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Article in *Studies in Media and Communication* · February 2024

DOI: 10.11114/smc.v12i1.6624

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Received: December 16, 2023

Accepted: January 25, 2024

Online Published: February 25, 2024

doi:10.11114/smc.v12i1.6624

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v12i1.6624>

Abstract

Intellectual brand experiences aim to stimulate thinking, problem-solving, and a deeper understanding of the brand. The goal for marketers is to create meaningful and thoughtful connections with consumers based on knowledge, information, and intellectual engagement. When a consumer feels intellectually connected to a brand, they are likely to remain loyal and advocate for the brand within their social circles. Drawing upon the pleasure-arousal-dominance (PAD) approach, this study aims to investigate the effect of intellectual brand experiences on pleasure, arousal, and repurchase intention. Data was collected from 196 Red Bull consumers, aged between 18 and 25 years, and the proposed hypotheses were tested using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). This study found that intellectual experiences had direct significant impacts on pleasure, arousal, and repurchase intention. By following intellectual branding and communication as an essential positioning tool and implementing several thinking, curiosity and problem-solving strategies, marketers of energy drinks could drive repurchase intention. This research contributes to research in the field of intellectual brand experience and offers strategies for marketers to develop intellectual brand experiences.

Keywords: brand experience, intellectual brand experience, pleasure, arousal, marketing communication

1. Introduction

Marketers are increasingly working on strategies to provide long-lasting experiences and engagement to consumers at each touchpoint (Safeer, He & Abrar, 2021). The concept of brand experience is closely tied to the building of brand equity (Beig & Nika, 2019). Some touchpoints can evoke different types of feelings, whereas others work best as providing information and creating intellectual experiences (Keinonen, 2016). Iglesias, Singh and Batista-Foguet (2011) defined intellectual experience as the imaginative and analytical thinking that brands trigger in consumers. Thought, stimulation of curiosity problem-solving, all relate to intellectual brand experience. Intellectual brand experience focuses on engaging consumers' intellect and cognitive processes to create a distinctive and meaningful connection with a brand (Brakus et al., 2009). Intellectual experience is related to Schmitt's (1999) "think" experience. According to Schmitt (1999), the "think" experience appeals to a consumer's intellect with the objective of creating cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage consumers creatively. "Think" marketing can stimulate intelligence by engaging consumers in creative and critical thinking through various strategies, including surprise, intrigue, and provocation (Tsaur, Chiu & Wang, 2007); it aims to engage and stimulate intelligence. Thinking works well in stimulating the interaction between consumers and the brand. An example of "think" marketing is Red Bull's slogan "Red Bull gives you wings" (Red Bull, 2023); this intriguing marketing content piques curiosity and encourages individuals to delve deeper into the message. Red Bull's advertising strategy is known for its creativity, unconventional approach, and ability to capture attention. Energy drinks employ dynamic marketing and advertising strategies. Innovative marketing strategies by leading companies are propelling the market growth. Since these energy drinks are rich in energizing ingredients like ginseng, caffeine, and others, they keep the mind and body sharp (Statista, 2024). Red Bull, the leading energy drink brand, holds approximately 32% of the market share. The consumption of energy drinks has increased over the last decade among adolescents (Gutiérrez-Hellín & Varillas-Delgado, 2021). The energy drinks market is projected to register a CAGR of 8.51% during the forecast period (2024-2029) (Mordor Intelligence, 2024); this growth is expected to be driven by loyalists and category newcomers (Jacobsen, 2023). A critical marketing strategy adopted by leading players is advertising through celebrity endorsements and sports event sponsorships (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). The big players in the energy drinks market include Red Bull and Monster Energy, and Rockstar Inc. (Statista, 2024). There are also many smaller local brands that are growing in popularity (Insight Survey, 2024). Marketers are constantly coming up with new promotional and marketing strategies to attract consumers and gain a competitive advantage. Brand experiences provided by brands

are considered to be an important means of achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Harris, Kluppel-Strobel & Shakhiry, 2018).

The intellectual or cognitive dimension in the context of consumer experience involves consumers' thoughts, perceptions, and the various ways in which they evaluate things (Shamim & Mohsin Butt, 2013). Intellectual experiences have a greater influence on brand trust compared to sensory or behavioural experience and aligns with the idea that cognitive aspects play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes toward a brand (Yu & Yuan, 2019).

Companies that focus on enhancing the intellectual experience for their consumers are likely to see positive effects on consumer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately contributing to higher repurchase intention (Safeer et al., 2021; Ong, Lee & Ramayah, 2018). Intellectual experiences can be tailored to incorporate elements of novelty, complexity, subtlety, convergence, analysis, divergence, and imagination to create a holistic and stimulating engagement with information, ideas, and concepts (Ahn & Back, 2020; Garg et al., 2015; Machado et al., 2014). Consistent delivery of pleasurable and intellectually stimulating marketing communication contributes to the development of brand loyalty. Consumers who consistently experience positive emotions and engage with intellectually satisfying content are more likely to become loyal consumers, leading to increased repurchase intention.

1.1 Research Area to Be Addressed

This study investigates the influence of intellectual brand experience on consumer behaviour, specifically within the context of marketing communication. The theoretical underpinning in which study is grounded, is provided in the following section.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Theoretical Grounding

The Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance (PAD) theory is a psychological framework used to explain human emotional reactions as a response to environmental factors. Developed by Mehrabian and Russell in the 1970s, the PAD model categorizes emotions based on three primary dimensions: Pleasure, Arousal, and Dominance. These dimensions help describe and quantify the emotional experience associated with a particular stimulus, whether it be a product, environment, or other stimuli (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The pleasure–displeasure dimension refers to the degree to which the person feels happy, blessed, or satisfied in the resulting situation (Shankar et al., 2020); Arousal–non-arousal refers to the degree to which a person feels excited, stimulated, alert or active in a specific situation (Kumar & Shah, 2021); and Dominance–submissiveness refers to the extent to which the individual feels in control of or free to act in a particular situation (Loureiro et al., 2020). Marketers use the PAD model to understand how consumers emotionally respond to products and advertisements (Xu, Yao, He, & Cao, 2023). It helps in designing marketing campaigns that evoke desired emotional reactions (Hsieh, Lee & Tseng, 2021; Yang, Kim & Zimmerman, 2020).

1.2.2 Concept of Brand Experience

Brand experience is referred to as the 'subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments' (Brakus et al., 2009). This perspective highlights the importance of managing and crafting a consistent and positive brand experience to build strong connections with consumers. Brakus et al. (2009) suggest four dimensions of brand experience: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural. The sensory dimension refers to the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile stimulation provided by the brand. The affective dimension refers to the feelings and emotions triggered by the brand. The intellectual (or cognitive) dimension refers to the cognitive stimulation provided by the brand. The final dimension of brand experience relates to the actions and behaviours stimulated by the brand – the behavioural dimension (Zarantonello & Andreini, 2023).

1.2.3 Intellectual Brand Experience

Intellectual experience within the context of brand experience refers to the effect a brand has on the cognitive aspects of consumers. It involves engaging consumers' thinking processes, stimulating their curiosity, and encouraging problem-solving capabilities (Anucha, 2023). According to Visza Adha and Utami (2021), intellectual brand experience refers to consumers' analytical and imaginative thinking towards the brand. Intellectual experience suggests that the brand goes beyond surface-level interactions and prompts consumers to think more deeply. This could involve presenting information in a thought-provoking manner or encouraging reflection.

Intellectual dimensions have been found to positively influence brand associations, perceived quality, brand evaluation consumer-based brand equity, and consequently, brand loyalty (Pina, 2021). The intellectual dimension is associated with the inventive use of products and services and is evoked differently by complex, novel, analytical, and imaginative thought processes (Ahn & Back, 2020). Brands that foster an intellectual experience are often associated with innovation and

creativity. This can involve introducing new approaches that challenge conventional thinking and inspire consumers to explore new possibilities. Creating a positive intellectual brand experience is important for brands looking to establish a deeper connection with their consumers. It not only positions the brand as a source of information and innovation but also contributes to building a sense of trust and loyalty among consumers who value intellectual engagement.

Consumers remember a brand that has intellectual appeal and are able to recollect all memories associated with the brand (Revaldi, Hayuningtyas et al., 2022). According to Putri, Risqiani, Nilasari and Yaputra (2024), intellectual brand experience test results positively affect affective engagement and cognitive engagement. Employing the avenue of intellectual experience stands as a potent mechanism for engendering curiosity and cognitive resonance within consumer-brand relationships (Butt, Ahmad, & Muzaffar, 2024).

1.2.4 Brand Experience and Marketing Communication

Marketing communication plays a crucial role in building and maintaining a brand by engaging with consumers and conveying important information about products and services (Keinonen, 2016). It is a dynamic and multifaceted tool that goes beyond merely promoting products. It is instrumental in shaping the perception of a brand, influencing consumer behaviour, and building lasting relationships. Marketing communications serve as a conduit for brand experiences to take place indirectly (Brakus et al., 2009). When marketing communication is intellectually engaging, it captures the attention of consumers who enjoy and appreciate a more profound level of content. Keller (2009) identifies eight key forms of communication that make up the marketing communications mix. Each of these elements plays a distinct role in promoting and building a brand. Consistency across all touchpoints ensures that the brand message is coherent and that consumers receive a unified experience, whether they are interacting with the brand through marketing materials, customer service, or the actual use of the product or service. Combining these elements can contribute to a comprehensive and successful brand strategy. When marketing communication is perceived as reliable and intellectually stimulating, consumers are more likely to trust the brand, influencing their decision to repurchase.

1.3 Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development

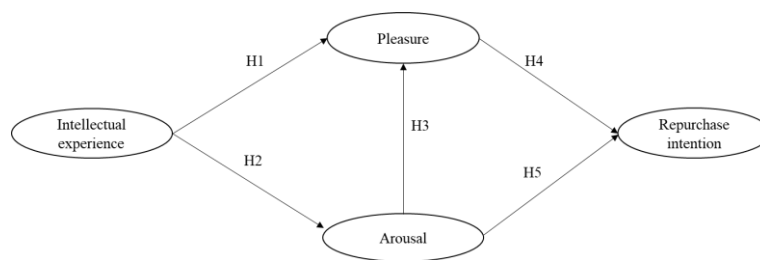


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Source: Author's own work (2023)

1.4 Hypotheses Development

1.4.1 Relationships between Intellectual brand experience, Pleasure, and Arousal

By focusing on intellectual engagement, brands can build a reputation for being knowledgeable, insightful, and forward-thinking. This type of brand experience aims to create a deeper connection with consumers by appealing to their intellect, curiosity, and desire for meaningful engagement (Brakus et al., 2009). Hsieh Lee and Tseng (2021) established that various atmospherics influence pleasure and arousal. By creating favourable intellectual experiences, marketers are able to attract consumers who value intellectual engagement and seek brands that align with their values and interests. The following is therefore hypothesised:

H1: Intellectual experience has a positive influence on pleasure.

H2: Intellectual experience has a positive influence on arousal.

1.4.2 Relationships between Pleasure, Arousal and Repurchase Intention

Brands that prioritize creating pleasant experiences for their consumers not only enhance the immediate transaction but also contribute to the overall brand perception and long-term success (Kumar & Shah, 2021). This positive cycle of satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth can have a significant impact on a brand's reputation and market position. Ryu and Jang (2007) suggest a positive relationship between emotions (pleasure and arousal) and behavioural intentions. This insight underscores the importance of considering emotional aspects in marketing and branding efforts to foster

positive customer experiences and drive desired behaviours, such as recommendations and increased spending. Furthermore, their study further indicated that pleasurable experiences for consumers can have a profound impact on their attitudes and actions towards a brand. Koo and Ju (2010) found that the emotional arousal elicited by a brand plays a significant role in influencing consumers' intentions to repurchase. Essawy (2019) highlights the interconnectedness of positive emotions and users' behavioural intentions, emphasizing the need for a user-centered approach that considers emotional experiences alongside functional aspects in product design, service delivery, and marketing strategies. Raajpoot et al. (2013) found a connection between arousal and repurchase intention, highlighting the importance of emotional engagement in shaping customer loyalty and influencing their likelihood to make repeat purchases. Brand arousal often involves creating a strong emotional connection between the consumer and the brand. This emotional bond contributes to a positive attitude toward the brand, making customers more likely to repurchase. The emotional dimensions of arousal and pleasure play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours, including the intention to repurchase (Koo & Lee, 2011). The extant literature has also acknowledged the role of pleasure and arousal on behavioural response (Syed, Khan, Idrees & Khan, 2020; Yang et al., 2020; Huang, Ali, Liao, 2017). Brands that understand and leverage these emotional factors can create lasting connections with their customers, driving repeat business and long-term loyalty. The following is therefore hypothesised:

H3: Arousal has a positive influence on pleasure.

H4: Pleasure has a positive influence on repurchase intention.

H5: Arousal has a positive influence on repurchase intention.

2. Method

2.1 Sampling and Data Collection

The study followed a quantitative research approach and consisted of a questionnaire survey that was applied to test the research model. Only respondents who were between the ages of 18 and 25 and had consumed Red Bull energy drink/s within the previous six months were requested to participate in the study.

2.2 Construct Measures

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). All items were adopted from previous literature to ensure the content validity of the constructs. Intellectual experience was adopted from Beckman, Kumar and Kim (2013) and was measured with three items. The measurements for pleasure and arousal were adopted from Kulviwat et al. (2014) and each measured with six items. The measurement for repurchase intention was also adopted from Beckman, Kumar and Kim (2013) and was measured with four items.

3. Results

Table 1. Consumers' demographics profile

Description	Category	Representation	Valid percentage (%)
Sample Size		196	
Age	18 - 20	76	38.8%
	21 - 23	91	46.4%
	24- 25	29	14.8%
Gender	Male	112	57.1%
	Female	82	41.8%
	Prefer not to say	2	1.0%
Profession	Student	171	87.2%
	Employed	20	10.2%
	Self-employed	1	0.5%
	Unemployed	4	2.0%
Frequency of Energy drink consumption	Daily	11	5.6%
	Once per week	20	10.2%
	More than once per week	21	10.7%
	1-3 times a month	49	25.0%
	Irregular routine	95	48.5%

3.1 Data Characteristics

Respondents' demographics are shown in Table 1. Almost two thirds (57.1%) of the sample were male and the remainder were female. With regard to age, the majority (i.e., 87.2%) were between the ages of 18 and 20 and the remainder fell in other classifications. The majority of the respondents (48.5%) indicated that their frequency of energy drinks consumption was an irregular routine, followed by 25.0% who indicated that their frequency of consumption is 1-3 times a week.

3.2 Measurement Model Assessment

Table 2. Convergent validity and internal consistency reliability

Construct	Indicators	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Arousal (AR)	AR1	0,851	0,893	0,906	0,512
	AR2	0,871			
	AR3	0,649			
	AR4	0,430			
	AR5	0,663			
Intellectual Experience (IE)	IE1	0,801	0,880	0,880	0,710
	IE2	0,844			
	IE3	0,824			
Pleasure (PL)	PL1	0,859	0,880	0,891	0,562
	PL2	0,802			
	PL3	0,851			
	PL4	0,732			
	PL5	0,768			
	PL6	0,745			
Repurchase Intention (RI)	RI1	0,568	0,929	0,930	0,767
	RI2	0,879			
	RI3	0,879			
	RI4	0,915			
		0,827			

The model met the required benchmarks (see Table 2) (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt & Ringle, 2019). The values of CR were higher than 0.7, AVE were higher than 0.50 for all the constructs. Cronbach's alpha values were greater than 0.90, thereby implying internal consistency.

Table 3. Fornell and Larcker's criterion: discriminant validity

Fornell-Larcker criterion	Arousal	Intellectual Experience	Pleasure	Repurchase Intention
Arousal	0,716			
Intellectual Experience	0,503	0,842		
Pleasure	0,521	0,347	0,750	
Repurchase Intention	0,517	0,295	0,665	0,876

All the constructs fulfilled the discriminant validity criteria as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) (see Table 3).

3.2.1 Structural Model Evaluation (SME)

Table 4. Discriminant reliability (heterotrait–monotrait values)

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix	Arousal	Intellectual Experience	Pleasure	Repurchase Intention
Arousal				
Intellectual Experience	0,500			
Pleasure	0,514	0,361		
Repurchase Intention	0,507	0,295	0,663	

Besides, all the values of heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio were less than the suggested value of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). The values of HTMT have been shown in Table 4.

Table 5. R-square (R^2)

	R-square
Arousal	0,253
Pleasure	0,281
Repurchase Intention	0,483

To evaluate the model's predictive power, Hair et al. (2019) proposed to use the explained variance (R^2) measure. When the R^2 value surpasses 0.1 (10%), expressive power is required (Hair et al., 2019). The results of this study explained 25.3% of R^2 variance in arousal, 28.1% of R^2 variance in pleasure and, 48.3% of R^2 variance in repurchase intention which was a good predictor in the current study's perspective (see Table 5).

3.2.2 Hypotheses Assessment

To determine the path co-efficient, t-statistics and p-values for hypotheses testing, the bootstrapping method applied 5,000 subsamples at the 0.05 significance level (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 6. Hypotheses testing

		PC	Sample mean	Standard deviation	t-V	p-V	Result
H1	Intellectual Experience -> Pleasure	0,107	0,106	0,082	1,309	0,191	Not supported
H2	Intellectual Experience -> Arousal	0,503	0,505	0,066	7,582	0,000	Supported
H3	Arousal -> Pleasure	0,466	0,468	0,080	5,788	0,000	Supported
H4	Pleasure -> Repurchase Intention	0,543	0,545	0,087	6,266	0,000	Supported
H5	Arousal -> Repurchase Intention	0,235	0,235	0,087	2,707	0,007	Supported

Note(s): PC means path coefficient; t-V means t-value; p-V means p-value; f2 means f square

The results of the hypotheses are presented in Table 6. The results show that intellectual experiences had direct significant impacts on pleasure, arousal, and repurchase intention; thus, H1 Intellectual Experience→Pleasure ($\beta=0.107$; $p=0.191$) was not supported. H2 Intellectual Experience→Arousal ($\beta=0.503$; $p=0.000$), H3 Arousal→Pleasure ($\beta=0.466$; $p=0.000$), H4 Pleasure→Repurchase Intention ($\beta=0.543$; $p=0.000$) and H5 Arousal→Repurchase Intention ($\beta=0.235$; $p=0.007$) were supported.

4. Discussion

The first hypothesis, H1 Intellectual Experience→Pleasure ($\beta=0.107$; $p=0.191$) was not supported. This implies that intellectual brand experience does not lead to consumer pleasure. This therefore suggests that the relationship between intellectual brand experience and pleasure is context-dependent and varies among different consumer segments, some consumers may find intellectual stimulation highly pleasurable, while others may not. Finding the right balance between intellectual appeal and pleasure is crucial for a brand to create a positive and enjoyable overall experience. The results however contradict that of Hsieh et al. (2021). The second hypothesis, H2 Intellectual Experience→Arousal ($\beta=0.503$; $p=0.000$), was supported. This implies that intellectual brand experience leads to consumer arousal. This suggests that a positive intellectual brand experience can lead to a more meaningful connection with the consumer. While intellectual brand experiences can contribute to arousal, it is crucial to ensure that the content remains engaging and relevant to the preferences and expectations of the consumers. This outcome is in line with Hsieh et al. (2021). The third hypothesis, H3 Arousal→Pleasure ($\beta=0.466$; $p=0.000$), was supported. This implies that arousal leads to consumer pleasure. This, therefore, suggest that when consumers experience arousal in a positive context, it can contribute to feelings of pleasure. This connection between arousal and pleasure is supported by Yang et al. (2020), with Kumar and Shah (2021) establishing a relationship between arousal and pleasure. The fourth hypothesis, H4 Pleasure→Repurchase Intention ($\beta=0.543$; $p=0.000$), was supported. This implies that consumer pleasure leads to repurchase intention. This suggests that consumers who consistently derive pleasure from a brand are more likely to become repeat customers. This outcome is in line with several authors (Kumar & Shah, 2021; Syed et al., 2020; Ryu & Jang, 2007). The fifth hypothesis H5 Arousal→Repurchase Intention ($\beta=0.235$; $p=0.007$) was supported. This implies that consumer arousal leads to repurchase intention, especially if the arousal is associated with positive experiences. This outcome is in line with various authors (Kumar & Shah, 2021; Syed et al., 2020; Koo & Ju, 2010).

4.1 Theoretical Contributions

Marketing communication through intellectual brand experiences, when designed to evoke pleasure and arousal, can significantly influence consumer behaviour and positively impact repurchase intention. By using the study of Red Bull, a typical representative of an active brand in driving intellectual brand experiences, the results revealed a positive impact on intellectual brand experiences and repurchase intention. The results of the study strengthen the academic understanding of the intellectual brand experience and pleasure-arousal-dominance (PAD) theory based on evidence from the perspective of young consumers. Prior studies focused mainly on brand experience with very few studies of intellectual brand experience and from a consumer experience perspective. As a growing body of literature is exploring the use of brand experience in products and services to create a competitive advantage, this study not only contributes to the body of literature but provides researchers and practitioners with an in-depth understanding of consumer responses. While "intellectual brand experience" emphasizes cognitive engagement, "pleasure arousal" seems to incorporate elements of positive emotions, excitement, and brand dominance. Integrating these aspects thoughtfully can contribute to a comprehensive and impactful brand strategy.

4.2 Managerial Implications

Marketing communications should be intriguing to influence consumers at every touchpoint. In creating intellectual brand experiences, marketers should aim to trigger consumers' imaginative and analytical thinking. Marketers could implement marketing communication through the following intellectual brand experiences:

- a. **Content Marketing:** Marketers could develop high-quality, informative, and thought-provoking content, showcasing a brand's expertise and insights. This could include activities that require problem-solving and critical thinking. By combining intellectual engagement with pleasure and arousal, brands can create a more well-rounded and memorable experience for consumers, fostering a deeper connection and increasing the likelihood of positive brand perceptions. This approach recognizes that consumers often seek both information and emotional satisfaction in their interactions with brands.
- b. **Storytelling with Substance:** Marketers could aim to tell compelling stories that engage the consumers intellectually, such as complex problem-solving or highlighting innovative solutions.
- c. **Interactive Experiences:** Marketers could create experiences that allow consumers to engage through experiences that challenge and entertain them in order to make intellectual engagement enjoyable.
- d. **Leverage social networking platforms** to showcase a brand's intellectual capital while engaging with discussions.

When designing intellectual experiences, marketers should consider the pleasure and arousal dimension of consumers. Intellectual engagement could lead to increased brand trust, and credibility, customer loyalty, positive word of mouth, and ultimately, higher repurchase intentions. Brands that prioritize creating enjoyable and satisfying consumer experiences are likely to experience customer retention and repeat business. Marketing communication that integrates intellectual brand experiences with pleasure and arousal creates a more memorable and positive impact on consumers. Consumers who experience pleasure during interactions with marketing content are more likely to develop positive associations with the brand. When intellectual brand experiences create a state of arousal, consumers are more likely to focus on the message, leading to increased retention and recall. By offering content that stimulates the intellect, generates positive emotions, and captures attention, brands can influence repurchase intention and build lasting relationships with their customers. By integrating these strategies, marketers can create a distinctive and intellectually engaging marketing communication approach that resonates with customers while establishing authority and fostering long-term customer relationships.

5. Conclusion, Research Limitations and Future Guidelines

The study aimed to investigate the effect of intellectual brand experiences on pleasure, arousal, and repurchase intention of energy drinks among young consumers in South Africa. The study confirmed intellectual brand experiences, pleasure and arousal influence repurchase intention of energy drinks. Thus, delivering enjoyable and memorable intellectual experiences are essential to enhance pleasure and arousal towards repurchase intention of energy drink brands. Future researchers can target other groups for their studies. This study did not use any moderator to check the strength of relationships under the presence of a moderator. Future researchers may extend this model by adding a moderator like past experiences. Future studies should use experiments or qualitative methods (e.g., interviews or focus groups) to gather in-depth insights into young consumers' experiences. The findings are limited to Red Bull and to a specific product category, as such, researchers should be cautious about extrapolating the results across other brands or different geographic or cultural contexts. The study provides marketers with insights which could be used for devising strategies in order to provide intellectual experiences to consumers.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank all the study's participants.

Authors contribution

Dr Neo Ligaraba was responsible for the study design and revision. Dr Neo Ligaraba was responsible for data collection. Dr Neo Ligaraba drafted the manuscript and revised it. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Funding

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The author declares that there is no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Redfame Publishing.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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