

## Images as Communication Tools in Herbal Drinks' Labels in Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

Herbal medicines are generally advertised in different ways to communicate, influence consumer perceptions of potential benefits. This paper focuses on the images of non-alcoholic herbal drinks' labels in Ondo State, Nigeria, to identify social-semiotic features of herbal drinks' labels, relate the analysed features to the theme of medicine; and describe the contributions of semiotic modes toward meaning making in the labels. Since the use of herbal products as a remedy for self-administered health care continues to increase, it is necessary to understand how producers present health claims to convince the consumers. The paper relies on a qualitative approach in analysing the images through Kress' and Van Leeuwen's, and Halliday's Social Semiotic theory. The analysis of the semiotic resources of five herbal drinks do not only imply they are tools of generating medicine-related meanings but they are rich in inherent meanings for positive life outcomes. The study showed that labels on herbal beverages often use semiotic resources such as colour, graphology, shade, distance among others to portray the drinks as medically beneficial, and to position the products as a necessity of life. For academics, new doors of research are opened in the areas of advertising discourse, health communication, and the marketing of herbal medicine. More research is suggested with the inclusion of different regions and a wider scope of health advertisements.

### **Keywords:**

Images, multimodes, health, communication, advertiments, herbs.