sheer volume of ads they encounter daily. This often leads to ad blindness, where consumers consciously or unconsciously ignore advertisements, thereby diminishing their impact (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Additionally, the rise of ad-blocking technologies has made it

more difficult for brands to reach their target audience online. As a result, advertisers have had to become more creative and less intrusive, often shifting towards native advertising formats that blend seamlessly with the content consumers are already engaging with (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Another significant challenge is the ethical implications of advertising. According to Percy and Elliott (2016), critics argue that advertising can be manipulative, promoting consumerism and materialism, while often perpetuating harmful stereotypes. Moreover, the line between advertising and reality can become blurred, particularly in influencer marketing and native advertising, where the distinction between sponsored content and organic content is not always clear to consumers (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). As such, it is within frame to inform that advertisers must strike a balance between persuasive communication and ethical responsibility. Advertisement contents ought to be truthful, respectful, and socially responsible.

However, despite the observable challenges, advertising remains a powerful tool for businesses to influence consumer behaviour and achieve their marketing objectives. It is important to note that, with the growing integration of digital platforms, data analytics, and artificial intelligence, the future of advertising is likely to be even more personalized and targeted. Still, the core principles of effective advertising; building awareness, creating emotional connections, and influencing consumer behaviour are likely to remain constant as businesses continue to pilot the complex and evolving advertising landscape.

## Theoretical Context

This paper shall rely on two theories namely: Social Learning Theory and Narrative Transportation Theory.

### Social Learning Theory

As propounded and advanced by Albert Bandura in 1971, the social learning theory has been constantly thought out to be provisionally classy, based on its germaneness to a multiplicity of fields including; psychology, education, and very importantly, communication. Basically, the tenet of the social learning theory is birthed from the ideology that a large ratio of an individual's knowledge procurement can be straightly aligned to the act, practice and the innate habit of observing other people (particularly older people) within his/her immediate and distant environment. Founded on the dimensions of social interactions amongst others, learned experiences, and through external media influences, the process of observational learning is complete. Citing Juliet (2011), Albert Bandura (1971), proposed that social learning occurred through four main stages of imitation: close contact, imitation of superior, understanding of concepts and role model behavior.

Nursing this thought, Juliet (2011) opines that social learning suggests a combination of environment (social) and

psychological factors influence behavior. Relatively, the latter holds that, social learning theory emphasized the importance of learning in personality development and change; like the behaviorists, but differs in three ways. Divulging the initial situation, Juliet (2011), is keen to appraise that, “social learning theorists suggest that reinforces, such as praise and punishment are important in determining whether behaviors are performed, but are not critical to behaviors being acquired or learned”. To prove her point effective, the latter provides the instance that a child can learn certain behaviors from parents or other models, by observing them, without the necessity of reward, though children will be more likely to perform behaviors they have observed if they are rewarded for such performance. Provisionally, Juliet (2011) gives a lucid explanation of the second and third processes thus, “social learning theorists suggested that many complex behaviors are learned holistically; and thirdly, they emphasize the importance of internal processes such as thought, in the development and regulation of behaviours”.

Founded on the foregoing provisions, the social learning theory is therefore a model which houses a configuration of “copy and paste” system. By implication, the summary of the theory is that when an individual observes a person (a model) performing a particular behavior and taking into cognizance the and the consequences of that behavior, that individual hark back to the time line of happenings and use these facts as materials to inform succeeding behaviours.

The application of social learning theory in the discourse of advertising telecommunication brands is considerably feasible. In the first instance, being that theatre/drama is based on imitation, then there is purpose in this discussion. This theory provides an understanding of how audiences might adopt behaviours or attitudes portrayed in drama-based advertisements.

For instance, when a telecommunication network uses dramatic narratives to showcase characters engaging positively with their services such as sharing moments with friends or solving problems through communication, viewers may observe and model these behaviours in their own lives. A specific illustration, if a character in an advertisement successfully resolves a conflict using the network’s services, viewers may be more likely to perceive those services as effective and desirable, thereby influencing their own usage and loyalty to the brand. The application of this theory highlights the potential for drama in advertisements to convey messages and shape consumer behaviour through relatable and observable scenarios.

## **The Narrative Transportation Theory**

The narrative transportation theory posits that individuals become immersed or “transported” into a story when they engage with a compelling narrative, leading to cognitive,

emotional, and behavioural changes. Developed by Richard J. Gerrig (1993) and later expanded by Green and Brock (2000), the theory suggests that as individuals are drawn into a narrative, they temporarily lose awareness of their surroundings and critical faculties. This process thus allows them to experience the emotions and perspectives of the characters. This process of transportation enhances the persuasive power of narratives, thereby making audiences more likely to adopt beliefs and attitudes aligned with the story. According to Green and Brock (2000), the more a person is transported into a narrative, the more likely they are to be influenced by its themes and messages, particularly in media and advertising contexts.

In application however, it suffices to state that the Narrative Transportation Theory is highly relevant to the subject under study. In this context, drama-based advertisements can use storytelling techniques to engage audiences, drawing them into a narrative that emotionally connects them with the brand. When viewers are transported into the storyline such as a relatable family drama or a comedic situation involving telecommunication services, they temporarily lose awareness of the advertisement itself and become absorbed in the story (Green & Brock, 2000). This involvement can make the audience more receptive to the brand’s message, thus, increasing the likelihood of a positive perception of the telecommunication network and influencing consumer attitudes and behaviours.

## **Methodology**

This paper adopts a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design, aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts about a given population. This research design was considered appropriate for this study because it describes a situation as it is and identifies present conditions of the existing situation. Study population is the entire population that particular research is about to study. Baridam (2001) asserted that study population is that population of interest which is measured at a single point in time. This implies that, a study’s population is that population in which the researcher is about to carry out his/her research. Given this premise, the study’s population consist of all the residents of Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, with the youth demographic placed as emphasis. Consequently, one hundred (100) respondents will be derived from the defined demographic above. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw one hundred (100) respondents within the residents of Obio-Akpor L.G.A. Relatively, simple random sampling technique was used to select the 100 respondents within Obio-Akpor L.G.A geography.

The method that was used for data collection in this study was questionnaire developed by the researcher. It was entitled “Drama as a tool of advertisement for telecommunication networks (DTATN) questionnaire”. With

the aid of research assistance, the said questionnaire was carried around the study's population area(s) and was shared to sound individuals who responded to the questions. The research team waited and collected them thereafter.

To assess the impact of drama-based advertisements on consumer engagement and recall of telecommunication services.

The instrument is divided into four sections. Section A, sought information on personal data of the respondents (demographic data). Section B involves question on the impact of drama-based advertisements on consumer engagement and recall of MTN telecommunication brand. They are expected to tick appropriately. Section C allows for them to give their opinions on how drama in advertising affects consumers' emotional connection with MTN telecommunication brands. Section D allows them give their opinions on the role of drama-based advertisements in enhancing brand loyalty and influencing consumer purchasing decisions with MTN'S telecommunication brand.

The reliability of the instrument was established through the test and re-test method for a measure of stability. This was achieved by administering twenty (20) copies of the research instrument to twenty (20) respondents outside the sampled respondents who responded to the instrument, after two weeks' interval of the first administration a re-test was given to the same respondents. The initial and re-test scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation test which yield a value of '0.92', hence the reliability of "Drama

as a tool of advertisement for telecommunication networks (DTATN) questionnaire" was established. The researcher and research assistants administered the instrument (questionnaire) to the targeted respondents. Where the respondents could not complete the questionnaire immediately, the research assistants waited behind to collect the completed questionnaire. The data gathered from the questionnaire were analysed using statistical table and simple percentages. The use of percentages introduced mathematical dimension to the data collected. Since one can easily deduce the adequacy or otherwise of a given quantity by simply determining the resulting percentage associated with the quality being considered falls between two extremes of 0% and 100%.

## Data Presentation

In this segment, data gathered from this paper were subjected to analysis to provide answers to the research questions as contained in chapter 1, sub section 1.4. Therefore, the research questions were analysed one after the other from the information extracted from copies of the returned questionnaires.

### Research Question One

What is the Impact of Drama-Based Advertisements on Consumer Engagement and Recall of MTN's Telecommunication Brand Questionnaire?

#### Ascertaining the Impact of Drama-Based Advertisements on Consumer Engagement and Recall of MTN's Telecommunication Brand.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1	I am likely to remember MTN's brand after watching a drama-based advertisement compared to other types of ads.	64	28	7	1	100
2	I feel engaged when watching drama-based advertisements from MTN.	59	29	11	1	100
3	MTN's drama-based advertisements influence my perception of MTN as a brand.	72	27	0	1	100
4	I share MTN drama-based advertisements with friends or family after watching them.	75	21	2	1	100

The analysis of table 4.1 above shows that 64 (64%) out of 100 respondents said that they strongly agree that they are likely to remember MTN's brand after watching a drama-based advertisement compared to other types of ads. 28 (28%) of them said they agree to the above statement, but 7 (7%) of them said they disagree. While 1 (1%) of them strongly disagree.

Also, the table shows that 59 (59%) out of 100 of the respondents said they agree that they feel engaged when watching drama-based advertisements from MTN. 29 (29%) of them said they agree to the above statement, but 11 (11%) of them said they disagree to the statement and 1 (1%) of them said they strongly disagree to that statement.

Likewise, the analysis indicates that 72 (72%) out of 100 of the respondents agree that MTN's drama-based advertisements influence their perception of MTN as a brand. 27 (27%) of them said they agree to the above statement,

while 0 (0%) of them said they disagree, 1 (1%) of them strongly disagree.

More so, 75 (75%) out of 100 of the respondents strongly agree that they share MTN drama-based advertisements with friends or family after watching them. 21 (21%) of them agree to the above statement. But 2 (2%) of them said they disagree to the statement, while 1 (1%) of them said they strongly disagree.

From the analysis, since about 90 percent of the respondents agree and strongly agree to all the items of research question one, it means that the impact of drama-based advertisements on consumer engagement and recall of MTN's telecommunication brand is real and massive.

### Research Question Two

How Drama in Advertising Affects Consumers' Emotional Connection with MTN's Telecommunication Brand?



### Ascertaining How Drama in Advertising Affects Consumers' Emotional Connection with MTN's Telecommunication Brand.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1	I strongly feel an emotional connection to MTN's brand after watching their drama-based advertisements.	76	17	4	3	100
2	MTN's drama-based advertisements make me feel positive emotions (e.g., happiness, warmth, nostalgia) towards the brand.	58	22	13	7	100
3	I believe that the characters and stories in MTN's drama-based ads are relatable to my own life or experiences.	24	18	32	26	100
4	After watching an MTN drama-based advertisement, I am likely to choose MTN over other telecommunication brands due to the emotional appeal of the ad.	77	20	2	1	100

The analysis of table 4.2 above shows that 76 (76%) out of 100 respondents said that they strongly feel an emotional connection to MTN's brand after watching their drama-based advertisements. 17 (17%) of them said they agree to the above statement, but 4 (4%) of them said they disagree, while 3 (3%) of them strongly disagree.

Also, the table shows that 58 (58%) out of 100 of the respondents said they agree that MTN's drama-based advertisements make them feel positive emotions (e.g., happiness, warmth, nostalgia) towards the brand. 22 (22%) of them said they agree to the above statement, but 13 (13%) of them said they disagree to the statement and 7 (7%) of them said they strongly disagree to that statement.

Likewise, the analysis indicates that 24 (24%) out of 100 of the respondents agree that they believe that the characters and stories in MTN's drama-based ads are relatable to my own life or experiences. 18 (18%) of them said they agree to the above statement, while 32 (32%) of them said they disagree. 26 (26%) of them strongly disagree.

More so, 77 (77%) out of 100 of the respondents strongly agree that after watching an MTN drama-based advertisement, they are likely to choose MTN over other telecommunication brands due to the emotional appeal of the ad and 20 (20%) agree to the above statement. But 2 (2%) of them said they disagree to the statement, while 1 (1%) of them said they strongly disagree.

From the analysis, since about 80 percent of the respondents agree and strongly agree to all the items of research question one, it means that drama in advertising affects consumers' emotional connection with MTN's telecommunication brand.

### Research Question Three

What is the Role of Drama-Based Advertisements in Enhancing Brand Loyalty and Influencing Consumer Purchasing Decisions with MTN's Telecommunication Brand.

### Ascertaining the Role of Drama-Based Advertisements in Enhancing Brand Loyalty and Influencing Consumer Purchasing Decisions with MTN's Telecommunication Brand.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1	I am likely to remain loyal to MTN after watching their drama-based advertisements.	68	26	4	2	100
2	MTN's drama-based advertisements influence my decision to choose MTN over other telecommunication brands.	55	38	4	3	100
3	MTN's drama-based advertisements make me feel committed to the MTN brand.	69	22	5	4	100
4	Emotional themes in MTN's drama-based advertisements encourage me to purchase MTN services or products.	76	21	2	1	100

The analysis of table 4.3 above shows that 68 (68%) out of 100 respondents said that they strongly agree that they are likely to remain loyal to MTN after watching their drama-based advertisements. 26 (26%) of them said they agree to the above statement, but 4 (4%) of them said they disagree. While 2 (2%) of them strongly disagree.

Also, the table shows that 55 (55%) out of 100 of the respondents said they agree that MTN's drama-based advertisements influence their decision to choose MTN over other telecommunication brands. 38 (38%) of them said they agree to the above statement, but 4 (4%) of them said they disagree to the statement and 3 (3%) of them said they strongly disagree to that statement.

Likewise, the analysis indicates that 69 (69%) out of 100 of the respondents agree that MTN's drama-based advertisements make them feel committed to the MTN brand. 22 (22%) of them said they agree to the above statement, while 5 (5%) of them said they disagree. 4 (4%) of them strongly disagree.

More so, 76 (76%) out of 100 of the respondents strongly agree that emotional themes in MTN's drama-based advertisements encourage them to purchase MTN services or products. But 2 (2%) of them said they disagree to the statement. While 1 (1%) of them said they strongly disagree.

From the analysis, since about 83 percent of the respondents agree and strongly agree to all the items of research question

one, it means that the role of drama-based advertisements in enhancing brand loyalty and influencing consumer purchasing decisions with MTN's telecommunication brand is real and very impactful.

## Summary of Findings

Based on the outcome of the analysis of data collected for the study, the following findings were revealed:

With respect to research question one which sought to know the impact of drama-based advertisements on consumer engagement and recall of MTN's telecommunication brand, the results show that the impact of drama-based advertisements on consumer engagement and recall of MTN's telecommunication brand is real and massive. This is because above 90 percent of the respondents agreed on all the items of research question one. This result is supported by the literature review of this study.

With respect to research question two which sought to know the extent how drama in advertising affects consumers' emotional connection with MTN's telecommunication brand, the results revealed that drama in advertising affects consumers' emotional connection with MTN's telecommunication brand. This is because about 80 percent of the respondents agreed on all the items of research question two. This result is supported by the literature review of this study.

With respect to research question three which sought to know the role of drama-based advertisements in enhancing brand loyalty and influencing consumer purchasing decisions with MTN's telecommunication brand, the results show that the role of drama-based advertisements in enhancing brand loyalty and influencing consumer purchasing decisions with MTN's telecommunication brand is real and very impactful. This is because above 83 percent of the respondents agreed on all the items of research question three. This result is supported by the literature review of this study.

## Conclusion

The findings of this research study which is focused on "Drama as a Tool of Advertisement for Telecommunication Networks" made several discoveries. Importantly, this article reveal that drama-based advertisements significantly enhance consumer engagement, emotional connection, and brand recall for telecommunication networks. Similarly, respondents indicated that the narrative elements in drama-based advertisements such as relatable characters, compelling storylines, and emotional appeals brings about a stronger connection to the brand. This emotional engagement increased not only their awareness of the brand but also their likelihood of retaining brand messages. It also found that consumers tend to view drama-infused advertisements as

more authentic and memorable, which positively impacts brand loyalty and can influence purchasing decisions. Furthermore, drama-based ads were shown to be particularly effective in positioning telecommunication services as essential to everyday communication and relationships, thereby reinforcing brand relevance in consumers' lives. Summarily, these findings give the impression that incorporating drama into advertising strategies for telecommunication brands deepen customer loyalty and boost engagement.

Finally, it suffices to this paper demonstrates that drama-based advertisements are a powerful means of connecting with consumers on an emotional level. The impact is its significant impact in enhancing brand engagement, recall, and loyalty. Given this instance, with utilizing relatable narratives and emotional appeal, telecommunication brands like MTN can effectively convey the value and relevance of their services within consumers' daily lives.

Be that as it may, this study highlights the effectiveness of drama in creating memorable advertising experiences that go beyond mere product promotion, thereby, fostering long-term brand associations and influencing consumer decisions. Therefore, incorporating dramatic storytelling in advertising strategies is an impactful approach for telecommunication networks seeking to strengthen consumer relationships and maintain a competitive advantage in the communication industry.

## Recommendations

This paper offers several recommendations which but not limited to the following:

Given this instance, it is recommended that telecommunication networks increasingly integrate drama-based storytelling into their advertising strategies to enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty. Advertisers should focus on creating relatable and emotionally compelling narratives that reflect consumers' real-life experiences. This approach give room for a deeper connection and makes the brand more memorable.

Additionally, telecommunication brands could benefit from segmenting their audience to peculiar drama-based ads that aligns with specific demographic and psychographic groups. In this instance, relevance and impact of drama-based advertisement will be maximized. It is also suggested that brands utilize multiple media channels, including social media and television, to expand the reach of these drama-based advertisements and strengthen brand messaging.

Lastly, periodic assessments of consumer responses to these ads should be conducted to ensure that the storytelling approach remains effective and aligns with changing consumer expectations and preferences.

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