



## INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS EFFECT ON COGNITION PROCESS OF CUSTOMERS

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### **Abstract**

*In the contemporary competitive market, age old Advertising is not only medium used by the seller to persuade their prospects and customers, different medium of marketing communication has been integrated to create long lasting impact on the consumers. Sometimes customer's cognition process is hijacked, reshaping wants of customers at the seller's interest. This paper attempts to shed some light on marketing communication media used by sellers to influence Consumers.*

*While contemporary customers have acquired immunity over wrong advertisement, Direct Marketing, Publicity, Public relations, Personal selling, Packaging, Events, Sponsorships, Interactive/Internet Marketing, Customer service etc... neo marketers are penetrating consumers mind and heart through neo Integrated Marketing Communication strategies. This paper observes for consumer protection and empowerment, customers should be educated to withstand the illusion Integrated Marketing Communication can create exaggerating customers real needs.*

**Keywords:** *Media, Consumers, Marketing Communication, Cognition Process, Consumer Protection And Empowerment, Wants, Needs, Advertising, Direct Marketing, Publicity, Public Relations, Personal Selling, Packaging, Events, Sponsorships, Interactive Marketing, Electronic Marketing And Customer Service.*

### **Introduction**

Organizations communicate to their customers through numerous media. Traditionally, basic tools used for organization's communication objectives are often referred as promotional mix and has four elements: advertising, sales promotion, publicity/public relations and personal selling. Then in the mid-1990's came the idea of Marketing Communications. Marketing Communication includes all the means by which organizations attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers- directly or indirectly about the brand they sell. In a sense Marketing Communications is the voice of the brand and means by which it establishes a dialogue & build relationships with consumers.

Integrated Marketing Communications or IMC ensures that all marketing communication tools and programs are unified and streamlined in such a way that it gives maximum impact on end users at a minimal cost. Synergy is the outcome of integration. Concept of integrated marketing communications has evolved over time.

Though the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications is wonderful, in the contemporary competitive market, Marketing Communications has been integrated to create long lasting impact on the consumers in such a way that, sometimes customers' cognition process is even hijacked, reshaping wants of customers at the sellers' interest. This paper attempts to shed some light on how Integrated Marketing Communications hijacks cognition process of consumers.

### **Literature Review And Definitions Of Concepts**

Marketing communication (abbreviated as MC) is a collective term for all the various types of planned messages used to build a brand. According to Professor Tom Duncan of University of Colorado/Boulder Marketing Communication is 'Creating, delivering, managing, and evaluating brand messages which are the information and experiences that impact how a brand is perceived'.

Professor Tom Duncan in his book Principles of advertising and IMC (2005) mentions the Functional Areas of Marketing communication as Advertising, Direct Marketing, Publicity & Public Relations, Sales Promotion, Personal Selling, Packaging, Events & Sponsorships and Customer Service. According to view point of Professor Philip Kotler in his book Principles of Marketing: A South Asian Perspective (2009) coauthored with Professor Kevin Lane Keller, Professor Abraham Koshy and Professor Mithileshwar Jha Marketing Communication Mix consists of Advertising, Sales Promotion, Events and experiences, Public Relations & Publicity, Direct Marketing, Interactive Marketing, Word-of-mouth marketing and Personal selling. From numerous view points of various authors, professors and experts from this area it may be summarised that tools/ functional areas/ components of Marketing communications are as mentioned in Figure 1

**Figure 1. Tools/ Functional areas/ components of Marketing Communications**



Source: adapted view from various authors

**Where each concept may be defined as follows:**

**Advertising:** “Paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor”.

**Direct Marketing:** “An interactive database driven MC process that uses a range of media to motivate a response from customers and prospects”.

**Publicity:** “It is stories and brand mentions delivered by the mass media without charge”.

**Public relations:** “Is a management function which identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics”.

**Sales promotion:** “It is a short-term, added value offer designed to motivate an immediate response”.

**Personal selling:** “It is interpersonal communication in which a sales person uncovers and satisfies the needs of a customer to the mutual benefit of both”.

**Packaging:** “It is a container and conveyor of information”.



**Events and sponsorships:** Events: “highly targeted brand associated activities designed to actively engage customers and prospects and generate publicity”

**Sponsorship:** “financial support of an organisation, person, or activity in exchange for brand publicity and association”

### **Interactive and Electronic Marketing**

“Interactive media allow for a back-and-forth flow of information whereby users can participate in and modify the form and content of the information they receive in real time”.

Electronic marketing (e-Marketing) “is the marketing of products and services using electronic media such as the Internet (which includes search marketing, email marketing, eCRM and social media marketing) also including the rapidly developing mobile marketing environment”.

**Customer service:** “Company’s attitude and behaviour during interactions with customers”.

In the early 1990s American Association of Advertising Agencies defined IMC "a comprehensive plan to further evaluate the strategic roles of a range of different communications disciplines." Professor Don Edward Schultz of Northwestern University’s Medill School who revolutionized Professor E. Jerome McCarthy’s the 4P’s concept by changing it with the 4C’s model and often referred to as the "father of Integrated Marketing", in his paper titled “The Inevitability of Integrated Communications” allude importance of Integrated Marketing Communications as “the question of integration or not is moot”.

Professor Philip Kotler mentions need as the basic human requirement and says need become wants when they are directed to specific objects that might satisfy the need.

According to English Oxford dictionary “Cognition" is "the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses." From the time of Aristotle the Greek philosopher, cognitive process has got attention; while Aristotle focused on cognitive areas pertaining to memory, perception, and mental imagery; Centuries later, Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) heavily emphasized on examining the inner feelings of an individual. Herman Ebbinghaus (1850–1909) studies examined the function and capacity of human memory. Mary Whiton Calkins (1863–1930) and William James (1842–1910) are other pivotal figures in the history of cognitive science. Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung discusses the theory of cognitive processes in his book Psychological Types (1971). The definition of cognitive processes is the performance of a cognitive activity or a processing and movement that affects the mental contents of a person such as the process of thinking or the cognitive operation of remembering something.

### **Research Objective**

Study was conducted to understand whether consumer really differentiated between content of the brand product or there cognition process was hijacked though power full Integrated Marketing Communications.

### **Methodology**

Research design chosen for the study was descriptive in nature. For study purpose a world’s leading brand Coca cola was given in different test designed brand bottle named ‘Thunder cola’. Hundred persons who have consumed Coca cola and believe to differentiate it from other cola but are not regular consumers were identified and selected using convenience sampling method from Calicut City. While selecting the sample equal weightage was given to both the genders male and female. All the age group where considered to be included in the sample in between age limits of 60 upper and 18 lower. Each test subject was given 50 milliliter of Coco cola from test designed brand bottle named ‘Thunder cola’. Hiding the brand Coca cola responds were informed that this is a new local brand designed to taste like Coca cola in test marketing and where asked, do you agree that ‘Thunder cola’ taste like Coca cola.

Responds were given following options which were recorded on following five point Likert scale format:

1. Strongly Agree, this is Coca cola in different bottle
2. Agree, somewhat this taste like Coca cola
3. Undecided, not able to say an opinion
4. Disagree, Coca cola is different
5. Strongly Disagree, Coca cola taste completely different

### Demographics Profiles Of Respondents

**Gender of Respondents:** Equal weightage was given to incorporate opinion from both the genders male and female as depicted in figure 2

**Figure 2: Gender of Respondents**

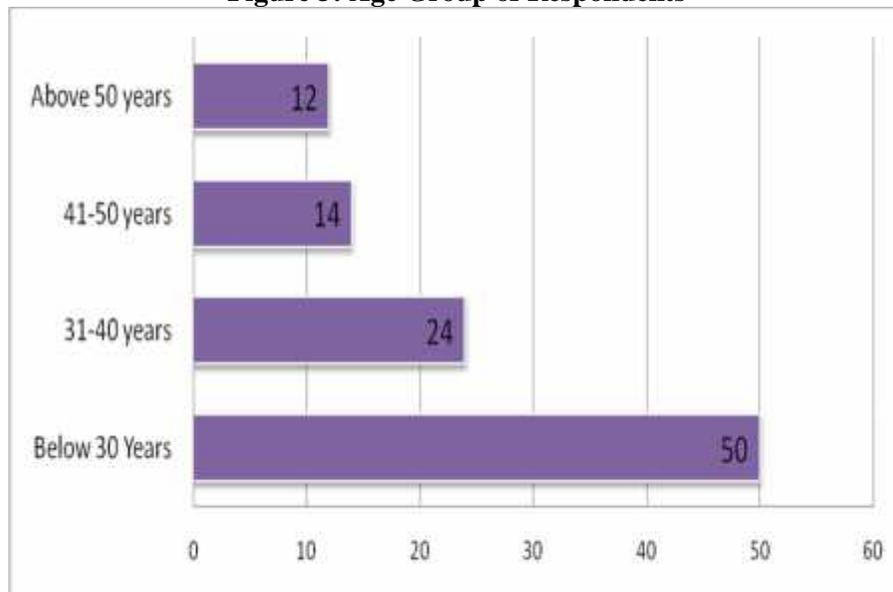


Source: Primary data

### Age Group of Respondents

Figure 3 below enlightens age Group of Respondents

**Figure 3: Age Group of Respondents**

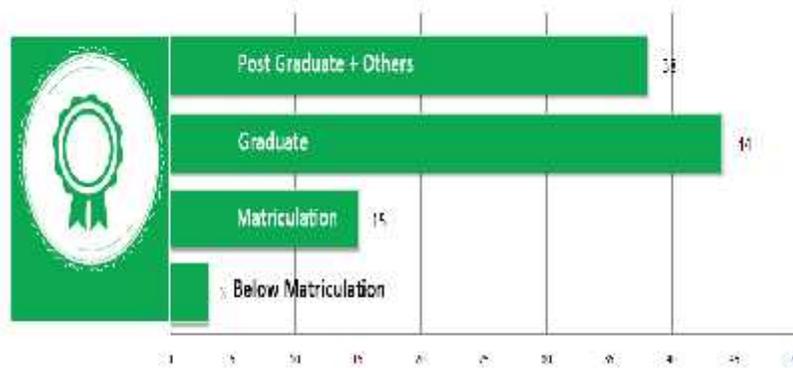


Source: Primary data

### Educational Qualification of Respondents

The figure 4 suggests that majority of respondents are graduate (44%) followed by post graduate (38%). Matriculation and below metric are (15%) and (3%) respectively. The mode value lies at graduate level, whereas only a small number of respondents are under metric.

**Figure 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents**



Source: Primary data

**Result and Discussion**

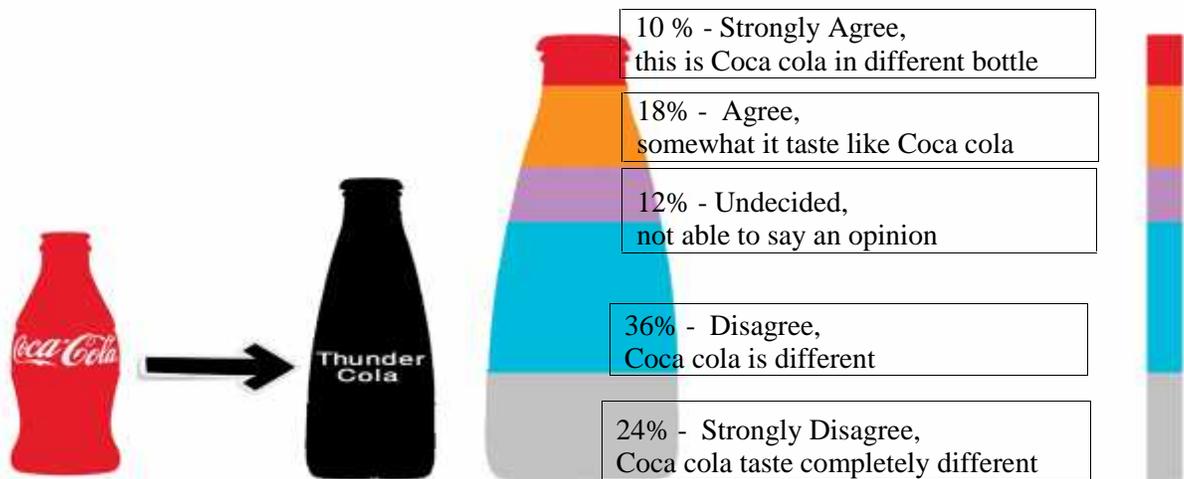
Astonishing result of the study is self-explained in following table 1 and figure 2

**Table 1: How do Thunder Cola taste**

Opinion	No. of consumers
Strongly Agree, this is Coca cola in different bottle	10
Agree, somewhat it taste like Coca cola	18
Undecided, not able to say an opinion	12
Disagree, Coca cola is different	36
Strongly Disagree, Coca cola taste completely different	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

**Figure 3: How do Thunder Cola taste**



Source: Primary data

Ninety percentage of customers who thought they can differentiate between the content of the brand product, actually could not, what they could differentiate was the brand. Results may be unbelievable at least to some people, but the research unveiled the truth that cognition process of ninety percentage was hijacked to some extent though power full Integrated Marketing Communications and study also revealed cognition process of one out of four was hijacked through power full Integrated Marketing Communications.

### Conclusion

At the time when we are discussing about importance of Consumer Protection and Empowerment in India, the silent power of Integrated Marketing Communication in hijacking cognition process has also to be understood. Moreover a platform should be created for the customers to understand power of IMC in reshaping wants of customers at the seller's interest. Customers should be educated to withstand the illusion Integrated Marketing Communication can create exaggerating customers real needs.

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