

BUSM094 SOHAM BHATTACHARYA 240705695.pdf

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Module Title: Introduction to Marketing Theory and Concepts

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Module Organizer: Dr Arash Valipour

Brand: Red Bull

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PART A: ANALYSIS OF THE BRAND

A1: BACKGROUND

Red Bull, founded in 1987 by Dietrich Mateschitz and Chaleo Yoovidhya, revolutionised the global beverage market by introducing the first energy drink. Inspired by a Thai tonic called Krating Daeng, Red Bull created a new category within the soft drinks industry and positioned itself as a premium lifestyle brand. Today, the company is a market leader, operating in over 175 countries and selling 11.5 billion cans in 2022 alone (Statista, 2023).

Renowned for its iconic slogan, "Red Bull Gives You Wings," the brand has established a strong identity through innovative marketing. Red Bull's marketing strategy emphasises extreme sports, adventure, and digital media, enabling it to dominate the energy drink market and foster consumer loyalty. Its Red Bull Media House and sponsorships of events like Formula 1 and Red Bull Rampage underscore its adventurous and high-energy brand personality (Guschwan, 2012; Euromonitor, 2022).

Despite its success, Red Bull faces challenges such as criticism over high sugar content and health risks, premium pricing, and increased regulatory scrutiny. These issues demand strategic innovation to sustain its position in a highly competitive market dominated by rivals like Monster Energy and PepsiCo (WHO, 2019; Mintel, 2021).

By leveraging its dynamic branding and global presence, Red Bull continues to inspire consumers seeking vitality and adventure while navigating evolving consumer expectations and regulatory landscapes.

A2: SWOT

SWOT Analysis of Red Bull

Strengths

- **Market Leadership and Global Recognition**

Red Bull dominates the global energy drink market, holding a 43% share compared to its competitors, as illustrated in the market share pie chart in **Appendix A**. Selling over 11.5 billion cans in 2022 across 175 countries (Statista, 2023). Its iconic slogan, "Red Bull Gives You Wings," and distinct branding make it one of the most recognised beverage brands worldwide. The brand's robust global presence is supported by strategic partnerships and local manufacturing capabilities, ensuring a seamless supply chain and consumer reach (Red Bull, 2023).

- **Innovative Marketing and Content Creation**

Red Bull is known for its groundbreaking marketing strategies, including sponsorship of extreme sports events like Red Bull Rampage and Formula 1. These activities resonate strongly with its adventurous target audience, helping build brand loyalty and high consumer engagement. Additionally, the Red Bull Media House consistently produces captivating content that reinforces its image as a bold and exciting brand (Guschwan, 2012).

- **Strong Financial Performance**

The brand's financial health is evident through consistent growth in revenues and market share. With strategic investments in marketing and product development, Red Bull maintains its competitive edge in the highly dynamic energy drink industry (Euromonitor, 2022). The revenue trends highlight steady growth for Red Bull from 2018 to 2022, detailed in **Appendix B** (Red Bull Media House, 2022).

Weaknesses

- **Health Concerns Associated with Ingredients**

Red Bull's high sugar (27g) and caffeine (80mg) content per 250ml can has drawn criticism for contributing to health risks such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular problems. These health concerns have led to product bans in countries like Norway and France at different times, impacting the brand's image in certain markets (WHO, 2019; Mills, 2018). The comparison of sugar and caffeine content between Red Bull and its competitors in **Appendix C** highlights potential health criticisms (WHO, 2019; Mintel, 2021).

- **Premium Pricing Strategy**

The premium pricing of Red Bull limits its accessibility in price-sensitive markets, creating opportunities for competitors offering lower-priced alternatives. This pricing strategy could hinder Red Bull's growth in developing nations where affordability remains a significant factor (Mintel, 2021).

Opportunities

- Expansion into Emerging Markets

Emerging economies, particularly in Asia-Pacific and Africa, represents a significant growth opportunity for Red Bull. Rising disposable incomes and a growing consumer base in these regions create favourable conditions for market penetration. Red Bull could establish regional production facilities to enhance cost efficiency and cater to local preferences (Euromonitor, 2022).

- Product Diversification and Sustainability Initiatives

Red Bull has the potential to expand its portfolio by introducing healthier, low-calorie, and natural ingredient-based variants to cater to health-conscious consumers. The success of Red Bull Zero Sugar highlights the demand for such alternatives. Furthermore, adopting sustainable packaging solutions can align the brand with global environmental trends, enhancing its appeal to environmentally conscious consumers (Euromonitor, 2022)

Threats

- Intensifying Market Competition

The energy drink market is highly competitive, with global players like Monster Energy, PepsiCo, and Rockstar continuously innovating and expanding. These competitors pose a challenge to Red Bull's market dominance, particularly in regions where brand loyalty is influenced by pricing and local preferences (Grand View Research, 2023).

- Regulatory Pressures and Changing Consumer Preferences

Increasing regulations on high-sugar and high-caffeine products, along with shifting consumer preferences toward healthier options, present significant challenges. Failure to adapt to these changes may risk losing market share, especially among health-conscious consumers (Johnson, 2022).

A3: BRAND PERSONALITY

¹ According to Aaker Jennifer (1997), there are five brand personality dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. A well-defined brand personality fosters emotional connections and enhances customer loyalty, which is essential in competitive markets like energy drinks (Siguaw, 1999). Red Bull's brand personality is best categorised as *excitement*. Traits associated with excitement, daring, spirited, imaginative, and energetic align with Red Bull's vibrant and boundary-pushing brand image (Aaker, 1997). These traits are evident across Red Bull's marketing campaigns, events, digital content, and product design, creating an engaging and adventurous identity for its audience.

Red Bull exemplifies the excitement personality by embracing high-energy activities, bold marketing, and innovation. Its iconic tagline, "Red Bull Gives You Wings," not only encloses vitality and creativity but also resonates deeply with consumers seeking thrill and inspiration. The brand's positioning consistently reflects this ethos, forging a strong connection with adventure-seekers globally.

Firstly, Red Bull's marketing campaigns vividly portray its spirited personality. For instance, the "Red Bull Stratos" project, as seen in **Appendix D**, where Felix Baumgartner jumped from the stratosphere, was a historic feat that demonstrated the brand's daring nature (Red Bull Media House, 2022). This campaign emphasised the message of pushing boundaries, inspiring consumers to associate Red Bull with boldness and limitless possibilities. Similarly, animated advertisements featuring characters performing extraordinary stunts, like flying or scaling heights, reflect the brand's creative and imaginative personality.

Secondly, Red Bull's engagement in extreme sports strengthens its association with energy and adventure. Through events like the Red Bull Rampage (freeride mountain biking) and sponsorships in Formula 1, the brand consistently portrays itself as a companion for adrenaline-fueled experiences. For example, Red Bull Rampage showcases athletes descending treacherous cliffs, highlighting the brand's alignment with thrill and daring activities (Keller, 2020). These events appeal to Red Bull's audience of adventurous and high-energy individuals.

Moreover, Red Bull's product design further reflects its spirited personality. The sleek silver-blue can, adorned with a dynamic bull logo, symbolises strength, vitality, and energy. The can's ergonomic design also underscores functionality and modernity, resonating with the on-the-go lifestyles of its target audience.

Finally, Red Bull amplifies its brand personality through digital platforms like Red Bull TV. By live-streaming high-energy sports and producing documentaries on extreme adventures, the brand reinforces its imaginative and daring identity. Red Bull's interactive initiatives, such as virtual games and apps, also engage its audience, creating an immersive brand experience (Euromonitor, 2022).

Through its marketing efforts, event sponsorships, and product design, Red Bull effectively embodies the excitement personality. By inspiring consumers with messages of energy, creativity, and adventure, Red Bull has cemented its position as a lifestyle brand that thrives on pushing boundaries.

PART B: ANALYSIS OF A BRAND FAILURE

B1: THE FAILURE CASE

In 2014, Red Bull GmbH faced a significant legal and reputational setback when it was sued in the United States for false advertising. The lawsuit revolved around the long-standing slogan "Red Bull gives you wings," which plaintiffs argued was misleading and lacked scientific evidence to substantiate its implied performance-enhancing benefits. The company settled the class-action lawsuit for \$13 million, offering affected consumers either a \$10 cash reimbursement or \$15 worth of Red Bull products (Business Insider, 2014).

This case attracted widespread media attention, leading to public scrutiny of the brand's marketing practices. The settlement and subsequent backlash not only imposed a financial burden on Red Bull but also tarnished its image as a reliable and innovative company. Critics accused the brand of perpetuating consumer deception, and the incident triggered conversations about the ethics of advertising claims.

While Red Bull maintained that their marketing practices were accurate, the need to settle and revise their advertising strategy highlighted the gravity of the issue. This failure underscores the critical importance of truthful advertising and illustrates how misleading claims, even in marketing campaigns, can lead to significant reputational and financial damage (Mintel, 2014).

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B2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The **7Ps marketing mix**, introduced by Booms and Bitner (1981), expands the original **4Ps** framework—**product, price, place, and promotion** (McCarthy, 1960)—by incorporating people, process, and physical evidence. This extended model addresses the complexities of service-oriented and consumer-focused industries, where intangible elements play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and experiences. Recognised as a vital strategic tool, the 7Ps framework enables marketers to align operational activities with strategic objectives, ensuring relevance in dynamic and competitive markets (Grönroos, 1994; Kotler & Keller, 2016).

This section reviews the literature surrounding the 7Ps model, focusing on the selected elements of **promotion, people, process, and physical evidence**. Each element is examined to understand its theoretical significance, practical application, and impact on consumer behaviour and business outcomes.

Promotion

Promotion refers to the tools and tactics businesses use to communicate their value propositions to **target audiences**. It includes **advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and digital campaigns**, aiming to create awareness, influence perception, and drive purchase decisions (Pistol & Tonis, 2017). Research highlights the critical role of promotional strategies in shaping consumer trust and loyalty. Ali et al. (2014) argue that promotions must balance creativity and factual accuracy, as exaggerated or ambiguous claims risk eroding trust and triggering reputational damage. The literature also emphasises the evolving nature of promotion in digital contexts. Bajpai (2012) notes that social media has revolutionised promotional activities, enabling brands to engage directly with consumers. However, Hanafizadeh and Shafia (2021) caution that digital platforms amplify the risks of promotional missteps, as messages can spread rapidly and provoke backlash. This highlights the importance of aligning promotional content with regulatory standards and consumer expectations to sustain brand credibility.

Timing and clarity are integral to promotional success. Poorly timed or contextually insensitive campaigns can alienate consumers, even if the underlying message aligns with brand values (Lieb, 2018). By ensuring that promotional strategies are transparent, culturally relevant, and aligned with audience expectations, businesses can maintain trust and foster long-term loyalty.

People

The "people" element in the 7Ps model encompasses all individuals involved in creating and delivering a brand's products or services. Chang and Chen (1998) argue that employees are instrumental in shaping consumer perceptions, as their behaviour reflects the organisation's values and commitment to quality. Well-trained and empowered personnel enhance customer experiences, fostering trust and loyalty (Narver & Slater, 1990).

In the context of marketing, the role of people extends beyond employees to include influencers and brand advocates. Kukanja et al. (2017) highlight that customer-facing personnel play a pivotal role in reinforcing brand authenticity. Poorly managed interactions, however, can undermine consumer confidence and harm brand equity.

Moreover, the alignment of internal communication and training with brand values is critical. Drucker (1968) suggests that organisations must cultivate a culture of accountability and customer-centricity to ensure consistent service delivery. By investing in employee development and aligning organisational goals with consumer needs, businesses can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

Process

Processes represent the workflows and mechanisms through which products and services are delivered to consumers. These touchpoints significantly impact consumer trust and satisfaction, particularly in service industries where intangible elements dominate (Grönroos, 1994). Effective processes ensure consistency, transparency, and efficiency, contributing to positive consumer experiences and enhancing brand loyalty (Muala & Qurneh, 2012).

The literature underscores the importance of integrating consumer feedback into process optimisation. Transparent processes foster accountability, which in turn strengthens trust and retention rates (Ali et al., 2014). Conversely, poorly executed processes can lead to dissatisfaction, negatively affecting performance metrics such as net promoter scores and repeat purchase rates.

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Physical Evidence

Physical evidence refers to the tangible components associated with a brand, such as packaging, branding, and the physical environment in which services are delivered (Booms & Bitner, 1981). These elements serve as visual cues that reinforce a brand's value proposition and influence consumer perceptions (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

For example, premium packaging and visually consistent branding can signal quality and reliability, enhancing consumer confidence. However, inconsistencies between physical evidence and promotional messaging can dilute brand trust and credibility. Hanafizadeh and Shafia (2021) emphasise the importance of aligning physical evidence with other marketing mix elements to ensure coherence and authenticity.

1 **B3: DISCUSSION**

In the following section, a detailed discussion of the reviewed elements of promotion, people, and process will exemplify the reasoning behind Red Bull's marketing failure in the "It Gives You Wings" lawsuit.

Promotion

Promotion serves as a critical tool in engaging consumers, building brand loyalty, and communicating value propositions. However, as Reinartz and Saffert (2013) argue, while creativity is integral to advertising, it must align with factual accuracy to sustain credibility. In Red Bull's case, the tagline "It Gives You Wings" successfully captured the imagination of its audience but failed to substantiate its implied claims with scientific evidence. This dissonance between promotional messaging and product reality led to consumer dissatisfaction and legal challenges. The evolving landscape of consumer expectations further complicated Red Bull's promotional strategy. Modern consumers are increasingly sceptical of hyperbolic advertising, particularly when such claims suggest tangible benefits without verification (Ali et al., 2014). By overlooking this shift, Red Bull exposed itself to scrutiny, as highlighted by the lawsuit's widespread media coverage and criticism. Hanafizadeh and Shafia (2021) emphasise that aligning promotional strategies with regulatory standards and consumer values is crucial to maintaining trust, a principle Red Bull neglected in this instance.

People

The "people" element within the 7Ps framework reflects the influence of personnel and stakeholders on a brand's reputation. In this case, Red Bull's internal marketing teams failed to anticipate the potential repercussions of their tagline, demonstrating a gap in aligning organisational practices with evolving consumer sentiment. As Drucker (1968) asserts, clear communication and accountability within teams are critical to avoiding missteps that could tarnish brand credibility. Additionally, poorly managed external communication during the lawsuit exacerbated the situation. Red Bull's defence of its marketing practices, despite settling the case, appeared contradictory and undermined consumer confidence. Kukanja et al. (2017) highlight that misaligned internal and external messaging often leads to reputational damage, as seen in the public backlash Red Bull faced.

Process

Processes, as defined in the 7Ps framework, encompass the mechanisms and workflows through which products and services are delivered. Grönroos (1994) emphasises that effective processes foster consistency and transparency, which are essential for maintaining consumer trust. In this context, Red Bull's failure lay in the inadequate vetting of its promotional claims. The absence of rigorous internal review mechanisms to validate marketing statements contributed significantly to the lawsuit and its subsequent fallout.

Moreover, the lawsuit revealed a disconnect between Red Bull's promotional processes and consumer expectations for authenticity. Ali et al. (2014) argue that transparent and consumer-centric processes are pivotal to addressing such gaps. By not embedding fact-checking and regulatory compliance into its promotional workflow, Red Bull left itself vulnerable to legal and reputational risks.

Alignment with Literature and Theories

The Red Bull lawsuit highlights several consistencies with the reviewed literature. For instance, the principles outlined by Reinartz and Saffert (2013) and Hanafizadeh and Shafia (2021) regarding the balance between creativity and compliance align closely with the root cause of Red Bull's failure. The case exemplifies how neglecting this balance can erode consumer trust and provoke legal challenges.

However, an inconsistency emerges in Red Bull's ability to recover from the incident. While the literature suggests that such failures often lead to prolonged reputational damage, Red Bull's strong brand equity and loyal consumer base allowed it to mitigate long-term harm. This underscores the resilience of well-established brands, even in the face of significant setbacks.

Lessons Learned

The failure of Red Bull's tagline offers key lessons for marketers:

- **Balancing Creativity and Authenticity:** Bold advertising must be grounded in verifiable claims to maintain consumer trust and regulatory compliance.
- **Proactive Crisis Management:** Transparent and timely communication during crises is critical to mitigating reputational damage and restoring consumer confidence.
- **Enhancing Internal Review Processes:** Embedding regulatory compliance and fact-checking into marketing workflows can prevent similar failures.

B4: RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the challenges identified in the report and build on its strengths, Red Bull should adopt the following strategic recommendations:

- **Strengthen Advertising Transparency**

Red Bull must revise its promotional strategies to ensure all claims are verifiable and compliant with regulatory standards. Highlighting scientifically supported benefits, such as increased alertness and energy, rather than hyperbolic claims, will rebuild consumer trust. Transparent marketing will mitigate the risks of legal challenges and reinforce brand credibility (Ali et al., 2014; Hanafizadeh & Shafia, 2021).

- **Enhance Internal Review Mechanisms**

Establishing a dedicated team to scrutinise marketing campaigns for accuracy and compliance is crucial. This team should include experts in regulatory compliance, scientific research, and consumer behaviour. Such processes will ensure that Red Bull's promotional materials align with consumer expectations and global regulatory requirements (Grönroos, 1994).

- **Promote Product Diversification**

To address health-conscious consumers and counter criticism over its sugar content, Red Bull should expand its product portfolio. Introducing low-calorie, natural, and functional beverages can capture new market segments while catering to shifting consumer preferences. The success of Red Bull Zero Sugar indicates strong potential for further diversification (Euromonitor, 2022).

- **Leverage Digital and Community Engagement**

Red Bull should utilise its robust digital presence to foster deeper consumer connections. Interactive campaigns, co-creation initiatives, and transparent dialogues on social media can enhance brand loyalty and address consumer concerns effectively. By showcasing its commitment to consumer well-being and ethical practices, Red Bull can strengthen its market position (Bajpai, 2012).

- **Sustainability Initiatives**

Aligning with global sustainability trends, Red Bull should adopt eco-friendly packaging solutions and invest in reducing its environmental footprint. Promoting these efforts will resonate with environmentally conscious consumers and enhance the brand's appeal (Intel, 2021).

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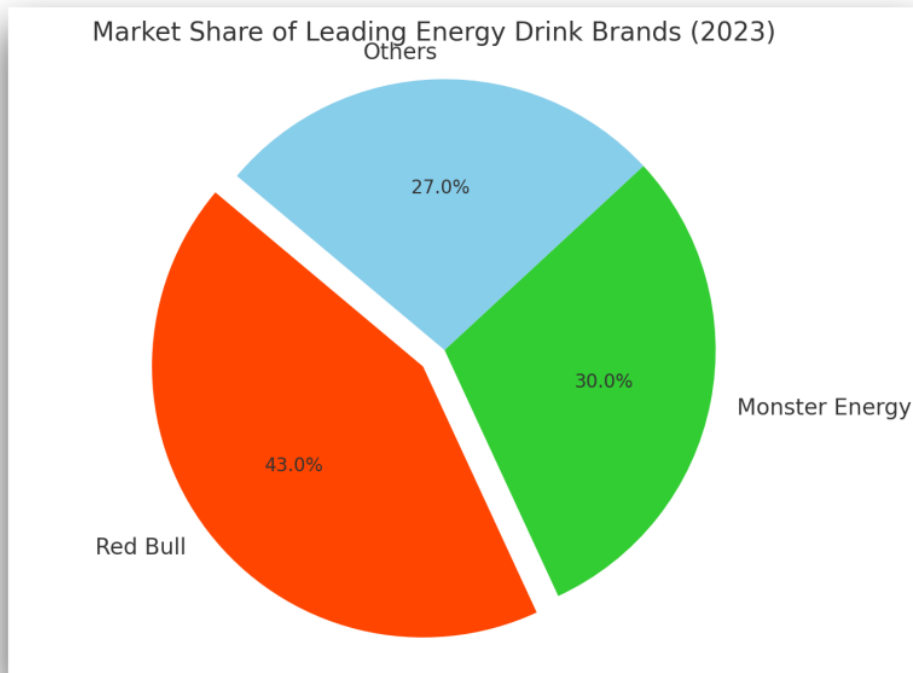
Xie, X., Huo, J., & Zou, H. (2019). ⁸Green process innovation, green product innovation, and corporate financial performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 101, pp. 697–706.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Market Share of Leading Energy Drink Brands (2023)

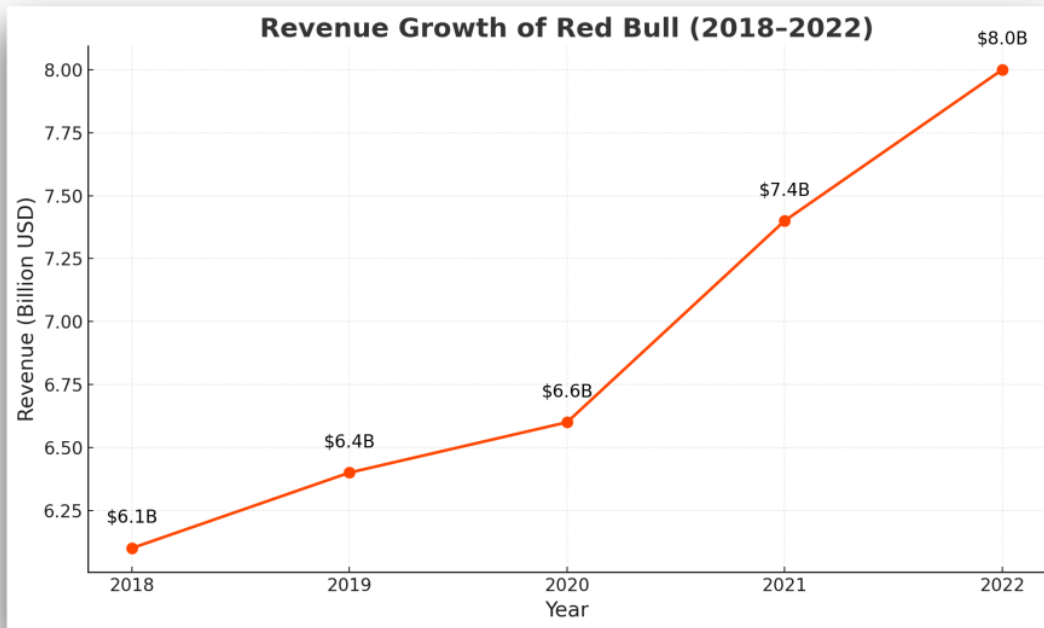
- Source: Statista (2023). Global Energy Drink Market Overview.



Appendix B

Revenue Growth of Red Bull (2018–2022)

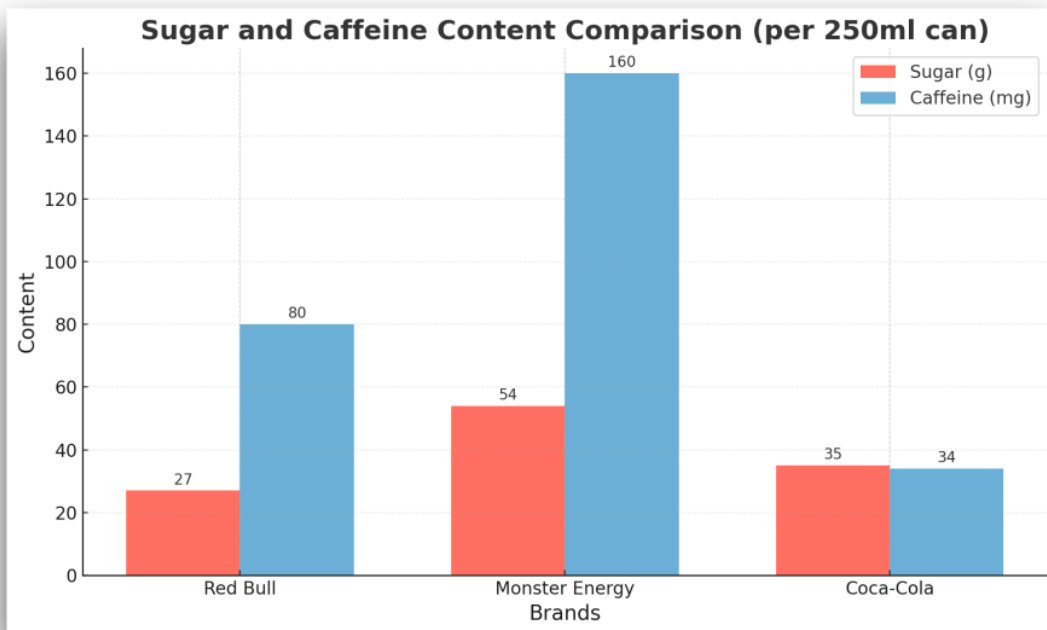
- **Source:** Red Bull Media House, Annual Reports.



Appendix C

Sugar and Caffeine Content Comparison (per 250ml can)

- **Source:** WHO (2019); Mintel (2021).



Appendix D

Red Bull Stratosphere Campaign

- **Source:** Red Bull Media House (2012). Red Bull Stratos: Mission to the Edge of Space.
- **Description:** Felix Baumgartner's record-breaking freefall from the stratosphere was sponsored by Red Bull, emphasising the brand's adventurous and extreme sports persona.



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FINAL GRADE

73 / 100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Part A: Nice presentation of desk research results, including comprehensive background, facts, and figures. There is evidence of wide and relevant reading and a careful engagement with the conceptual issues learnt in the module, with good planning and appropriate choice of sources used. SWOT analysis provides relevant information about internal strengths/weaknesses and external opportunities/threats to a good extent. Provided facts and figures give us a clear picture of the internal and external environment of the brand. The items of the SWOT analysis make sense, and they are consistent with the module material. The Brand Personality section is also good. There is a good understanding of brand personality. There is still room for improvement though by adding deeper analysis.

Part B: The failure case provides a solid overview, but a more significant integration of quantitative data and statistics/reports would improve its depth. While the lit review is relevant, it needs more depth with stronger arguments and more citations for a robust foundation. The discussion section delivers an adequate analysis but would benefit greatly from added depth and reinforced arguments through citations. The logical nature of the recommendations is acknowledged, yet a more specific delineation would enhance their impact.

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WRITING AND REF. (OUT OF 10)

