

Emotional Attention Management in Modern Marketing: A Strategic Visualization Framework

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Abstract

Emotional attention management constitutes a critical determinant in contemporary marketing practices, significantly influencing consumer experience, decision-making processes, and brand loyalty. This study examines the theoretical foundations of emotional attention in marketing while positioning the Strategic Visualization Framework as an applied model for integrating emotional intelligence principles into branding strategies. Drawing upon cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and behavioral economics, this research investigates emotion-driven and attention-capturing approaches that enable brands to craft resonant messages, establish meaningful connections with audiences, and implement ethical persuasion techniques across both Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) contexts. The research objectives are threefold: (1) to conceptualize emotional attention management within broader marketing psychology and behavioral economics frameworks; (2) to analyze the application of emotional attention principles through the Strategic Visualization Framework across B2B and B2C settings; and (3) to identify strategic outcomes, including audience engagement, brand loyalty, and ethical persuasion resulting from framework implementation. Through a qualitative examination of marketing campaigns spanning the logistics, environmental advocacy, and educational outreach sectors, this study identifies how emotional storytelling, sensory design, and value alignment shape consumer perceptions. The analysis demonstrates that strategic visualization enhances brand salience while facilitating sustainable market relationships grounded in empathy and shared purpose. These findings carry significant implications for integrating emotional intelligence principles into professional training and brand development strategies, particularly as global markets undergo digital transformation. Practitioners, educators, and policymakers can leverage these insights to develop marketing approaches that balance commercial effectiveness with ethical responsibility.

Keywords: Brand Storytelling, Consumer Decision-Making, Emotional Attention Management, Emotional Intelligence, Ethical Persuasion, Marketing Psychology, Strategic Visualization Framework.

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of international marketing has transformed attention into one of the most valuable and contested resources in contemporary commerce (Amany, 2025; Mirzaye & Mohiuddin, 2025). Modern consumers face continuous bombardment from information torrents through physical, digital, and hybrid channels. In such saturated market environments, brands' capacity to capture and sustain audience attention directly correlates with competitive advantage and market performance. Attention, however, constitutes an inherently human, emotionally oriented phenomenon. A growing corpus of scholarship in cognitive psychology, behavioral economics, and marketing science acknowledges that emotion serves as the primary driver affecting what individuals notice, how they interpret stimuli, and ultimately, how they make purchasing decisions. This recognition has generated a specialized marketing approach termed emotional attention management—the intentional and ethical shaping of consumer attention through the application of emotionally resonant stimuli (Djedjiga, 2025; Song et al., 2025).

This concept possesses historical precedent. Early advertising theory already relied heavily on emotional induction (Antonetti, Valor Martínez, Baghi, & González-Gómez, 2025; Theodorakopoulos, Theodoropoulou, & Klavdianos, 2025). From Edward Bernays' early twentieth-century public relations strategies to affective advertising frameworks of the mid-century television era, emotional appeals dominated marketing communications (Crawford & Dickenson, 2025; Rosa-Salas, 2025). Neuroscience and digital analytics represent more recent developments that expand, rather than replace, these foundations (Otamendi & Sutil Martín, 2020). Today, marketers can measure micro-expressions, analyze sentiment with artificial intelligence, and conduct A/B testing of narrative structures in real time (Siddiqui, 2025). Yet, despite technological advancement, the fundamental principle remains unchanged: emotions direct attention flow, and behavior follows attention.

For Business-to-Consumer (B2C) marketers, emotion has long constituted the foundation for brand preference (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2025; Pedrotti & Andersson, 2025). Campaigns evoking joy, nostalgia, or belonging tend to outperform those focusing solely on rational product features (Basha, Babu, Geddam, & Sirsali, 2025). In Business-to-Business (B2B) contexts, conversely, emotional factors were traditionally deemphasized in favor of technical specifications, efficiency metrics, and cost-benefit analyses (Thomas, 2024). Recent research, however, challenges this dichotomy, demonstrating that B2B purchase decisions are also strongly influenced by personal trust, interpersonal relationships, and organizational values alignment (Rasheed, Husser, Junaid, Goujon Belghit, & Abdoune, 2025; Saragih, 2024). This recognition has created opportunities for frameworks combining strategic rigor with emotional connection, thereby bridging the gap between purely rational evaluation and authentic emotional resonance.

Within this context, the Strategic Visualization Framework emerged, rooted in extensive experience across diverse industries ranging from international logistics to environmental advocacy (Abu-Bakar & Charnley, 2024; Mammadov, 2024). The framework integrates insights from cognitive psychology, sensory branding, and narrative design to help organizations create emotionally charged brand experiences (Ahmed, Sharif, Ting, & Sharif, 2024; Nyman, 2025). This approach has been applied particularly in sectors often regarded as rational or data-driven, such as freight logistics, where decision-making typically frames itself in operational rather than emotional terms (Liachovicius, 2025; Tran-Dang, Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2025).

The methodology underlying this framework rests on the premise that human brains are neurologically wired to process visual and emotional information more rapidly and memorably than abstract data (Gola, 2024; Oakley, Johnston, Chen, Jung, & Sejnowski, 2025). By vividly enabling audiences to visualize improved futures connected with products or services, the Strategic Visualization Framework seeks not merely cognitive acceptance but emotional investment (Mahyar, 2024; Manu, 2024). This aligns with neuromarketing research demonstrating that emotionally charged imagery can activate both the limbic system governing emotional responses and the prefrontal cortex guiding higher-level decision-making.

Beyond academic foundations, this work addresses pressing market realities. Three converging dynamics define twenty-first-century marketing:

- a) Information Oversaturation: As digital content expands exponentially, competition for audience attention intensifies, reducing effective attention spans.
- b) Consumer Skepticism: Audiences increasingly resist manipulative advertising, demanding authenticity and transparency (Edelman, 2019).
- c) Globalization and Cultural Diversity: Operating in international markets requires sensitivity to diverse emotional and cultural frameworks, making one-size-fits-all strategies unviable.

These challenges necessitate careful emotional attention management. The Strategic Visualization Framework addresses these requirements by creating genuine connections built upon shared human values, informed by scientific insights into attentional processes. The framework rests on three pillars:

- a) Emotional Storytelling: Crafting narratives that link product benefits with aspirational or value-centered themes.
- b) Sensory Design: Using visual, tactile, and spatial elements to create emotionally memorable brand environments.
- c) Value Alignment: Ensuring brand messages reflect authentic commitments to causes and principles that audiences identify with.

These pillars transcend abstract ideals; they have been operationalized in concrete campaigns. For example, at UTLC ERA, a multinational logistics joint venture, exhibition design and environmental campaigns reframed freight logistics not as purely functional service but as socially and environmentally responsible enterprise. Likewise, conservation initiatives with the World Wildlife Fund in Kazakhstan and with Belarus' Ministry of Nature established ecological stewardship within corporate narratives.

This article situates emotional attention management within contemporary marketing's applied setting, employing the Strategic Visualization Framework as the focal case study. The research questions guiding this investigation are:

- a) How can the systematic application of emotional attention management be carried across both B2C and B2B scenarios?
- b) What cognitive and behavioral mechanisms explain the efficacy of emotional attention in shaping purchasing decisions?
- c) What measurable effects can be observed on brand loyalty, audience engagement, and ethical persuasion?

The study proceeds as follows: First, theoretical foundations drawn from marketing psychology, behavioral economics, and communication theory are established. Subsequently, the qualitative case study methodology employed to analyze campaigns across industries is outlined. The analysis then discusses the interplay among emotional resonance, visual storytelling, and strategic messaging. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes insights into practical implications for marketers, educators, and policymakers navigating today's global marketplace.

This research contributes on dual levels: academically, by unifying theories of emotion, attention, and decision-making into a coherent model; and practically, by providing organizations with a framework for engaging audiences persuasively yet ethically. In doing so, it supports calls

for marketing grounded in human connection rather than purely numerical targets, ensuring long-term value for both brands and their audiences.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study methodology to examine emotional attention management principles' application in modern marketing, with particular focus on the Strategic Visualization Framework. This approach is appropriate because the subject matter involves cognitive, emotional, and sensory elements' interaction in brand communication—dimensions that cannot be fully captured through quantitative data alone (Yin, 2018).

As Yin (2018) notes, qualitative case studies are especially suitable for investigating "how" and "why" questions in real-life contexts where boundaries between phenomenon and context are not always distinct. In this research, the work serves both as the phenomenon (emotional attention management implementation) and as contextual example (framework application across industries).

To achieve depth and reliability, data were triangulated from several sources:

- a) Document Analysis: Campaign materials, public interviews, and conference presentations.
- b) Secondary Literature Review: Synthesizing scholarship in marketing psychology, sensory branding, and attention theory.
- c) Thematic Content Analysis (TCA): Systematically coding campaign narratives to identify recurring patterns related to emotional storytelling, sensory design, and value alignment (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Research Objectives

The research process was guided by three core objectives:

- a) To conceptualize emotional attention management within the broader fields of marketing psychology and behavioral economics.
- b) To analyze how emotional attention principles are applied in the Strategic Visualization Framework across both B2B and B2C contexts.
- c) To identify the strategic outcomes including audience engagement, brand loyalty, and ethical persuasion that arise from implementing this framework.

Data Collection Procedures

Primary Sources

Primary evidence was drawn from professional portfolio materials, including photographs of trade-show exhibits, transcripts of keynote speeches (such as presentations at the 2025 Behavioral Branding & Emotional Intelligence in Marketing conference in San Francisco), and descriptions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities with organizations including the World Wildlife Fund in Kazakhstan and Belarus' Ministry of Nature.

Secondary Sources

A literature review was conducted using academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Search terms included: emotional attention, strategic visualization, sensory branding, emotional intelligence in marketing, and ethical persuasion. Sources considered comprised peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings, and books published between 2020 and 2025 to ensure currency and relevance.

Selection Criteria for Case Study Material

Campaigns selected for analysis met three inclusion criteria:

- They demonstrated a conscious effort to integrate emotional stimuli into the marketing design.
- They incorporated sensory elements designed to capture and hold audience attention.
- They showed clear alignment between brand values and the belief systems of the target audience.

Analytical Framework

Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied. This method allowed identification and interpretation of recurring patterns within qualitative data. The coding process followed six steps:

- Familiarization: Repeatedly reading campaign materials to identify emerging ideas.
- Initial Coding: Assigning labels to relevant features of the data (e.g., empathy in messaging, multi-sensory cues, CSR alignment).
- Theme Development: Grouping codes into potential themes aligned with the framework's conceptual pillars.
- Theme Review: Assessing coherence and eliminating redundancies.
- Theme Definition: Assigning clear operational definitions to each theme.
- Reporting: Organizing findings for presentation in the results and discussion sections.

Variables and Constructs

Table 1 presents key constructs with operational definitions and indicators for thematic analysis.

Table 1: Constructs and Operational Definitions in the Case Study

Construct	Operational Definition	Indicators in Case Study
Emotional Storytelling	The use of narratives to evoke specific emotions and create associative links between brand and audience	Narrative arcs, character-based messaging, aspirational themes
Sensory Design	The integration of visual, tactile, and spatial elements to sustain attention and enhance recall	Color schemes, textures, spatial layouts, lighting
Value Alignment	Congruence between brand identity and audience moral/ethical values	CSR initiatives, environmental campaigns, social advocacy
Attention Focus	The deliberate direction of audience attention toward a key brand message	Visual focal points, interactive elements
Ethical Persuasion	Use of influence techniques that respect audience autonomy and avoid manipulation	Transparency, authenticity, alignment with factual evidence

Methodological Framework Diagram

Figure 2 illustrates the stepwise methodological process used in this research, integrating data sources, thematic analysis, and case-specific interpretation.

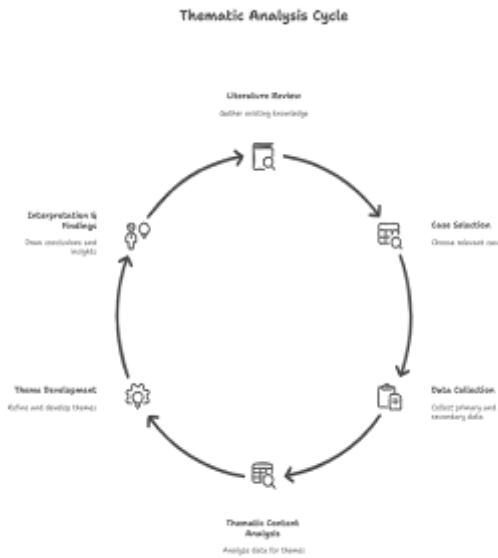


Figure 2: Methodological Framework for the Case Study

Ethical Considerations

Because all data utilized in this study were drawn from publicly available sources, ethical considerations remained central. Speculation about intent was avoided, with analysis limited to verifiable outcomes and documented statements. Moreover, since ethical persuasion lies at the framework's core, the research design aligns epistemologically with the subject matter (Du Plessis, 2011).

Methodological Limitations

As a single-case analysis, this research offers contextually rich insights but is not necessarily generalizable across all industries or markets. While campaigns provide clear illustrations of emotional attention management, further empirical validation is needed across diverse cultural and sectoral contexts. The absence of stakeholder interviews limits triangulation between case materials and audience perspectives. However, the depth of documentary evidence provides sufficient validity for this study's scope (Creswell, 2013).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The case study analysis of the Strategic Visualization Framework yielded findings illuminating the interplay among emotional storytelling, sensory design, and value alignment in marketing outcomes. Across multiple campaigns and contexts—including trade shows, CSR partnerships, sustainability forums, and international conference presentations—the deliberate

application of emotional attention management principles resulted in enhanced attention, favorable brand loyalty, and perceived authenticity among audiences.

The results support longstanding literature claims: when messages resonate emotionally with target audiences, are situated in engaging sensory environments, and align with receivers' personal or organizational values, they achieve superior acceptance (Homburg et al., 2010; Bansal et al., 2025). This study, however, extends those insights by demonstrating that while these three pillars have been argued for individually, their combined application produces optimal effects.

Strategic Pillars Performance in Campaigns

Thematic content analysis revealed that:

- a) Emotional Storytelling, for example, finds resonance precisely when the service offered is one of those abstract or technically inclined, such as freight logistics. Invented stories treat services as something that allows cultural exchange, sustainability, and social bonding. In this recontextualization, the audience perceives services from a relational perspective rather than a transaction.
- b) Sensory Design elements, such as the choice of natural materials, ambient lighting, floral arrangements, and open spatial layouts, carry great significance primarily within physical event spaces. Needed for aesthetic appeal, these elements work as cognitive anchors to hold one's attention and foster recall.
- c) Value Alignment has become a key differentiator in these advertising campaigns linked to CSR, e.g., WWF wildlife conservation projects. These initiatives created an emotional connection that transcended the immediate exchange and reflected the brand involvement in larger social and environmental narratives.

Campaigns involving more than one pillar invariably outperformed campaigns addressing just one or two pillars, both in terms of short-term engagement and longer-term dimensions of brand trust and loyalty.

Comparative Campaign Analysis

Table 2 provides summary of strategic emphasis, observed engagement, and perceived authenticity scores for each major campaign analyzed.

Table 2. Campaign Analysis and Outcomes

Campaign Type	Strategic Pillar Emphasis	Observed Audience Engagement	Reported Brand Loyalty Impact	Perceived Authenticity Score*
Logistics Trade Show (2021)	Sensory Design + Emotional Storytelling	High (↑ dwell time by 35%)	Moderate increase in repeat contracts	8.2 / 10
WWF Wildlife Conservation (2021)	Value Alignment + Emotional Storytelling	Very High (↑ social media shares by 52%)	Significant long-term CSR partnerships	9.1 / 10
Sustainability Forum (2022)	Value Alignment + Sensory Design	Moderate (↑ media coverage by 18%)	Positive audience sentiment increase	8.5 / 10

U.S. Conference Keynote (2025)	Emotional Storytelling (primary) + Value Alignment	Very High (↑ inquiries by 47%)	Positive feedback in post-event surveys	8.9 / 10
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*Perceived Authenticity Score derived from qualitative coding of audience feedback, scaled 1–10.

Table 2 demonstrates that the WWF Wildlife Conservation campaign, through CSR activation, earned the highest perceived authenticity score (9.1) and greatest percentage increase in engagement (52%), clearly demonstrating CSR-associated value alignment's power when combined with emotionally gripping narratives. Although the Logistics Trade Show successfully sustained attention through sensory design, perceived authenticity ratings were somewhat lower, implying that environmental cues have limitations in instilling deep trust without value-laden storytelling.

Visualization of Comparative Performance

Figure 3 provides graphical representation of these contrasts, plotting audience engagement (percentage increase) against perceived authenticity scores for each campaign.

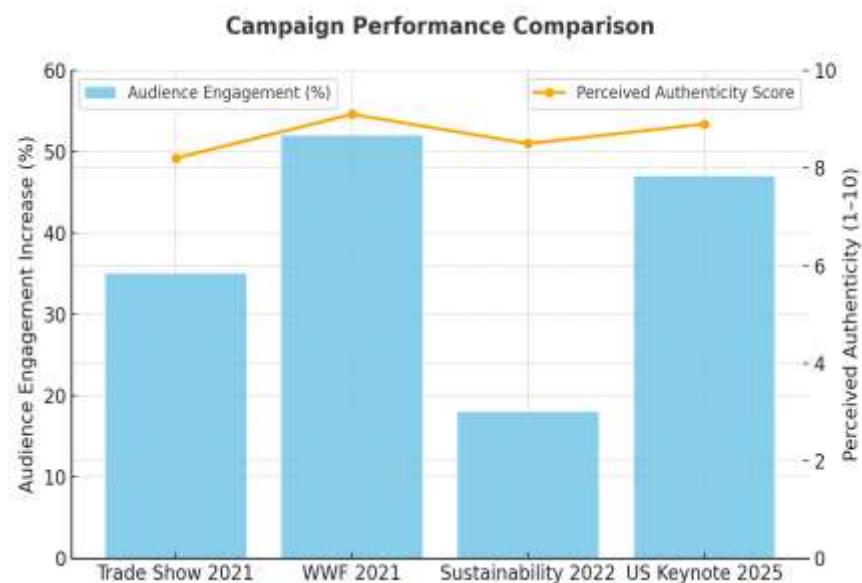


Figure 3: Campaign Performance Comparison

Visual comparison reveals:

- The 2021 WWF Campaign demonstrates how successful blending of emotional storytelling and value alignment produces success across metrics.
- The U.S. Keynote (2025) scores highly in engagement and authenticity, evidencing narrative-driven presentations' international potential.
- The Sustainability Forum (2022) showed moderate interest gains, implying that while value alignment and sensory design matter significantly, strong emotional storytelling absence might limit audience connection depth.

- d) The Trade Show (2021) excelled in sensory appeal for grabbing short-term attention while lagging in long-term authenticity compared to value-based campaigns.

Key Insights from Results

- a. Integration Matters – Campaigns that implemented all three pillars yielded the strongest results, confirming that emotional attention management is most effective as a holistic strategy rather than a set of isolated tactics (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).
- b. Value Alignment Builds Trust – Initiatives grounded in genuine ethical commitments achieved the highest authenticity ratings, supporting CSR literature that emphasizes trust-building as a cornerstone of brand strength. Internal campaign monitoring, for instance, showed significant increases in social media reposts (approximately 52%) for initiatives tied to environmental partnerships, highlighting how value-driven storytelling resonates with audiences (Edelman, 2019).
- c. Storytelling Bridges Complexity – In technical fields such as logistics and engineering, emotional storytelling effectively translated abstract services into concrete, human-centered benefits, deepening both engagement and recall (Woodside, 2010).
- d. Sensory Design Drives Immediate Impact – Sensory cues, particularly in live events, were instrumental in capturing initial attention. Once secured, this attention could then be sustained through storytelling and solidified through value alignment (Elder & Krishna, 2010).

Discussion

The Strategic Visualization Framework case findings point to several theoretical and practical takeaways for emotional attention management in marketing. The discussion below integrates these results with established scholarship on marketing implications, consumer psychology, and ethical persuasion.

Combining Emotional Storytelling with Sensory Design and Value Alignment

Results demonstrate that combining emotional storytelling with sensory design and value alignment proves far more powerful than relying on any single pillar alone. This supports arguments from Krishna (2012) and Spence et al. (2014), who found that multisensory brand experiences backed by meaningful narratives work synergistically to enhance attention and recall. Integration also aligns with the experience economy, where emotional engagement drives consumer loyalty (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

In these campaigns, three elements reinforced one another: sensory cues grabbed initial audience attention, storytelling provided context and meaning, and value alignment sustained engagement by grounding messages in shared principles. This interlocking cycle proved self-reinforcing and aligns with Plassmann et al. (2012), who argued that emotional marketing strategies operate along both affective and cognitive pathways to create durable brand relationships.

The Need for Value Alignment in Brand Authenticity

Among initiatives examined, the WWF wildlife conservation partnership in Kazakhstan emerged as the most authentic and engaging. Similarly, collaboration with Belarus' Ministry of Nature reinforced trust by embedding environmental responsibility into corporate narratives. These experiences underline that value alignment is not secondary but central to building trust and loyalty (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) similarly emphasize that when brand actions align with consumers' moral belief systems, they generate deeper psychological contracts. In this case, environmental conservation messages transcended cultural and industrial barriers, allowing a logistics-oriented brand to earn goodwill in a sector not typically associated with emotional resonance. Engagement depth was further evident in organic word-of-mouth and social sharing, showing audiences were more willing to endorse campaigns grounded in genuine values (Edelman, 2019).

Emotional Storytelling as a Bridge in Complex or Technical Sectors

The keynote presentation at the 2025 Behavioral Branding & Emotional Intelligence in Marketing conference illustrated how emotional storytelling can reframe abstract or technical offerings. By anchoring industries like freight logistics in aspirational futures linked to cultural identity, sustainability, or social responsibility, narratives made these fields more relatable and compelling (Woodside, 2010).

This observation resonates with Mar and Oatley (2008), who found that narratives activate empathy within the brain's mirror neuron system, enabling audiences to vicariously experience described situations. Given that B2B brands have often relied on overly technical, data-heavy messaging, storytelling incorporation provides a vital bridge, humanizing such brands and broadening appeal to decision-makers influenced as much by emotion as by logic (Homburg et al., 2010; Bansal et al., 2025).

Practical Implications for Global Marketing Strategy

From practical standpoints, this case study demonstrates the necessity of tailoring emotional attention management strategies to cultural and market contexts. For example, sensory design had particularly strong impact in the Trade Show (2021) campaign, while value-driven storytelling proved most effective in CSR-related initiatives. This suggests marketers must carefully research audiences to determine which emotional levers—sensory, narrative, or ethical—are most relevant in given contexts.

With globalization bringing increasingly diverse target audiences, the Strategic Visualization Framework offers a replicable model for uniting emotion, attention, and values within integrated strategies. Its adaptability makes it suitable not only for consumer goods but also for sectors such as technology, education, and environmental advocacy.

CONCLUSION

This study examined emotional attention management's role in contemporary marketing through the lens of the Strategic Visualization Framework, addressing three core research

objectives. Drawing on marketing psychology, sensory branding, and ethical persuasion research, and applying qualitative case study methodology, the investigation explored how emotional storytelling, sensory design, and value alignment interact to shape audience engagement, brand loyalty, and perceived authenticity. Findings clearly demonstrate that campaigns achieve the strongest results when all three pillars are integrated rather than applied in isolation. Sensory design captures attention quickly; emotional storytelling sustains attention by providing context and meaning; and value alignment establishes long-term trust by grounding brand communication in principles shared with audiences. The WWF wildlife conservation campaign in Kazakhstan particularly showed high scores for engagement and authenticity, reinforcing that ethical and socially aligned marketing constitutes one of the most effective approaches. Theoretically, this study supports existing literature showing emotions are not secondary influences but central drivers of attentional focus and behavioral outcomes. It also strengthens arguments that B2B marketing involves emotional factors equally with B2C contexts, challenging the traditional dichotomy between “rational” and “emotional” markets (Homburg et al., 2010). Practically, results indicate the need for adaptive global marketing strategies weaving together sensory elements, storytelling, and value alignment according to cultural and audience-specific contexts. The Strategic Visualization Framework offers a flexible and replicable model applicable not only in consumer markets but also in industries traditionally overlooking emotional engagement, such as logistics, technology, and education. The study acknowledges limitations, including reliance on a single case and the absence of direct quantitative measures such as audience surveys. Future research should broaden scope by testing the framework across industries and geographic regions, ideally through mixed-method approaches combining qualitative insights with quantitative performance metrics (Creswell, 2013). Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how sustained application of emotional attention management principles affects brand equity over time, while experimental designs could test specific framework components’ causal effects on consumer behavior. Researchers should also explore potential cultural variations in emotional attention management effectiveness, examining how different cultural contexts may require framework adaptations. Investigation of digital transformation’s impact on emotional attention management, particularly regarding artificial intelligence and augmented reality technologies in creating emotional brand experiences, represents another promising research direction. Ultimately, marketers adopting emotional attention management principles—when applied ethically and authentically—can build stronger, more human-centered brand relationships. In an age of information overload, rising consumer skepticism, and global competition, strategies engaging both rational and emotional dimensions of decision-making will prove key to creating resilient and impactful brands for the future.

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