

Influence of Storytelling Advertising on Women's Purchasing Decisions: A Study of Sonia So Much to Love Television Commercial

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Abstract:

This study examined the influence of storytelling advertising on women's purchasing decisions, using Sonia Nigeria's 2024 "So Much to Love" television commercial as a case study. Despite growing academic interest in storytelling advertising, existing literature has largely adopted generalized, gender-neutral, and Western-context approaches, leaving a gap in localized, gender-specific research within the Nigerian advertising landscape. Guided by the AIDA Communication Model, the main objective of this study is to investigate how women in Ojota, Kosofe Local Government Area, Lagos State, perceive the storytelling in the commercial. A quantitative survey research design was adopted. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 368 women aged 18 and above was determined. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The findings of this study revealed that 80.5% of respondents perceived the commercial's narrative as authentic, and 77.7% reported experiencing meaningful positive emotion while watching it. In terms of purchasing influence, 80.2% indicated they were likely to purchase or recommend Sonia products after seeing the commercial, and 65.0% had already recommended the brand to others. Characters and their life stories stood out as the element respondents connected with most (40.8%), followed by the brand's message and values (23.9%). The study concludes that storytelling advertising, when it draws on narrative authenticity, cultural relevance, and emotional depth, works as an effective, persuasive tool that moves Nigerian women through the full AIDA sequence, from attention to action, ultimately shaping their purchasing decisions.

Keywords:

Storytelling; Advertising; Sonia So Much Love Advert; Television commercial, Brand

I. Introduction

Storytelling has long been a fundamental way of communicating ideas, values and emotions. It has been part of us for thousands of years and is evident in various aspects of our lives. Storytelling has to do with conveying messages through stories that evoke emotions and captivate the audience to influence decisions and behaviours (Rome Business School, 2024). In marketing and advertising, it has evolved into a strategic tool for building brand identity, creating emotional connections and influencing consumer choices. The earliest examples of Storytelling in advertising dates back to 1895 with John Deere's launch of "The Furrow magazine" which did not just sell farming equipment but instead, told the stories of farmers, creating a community around the brand (Hiorns, 2024; Aondover et al., 2025). Woldarsky (2019) believes that

consumers choose brands based on how it reflects their identity and consume products or services based on the meanings attributed to them. This means that consumers notice and observe how authentic a brand and its story is, which helps in attributing symbolic value to the brand and its product (Woldarsky, 2019).

Gone are the days when advertising focused on the features and benefits of a product alone, companies have now shifted towards storytelling advertising which seeks to build relationships by creating relatable narratives that speak and resonate with their target audience (Aondover et al., 2024). In today's competitive marketplace, brands are turning to storytelling as a powerful advertising strategy to connect with consumers on an emotional and psychological level. Instead of just showing the product, these adverts tell a story that people can relate to. Since consumers are increasingly seeking brand experiences that reflect their identities and values, storytelling has become a persuasive tool that is not only used to inform but also to transform attitudes and behaviours of consumers (Akintayo et al., 2026). In Nigeria, advertisers have adopted storytelling to bring about loyalty and influence purchasing decisions through the use of music, visuals and other storytelling elements.

Women, as a significant segment of the consumer market, often respond to advertisements that resonate with their values, identities and emotional experiences. As such, brands targeting female audiences increasingly rely on narrative-driven commercials to create meaningful connections and drive consumer engagement (Aondover et al., 2025; Akintayo et al., 2026). The main goal of advertising is to persuade and bring about interest in a particular brand, but how are brands persuading their target audience, especially women, to take action? In Nigeria, Sonia Foods Industries, incorporated in June 2006, known for the production of Sonia Tomato Paste effectively utilized storytelling in its 2024 "So Much to Love" TVC. This Television commercial which features Ihuoma Linda Ejiorfor and Ibrahim Suleiman among several others, tells a story of family and love among other themes that Nigerian women can relate to. Through the use of catchy music and humor, Sonia Nigeria was able to creatively promote and raise awareness to the new "Stand-Up Pouch" while also entertaining, engaging, informing, and connecting with their audience emotionally (Akintayo et al., 2026).

This study therefore, focused on Ojota Community within Kosofe Local Government Area in Lagos State, Nigeria, as the demographic for examining the Influence of Storytelling Advertising on Women's Purchasing Decisions, Using the Sonia Nigeria's 2024 "So Much to Love" TVC as a case study.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the growing academic interest in storytelling advertising, there remains a notable gap in research specifically addressing its influence on women's purchasing decisions, particularly within localized contexts. Much of the literature adopted a generalized approach to consumer behaviour (Taiwo et al., 2024). A considerable proportion of existing research was conducted with western context where social values and media patterns differ from those in Nigeria. As a result, such findings cannot be applied to Nigerian communities such as Ojota within Kosofe LGA given the social dynamic that shape consumer behaviour in this environment. Furthermore, while brands like Sonia Nigeria have embraced storytelling in their advertising, the extent to which such narratives influence women's emotional engagement, brand perception and purchase intentions remains underexplored. Questions still persist around whether storytelling truly leads to deeper brand loyalty, increased consumer trust, and stronger purchase motivations among Nigerian women, or if such advertising merely entertains without driving purchasing

decisions (Akintayo & Ajayi, 2024). Also, there is no notable academic study on the evaluation of the influence of Sonia Nigeria's "So Much to Love" Commercial. Hence, this present study seeks to fill that gap by examining the Influence of Storytelling Advertising on Women's Purchasing Decisions, using Sonia Nigeria's "So Much to Love" Television Commercial as a case study.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do women in Ojota perceive the storytelling in Sonia Nigeria's "So Much to Love" TV advert?
2. How does the commercial influence the purchasing decisions of women in Ojota?
3. What elements of the commercial do women in Ojota connect with the most?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The AIDA Communication Model

The AIDA Communication Model, which forms part of the broader Hierarchy of Effects Theory, is one of the most widely used theoretical models for explaining how advertising influences consumer decision-making processes. The model provides a structured explanation of the psychological journey consumers undergo from initial exposure to an advertising message to the eventual act of purchasing (Moropefoluwa et al., 2024; Akintayo et al., 2024). According to the model, consumers follow a linear and sequential path that begins with awareness created through advertising and ends with a behavioural response, typically the decision to buy the advertised product (Aondover et al., 2024). This framework has been extensively applied in marketing and communication studies to evaluate the persuasive effectiveness of advertisements and their ability to move consumers through progressively deeper stages of engagement (Owens-Ibie et al., 2026).

The Hierarchy of Effects Theory, which underpins the AIDA model, comprises three key psychological dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. These dimensions operate in sequence to describe how consumers process advertising messages. The cognitive component refers to consumers' awareness and knowledge about a product resulting from exposure to advertising (Owens-Ibie & Aondover, 2025). The affective component involves consumers' emotional reactions, feelings, and attitudes toward the product. The behavioural component, which follows cognitive awareness and emotional attachment, reflects the action taken by consumers, such as purchasing or recommending the product (Metili, 2023). The AIDA model incorporates these dimensions into a simplified structure that reflects how consumers move from thinking, to feeling, and finally to doing.

II. Research Methods

This study adopted the quantitative research design. This study adopted the Survey method to obtain and collect data (Msughter & Yaú, 2018). The survey method is considered the most appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to gather quantitative data from a large number of women in Ojota in a systematic, and cost-effective manner. This study adopted the purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique, according to Msughter (2020), is a sampling method in which the researcher chooses respondents and selects those considered to possess the required attributes, characteristics or information, based on his judgement. In this type of sampling, participants are deliberately selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research problem. This sampling technique was appropriate for this study because the researcher aimed at obtaining a sample that was rich in information, particularly from individuals who possess the knowledge, experience, or exposure required to provide accurate and meaningful responses. The choice of purposive sampling was based on the need to focus on women who were active media consumers in Ojota, and had been exposed to the Sonia “So Much to Love” television commercial, as only such respondents could provide meaningful and valid insights into how storytelling advertising influences their purchasing decisions.

2.1 Study Population

The population of this study therefore, comprises women (18 and above) who are active media-consumers, in Ojota, Lagos State. Due to the unavailability of the exact population of women in Ojota, the actual population of Ojota is unknown. This study however, adopted the female population of Kosofe Local Government Area (LGA), since Ojota is a part of Kosofe LGA. According to the Association For Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH, 2021), Kosofe has a total female population of 537,723. This population was selected because the Sonia So Much to Love commercial appears to target women. Also, no notable study has been conducted on how storytelling advertising influences the women in this area. Since Ojota is a media-exposed environment where residents frequently engage with television and digital advertisements, women in this community are more likely to have encountered the television commercial, making them relevant for this study.

This study was conducted in Ojota, a densely populated urban community located within the Kosofe Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos state, Nigeria, along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway. Ojota is a strategic and influential commercial hub recognized for its vibrant economic activities, cultural diversity, and high level of urban mobility. Its central location within Lagos positions it as both a residential and commercial area where Individuals from different socio economic backgrounds interact, work, shop and access media content daily, making it an ideal site for studying consumer behaviour. It has been in existence since the late 18th century when the town was a military settlement where troops practiced their shooting. As time strolled by, the region became known as “Oju-Ota” in Yoruba, meaning, “Bullet spots” and then evolved into Ojota, as we know it today (Ojota area guide, 2024).

Ojota, which is bordered by key areas such as Ogudu, Maryland, Ketu, Iyana-Oworo, to mention a few, is saturated with commercial activities, ranging from formal supermarkets and retail outlets to open markets and neighborhood shops where household and personal products, such as the Sonia brands, are frequently purchased (Ojota area guide, 2024). This constant flow of traders, commuters and residents facilitates widespread exposure to advertising messages across multiple media channels such as television, bill boards and digital platforms. This diversity

provides a rich context for studying how storytelling advertising influences purchasing decisions among women with varying levels of income, education, and media exposure.

Women in Ojota play a significant role in making daily or weekly purchase decisions related to food items, the presence of shopping plaza and roadside vendors indicates that women regularly engage in purchasing activities where brand exposure and advertising influence are highly relevant. Looking at the popularity of the Sonia products and the wide spread airing of the Sonia so much to love commercial across television and online platforms, Ojota provides an appropriate environment to investigate the influence of storytelling advertising on purchasing decisions. By selecting Ojota as the area of study, this research contributes specific knowledge to advertising and consumer behaviour scholarship. Studying the women in Ojota provides grounded evidence of the influence of storytelling advertising. By doing so, this research has addressed the gap identified in prior studies, offering relevant findings to marketers, brands and policy makers.

III. Result and Discussion

3.1 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. This approach was deemed appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to summarize, organize, and present the data in a manner that clearly reflects respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing behaviours regarding the Sonia "So Much to Love" commercial. Descriptive statistics focused on providing a clear and accurate picture of the sample, highlighting patterns and trends in respondents' opinions and behaviors. The analysis involved summarizing the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as age, educational level, and occupation, using frequencies and percentages. Respondents' perceptions of the storytelling, the influence of the commercial on their purchasing decisions, and their connection with elements of the commercial was measured. These measures were to provide insight into the tendencies and intensity of respondents' responses, indicating whether the commercial is generally perceived positively, or negatively.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25 years	153	41.6%
26 – 35 years	145	39.4%
36 – 45 years	50	13.6%
46 years and above	20	5.4%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 1 reveals that the largest proportion of respondents fall within the 18–25 age group, accounting for 41.6% of the total sample, followed closely by those in the 26–35 age bracket at 39.4%. Respondents aged 36–45 years constitute 13.6%, while those aged 46 years and above represent 5.4%. The dominance of younger and middle-aged women in this study is consistent with urban demographic patterns in high-density Lagos communities such as Ojota,

where working-age women form a significant majority of the population. This age distribution is also significant because younger and middle-aged women are among the most active consumers of television and digital advertising content, making them highly relevant for a study examining the influence of storytelling advertising on purchasing decisions (Nelson, 2025).

Table 2: Educational Background of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary School	40	10.9%
Undergraduate/HND	217	59.0%
Postgraduate	81	22.0%
Primary School	30	8.2%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents hold undergraduate or HND qualifications, accounting for 59.0% of the sample, followed by postgraduate degree holders at 22.0%. Secondary school certificate holders constitute 10.9%, while 8.2% had only primary-level education. Educated individuals are usually more critical in media consumption and better at recognizing emotional appeals in advertising narratives which in turn gives more credence and significance to the responses collected in this research.

Table 3: Occupational Status of Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Student	130	35.3%
Civil/Public Servant	84	22.8%
Self-employed/Business Owner	121	32.9%
Unemployed	33	9.0%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 3 indicates that students constitute the largest occupational group at 35.3%, followed by self-employed and business owners at 32.9%, civil or public servants at 22.8%, and unemployed respondents at 9.0%. The representation of women across various occupational categories strengthens the diversity of the sample and ensures that findings are not reflective of any single socioeconomic stratum. Self-employed and business-owning women, who form a substantial proportion of the sample, are particularly significant as they are often key household purchasing decision-makers in Nigerian urban communities, a dynamic consistent with the observations of Silverstein and Sayre (2022) on the expanding economic agency of women in contemporary consumer markets.

Table 4: Frequency of Television Viewing

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	209	56.8%
A few times a week	102	27.7%
Occasionally	40	10.9%
Rarely	17	4.6%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 4 shows that 56.8% of respondents watch television daily, while 27.7% watch a few times a week. 10.9% reported watching occasionally and 4.6% rarely. A combined 84.5% of respondents are regular television viewers, establishing a high level of exposure to broadcast advertising content. This finding is critical to the study, as it confirms that the majority of respondents inhabit a media environment where they are frequently exposed to television commercials, including the Sonia 'So Much to Love' TVC that forms the focus of this investigation.

Table 5: Exposure to the Sonia 'So Much to Love' TV Commercial

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, many times	168	45.7%
Yes, once or twice	130	35.3%
I have heard of it but not seen it	44	12.0%
No, I have not seen it	26	7.1%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: As shown in Table 5, 45.7% of respondents reported having seen the Sonia 'So Much to Love' TV commercial many times, while 35.3% had seen it once or twice. 12.0% had heard of the commercial but not yet viewed it, and 7.1% had not encountered it at all. A combined 81.0% of respondents have direct viewing experience of the commercial, which validates their capacity to provide meaningful and accurate assessments of its storytelling quality, emotional impact, and influence on purchasing decisions. This high exposure rate reflects the commercial's extensive broadcast reach and confirms that the Sonia brand has achieved significant penetration within the Ojota community, a prerequisite for assessing the commercial's effectiveness as a storytelling advertising vehicle.

SECTION B: Perception of Storytelling in the 'So Much to Love' TV Commercial

Table 6: How Women Describe the Storytelling Style of the Commercial

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very relatable and emotionally engaging	172	46.7%
Somewhat relatable but not very compelling	116	31.5%
Interesting but not personally relevant to me	56	15.2%
Unconvincing and difficult to connect with	24	6.5%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 6 reveals that 46.7% of respondents described the storytelling style of the Sonia 'So Much to Love' commercial as very relatable and emotionally engaging, while an additional 31.5% found it somewhat relatable, though not entirely compelling. 15.2% considered the commercial interesting but personally irrelevant, while 6.5% found it unconvincing and difficult to connect with. A combined 78.2% of respondents affirmed some degree of relatability in the commercial's storytelling approach, a finding that underscores the success of the Sonia brand in constructing a narrative that resonates with the everyday experiences and emotional sensibilities of its target audience. This outcome aligns with established scholarship on storytelling advertising, particularly Kaufmann, Loureiro, and Manarioti's (2022) assertion that advertisements which present brands in realistic, human-centered situations are more likely to generate emotional engagement and foster consumer-brand identification.

Table 7: Extent to Which the Commercial Reflects the Everyday Experiences of Nigerian Women

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To a very great extent	142	38.6%
To a great extent	146	39.7%
To a little extent	57	15.5%
Not at all	23	6.8%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: From Table 7, 38.6% of respondents agreed that the commercial reflects the everyday experiences of Nigerian women to a very great extent, 39.7% affirmed this to a great extent. 15.5% felt this applied to a little extent, and 6.8% said not at all. 78.3% of respondents affirmed, at varying degrees of intensity, that the storytelling in the commercial authentically mirrors their lived realities as Nigerian women. This finding is particularly significant when interpreted through the lens of Narrative Transportation Theory (Green & Brock, 2000; cited in Thomas & Grigsby, 2024), which holds that narrative immersion is most effectively achieved when the story aligns with the audience's personal experiences and cultural reference points.

Table 8: Respondents' Rating of the Overall Quality of the Commercial's Storytelling

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent – it is one of the best adverts I have seen	141	38.3%
Good – the storytelling was well done	153	41.6%
Fair – it was average in storytelling quality	55	14.9%
Poor – the storytelling was weak or ineffective	19	5.2%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: As shown in Table 8, 38.3% of respondents rated the storytelling quality of the commercial as excellent. A further 41.6% rated it as good, affirming that the storytelling was well executed. 14.9% considered the quality fair or average, and 5.2% rated it as poor. 79.9% of respondents positively evaluated the overall storytelling quality of the Sonia commercial, reflecting high standards of narrative craftsmanship that distinguish it from conventional product-focused advertising. These results are consistent with Dessart's (2018) findings that storytelling effectiveness is largely contingent upon narrative quality, character relevance, and emotional authenticity, all of which appear to have been successfully achieved in the Sonia 'So Much to Love' commercial.

Table 9: Perceived Authenticity of the Story in the Commercial

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very authentic – it feels true to real life	157	42.7%
Somewhat authentic – parts of it felt real	139	37.8%
Slightly exaggerated – it did not feel fully real	49	13.3%
Not authentic at all – it felt staged and unrealistic	23	6.2%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 9 indicates that 42.7% of respondents perceive the story in the 'So Much to Love' commercial as very authentic, reflecting a belief that the narrative feels true to real life, while 37.8% consider it somewhat authentic, acknowledging that parts of it felt real. 13.3% found the story slightly exaggerated, and 6.2% considered it not authentic at all. A combined 80.5% of respondents affirmed the authenticity of the commercial's narrative to varying degrees, which is a critical indicator of perceived storytelling credibility. This finding resonates strongly with Singh and Sonnaberg's (2020) conclusion that authentic storytelling fosters credibility and strengthens the bond between the brand and its audience, as consumers who perceive a commercial's narrative as genuine are significantly more likely to form positive attitudes toward the brand being promoted and to ultimately translate those attitudes into purchasing behavior.

Table 10: Extent to Which the Commercial Evoked Positive Emotions

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To a very great extent – I felt strong positive emotions	166	45.1%
To a great extent – I felt noticeably positive	120	32.6%
To a little extent – only mild emotions were stirred	55	14.9%
Not at all – I felt no emotional response	27	7.3%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: From Table 10, 45.1% of respondents reported that the commercial evoked strong positive emotions in them to a very great extent, and to 32.6% positive emotions were stirred to a great extent. Only 14.9% reported mild emotional responses, and 7.3% felt no emotional response at all. 77.7% of respondents therefore, experienced meaningful positive emotional engagement upon viewing the Sonia 'So Much to Love' commercial. This finding validates the core principle of the Narrative Transportation Theory, that strong emotional immersion enhances message retention and persuasion (Green & Brock, 2000; cited in Thomas & Grigsby, 2024). The commercial's ability to consistently generate emotions such as warmth, nostalgia, and familial affection among the majority of its viewers demonstrates the effectiveness of its emotional storytelling strategy and establishes a strong affective foundation for influencing purchasing decisions.

SECTION C: Influence on Purchasing Decisions

Table 11: Likelihood of Purchasing or Recommending Sonia Products After Watching the Commercial

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very likely	168	45.7%
Likely	127	34.5%
Unlikely	44	12.0%
Very unlikely	29	7.9%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 11 shows that 45.7% of respondents indicated they are very likely to purchase or recommend Sonia products after watching the 'So Much to Love' commercial, while 34.5% are likely to do so. Only 12.0% described themselves as unlikely, and 7.9% as very unlikely. A combined 80.2% of respondents therefore affirmed a positive purchase or recommendation intention following exposure to the commercial, representing a strong and statistically significant commercial impact of the storytelling approach adopted by the Sonia brand. These findings are consistent with Joshi et al.'s (2022) empirical evidence that storytelling advertising significantly increases purchase intention by fostering emotional attachment and

psychological involvement with the brand, thereby humanizing brand messages in ways that move consumers meaningfully toward favorable purchasing responses.

Table 12: Degree to Which Emotional Storytelling Motivated Purchase or Continued Use of Sonia Products

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To a very high degree – I felt strongly motivated	145	39.4%
To a moderate degree – it had some influence on me	132	35.9%
To a low degree – it had little effect on my decision	57	15.5%
Not at all – my purchasing decisions are unaffected by adverts	34	9.2%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: As revealed in Table 12, 39.4% of respondents reported being motivated to try or continue using Sonia products to a very high degree as a result of the emotional storytelling in the commercial. A further 35.9% were motivated to a moderate degree, while 15.5% reported low levels of motivation and 9.2% indicated no effect on their purchasing decisions. A combined 75.3% of respondents affirmed that the emotional storytelling in the commercial exerted meaningful influence on their motivation to purchase or continue using Sonia products. This finding aligns with the AIDA Communication Model (Kenton, 2018; cited in Metili, 2023), specifically its Desire stage, at which the storytelling advertisement successfully transforms interest into emotional preference for the product, thereby laying the psychological groundwork for the transition to the Action stage of purchasing. The emotional depth of the commercial's narrative is clearly central to its motivational effectiveness.

Table 13: Prior Awareness and Purchase Experience with Sonia Products Before Viewing the Commercial

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I was already a regular user of Sonia products	103	28.0%
Yes, I had considered it but had not bought yet	89	24.2%
No, but the commercial has made me consider it	127	34.5%
No, and the commercial did not change my interest	49	13.3%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 13 provides data regarding respondents' prior relationship with Sonia products. A total of 28.0% confirmed they were already regular users of Sonia products before seeing the commercial, and 24.2% had considered purchasing but had not yet done so. 34.5% reported that while they had not previously considered Sonia products, the 'So Much to Love' commercial has now made them consider purchasing, confirming a persuasive conversion effect among previously uninterested consumers. Only 13.3% reported that the commercial had not changed their interest at all. Collectively, these figures suggest that the commercial functions across multiple consumer stages: reinforcing loyalty among existing users, converting undecided consumers, and most notably, generating new purchase consideration among 34.5% who had previously shown no interest in the brand. This multi-stage impact is consistent with the comprehensive persuasive model described by the AIDA framework.

Table 14: Influence of Relatable Storytelling on Brand Trust

Response	Frequency	Percentage
A great deal – I trust the brand more because of the story	163	44.3%
Somewhat – it slightly improves my trust	128	34.8%
Very little – I rely more on other factors	50	13.6%
Not at all – adverts do not influence my brand trust	27	7.3%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: From Table 14, 44.3% of respondents reported that seeing a relatable story in a television commercial increases their trust in the product or brand a great deal, while 34.8% said it somewhat improves their trust. Only 13.6% rely primarily on other factors, and 7.3% indicated that advertising does not influence their brand trust at all. A combined 79.1% of respondents affirmed that relatable storytelling positively contributes to their brand trust, making it a powerful mechanism for building credibility in the minds of Nigerian female consumers. This finding strongly supports Kaufmann, Loureiro, and Manarioti's (2022) conclusion that storytelling in advertising enhances brand trust by presenting brands in realistic, human-centered situations that reflect sincerity, empathy, and reliability, and confirms that emotional narrative authenticity is a principal driver of consumer trust formation in the Nigerian advertising context.

Table 15: Word-of-Mouth Recommendation Behavior Following Exposure to the Commercial

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I have recommended it to several people	111	30.2%
Yes, I have recommended it to one or two people	128	34.8%
No, but I intend to	80	21.7%
No, and I do not plan to	49	14.4%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: As shown in Table 15, 30.2% of respondents have recommended Sonia products to several people following exposure to the 'So Much to Love' commercial, and 34.8% have recommended it to one or two people. A further 21.7% are yet to recommend the brand but intend to do so. Only 13.3% have not recommended it and do not plan to while 65.0% of respondents have actively shared recommendations based on the commercial, representing a strong word-of-mouth impact that extends the commercial's persuasive reach well beyond direct viewership. This finding aligns with Kang, Hong, and Hubbard's (2020) empirical demonstration that storytelling advertising generates higher levels of word-of-mouth communication, as emotional engagement with the narrative encourages followers to share their positive brand experience with others, functioning as a catalyst for interpersonal marketing within social and community networks.

SECTION D: Elements of the Commercial Women Connect with Most

Table 16: Storytelling Element That Resonates Most with Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
The characters and their life stories	150	40.8%
The background music and visual presentation	80	21.7%
The brand message and values communicated	88	23.9%
The emotional tone and cultural representation	50	13.6%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 16 reveals that 40.8% of respondents connect with the characters and their life stories the most in the Sonia 'So Much to Love' commercial, making this the dominant element of engagement. The brand message and values communicated ranked second at 23.9%, followed by the background music and visual presentation at 21.7%, and the emotional tone and cultural representation at 13.6%. The prominence of character identification as the most resonant element confirms a central principle of storytelling advertising theory: that the presence of relatable characters with whom consumers can identify is the most powerful conduit for emotional engagement (Dessart, 2018). When audiences see characters whose experiences, struggles, and relationships mirror their own, they are drawn into the narrative at a deeper psychological level, which amplifies the persuasive impact of the advertising message

Table 17: Perceived Appeal of the Visual Aesthetics of the Commercial

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very appealing – the visuals are striking and fitting	172	46.7%
Fairly appealing – the visuals are decent	133	36.1%
Slightly appealing – the visuals are average	43	11.7%
Not appealing – the visuals are uninspiring	20	5.4%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: From Table 17, 46.7 of respondents described the visual aesthetics of the ‘So Much to Love’ commercial as very appealing, and 36.1% found them fairly appealing. Only 11.7% considered the visuals slightly appealing and 5.4% not appealing at all. A combined 82.8% of respondents affirmed the visual appeal of the commercial, reflecting a high standard of production quality that complements the emotional depth of the storytelling. This finding is consistent with the theoretical observations of Feng and Pritchard (2020) that narrative structure in effective storytelling advertising is supported by visual presentation that creates coherence, aesthetic pleasure, and emotional salience. The alignment between the commercial’s visual language and its narrative themes appears to have been successfully achieved, enhancing overall audience engagement.

Table 18: Extent to Which the Background Music Enhances the Commercial's Emotional Appeal

Response	Frequency	Percentage
To a very great extent – the music significantly boosts the emotion	166	45.1%
To a great extent – the music adds to the feeling	121	32.9%
To a little extent – the music is background noise	55	13.9%
Not at all – the music makes no difference to me	26	7.1%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 18 shows that 45.1% of respondents believe the background music in the commercial enhances its emotional appeal to a very great extent, and a further 32.9% affirm this to a great extent. Only 13.9% regard the music as background noise with minimal emotional contribution, and 7.1% feel it makes no difference to them. A combined 78.0% of respondents recognized the music as a significant emotional amplifier within the commercial’s storytelling . This finding underscores the critical role of sound design in augmenting the narrative transportation experience. The emotional power of music has been identified in the literature as a key facilitator of audience immersion and affective engagement (Kang, Hong, & Hubbard, 2020), and the results here confirm that the Sonia brand’s deliberate musical choices meaningfully deepen the emotional resonance of its storytelling, creating a multisensory narrative experience that leaves stronger impressions on the audience.

Table 19: Most Powerful Narrative Aspect in Communicating the Sonia Brand Message

Response	Frequency	Percentage
The depiction of love, family, and relationships	163	44.3%
The portrayal of a woman's strength and everyday resilience	100	27.2%
The aspirational lifestyle shown in the commercial	65	17.7%
The direct connection made between the product and daily life	40	12.0%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: As revealed in Table 19, 44.3% of respondents identified the depiction of love, and family as the most powerful narrative aspect of the ‘So Much to Love’ commercial in communicating the Sonia brand message. This was followed by the portrayal of a woman’s strength and everyday resilience at 27.2%, the aspirational lifestyle shown in the commercial at 17.7%, and the direct connection between the product and daily life at 10.9%. The dominant preference for the love and family theme reflects the central role of family-centered values in the socio-cultural identity of Nigerian women, particularly in urban community settings like Ojota. Lim, Sing, and Liu (2020) emphasized that cultural relevance is a vital component of effective storytelling advertising, and the Sonia commercial’s grounding in themes of familial love clearly resonates deeply with the cultural values and lived experiences of its female audience.

Table 20: Rating of the Commercial's Effectiveness in Representing Nigerian Women's Values

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective – it captures our values excellently	163	44.3%
Effective – it does a good job of representation	132	35.9%
Somewhat effective – it partially represents our values	47	12.8%
Ineffective – it does not represent our values well	26	7.1%
Total	368	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Analysis: Table 20 indicates that 44.3% of respondents rated the ‘So Much to Love’ commercial as very effective in using storytelling to represent Nigerian women’s values, and 35.9% rated it as effective. Only 12.8% considered it somewhat effective, while 7.1% found it ineffective. An impressive 80.2% of respondents affirmed the commercial’s effectiveness in reflecting the values, experiences, and identity of Nigerian women, representing the highest aggregate positive rating across all tables in Section D. This finding provides a compelling

testament to the cultural intelligence embedded in the Sonia brand's storytelling approach, affirming that the commercial's creative strategy successfully bridges the gap between commercial promotion and cultural representation. When advertising narratives accurately reflect the values of their target audience, they do not merely sell products; they build enduring cultural connection and brand allegiance.

IV. Conclusion

The findings of this study yield a clear, evidence-based, and theoretically grounded conclusion: storytelling advertising, as exemplified by Sonia Nigeria's 'So Much to Love' television commercial, constitutes a powerful and multi-dimensional force that shapes audience perception, emotional engagement, and purchasing behavior among women in Ojota, Lagos State. The study demonstrates conclusively that the effectiveness of storytelling advertising technique is not incidental but is rooted in the deliberate alignment of narrative authenticity, cultural relevance, character relatability, and emotional depth, all of which the Sonia brand achieved with the 'So Much to Love' commercial.

The study further establishes that storytelling advertising operates through a layered and sequential process of influence that is fully consistent with the AIDA Communication Model. The commercial successfully captures the attention of its female audience through its emotionally charged opening, familiar characters, and culturally resonant setting. It sustains interest through a coherent and relatable narrative that mirrors the everyday experiences of Nigerian women. It cultivates desire through the depiction of love, and family, values that sit at the heart of its audience's cultural and personal identity. It motivates Action through the emotional investment that the narrative generates, translating affective engagement into purchase intention, brand trust, and active word-of-mouth recommendation behavior. The data confirms that all four stages of the AIDA model are operationally present in the audience's response to this commercial, validating the model's enduring relevance as an analytical framework for evaluating the effectiveness of storytelling advertising.

At a deeper psychological level, the Narrative Transportation Theory provides the most precise explanation for the commercial's persuasive power. The theory posits that when individuals become emotionally and cognitively immersed in a narrative, they lower their resistance to persuasion and become more receptive to the values and messages embedded in the story (Green & Brock, 2000; cited in Thomas & Grigsby, 2024). The near-consistent finding across all sections that approximately 78.3% of respondents affirmed the commercial's narrative qualities at a positive level is not coincidental; it reflects the threshold of narrative transportation that the commercial has achieved among its female audience. When women in Ojota watch the 'So Much to Love' commercial and see their own experiences of family, love, and everyday Nigerian life reflected on screen, they are not merely watching an advertisement; they are inhabiting a story that feels personally relevant, and it is this immersive quality that transforms passive viewers into motivated consumers.

The study also establishes that cultural relevance is not a peripheral feature of effective storytelling advertising but is, in fact, its foundational pillar. The finding that 80.2% of respondents rated the commercial as effective or very effective in representing Nigerian women's values stands as the most powerful single indicator of why this commercial works. Advertising that reflects the cultural identity of its audience does not merely sell a product; it affirms the consumer's sense of self, and this affirmation creates an emotional bond between the brand and the consumer that is more durable than any transactional purchase incentive. For Nigerian

women in particular, whose identities are deeply intertwined with narratives of family, community, and relational love, the Sonia brand's investment in cultural storytelling represents a strategically intelligent and commercially rewarding communication choice.

The 20 to 25% minority of respondents who expressed limited engagement or skepticism across various dimensions of the study should not be dismissed. This segment represents the natural limit of any single advertising message's persuasive reach, shaped by individual differences in prior brand experience, media literacy, financial circumstance, and personal narrative preference. Dessart (2018) asserts that storytelling advertising is not universally effective, and these findings affirm the importance of a diversified communication strategy that supports storytelling campaigns with other consumer touch points. Nonetheless, this minority does not diminish the conclusion of the study; it qualifies and contextualizes it, reminding brand strategists that sustained and varied engagement is necessary to convert the entire consumer base.

In synthesizing these findings, this study concludes that storytelling advertising in the Nigerian fast-moving consumer goods sector achieves its greatest commercial impact when it is grounded in four interlocking conditions: authentic narrative construction that reflects the real lives of its target audience; culturally embedded themes that affirm the values and social identity of female consumers; strong character identification that enables narrative transportation; and a multi-sensory production quality that harmonizes visual, musical, and narrative elements into a cohesive and emotionally resonant experience. Based on the findings, the Sonia 'So Much to Love' commercial exemplifies all four of these conditions and, in doing so, offers both a compelling evidence base for the power of storytelling advertising technique and a practical model for brands seeking to connect meaningfully with Nigerian women as a consumer group. The findings of this study make a relevant contribution to advertising and consumer behavior scholarship in Nigeria, particularly by providing localized, gender-specific, and culturally grounded empirical evidence that enriches and extends the existing body of knowledge beyond the Western-focused literature that has dominated this field.

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