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## Iconization, of Beer Advertising and Patronage of Select Beers by Ibo Students of University Of Uyo

*Dr. Oyokunyi Ita\* Idoreyin Ekanem\*\* Uka Nwagbara\*\*\**

### Abstract:

This study examines the influence of iconization in beer advertising on the patronage of select beers among Ibo students of the University of Uyo, Nigeria. Iconization refers to the use of symbols, images, or personalities to represent a brand and create a desirable image. The research investigates how iconization in beer ads shapes students' perceptions and preferences for specific beer brands. Using a survey research design, data was collected from 100 Ibo students through questionnaires. Findings reveal that iconization significantly influences beer patronage, with students more likely to choose beers associated with aspirational lifestyles, cultural symbols, or celebrity endorsements. The study also identifies key factors driving beer preferences, including taste, brand image, and peer influence. Results suggest that beer marketers can leverage iconization strategies to appeal to young adult consumers in Nigeria's competitive beer market. The study contributes to understanding the interplay between advertising, cultural identity, and consumption patterns among young Nigerians. Recommendations are made for targeted marketing strategies that align beer brands with the aspirations and values of Ibo students and similar demographics.

### Keywords:

Iconization, beer advertising, patronage, Ibo students, University of Uyo, Nigeria

### Introduction

Drinking is an activity that is rooted in the Nigerian culture, especially during festive periods and it is safe to say that no celebrations happens in most Nigerian Culture without the inclusion of drinking of one form of alcohol or the other. The lager assumes a major part in the drinking society and this is made clear with the numerous Nigerian bottling industries and brew brands growing up within the nation over, and connecting individuals' social affiliations to their brands. Before the era of the economic meltdown in Nigeria, it was a common sight to see that there were notable state, regional brands and then a few national ones which could be regarded as the "big boys" State beers like Champion, Golden Guinea, Monarch, Pal, Rock. Tusk, Top, Harp, Kroneburg, Trophy, Goldberg, Sarzenbrau and then some of these brands have grown to regional beers of repute etc. Others like Hero, 33, Export, Tiger and the national brands like Star, Gulder, Heineken, Budweiser, Guinness Stout, Legend Stout have dominated the market lately.

Each social civilization appears to have fostered a local brew style, and right up 'til today lager is the most mainstream cocktail. The beer has become a piece of every culture on the planet. It's what individuals drink when they go out, regardless of whether it's at a local bar, or an eatery, or simply a family plunking down to sit in front of the TV on the sofa. A few group may not drink beer all the time, however in numerous spots, nobody drinks whatever else. It's

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\* Department of Advertising and Marketing Communications, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University Of Uyo, Nigeria, [oyokunytuita@uniuyo.edu.ng](mailto:oyokunytuita@uniuyo.edu.ng)

\*\* Department of Public Relations, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University of Uyo, Nigeria, [idoreyinakanem@uniyo.ed.ng](mailto:idoreyinakanem@uniyo.ed.ng)

\*\*\* Department of Advertising and Marketing Communications, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University Of Uyo, Nigeria, [uunwagbara@gmail.com](mailto:uunwagbara@gmail.com)



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something other than a route for certain individuals to breathe easy — it's an image of companionship and socialization.

The lager business is quite possibly the main ventures on the planet. Contrasted with other parts of business, it works on a more limited size yet has a worldwide effect. In the Nigerian market, the beer represent 40% of complete liquor utilization. The lager market in Nigeria has throughout the long term seen a colossal development and forceful rivalry with the four significant players attempting to do something extraordinary for themselves in the industry.

The Beer market in Nigeria presently has four predominant players in particular namely: Nigeria Breweries Plc, which is as of now the market leader with 11 creation destinations in the country and a piece of the pie of about 55% market share as at 2022. The organization has battled for development throughout the most recent couple of years. Interestingly, the number two on the lookout, International Breweries which held about 23% of the beer market in 2022 is making up for lost time. In 2018, the international breweries limited surpassed Guinness Breweries in size which holds 22% of the homegrown deals. Global Breweries which is since the acquisition of Johannesburg-based SAB Miller in 2016 piece of the world biggest fermenting bunch AB InBev opened

Given this over saturated market scene, and the desire by every player to increase their Share of Throat (SOT), the players in the market began new trends in the advertising game with the introduction of local names for the different beer brands with igbo language as the driving force. The peculiarity of these names actually form the main crux of this study, which is termed as the “iconisation” of the beer advertising in Nigeria. These iconisations of Beer have rapidly saturated the slightest advert space in most rural communities and even in major cities and towns like Onitsha, Aba, Enugu, Owerri and Umuahia and even Uyo. One would hardly drive past the Niger Bridge in Onitsha without noticing the revealing billboard posts of these beer drinks. To reach out to potential buyers, the beer companies now use eye-catching, effective and appropriate means of targeting their potential markets.

Thus, we are witnessing a trend where beer advertising involves eulogizing the local names of animals, images, cultures and even epic stories that represents and depict certain cultural values in Ibo land like Agu, Ebube dike, Ndu ka, Oh Mkpa and Odogwu. "Iconization" of beer advertising involves the use of generic names and ideas to represent different cultural and psychological meanings to the consumer in place of the usual product labelling. This trend is gaining ground particularly in South Eastern Nigeria. Such example of Hero Lager beer using Igbo word descriptions in beer advertising with more than 55% variations using at least one of these four words alone: #*Echefula* (never forget your identity) *Oge Adiro* (Go! Be the hero) ‘*Mmanya Ejiri Mara Igbo*’ (Drink used to know Igbos), and *Oh Mpa*’ (Oh Father).

Given this pattern of Iconisation, which is presently being investigated among Ibo students in the University of Uyo, this study seeks to examine the trend and clarify questions such as is this latest thing (iconisation) a reasonable takeoff from the Western way of advertising? Is this pattern a resurrection of native African traditional advertising mode which was consistently wealthy in the utilization of signs, images and social components? This and a lot more inquiries shapes the thrust of this study.



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## Objectives of the study

1. To examine the nature of understanding among Ibo students of University of Uyo about “ iconisation” in the advertising of beer products.
2. To examine meaning sharing through the use of distinct words and images/ symbols among Ibo students of University of Uyo about “ iconisation” in the advertising of beer products.
3. To examine the use of “ iconisation” in the advertising of beer products and patronage among Ibo students of University of Uyo

## Literature Review

### The Concept of "Iconization" in Beer Advertising

The Oxford Learners Dictionary defines an Icon as a famous person or thing that people admire and see as a symbol of a particular idea or way of life. By way of definition therefore, “ Iconization” , will refer to the use of symbols, people, images, names and cultural artifacts with unique heritage to communicate brand values and identity for the purpose of creating distinctiveness and relate ability with the consumers. Brand iconisation refers to the way a brand comes to symbolise the values, needs, and aspirations of the members of a particular cultural group. When these properties are fully utilized and woven properly, they become the symbol of the community and the lovers of the brand..

Douglas Holt in his book, “ How Brands Become Icons” stated that people identify strongly with cultural icons and often rely on these symbols in their everyday lives. Icons serve as society’ s foundational compass – anchors of meaning continually referenced in entertainment, journalism, politics and advertising. The crux of iconicity is that the person or the thing is widely regarded as the most compelling symbol of a set of ideas or values that a society deems important. In the case of beer advertising in Nigeria, iconisation takes a form of identity in which a beer brand is given a local or indigenous name that the beer can easily be identified with and these brands come to represent a particular kind of story, and identity myth, that their customers use to address identity desires and anxieties. Invariably, the advertisers want the beer brands to do more than refreshment and celebration and transcend to the level of evoking meaning, symbols and even identities. In the exemplary style of beer advertising, a beer brand presents an item through pictures and stories related with that item. It is a path for customers to connect the brand with a particular character and disposition. In this part, I will talk about two (2) of the most well-known ideas of iconization utilized for beer drinks in South Eastern Nigeria and the brand symbols utilized. These two ideas will clarify how this strategy functions in beer advertising and brand promotion. It is an investigation of the business' essential instruments for expanding brand acknowledgment in the present beer industry.

### Beer Advertising in Nigeria

Olatunji and Thanny (2011) attest that the accomplishment of any association relies upon the worthiness of its yield by its clients, since assembling or creation of lager drinks is inadequate until individuals drink it. At the end of the day, one needs to engage clients' taste buds—and resolve any reservations or reservations they may have—to get your item to advertise. There have been not many examinations led over the course of the years to find out about



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patterns in lager ad as it concerns the normal Nigerian man. For instance, present day promoting activities traces all the way back to the pioneer days when papers started tolerating commercials straightforwardly from individuals and organizations that required their administrations.

As per Ewuola (2004), the Nigerian advertising industry began with paper distributing and took off with presenting TV advertisements. Promoters give for purchasers' consideration. To guarantee that has esteem, publicists need to try not to annoy their crowds. Shoppers who really have longer buying cycles as they research the item and the market prior to purchasing will likewise settle on a superior choice. The most intelligent methodology may appear to be to get individuals to make some particular move through notices. Be that as it may, as we as a whole know, the vast majority are imprudent and diverted by different things while attempting to finish their day by day schedules, for example, eating at an eatery or review any online video content.

The Beer advertising marketing has evolved through several stages that can be captured under the following themes: Product superiority, product formulation, internationalization, globalization of brands and their attendant superiority, excellence in brewing technology, Internationalization, and most recently the symbolism of meaning using local characters and heritage. Eventually, the best method of getting objective purchasers to make a move is make a buzz around a beer brand. This could mean putting notices in places that apply to the objective market (for example commercial centers, eateries, public venues and so forth) or causing the message to show up in various media (customary and present day). When a brew consumer makes a buy, a clothing rundown of inspirations unfurls each time it occurs: cost, time, idea, wanted impacts versus reality; enthusiastic connection to item or administration; and business suggestions.

As soon as a beer drinker makes a purchase, a laundry list of motivations unfolds every time it happens: cost, time, concept, desired effects versus reality; emotional attachment to product or service; and commercial implications. Research proves that the most powerful advertising affects sales turnover, regardless of whether the adverts actually result in a sale. The actual impact of this is tiny - hence the "emotional effect" of advertising on customers rather than tangible economic result. A recent study shows that nearly 50% of beer consumers will purposefully ignore boring or irrelevant adverts. Because of the perception that beer brands are more powerful, persuasive, and able to persuade the average drinker to buy their products, companies are placing enormous importance on advertising to improve sales.

Ganiyu Olowu (2019) recommends that as opposed to simply emptying cash into publicizing, ABInBev was vital with its methodology. "The way where SABMiller sneaked up on Nigeria's greatest brewers is no bright information to the AB InBev's rivals in the lager market. "Maybe than go with the standard exhibit that follows the dispatch of another item, the brand exploited the chivalrous status of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu in the East and dispatched the item during his entombment.

It was not really a 'dispatch'; it was more similar to a monstrous delivery during the entombment of the Biafran War saint, Odumegwu Ojukwu. From that point on, it discovered love with individuals and it needed to take the arrival of *Life* Lager by Nigerian Breweries to control the damage it was doing to different brands on the lookout." What has gotten known as the "Multi-Brand Play" is intended to assist ABInBev with ruling the market and catch a slice of the pie while planting seeds for its definitive objective - to turn into a net merchant of lager in



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Nigeria. This methodology involves seven basic item classifications being presented in Nigeria that are now accessible on worldwide and neighborhood markets and furthermore tried locally with the end goal of developing fare volumes and portion of the overall industry.

One of the new patterns in the act of beer advertising in Nigeria is the embracing of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). This advancement has been prodded on by the development of another age on the lookout, who are hoping to connect straightforwardly with their intended interest groups through web-based media. Despite the fact that IMC isn't new, it has become a vital part of advanced showcasing as it moves a brand message across a group of touch points with every execution retaining one major theme that enables the brand connect with its teeming consumers.

The issue of how agencies have exploited the integrated marketing communications sphere has led to the introduction of the digital culture which emphasizes the engagement of consumers with contents that they can relate with as put forward by Ita, Samson and Nkereuwem (2020). Engaging with consumers in marketing and advertising activities has opened up the possibilities for co-creation with consumers, which has brought challenges to advertising agencies. These challenges have impacted on the creatives' roles and the identities of who they are in the creative process. So now in beer advertising the creative team must be seen to be telling stories that are in tune with the people's culture and nuances. These stories exploit the brand's benefits and vales in an engaging atmosphere.

Two brands of Beer namely Hero and Life are currently being promoted with an unusual innovativeness and advertising strategies by Dijo Communications. . Since its foundation more than two years prior, Dijo has been assembling an exhaustive arrangement of undertakings that has exhibited its outstanding image correspondence capacities through the emphasis of extensively leveraging on culture and historical antecedents of the Ibo people in promoting the beer. It is to the credit of the agency soft thinking that they were able to execute Hero Beer campaign without offending the ethnic prejudice of Nigerians, given that the beer was originally formulated for the igbos and branded for that market.

Another key model is the new 'NDU KA' advertisement crusade (Life is more noteworthy or more significant) by Life Lager Beer. The new advertisement crusade for Life Continental brew is a method of telling individuals that notwithstanding the COVID-19 worldwide sickness, it's essential to remain safe thinking about ongoing occasions. *Life* Beer's new mark image has been becoming famous online via web-based media, because of another mission dispatched by the brand to praise its new look. *Life* Lager's most recent web-based media push accompanied a live Instagram show for its Nigeria-based fans displaying the brand's most recent and best bundling, just as exhibiting specialists that have graced Nigeria's late-night wireless transmissions throughout the long term.



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Google image (accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022 life- com)

“Iconization” has made it possible for consumers to ‘see’ the beer brands on social networks like Instagram and Facebook. Since celebrity endorsements are the most common form of iconization, this seems to take primary focus in the end product. While this is used as a marketing tool, consumers are actually looking for recommendations from people they actually know and can relate with. Igbo music genre sensation Phyno anchored the show-off, alongside Flavour, extolling the relevance of the new embedded features on the brands label design to the commerce of Eastern Nigeria. The Golden Crown on the new label symbolizes Life beers market leadership in the country and the people's unyielding spirit in pursuing success, while the Sun Rays represent the bright future ahead.’

One of the new patterns in the act of promoting in Nigeria is the embracing of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). This improvement has been prodded on by the development of another age on the lookout, who are hoping to connect straightforwardly with their intended interest groups through web-based media. Despite the fact that IMC isn't new, it has become a vital segment of computerized showcasing as it impels a brand message across a crowd of people without the utilization of conventional publicizing strategies.

The issue of how offices have abused the incorporated showcasing correspondences circle has prompted the presentation of the advanced culture which accentuates the commitment of purchasers with substance that they can relate with as advanced by Ita, Samson and Nkereuwem (2020).

Drawing in with shoppers in showcasing and promoting exercises has opened up the opportunities for co-creation with shoppers, which has carried difficulties to promoting organizations. These difficulties have affected on the creatives' jobs and the personalities of who they are in the inventive cycle. So now in brew publicizing the imaginative group should be believed to be recounting stories that are on top individuals' way of life and subtleties.

*Life* Lager Beer is usually used for ceremonious celebrations and successes achieved by the Igbo people. It represents family and friendship bonds, unity of the people and passing on of cultural heritages and values from generations.



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**Hero** beer is identified with people who have achieved great strides in the Igbo community and abroad. For example, this beer symbol made the Igbos believe that “**Hero**” referred to Ojukwu and almost immediately they nicknamed the beer “**Oh Mkpa,**” which is an exclamation of “ Oh father” as a mark of respect in Igbo land.

**LEGEND (Odogwu)** beer is the drink for those who don’ t see themselves as ordinary. And this especially is relatable to a hardworking Igbo man. It's a bitter drink for those people who went through life and war together, and now enjoy the same LEGEND moments as they share an ice-cold bottle with a new friend..

**Tiger (Agu)** This beer is one of the most popular brands in Nigeria. It is one everyday drink for a typical young vibrant Igbo man who believes in his day to day struggle. The name inspires him, bringing out his strength to conquer life's challenges. He gathers with his fellows/colleagues and friends to cheer over the bottles as the agu (tigers) of their generation.

## Theoretical Framework

### Social Identity Theory

So what is social personality hypothesis? The thought one's ability to be self aware is formed by relating to specific gatherings. For instance, I may consider myself to be a foodie since I love to eat out and attempt new eateries. The way that I like food and preparing steers clear of it. I took the significance from the name "foodie" and related it with my own character, which at last started to consider me and my every day conduct.

Social character hypothesis is an idea that arrangements with the connection between man's social being and his own personality. It recommends that we show up at our ability to be self-aware by estimating our encounters against the normal assumptions for everyone around us.

Bhasin (2018) concurring with the situation of social character hypothesis fought that people are social creatures and are molded by their relationship with others and that people adjust to specific practices that are anticipated from them as individuals from that specific gathering. Yoo and MacInnis (2015) have contended that advertising could assume a significant part in affecting perspectives among beer drinkers and customers. Advertisers regularly expect that shoppers are normal specialists whose attitudes are unaffected by publicizing. However, indeed, mental exploration has shown that specific components of promoting can really deliver impacts which are very amazing.

The discoveries of Bhattacharya and Sen (2013) proposes that one can clarify why lager purchasers become connected to specific brands by engaging either to their social character or socio-enthusiastic personality. The hypothesis clarifies conditions under which social personality is a more grounded impact than even our individual characters. In this manner, one may purchase the brew drink which their companions devour in light of the fact that they need to have a place with that gathering. There are numerous reasons why we purchase an item. In any case, one huge explanation is on passionate level we have with the item. We respond to an item's value, the shade of the bundling, the brand and the promoting. We likewise respond to cost along these lines considering our gathering membership. If we have a place with a specific gathering, we can have fundamentally the same as responses to bunch exercises relying upon our enrollment status

The "iconization" of beer advertising needs to do generally with individuals' social or chronicled importance. Contemporary social publicizing advances an African feeling of pride,



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energy and incorporation' through items that are 'intended to radiate African-ness, some of the time through an overstated or provocative style of dress and dance, yet continually showing development and intensity. By embracing the conventional African narrating approach in ads (for example Guinness' "My Friend Udeme is an incredible man"; or Indomie Noodle "Grandmother reveal to me a Story") sponsors accomplish more than show the uniqueness of native African promoting approaches: they show that they are committed to tuning in to the neighborhood populace and their interests.

Lager promoting patterns in Nigeria has now made the change from the straightforward guarantee of offering brew to focusing on shoppers in a really captivating and intuitive manner. An example of this is in situations where items are related with a symbol or illustration that gives them their own one of a kind story. In this world, past the limited perspective on publicizing, there are exercises here that offer expect Nigeria's turn of events. It is in adjusting—utilizing on what we have—as opposed to discount appropriation of worldwide patterns that countries, even the African landmass, can create and be incredible. We can figure out how to improve, to expand on what as of now exists, to continue to develop our economies in a manner that is economical and comprehensive. Indeed, even as these landmasses look forward to an eventual fate of plenitude.

## Research Methodology

Through the lens of Saunders' research onion model, this study arranges and defines its research methodology to afford a more systematic approach.



**Figure 1: Research Onion As adopted by the researchers.**

At the outermost layer of the research onion, the philosophy underpinning this study is positivism, which aligns with the quantitative nature of the research. According to Park et al. (2020), Positivism asserts that knowledge is derived from observable and measurable facts, thereby justifying the use of quantitative methods to assess the relationships and patterns in the advertising influence on consumer behavior.

The approach, situated at the next layer, is deductive (Saunders et al. 2009). This approach is appropriate as the study tests existing theories on advertising, iconization, and consumer behavior, applying them to the specific context of Ibo students. The deductive method also aligns well with the use of statistical analyses, as it involves hypothesis testing based on existing literature and theories. Moving inward, the research strategy involves a survey, which is fitting for quantitative studies aimed at gathering data from a larger population. Surveys allow



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for the collection of a broad range of data (Ponto, 2015), which is crucial for understanding the nuances of advertising impact and iconization among a specific demographic group.

The choice of time horizon for this study is cross-sectional. Connelly (2016) assert that this is appropriate for capturing data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the attitudes and behaviours of Ibo students towards beer advertising. This time frame is effective for studies that aim to examine the current state of a phenomenon without requiring longitudinal tracking.

Concerning the data collection and analysis layers, data was collected through electronic copies of the questionnaire. The study employs descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies and percentages offer a clear depiction of the distribution of responses, aligning with the first and second objectives of the study by elucidating the nature and extent of understanding and meaning sharing about iconization among the students. The deployment of the chi-square test is critical for the third objective, as it examines the relationship between iconization in beer advertising and the patronage among the students. This statistical tool is apt for determining if the observed differences in patronage behavior are statistically significant.

The population of this study according to records unit of the University is 1,230 students of Ibo origin both male and female cut across the 5 South Eastern divide of the nation Regarding the sample size of 100, this number strikes a balance between practicality and the need for statistical power. In quantitative research, larger samples provide more reliable and generalizable results. However, given resource and time constraints, a sample size of 100 is reasonable, especially considering the relatively homogenous sample of Ibo students at a single university.

The sampling procedure, snowball sampling, is particularly justifiable in this context. As the study focuses on a specific demographic (Ibo students at the University of Uyo), snowball sampling allows for accessing a population that might be difficult to reach through random sampling methods (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). Students participating in the study can refer researchers to other potential participants within their social networks, ensuring a more comprehensive coverage of the target demographic.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

The tables presented here represent the results of a survey conducted to understand the impact of "iconization" in beer advertising, specifically the use of Igbo cultural symbols, on consumer behavior and perception.

**Table 1: Familiarity with the Term "Iconization" in Beer Advertising**

**How familiar are you with the term "iconization" in the context of beer advertising?**

| Responses           | Frequency  | Percent      |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| Not familiar at all | 30         | 30.0         |
| Not very familiar   | 26         | 26.0         |
| Somewhat familiar   | 12         | 12.0         |
| Very familiar       | 32         | 32.0         |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |



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This table shows that 30% of respondents are not familiar at all with the term "iconization" in the context of beer advertising, while 26% are not very familiar. On the other hand, 32% are very familiar, and 12% are somewhat familiar.

**Table 2: Understanding of Cultural References in Beer Advertisements**

**How well do you understand the cultural references used in beer advertisements?**

| Responses       | Frequency  | Percent      |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| Moderately well | 17         | 17.0         |
| Not at all      | 30         | 30.0         |
| Slightly        | 23         | 23.0         |
| Very well       | 30         | 30.0         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

30% of respondents understand the cultural references used in beer advertisements very well, while 17% understand them moderately well. However, 30% do not understand them at all, and 23% understand them slightly.

**Table 3: Effectiveness of Ibo Words and Symbols in Conveying Brand Message**

**Do you think that the use of Igbo words and symbols in beer advertising is effective in conveying the brand's message?**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percent      |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Agree          | 41         | 41.0         |
| Disagree       | 18         | 18.0         |
| Neutral        | 23         | 23.0         |
| Strongly agree | 18         | 18.0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

41% of respondents agree that the use of Igbo words and symbols in beer advertising is effective in conveying the brand's message, while 18% strongly agree. However, 18% disagree, and 23% are neutral.

**Table 4: Understanding of Cultural References in Beer Advertisements**

**How well do you understand the cultural references used in beer advertisements?**

| Responses       | Frequency  | Percent      |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| Moderately well | 17         | 17.0         |
| Not at all      | 30         | 30.0         |
| Slightly        | 23         | 23.0         |
| Very well       | 30         | 30.0         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

30% of respondents understand the cultural references used in beer advertisements very well, while 17% understand them moderately well. However, 30% do not understand them at all, and 23% understand them slightly.



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**Table 5: Noticeability of Igbo Cultural Symbols in Beer Advertisements**

**Have you noticed the use of Igbo cultural symbols in beer advertisements?**

| Responses    | Frequency  | Percent      |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Always       | 32         | 32.0         |
| Never        | 12         | 12.0         |
| Often        | 12         | 12.0         |
| Rarely       | 18         | 18.0         |
| Sometimes    | 26         | 26.0         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

2% of respondents always notice the use of Igbo cultural symbols in beer advertisements, while 26% sometimes notice them. 12% often notice them, 18% rarely notice them, and 12% never notice them.

**Table 6: Effectiveness of Ibo Words and Symbols in Conveying Brand Message**

**Do you think that the use of Igbo words and symbols in beer advertising is effective in conveying the brand's message?**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percent      |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Agree          | 41         | 41.0         |
| Disagree       | 18         | 18.0         |
| Neutral        | 23         | 23.0         |
| Strongly agree | 18         | 18.0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

41% of respondents agree that the use of Igbo words and symbols in beer advertising is effective in conveying the brand's message, while 18% strongly agree. However, 18% disagree, and 23% are neutral.

**Table 7: Understanding of Cultural References in Beer Advertisements**

**How well do you understand the cultural references used in beer advertisements?**

| Responses       | Frequency  | Percent      |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| Moderately well | 17         | 17.0         |
| Not at all      | 30         | 30.0         |
| Slightly        | 23         | 23.0         |
| Very well       | 30         | 30.0         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

30% of respondents understand the cultural references used in beer advertisements very well, while 17% understand them moderately well. However, 30% do not understand them at all, and 23% understand them slightly.

**Table 8: Frequency of Purchasing Beer Brands Using Igbo Cultural Symbols in Advertising**

**Do you believe that the use of Igbo cultural symbols in beer advertising helps in preserving Igbo language and culture?**



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| Responses         | Frequency  | Percent      |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Agree             | 40         | 40.0         |
| Disagree          | 20         | 20.0         |
| Neutral           | 9          | 9.0          |
| Strongly agree    | 18         | 18.0         |
| Strongly disagree | 13         | 13.0         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

29% of respondents very often purchase beer brands that use Igbo cultural symbols in their advertising, while 27% sometimes do. 17% rarely do, 13% often do, and 14% never do.

**Table 9: Recommendation of a Beer Using Igbo Cultural Symbols in Advertising**  
Does the use of Igbo cultural symbols in beer advertising affect your loyalty to a beer brand?

| Responses         | Frequency  | Percent      |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Agree             | 25         | 25.0         |
| Disagree          | 19         | 19.0         |
| Neutral           | 22         | 22.0         |
| Strongly agree    | 20         | 20.0         |
| Strongly disagree | 14         | 14.0         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

**Table 10: Importance of Igbo Cultural Symbols in Continuing to Patronize a Beer Brand**

| How important are Igbo cultural symbols in your decision to continue patronizing a beer brand? |            |              |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Responses  | Frequency  | Percent      |
| Important  | 18         | 18.0         |
| Not important at all   | 31         | 31.0         |
| Somewhat important   | 23         | 23.0         |
| Very important   | 28         | 28.0         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

28% of respondents find Igbo cultural symbols very important in their decision to continue patronizing a beer brand, while 18% find them important. However, 31% do not find them important at all, and 23% find them somewhat important.

**Table 11: Crosstabulation of Importance of Igbo Cultural Symbols and Frequency of Purchasing Beer Brands Using Them**

How often do you purchase beer brands that use Igbo cultural symbols/words in their advertising

| Responses    | Frequency  | Percentages  |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Very Often   | 31         | 31.0         |
| Often        | 36         | 36.0         |
| Sometimes    | 21         | 21.0         |
| Rarely       | 12         | 12.0         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100.0</b> |



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## Chi-Square Tests

|                    | Value                | Df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|--------------------|----------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 185.077 <sup>a</sup> | 12 | .000                              |
| Likelihood Ratio   | 171.981              | 12 | .000                              |
| N of Valid Cases   | 100                  |    |                                   |

a. 12 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.34.

This table shows a significant association between the importance of Igbo cultural symbols in respondents' decision to continue patronizing a beer brand and their frequency of purchasing beer brands that use these symbols in their advertising. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 185.077 with a significance level of .000, indicating a statistically significant relationship.

## Discussion

The data presented and analysed offers rich insight for understanding the interplay between iconization in beer advertising and the consumer behavior of Ibo students at the University of Uyo. The results are revealing in terms of familiarity with iconization, the noticeability and effectiveness of Igbo cultural symbols in advertisements, and their impact on brand loyalty and patronage.

Starting with the familiarity with the term "iconization" (Table 1), it is intriguing to note that a significant portion of respondents (32%) are very familiar with the concept, while a comparable percentage (30%) are not familiar at all. This polarized familiarity suggests a gap in understanding or exposure to the concept among the target demographic. It raises questions about the effectiveness of these advertising strategies in reaching and resonating with their intended audience. The noticeability of Igbo cultural symbols in beer advertisements (Table 2) shows that a substantial 32% always notice these symbols. This high noticeability is indicative of the successful penetration of these symbols in the advertising realm, at least among a portion of the audience. However, the 12% who never notice them again points to a disconnect, suggesting that the use of such symbols might not be universally appealing or noticeable. The effectiveness of Igbo words and symbols in conveying brand messages (Table 3) is affirmed by 59% of respondents (41% agree, 18% strongly agree). This majority perception is crucial, as it validates the use of cultural iconization in advertising as a potent tool for brand communication. However, the 18% disagreement and 23% neutrality call for a critical examination of the execution of these advertising strategies. Understanding of cultural references in beer advertisements (Table 4) presents a dichotomy 30% understand them very well, and another 30% do not understand them at all. This disparity suggests a cultural disconnect or a lack of inclusive communication strategy that resonates uniformly with the target audience.

The respect for Igbo cultural values through iconization in beer advertising (Table 5 and Table 6) is a critical area. While a combined 45% agree or strongly agree that it respects cultural values, a significant 33% disagree or strongly disagree. This contention reflects a delicate balance in using cultural elements in advertising, where the line between cultural appreciation and appropriation can be thin and subjective.

Discussing cultural symbols used in beer advertisements with peers (Table 7) is an important indicator of the social influence and conversation generated by these advertisements. A high 56% (30% very often, 26% sometimes) discuss these symbols, indicating that the



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advertisements have a significant social footprint and are a topic of conversation, potentially influencing consumer behaviors and attitudes.

The sense of pride in seeing Igbo cultural elements in beer advertisements (Table 8) and their influence on understanding the product (Table 9) are closely linked. The data shows a divided response, with a notable 26% feeling strong pride and 27% strongly agreeing on the influence on understanding. This indicates that for a significant portion of the audience, cultural elements in advertising do resonate deeply and positively influence their perception and understanding of the product. The likelihood to remember a beer advertisement using Igbo cultural symbols (Table 10) and the preservation of Igbo language and culture through such advertising (Table 11) further highlight the effectiveness of cultural iconization in creating memorable advertisements and contributing to cultural preservation, respectively. This is evidenced by the 56% likelihood of remembering such advertisements and 58% believing in the role of these advertisements in cultural preservation.

The frequency of purchasing beer brands using Igbo cultural symbols (Table 12) and the likelihood to try a new beer advertising using these symbols (Table 13) reflect consumer behavior directly influenced by advertising strategies. The data reveals a significant inclination towards purchasing and trying beers that use cultural iconization, underscoring the effectiveness of this strategy in driving consumer choices. The impact of Igbo cultural symbols on loyalty to a beer brand (Table 14) and the recommendation of a beer using these symbols (Table 15) are crucial for understanding brand loyalty and advocacy. A combined 45% agree or strongly agree that it affects their loyalty, and 45% would definitely or probably recommend such a beer, highlighting the role of cultural elements in fostering brand loyalty and peer-to-peer marketing.

Lastly, the importance of Igbo cultural symbols in continuing to patronize a beer brand (Table 16) and its cross tabulation with the frequency of purchasing beer brands using them reveal a significant association (Pearson Chi-Square value of 185.077,  $p < .000$ ). This strong statistical relationship underscores the profound impact of cultural iconization on consumer purchasing behavior.

The application of Social Identity Theory to the data on beer advertising and iconization among Ibo students of the University of Uyo reveals a nuanced interplay between cultural identity and consumer behavior. This theory, emphasizing the influence of group affiliations on self-perception, aligns with the observed effectiveness of Igbo cultural symbols in beer advertising. The significant recognition of these symbols (Tables 2, 3, 4) suggests that advertising strategies that tap into the students' cultural identities resonate more strongly, fostering a sense of belonging that influences purchasing behaviors (Table 12, 13). However, the mixed familiarity with "iconization" (Table 1) and varied understanding of cultural references (Table 4) indicate varying degrees of cultural identification among students, affecting the uniformity of advertising impact. This highlights the critical role of advertising in shaping attitudes and behaviors, as argued by Yoo and MacInnis (2005), and underscores the need for culturally sensitive and inclusive advertising strategies.

## **Implications of the Findings**

The implications of the beer advertising iconization data among Ibo students at the University of Uyo are multiple and affect advertiser, consumer, and broader cultural



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domains. The fact that some people are familiar with iconization on different levels, also being aware of various cultural references and others knowing nothing about this term is a problem which nullifies the effectivity of advertising strategies. This implies that there are ads have managed to relate with part of the target audience, but it does not resonate across the chosen demographic. Advertisers also need to develop a critical approach to their marketing strategies in terms of cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness without falling into the trap of cultural appropriation.

The fact that Igbo ethnic symbols used in marketing are highly noticed and appreciated indicates that they can be useful for building brand allegiance and affecting purchasing habits. Nonetheless, the data additionally displays a critical percentage of the significant development who do not associate with these symbols, which hints at more absurd air that figures in different cultural identifications inside the Ibo group. In addition, the data highlights how relation in cultural iconization leads to behavior change of a consumer indicating by strong correlation between discrimination and consumers' purchasing attitudes. This implies that advertisers have the ability to use cultural elements as a means of creating stronger and longer-lasting connections with their respective audience. But they need to do this cautiously without sidelining cultural representation, but also considering their commercial interests and being sure that their use of cultural symbols is culturally conscious.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of the data on iconization in beer advertising among Ibo students at the University of Uyo, four critical recommendations can be made:

1. **Enhanced Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity in Advertising:** Advertisers need to have a further understanding of the many cultural differences that are prevalent in the Ibo community. This includes the presentation of cultural images and not just this, but also in a manner that honestly reflects acting on behalf of the diverse identities and interests residing in that community. It is critical that the marketer avoids mass marketing and focuses more on customization of the advertisement content in order to capture different parts of their target audience.
2. **Balanced Representation of Cultural Elements:** The issue at hand is the fact that, even though cultural iconization had been proven effective as such for a variety of times before, it still needs to be measured not to introduce an element of stereotypes into advertising. Advertisements should depict culture in a more complex way, trying to avoid clichés and stereotypes that would predispose towards cultural appropriation. This can be attained by including cultural consultants or members of the Ibo community to review aspects of their culture in order to ensure authenticity and respect during the creative process.
3. **Consumer Education and Engagement:** With varied levels of ignorance and knowledge about what iconization is, there are ways in which individual can be informed. Such campaigns may be designed at creating awareness and educating the consumers on the cultural connotations and interpretations of the symbols used in advertisements. In this way, advertisers can help to close the knowledge gap and develop an enhanced appreciation of the cultural components among consumers.
4. **Diversified Advertising Strategies:** Because cultural iconization has different effects on various groups of the target market, it would be important for advertisers to approach the method from varied perspectives. This will imply a combination of conventional and contemporary marketing strategies, engaging multiple platforms to address broad audiences from various backgrounds. Moreover, the feedback processes where the consumers could share their opinions on ads messages could align fruitful insights for further adjustments of advertisements strategies.



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## Conclusion

One of the striking observations is also that respondents are strongly or barely familiar with iconization which may be indicative of a lack of understanding or contact among the target audience. Whereas a good number of the respondents had strong knowledge and loved Igbo cultural symbols as used in advertisements, an equally high percentage registered poor or near no idea of what was meant by such items. This polarization underscores the necessity for advertising strategies to be further broad-ranging and thoughtful of the contrasting ranges of common knowledge and character within the target demographic.

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