

## CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF PEPSICO FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS AND COMPETITIVE POSITIONING IN PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN

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### Abstract

This study investigates the consumer perception of business communication strategies of PepsiCo and their role in enhancing marketing effectiveness and competitive positioning in Peshawar. In today's highly competitive beverage industry, effective communication strategies including advertising, digital engagement, celebrity endorsements, corporate image, and retail visibility play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and influencing purchasing behavior. A quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire comprising 20 Likert-scale items. Data were collected from a sample of 100 respondents, including university students, young professionals, and retail customers. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ), indicating strong internal consistency. Descriptive statistical analyses were applied to examine relationships among variables. The findings reveal that PepsiCo's communication strategies have a significant positive impact on consumer perception, marketing effectiveness, and purchase intention. Advertising and digital communication emerged as the most influential factors, followed by brand image and retail presence. Furthermore, the results indicate that effective communication strategies contribute substantially to strengthening PepsiCo's competitive positioning in the local market. The current study concluded that well-integrated and culturally relevant communication strategies enhance consumer engagement and brand preference. These findings provide valuable insights for marketers to optimize communication efforts and sustain competitive advantage in emerging markets. Future research may expand the scope by including comparative analysis with competing brands and larger sample sizes.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, business communication has become a critical determinant of brand success, consumer engagement, and market positioning (Leahy 2011). Companies are

increasingly relying on integrated communication strategies that combine advertising, digital media, celebrity endorsements, cultural relevance, retail visibility, and corporate communication to influence consumer perception and purchasing

behavior. Among global beverage brands, PepsiCo stands as one of the most prominent examples of a company that strategically utilizes communication to maintain its competitive advantage across diverse markets (Li 2024). In emerging markets such as Pakistan, consumer behavior is strongly influenced by media exposure, cultural values, and emotional branding. Urban centers like Peshawar represent a dynamic consumer base where youth, professionals, and retail customers are increasingly exposed to both traditional and digital marketing platforms. In such environments, understanding how consumers perceive corporate communication strategies becomes essential for evaluating brand effectiveness and competitive positioning (Li 2024).

PepsiCo has consistently adopted a multi-channel communication approach, targeting consumers through television advertising, social media campaigns, influencer marketing, sports sponsorships (particularly cricket), and culturally relevant messaging (Saleem et al. 2025). These strategies are designed not only to increase product awareness but also to build emotional connections with consumers and strengthen brand loyalty (Fournier and Yao 1997; Zulfikar 2022). However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends largely on how consumers interpret and respond to them in specific cultural and regional contexts (Nam, Ekinci, and Whyatt 2011; Zulfikar 2022). Despite extensive global research on marketing communication, limited studies have focused on consumer perception of integrated communication strategies in semi-urban and developing regions of Pakistan. This gap highlights the need to examine how advertising, digital communication, celebrity influence, corporate image, and retail visibility collectively shape consumer attitudes and behavior in local markets such as Peshawar (Dad 2012; Islam 2024).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the consumer perception of business communication strategies of PepsiCo and their impact on marketing effectiveness and competitive positioning in Peshawar. By focusing on university students, young professionals, and retail customers, the

study provides a comprehensive understanding of how different consumer segments interpret brand communication. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to marketing and communication literature by providing empirical evidence from a developing market context. Additionally, the study offers practical insights for marketers to refine communication strategies, improve consumer engagement, and strengthen competitive positioning in the beverage industry.

### Research Questions

- How do business communication strategies (advertising, digital media, celebrity endorsement, cultural appeal, and retail visibility) influence consumer perception of PepsiCo?
- What is the role of corporate image and trust in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intention toward PepsiCo?
- How do communication strategies and consumer perception affect marketing effectiveness and competitive positioning of PepsiCo in Peshawar?

### Objectives

- To examine the impact of business communication strategies (advertising, digital communication, celebrity endorsement, cultural appeal, and retail visibility) on consumer perception of PepsiCo in Peshawar.
- To assess the role of corporate image and trust in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intention toward PepsiCo.
- To determine how consumer perception and communication strategies contribute to marketing effectiveness and competitive positioning of PepsiCo in the beverage market.

### Literature Review

#### *Business Communication and Marketing Effectiveness*

Business communication is a core element of modern marketing strategy, especially in highly competitive FMCG markets. It includes all forms of message delivery between a company and its consumers through advertising, digital media, public relations, and in-store communication. Contemporary marketing theory emphasizes that

effective communication is not only about message transmission but also about meaning creation and consumer perception building. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has been widely recognized as a strategic approach that ensures consistency across all communication channels. Recent literature highlights that IMC improves brand recall, strengthens customer engagement, and enhances overall marketing performance by delivering a unified message across platforms such as television, social media, and retail environments. The evolution toward digital-first communication has further increased the importance of real-time engagement and personalized marketing strategies, particularly for youth-driven markets (Hänninen and Karjaluoto 2017; Jerman and Završnik 2012; Leahy 2011; Sanina et al. 2017).

#### ***Consumer Perception in FMCG Markets***

Consumer perception plays a central role in determining brand success in FMCG industries. It refers to how individuals interpret marketing stimuli such as advertisements, brand messages, and corporate behavior. Studies suggest that consumer perception is shaped by emotional, cognitive, and social factors, including brand familiarity, trust, and cultural alignment. In competitive beverage markets, consumer perception is strongly influenced by brand visibility, emotional appeal, and advertising exposure. Consumers often associate brands not only with product quality but also with lifestyle and identity. This is particularly relevant in developing countries where brand communication significantly shapes consumer preferences due to high exposure to mass media and limited product differentiation (C.Ramu and .C 2019; Joshi and Sabri 2021; Khalil 2021).

#### ***Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Communication***

A large body of literature emphasizes the importance of celebrity endorsement as a powerful marketing communication tool. Celebrity endorsement enhances brand credibility, attracts attention, and strengthens emotional appeal. A celebrity is generally defined as a publicly

recognized individual who uses their popularity to promote products or services, thereby influencing consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. In the FMCG sector of Pakistan, celebrity endorsement has been widely adopted by multinational companies, including PepsiCo, to build strong brand associations. Research indicates that celebrity endorsement positively influences brand image, awareness, and purchase intention by transferring symbolic meaning from the celebrity to the product. However, the effectiveness of this strategy depends on the match between the celebrity and the brand, as well as consumer trust in the endorser. Studies also show that celebrity endorsement significantly impacts brand image and consumer buying behavior in Pakistan's FMCG sector, highlighting its importance in shaping market outcomes (Carroll 2009; Hameed et al. 2023; Malik and Sudhakar 2014; Mukherjee 2009; Rocha, Caldeira de Oliveira, and Giraldi 2019).

#### ***Digital Communication and Social Media Marketing***

With the rapid expansion of digital platforms, companies have increasingly shifted toward social media-based communication strategies. Digital marketing allows brands to engage directly with consumers, create interactive content, and build online communities. Literature suggests that digital communication enhances brand visibility and strengthens consumer-brand relationships through continuous engagement. For brands like PepsiCo, digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become essential tools for targeting younger audiences. These platforms enable emotional storytelling, influencer collaboration, and viral marketing campaigns, which significantly enhance brand perception and engagement. Research also indicates that digital communication is more effective than traditional media in influencing youth purchasing behavior due to its interactive and personalized nature (Stephen 2016; Tiago and Verissimo 2014; Yadav, Joshi, and Rahman 2015).

***Cultural Appeal and Localization Strategy***

Localization of communication strategies is a key factor in multinational brand success. Literature suggests that consumers respond more positively to marketing messages that reflect their cultural values, traditions, and social identity. In South Asian markets, including Pakistan, cultural elements such as cricket, festivals, and music play a significant role in shaping consumer engagement. PepsiCo's marketing strategy frequently incorporates cultural symbols and local themes to enhance emotional connection with consumers. This cultural alignment strengthens brand relevance and increases consumer loyalty, particularly among young consumers who identify strongly with local cultural narratives (An 2006; Cheung 2010; Li et al. 2020; Noris, Sabatini, and Cantoni 2025; Okonkwo et al. 2023; Singh and Pipaliya 2024).

***Corporate Image, Trust, and Brand Equity***

Corporate image and trust are fundamental components of brand equity. A strong corporate image enhances consumer confidence, while trust directly influences long-term loyalty and purchase intention. Literature highlights that consumers are more likely to engage with brands perceived as socially responsible and ethically committed. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives further strengthen brand reputation by demonstrating commitment to societal welfare. Studies show that CSR activities positively influence consumer attitudes and increase brand trust, particularly in emerging markets where corporate reputation plays a crucial role in purchase decisions (Heinberg, Ozkaya, and Taube 2018; Sutanto and Kussudyarsana 2024; Syed Alwi et al. 2016; Zhao et al. 2021).

***Retail Visibility and Point-of-Sale Communication***

Retail visibility is an important but often underestimated aspect of marketing communication. In-store branding, product placement, and promotional displays significantly influence impulse buying behavior. Literature indicates that consumers frequently make purchase decisions at the point of sale, making

retail communication a critical factor in marketing effectiveness. For FMCG brands, strong retail presence ensures product availability and reinforces brand recognition. Studies show that consistent in-store visibility enhances brand recall and increases the likelihood of purchase, especially in price-sensitive markets (Favero and Alvarez 2013; Ojenike, Abina, and Ajayi 2024; Willems, Brengman, and van de Sanden 2017).

***Competitive Positioning in Beverage Industry***

Competitive positioning refers to how a brand differentiates itself from competitors in the consumer's mind. In the global beverage industry, competition between major brands is primarily driven by marketing communication rather than product differentiation. Brands rely on advertising intensity, emotional branding, and cultural relevance to maintain market share. Literature suggests that effective communication strategies significantly enhance competitive positioning by increasing brand visibility, strengthening emotional appeal, and influencing consumer preference. PepsiCo, in particular, has maintained strong global competitiveness through its dynamic communication strategies, targeting youth-oriented markets and leveraging celebrity-driven campaigns (Ojenike et al. 2024; Søndergård 2024; Wei 2025).

***Research Gap***

Although extensive literature exists on celebrity endorsement, digital marketing, and consumer perception, there is limited empirical research focusing on regional consumer behavior in semi-urban markets of Pakistan such as Peshawar. Most existing studies focus on national-level or global perspectives, ignoring localized consumer interpretations of communication strategies. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how consumers in Peshawar perceive PepsiCo's integrated communication strategies and how these perceptions influence marketing effectiveness and competitive positioning.

**Methodology**

**Sampling Technique**

Consumers of PepsiCo products in the urban area of Peshawar city, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan were taken as the target population. The researcher collected the data from the accessible

population containing university students, young professionals, and retail customers (shops, malls, cafes), using simple random sampling. In the sample (n=100), university students were 50, young professionals were 30, and retail customers were 20 (Table 1).

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage of respondent category (n=100).**

Respondent Category	Frequency	Percentage
University Students	50	50%
Young Professionals	30	30%
Retail Customers (shops, malls, cafes)	20	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Data Collection Tool**

A quantitative questionnaire having 20 items based on 5 point Likert scale was used to collect data from the PepsiCo consumers. The

questionnaire was having six main themes. The items of each themes was further coded as C1 to C20 for data analysis (Table 2).

**Table 2. Main themes, questionnaire items, and its codes used in the results of this study (Themes=06, Items=20, Codes=C1 to C20).**

Main Themes	Items	Code
<b>Advertising and Digital Communication</b>	Pepsi advertisements are attractive and engaging.	C1
	Pepsi advertisements positively influence my perception of the brand.	C2
	I frequently see Pepsi campaigns on digital/social media.	C3
	Pepsi's social media content is interactive and engaging.	C4
	Pepsi uses modern and trendy communication styles.	C5
<b>Celebrity and Cultural Appeal</b>	Celebrity endorsements make Pepsi more appealing.	C6
	Pepsi campaigns reflect youth culture.	C7
	Pepsi advertisements align with local culture and traditions.	C8
	Cultural themes (e.g., cricket, Ramadan) enhance my connection with Pepsi.	C9
<b>Corporate Image and Trust</b>	Pepsi appears as a socially responsible company.	C10
	Pepsi's activities improve my trust in the brand.	C11
	Pepsi has a positive overall brand image.	C12
<b>Retail and Visibility</b>	Pepsi products are easily visible in stores.	C13
	In-store promotions influence my purchase decisions.	C14
	Pepsi has a strong presence in retail outlets.	C15
<b>Marketing Effectiveness</b>	Pepsi's communication increases my awareness of its products.	C16
	Pepsi's communication influences my buying decisions.	C17
	Pepsi's communication strategies are overall effective.	C18
<b>Competitive Positioning and Purchase Intention</b>	Pepsi stands out among competing beverage brands.	C19
	I am likely to purchase Pepsi products in the future.	C20

### Data Analysis

For the reliability of questionnaire, the study was first gone through a pilot study with 20 PepsiCo consumers, and the Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for each section corresponding to specific theme were find out (Table 3). Based on the pilot study results, the mean of the  $\alpha$  for all sections of the questionnaire

was counted as 0.80 revealing the good reliability. Moreover, the researcher used SPSS v.20 software for descriptive statistics. The weighted means were also calculated to check the overall response to each item using the method explained in previous literature (Dr. Rozina Tabassum 2026; Tabassum, Ahmad, and Salim 2025, 2026).

**Table 3. Cronbach's alpha of the main themes in the results' sections along with the number of questionnaire items in each section.**

Results' Sections	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Advertising and Digital Communication	5	0.85
Celebrity and Cultural Appeal	4	0.82
Corporate Image and Trust	3	0.79
Retail and Visibility	3	0.76
Marketing Effectiveness	3	0.84
Competitive Positioning	2	0.73
<b>Total / Mean</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0.80</b>

### Results

#### Advertising and Digital Communication

The analysis of responses related to advertising and digital communication indicates a strong positive perception among respondents. The majority of participants selected "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" across all five items, reflecting that PepsiCo advertisements are perceived as engaging, modern, and influential. Respondents reported frequent exposure to Pepsi campaigns on digital platforms, suggesting effective media reach and visibility. Based on weighted mean analysis, the overall response for each item in this section falls within the "Agree" category, confirming that advertising and digital communication strategies significantly contribute to shaping favorable consumer perception in Peshawar (Table 4, Item C1 to C5).

#### Celebrity and Cultural Appeal

The findings reveal that celebrity endorsements and cultural relevance play an important role in enhancing brand appeal. A substantial proportion of respondents agreed that Pepsi's use of celebrities increases attractiveness and aligns well with youth culture. Additionally, cultural themes such as cricket and local traditions were found to strengthen emotional connection with the brand.

The weighted mean values for all items in this section fall under the "Agree" level, indicating that respondents perceive these strategies as effective in improving brand image and relatability (Table 4, Item C6 to C9).

#### Corporate Image and Trust

Results related to corporate image and trust demonstrate that respondents generally hold a positive view of Pepsi's brand credibility and social responsibility. Most participants agreed that Pepsi appears as a trustworthy and socially responsible company, which enhances their overall perception of the brand. The consistency of responses across items indicates a stable perception of corporate reputation. Weighted mean analysis further confirms that all items fall within the "Agree" range, suggesting that corporate image significantly influences consumer attitudes (Table 4, Item C10 to C12).

#### Retail and Visibility

The analysis of retail visibility and in-store communication shows that Pepsi maintains a strong presence in retail environments. Respondents largely agreed that Pepsi products are easily visible in stores and that in-store promotions influence their purchase decisions. Although slightly less pronounced than digital

communication effects, retail strategies still demonstrate a meaningful impact on consumer behavior. The weighted mean results classify all items in this section as “Agree,” indicating an overall positive evaluation of Pepsi’s retail communication effectiveness (Table 4, Item C13 to C15).

**Marketing Effectiveness**

The findings indicate that Pepsi’s communication strategies are perceived as effective in enhancing marketing outcomes, particularly in terms of awareness and purchase influence. Respondents agreed that Pepsi’s communication increases their knowledge of products and affects their buying decisions. The overall effectiveness of these strategies is reinforced by consistent agreement across items. Weighted mean analysis shows that all items fall under the “Agree” category,

confirming that communication efforts are successfully contributing to marketing effectiveness (Table 4, Item C16 to C18).

**Competitive Positioning and Purchase Intention**

The results demonstrate that Pepsi holds a strong competitive position in the beverage market, supported by effective communication strategies. Respondents generally agreed that Pepsi stands out among competitors and expressed a positive intention to purchase its products in the future. This indicates a link between communication strategies and both brand preference and behavioral intention. The weighted mean values for all items in this section are within the “Agree” range, suggesting that Pepsi’s communication strategies effectively enhance its competitive positioning and encourage purchase intention (Table 4, Item C19 to C20).

**Table 4. PepsiCo consumers’ responses to each item (C1 to C20) on five point Likert scale. Frequencies and percentage along with the overall response based on weighted mean (n=100).**

Code	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Weighted Mean	Overall Response
C1	30	45	15	7	3	100	3.92	Agree
C2	30	42	18	8	2	100	3.90	Agree
C3	26	40	20	10	4	100	3.74	Agree
C4	27	44	17	9	3	100	3.83	Agree
C5	28	46	16	8	2	100	3.90	Agree
C6	23	38	22	12	5	100	3.62	Agree
C7	24	41	20	11	4	100	3.70	Agree
C8	25	45	18	9	3	100	3.80	Agree
C9	25	42	19	10	4	100	3.74	Agree
C10	26	46	17	8	3	100	3.84	Agree
C11	28	48	15	7	2	100	3.93	Agree
C12	28	45	16	8	3	100	3.87	Agree
C13	28	50	14	6	2	100	3.96	Agree
C14	26	43	18	9	4	100	3.78	Agree
C15	28	44	17	8	3	100	3.86	Agree
C16	29	48	14	7	2	100	3.95	Agree
C17	27	46	16	8	3	100	3.86	Agree
C18	30	47	15	6	2	100	3.97	Agree
C19	26	44	18	9	3	100	3.81	Agree
C20	28	49	14	7	2	100	3.94	Agree

Note: Scale used for the comparison of weighted mean of each item to obtain the overall response: Strongly Disagree (1.00 to 1.79), Disagree (1.80 to 2.53), Neutral (2.60 to 3.39), Agree (3.4 to 4.19), Strongly Agree (4.2 to 5).

**Discussion**

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that the business communication strategies of PepsiCo are perceived positively by consumers in Peshawar, with overall responses across all constructs falling within the “Agree” range based on weighted mean analysis. This indicates that consumers generally recognize and respond favorably to PepsiCo’s integrated communication efforts, including advertising, digital media engagement, celebrity endorsement, cultural alignment, retail visibility, and corporate image building.

The results showed that advertising and digital communication are among the most influential components shaping consumer perception. Respondents reported high exposure to Pepsi campaigns across social and digital platforms, suggesting that the brand has effectively adapted to the increasing shift toward digital-first marketing. This aligns with modern marketing literature, which emphasizes that digital engagement enhances brand recall and consumer interaction. The strong agreement in this study reflects that PepsiCo’s advertising strategies successfully capture attention and maintain relevance among younger audiences, particularly university students and young professionals. The findings also highlighted that celebrity endorsement and cultural relevance significantly enhance brand attractiveness. Consumers in the study strongly associated Pepsi with youth culture, sports (especially cricket), and entertainment-driven messaging. This supports the idea that emotional branding and cultural embedding are critical in emerging markets where consumer identity is closely linked with popular culture. The positive perception suggests that PepsiCo’s strategy of aligning with celebrities and cultural themes effectively strengthens emotional connection and brand resonance (Li 2024; Søndergård 2024; Wei 2025).

On the other hand, corporate image and trust were also found to play a vital role in shaping consumer attitudes. Respondents generally perceived Pepsi as a socially responsible and trustworthy brand, which contributes positively to overall brand equity. This is consistent with

corporate communication theory, which states that trust and reputation significantly influence long-term consumer loyalty. The findings suggest that PepsiCo’s corporate communication and CSR initiatives are effectively reinforcing a favorable brand image in the minds of consumers. Retail visibility and in-store communication were also positively perceived, although slightly less influential compared to digital and advertising strategies. Consumers acknowledged strong product availability and visibility in retail outlets, which contributes to impulse buying and purchase decisions. This indicates that while digital communication dominates brand perception, physical availability and point-of-sale promotions remain essential in reinforcing final purchase behavior. The findings suggest that PepsiCo maintains an effective Omni channel presence in the market. The results confirmed that communication strategies collectively enhance marketing effectiveness by increasing awareness, influencing consumer preferences, and encouraging purchase behavior. This supports integrated marketing communication theory, which emphasizes consistency across multiple channels to maximize impact. The agreement across respondents indicates that PepsiCo’s communication mix is functioning effectively as a unified strategy rather than isolated promotional efforts (Hameed et al. 2023; Heinberg et al. 2018; Syed Alwi et al. 2016; Tiago and Verissimo 2014). The study also revealed that Pepsi holds a strong competitive position in the beverage market of Peshawar. Respondents expressed a clear preference for Pepsi over competing brands, largely influenced by its communication strategies. The positive purchase intention further indicates that effective communication not only builds awareness but also translates into behavioral outcomes. This finding reinforces the strategic importance of branding and communication in maintaining competitive advantage in highly saturated markets. In summary, the study demonstrates that consumers perceive PepsiCo’s communication strategies as effective, consistent, and engaging. The dominance of “Agree” responses across all constructs suggests that the brand successfully integrates advertising, digital

engagement, cultural relevance, and retail presence to build a strong market position. These findings support existing literature that emphasizes the importance of integrated communication strategies in enhancing brand equity, consumer loyalty, and competitive positioning in FMCG markets (Fournier and Yao 1997; Jallow 2021; Li 2024; Li et al. 2020; Saleem et al. 2025).

### Conclusion

This study examined the consumer perception of business communication strategies of PepsiCo and their influence on marketing effectiveness and competitive positioning in Peshawar. The findings, based on responses from 100 participants including university students, young professionals, and retail customers, indicate a generally positive perception of PepsiCo's communication practices. The frequency distribution of responses shows that the majority of respondents selected "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" across most items, suggesting that PepsiCo's advertising, digital engagement, and retail visibility are effective in capturing consumer attention and shaping favorable brand attitudes. In particular, advertising and digital communication emerged as the most influential components, reflecting the growing importance of modern, interactive platforms in reaching target audiences. Furthermore, factors such as celebrity endorsements, cultural relevance, and corporate image were found to enhance emotional connection and trust among consumers. Retail presence and in-store promotions also contributed to purchase decisions, though to a relatively moderate extent compared to digital and advertising efforts. The reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87) confirmed that the measurement scale is internally consistent and suitable for evaluating consumer perception. Overall, the results demonstrate that effective and integrated business communication strategies significantly contribute to improving marketing effectiveness, consumer engagement, and competitive positioning of PepsiCo in the local market. In conclusion, PepsiCo's ability to combine global branding with localized

communication strategies has strengthened its position among consumers in Peshawar. The study suggests that continued focus on digital innovation, cultural alignment, and customer-centric communication will further enhance brand loyalty and market competitiveness.

### Author's contributions

Methodology, Data collection, Formal Analysis, Writing-Original draft: Kifayat Ullah Khan. Data curation: Aftab Hussain. Supervision, Writing-Review and Editing: Geng xian hui.

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### Conflicts of Interest

The author have no competing interest.

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