

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CUSTOMER PERCEPTION ABOUT INTEGRATED MARKETING
COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AT SBC BEVERAGES LIMITED

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

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Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: Date:

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ABSTRACT

In today's global market characterized by fierce competition, high dynamism, and high volatility, organizations are trying their best to find the most efficient way to get their message to customers. Integrated marketing has thus become the strategic approach used to coordinate the various activities of marketing communication. The study was conducted to analyze customers' perception about integrated marketing communication activities at SBC Beverages Limited. The descriptive design was employed for the study. The target population for the study included customers of SBC Beverages Ltd. The simple random sampling method was used to select 195 respondents. Questionnaire was the main data collection instrument for the study. It was found that customers were aware of integrated marketing communication activities (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations). It was also found that customer perception of integrated marketing communication was slightly good. It was further revealed that there was a positive relationship between integrated marketing and consumer behaviour and decisions. Finally, the model summary showed that Integrated marketing (Public Relations, Advertising, Personal Selling, and Sales Promotion) explains 41.3% per cent of the variance in predicting the dependent variable (Consumer Buying Behaviour and Decisions). It was therefore concluded that integrated marketing communication activities has an influence on consumer behaviour and decisions. The study therefore recommended that the company engage in constant marketing research (say monthly, quarterly, semi-annually) geared towards understanding consumer behaviour, especially their perception in relation to integrated marketing communication.

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DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Abigail Brayie Lartey and my children Adwoa Brayie and
Akua Nkunim.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In modern competitive business environment, it is very difficult for any organization to stand out of the competition. This implies that, for any particular organization to be known and heard by its key stakeholders (especially prospective and existing customers), such organization should consistently communicate with its stakeholders rather than only producing and pricing its product. This means that modern marketing requires more than developing a good product, pricing it attractively, and making it accessible to target customers (Yeboah & Atakora, 2013).

In this regard, the onus lies on organizations, including SBC Beverages Ltd to find the right way and right blend of marketing communication mix to convey the message about its product and services. This has therefore given organizations the needed impetus to adopt integrated marketing communication (Kehinde, 2010). This study intends to fill that intellectual gap by proposing that the use of integrated marketing communications can help organizations like SBC Beverages Ltd to alter the buying behaviour of consumers.

Background to the Study

In today's global market characterized by fierce competition, high dynamism, and high volatility, organizations attempt to find the most efficient way to convey the message about the benefits of their products and services to customers. Owing to this claim, Kehinde (2010) highlights that, organizations must try to deliver the right message, taking into consideration the right medium

in order to reach their targeted customers so as to elicit the right response from these customers. Consequently, marketing communication has become an integral aspect and an efficient tool for customer conscious and result oriented organizations (Mihart, 2012). The importance of marketing communication has gained prominence in recent decades because it sends information on an organization's products and services to the final consumer.

Organizations have started practicing integrated marketing communication techniques rather than resorting to the conventional marketing mix and this is primarily due to changing trends in international markets. This is because, integrated marketing communication (IMC) is perceived as “ensuring all elements of the marketing mix converge on a single idea (ensuring that various marketing communication tools work together)” (Arens, Weigold, & Arens, 2013). Thus, organizations whose predominant driving force is marketing are gradually placing emphasis on coordinating and integrating their messages, and communication within their formal organizational boundaries (Umbrella & Ali, 2013). Integrated marketing communication can therefore be defined as a “concept of marketing communication planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of variety of communication disciplines” (Caywood, Schultz & Wang, 1991 as cited in Egwuonwu, Adeniran, & Egwuonwu, 2017)

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) combines various communication tools such as advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, online marketing, personal selling and public relations so as to achieve the objectives of an organization. In tandem to this claim, Kotler and Keller (2012)

posit that IMC strategically blends several communication tools to provide consistency, clarity, and maximum communication impact.

Extant literature highlights that, integrated marketing communication presents numerous benefits to organizations. For instance, Belch and Belch (2009) posit that, IMC helps management of organizations to design and implement effective and efficient marketing communication programmes, avoid duplication, and benefit from synergy among various promotional tools. Moreover, Smith and Taylor (2010) claim that integrated marketing communication helps to spread the right message, thereby creating an opportunity for customers to become aware, stimulated, and take purchase actions.

Consumer behaviour is a concept that has received considerable interest and attention by several researchers across various disciplines, and the marketing field is not an exception. Orzan Tița, Chivu, Oanță and Coman (2017) claim that consumer behaviour has been at the heart of market segmentation and marketing communication. In order for organizations to successfully market their products, a holistic understanding of the behaviour of consumers is required. Consumer behaviour has therefore been identified as a multidimensional concept which looks at the perception of customers, their attitude, motivation, and actual behaviour tendencies which influences customer buying decisions (Mihart, 2012).

The perception of consumers is an important element in studying consumer behaviour. Phanthong and Settanaranon (2011) considers perception as the principal and the most practical step in consumer buying decision processes. Customers' perception about a product or service determines his/her

behaviour towards the purchase of that product or service. Thus, the perception of customers of a particular product or commodity drives their demand for the product and in turn has a significant impact on their buying behaviour and decision (Yeboah & Atakora, 2013). Consumer perception about an organization's product offerings may either be positive or negative. Congruent to this claim, Ankomah (2017) avers that, while negative perception lowers demand for a company's offerings, positive perception held by consumers about a company's product offerings increases demand.

Several researchers have revealed that there is a positive relationship between integrated marketing communication activities and consumer buying behaviour and decision. Astha (2017) conducted a study on customers' perception towards IMC practices and disclosed that integrated marketing practices have a great impact on the customer's purchase decision. Sangeetha, Rajamannar, and Devi (2017) also established that IMC influences the consumer buying behaviour. Moreover, Umbreen and Ali (2013) found that consumer buying behaviour are influenced by IMC activities and this contributes in consumers' final purchase decisions. This is a clear indication that when customers have a good or positive perception about the products and services of an organization, their purchasing decision will be positively affected.

Adopting a blend of IMC activities such as direct marketing, general advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations will meet the needs of a cross section of customers. Marketing research should therefore be directed towards knowing the perception of customers in a quest to identifying the right product that would best appeal to customers (Ankomah, 2017). In this regard, it behooves organizations to successfully design and implement

integrated marketing practices so as to influence the behaviour of customers towards buying its products.

Statement of the Problem

Marketing has evolved from the previous door to door and word of mouth sales strategy to a more holistic approach in this modern era. Adopting a single marketing approach or strategy does not enable companies to achieve desired results and with new brands and companies springing up, this has posed more competition to marketing managers and businesses as a whole. The challenge however is the integration and coordination of the various marketing communications components and strategies into one system to meet consumer demands and satisfaction (Mihart, 2012). Again, although some firms have adopted IMC activities, they have a misconception about the concept, hence their inability to fully profit from IMC activities. This is summed up by Luck and Moffatt (2009) who claimed most firms do not get the desired results from implementing IMC activities, hence become disappointed with marketing.

Similarly, the perceptions of customers regarding IMC activities adopted by companies tend to drive their behaviour and buying decisions. Thus, adopting different approaches to communicating a brand's message will sell better to different sections of customers. The problem however is the nature of IMC integration by companies and how it is effectively done. This has become a major bone of contention for marketing departments and companies and therefore has an impact on the smooth running of their marketing activities or operations.

Again, companies (including SBC Beverages) are faced with the problem of which IMC activities best influences consumer behaviour and

decision. Companies like SBC Beverages adopt several IMC activities like advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, presentations, exhibitions and events. However, finding the right blend of IMC activities in order to influence consumer behaviour is a challenge. This is because consumers have different perceptions of the various IMC activities adopted by organizations and a negative perception will lead to lower patronage of the product, hence the need to conduct this study. It is against this background that the study seeks to analyze customer's perception about Integrated Marketing Communication Activities at SBC Beverages Limited.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze customers' perception about integrated marketing communication activities at SBC Beverages limited.

Research Objectives

The following specific research objectives will be pursued:

1. To determine customer awareness of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) activities by SBC Beverages and the one that best appeals to them
2. To assess customers' perception of IMC activities by SBC Beverages.
3. To assess the effect of IMC activities on consumer behaviour and decision

Research Questions

Based on the specific research objectives, the following research questions shall be pursued.

1. Are customers aware of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) activities and which one of the activities best appeals to customers?
2. What is customers' perception of IMC activities by SBC Beverages?
3. What is the effect of IMC activities on consumer behaviour and decision?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of immense benefit to some identified stakeholders. First and foremost, Marketers will benefit from the findings of the study to make informed decisions about consumer perceptions and preferences with respect to IMC practices. This will help them to design marketing approaches that would be effective in reaching and increasing awareness of products to the target market. The findings of the study will also throw more light on how managers can effectively develop and implement integrated marketing communication campaign and investigate on the effectiveness integrated marketing communications have on SBC Beverages Ltd.

Again, the findings of the study would help the organization (especially the marketing department) to understanding consumers' perception with respect to the implementations and practices of IMC activities. It would further enable them to effectively utilize the tools of marketing mix incorporating the IMC activities so as to stimulate consumer demand. Additionally, the findings of this study will contribute to the knowledge base on the concepts of integrated marketing communication and consumer buying behaviour and decisions, and further provide same, new or different findings alongside the already existing literature. Students, researchers and other academicians could rely on the

findings of this study to conduct further future studies. Thus, gaps in the study could as well be exploited.

Delimitation of the Study

The research seeks to analyze of customer perception about Integrated Marketing Communication Activities at SBC Beverages Limited. The study was conducted in the Accra Metropolis, in the Greater region of Ghana. Descriptive research design was used and questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect the primary data from the respondents. A target accessible population of 380 will be considered. The population consists of consumers of products by SBC Beverages Ltd. Out of this, a sample size of 195 will be surveyed. The choice of the sample size was based on the Population-Sample formula designed by Slovin (1973), which serves as a guide in sample selection in Social Science Research. The respondents will be selected through simple random sampling technique and data will be analyzed through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22.0).

Limitations of the Study

It would have been prudent to conduct the survey nation-wide instead of concentrating on customers in the Accra Metropolis. This is partially due to the fact that there is resource constrains and this makes it impossible for the study to capture every customer in the country. This will cause the researcher to generalize the finding of the study. Furthermore, it would have been appropriate to consider commercial customers like retailers but the study only focused on domestic customers.

The study was also limited to the quantitative research approach although it could have been appropriate to use a mixed research approach (where both quantitative techniques could be employed). The mixed research approach would have allowed the researcher to conduct interviews to augment the quantitative data. However, due to time and resource constraints the researcher limited the study to a quantitative approach. Finally, in using regression analysis, there are some assumptions that need to be met. However, the researcher conducted the analysis devoid of these assumptions.

Definition of Terms

Marketing Communication: "marketing communications as the voice and means by which companies offer their consumers, their product through dialogue (Kotler & Keller, 2012)

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC): IMC is "the systematic coordination of all sales programs mainly: media, advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling, public relation and other forms or types of communication to have a consistent, unified message which is a customer focused message" (Lamb & Low, 2012).

Consumer Behaviour: It deals with the actions of consumers in the market place and the underlying motives those motives.

Customer Perception: It is a marketing concept that involves a customer's impression, awareness and consciousness regarding an organization's and its related product offerings.

Organization of the Study

This research comprises of five (5) main chapters and each chapter focuses on a particular aspect of the research document. The Chapter One dealt with the Introduction of the study, background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, and the organization of the study. The Chapter Two handled the Literature Review. This chapter re-examined the theories, models, write-ups, and existing literature pertinent to the topic.

The Chapter Three covered the Research Methodology. It dealt with the research design, the study area, the population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments and procedure, and data processing and analysis. Under Chapter Four, data collected and the results obtained were tabulated to demonstrate the opinions of respondents on various questions. An in-depth discussion of results and findings from the data collected will also be presented. The Chapter Five gave the overview of the whole study. It presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to undertake both theoretical and empirical review of literature that relates to the topic. The chapter looks at some theories underpinning the study. The chapter also focuses on thematic areas such as: concept of marketing communication and integration marketing communication, importance of integrated marketing communication, concept of consumer buying behaviour and decisions, concept of consumer perception, relationship between integrated marketing communication and consumer buying behaviour and decisions. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework which encompasses the empirical and theoretical review.

Theoretical Review

This section concentrates on the theories and various concepts on the topic under study: integrated marketing. There are various theories related to the study and they include: Cognitive Theory, Gestalt and Field Theory, Psychoanalytic Theory, Theory of Achievement Motivation. However, for the purpose of this study, Communication Theory and the Field Theory was used to build a case to justify the study.

Communication Theory

This theory is the means of expressing the views and exchanging implication individually or components. It also binds together the means of sharing. Communication within channel of marketing is an important both theoretically and managerially. Frazier and Summers (2010) perceive

communication as the process through which important information is transmitted. Though the Marketing literature admits that the big role played by channel functioning, it does not encourage the means of sharing ideas.

Communication is the means or channel that encourages the sending of marketing information, product or service information. This reliable means of interaction is made possible through an appropriate transmission. Marketing promotes interaction through the exchange of ideas among stakeholders of a product and services using different communication media. Thus, the promotion of products and services is done using different communication tools (Frazier & Summers 2010).

The mode of communicating involves the source of the message. The sender creates or encodes the message which is understandable or interpreted by the receiver/audience instead of the buy 'now' loud advertisement. This effective interpretation enables the message satisfy adverts and distractions. The audience must correctly locate the message and decode or interpret it rightly. The marketer (sender) then waits for the feedback or reply from the audience (customers) to determine how successfully that message has been interpreted (Bovee & Thill, 2013).

Communications, therefore, becomes a complex, multi-step and multi-dimensional process. By this process, buyers and opinion leaders speak to one another add encoding, decoding, noise and feedback to make the process look difficult. The decoding of multiphase communications enables salesmen to get in touch directly with the mass media and by so doing target opinion leaders, formers, style leaders, innovators, and others prominent people selecting and processing information appropriate buyers difficult question. Buyer always cast

their mind backwards to get more information. In this regard, marketers and salesmen choose the most suitable communication tools for their target audience. For example while advertisement raises awareness, free sample and sales promotion generates product trial (Bovee & Thill, 2013).

Field Theory

According to this theory propounded in the 1940s, learning and consequent behaviour is not independent, but is a total process. The theory argues that, human behaviour must be viewed as individually patterned totalities. Behaviour, including that of the consumer, should be explained in terms of all the factors that are operating when an event happens. Thus buying is not motivated by a single element (Lewin, 1952), but is the aggregate of many elements.

Field theory is a useful refinement of Gestalt psychology, formulated by Kurt Lewin. The essence of this theory is that, buyer behaviour is the result of one's psychological field existing at the time of taking buying decisions. Thus, according to this theory, a person makes the decision to buy, taking into consideration product, quality, price, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, retailers among others, all combine into a particular pattern, consistent with buyer's expectations.

Concept of Marketing Communication

Marketing communication is not a new concept in the field of marketing. However, there is no unanimity among researchers with respect to the definition of marketing communication. The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines marketing communication as “ an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders” (American Marketing Association, 2004). Gundlach and Wilkie (2010) also explains marketing communication as the set of activities and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offering that value for clients, customers, partners and the entire society. For the purpose this study, the researcher explains marketing communication as the means by which an organization establishes a dialogue with consumers about its product offerings.

Marketing communication can be categorized into two: promotional techniques (batch) and continuous communication techniques. The promotional techniques are those actions that are temporarily used for a specified period and they include direct marketing, advertising, public relations, sales promotion, statement by event, and force sale (Orzan et al, 2017). However, the continuous communication technique are those elements and actions that are consistent throughout the life cycle of the product or service and ensures uninterrupted communication with your target audience. Such techniques include brand, design and packaging, the architectonics (Popescu, 2003).

There are several benefits associated with marketing communication. Marketing communication enables organizations to speak to current and

potential customers and further helps to establish a corporate image in the minds of these customers. Parallel to this assertion, Aden, Kreidly, and Tvrtkovic (2014) aver that, as a result of marketing communication, consumers can be told how to perceive a product, what to feel towards it, what the product stands for and what to associate to the product. Keller (2009) further highlights that marketing communication helps organizations to enjoy brand extension opportunities, customer loyalty, larger profit margins and less vulnerability to competition.

Concept of Integrated Marketing Communications

Academic research in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) area has covered a long way since its emergence. Integrated marketing communication is rooted in marketing communication. Edmiston- Strasser (as cited in Kehinde, 2010) avers that the practice of integrated marketing communication can be traced to its inception to the early 1890s when academic textbooks began to stress on the concept of marketing communication.

There is no universal definition for integrated marketing communication. Brindha (2014) explains Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as “a strategic marketing process specifically designed to ensure that all messaging and communication strategies are unified across all channels and are centered on the customer”. Floor and Van Raaij (2011) also define integrated marketing communication as “a process where all messages and methods are geared to each other in such way that they complement and reinforce each other, and that added value is the result”. For the purpose of this study, integrated marketing communication is defined as the strategic blend of various forms of marketing communication tools (direct marketing, advertising, personal selling,

sales promotion, public relations) employed by organizations to convey the benefits of its product to its targeted audience.

The principal aim of integrated marketing communication is to influence consumer behaviour. Thus, integrated marketing communication objective is to lead customers to purchase the product offerings of an organization (Orzan et al 2017). This is achieved through a concrete strategy geared towards creating a seamless experience for consumers across different aspects of the marketing mix (Sangeetha, Rajamannar, & Devi, 2017).

To effectively carry out integrated marketing communication, it is important for the organizations to communicate effectively with the clients. Naumovska and Blazeska (2016) states that the effectiveness of an organization's marketing communication technique is highly contingent on the proper combination of integrated marketing elements. Integration of the various marketing communications tools is essential to achieve cost-effective promotion mix considering the fact that each tool has its unique strengths and weaknesses (Belch & Belch, 2011).

Importance of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Undoubtedly, there are several benefits associated with the adoption of integrated marketing communication. Pickton and Broderick (2005) indicate that integrated marketing helps an organization to save cost by avoiding duplicity of sending messages, ensures better use of the media, enhances creativity, foster teamwork, ensures consistency in message spreading and further enables the organization to achieve its overall marketing objective. In tandem to this claim, Smith and Taylor (2010) state that, as a result of the application of integrated marketing communication, organizations enjoy

competitive advantage, increased sales as well as profits, better time management due to reduced stress, and saves cost.

According to Astha (2017), integrated marketing communication (IMC) wraps communication around customers and further assists them to move via the various states of their buying process. IMC stretches messages across various tools of marketing communications, hence creating more opportunities for customers to become aware or conscious of a product, aroused, and take purchase actions (Smith & Taylor, 2010). Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) helps management to avoid duplication, take advantage of synergy among promotional tools, and to develop more effective and efficient marketing communication programmes (Belch & Belch, 2009).

Components of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

There are several components of marketing communication that are integrated in an attempt to influence consumer behaviour. These components include but not limited to advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, online marketing, just to mention a few. However, this study will focus and elaborate on advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations.

Advertising

Advertising is a predominant component of the integrated marketing communications mix and considered as the oldest among the elements of integrated marketing. There are several definitions of advertising but the most commonly used is the definition by Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong (1999). Advertising, as defined by Kotler et al (as cited in Orasmäe, 2017) is

“any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor”.

Advertising fundamentally creates awareness, reminds consumers, provide information, and persuade both current and potential consumers about a particular product or brand (Egwuonwu, Adeniran, & Egwuonwu, 2017). Advertising is not only a communication tool that persuades customers to be aware of a product or service, but Chansiri (2009) claims that it is also deals with how an organization create the idea, feature, knowledge and benefit effected what customer will perceive. This is a clear indication that advertisement is an effective and potent tool for appealing to the minds of consumers.

Advertising can be done through various media and takes several types. It can be done via print media (newspapers, magazines, brochures), audio media (for example radio), and visual media like billboards, and television (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Based on the opinion of several researchers (Percy 2008; Floor & Van Raaij 2011; Orasmäe, 2017), the various types advertising include, retail advertising, consumer advertising, B2B advertising, and corporate advertising.

As an oldest form of marketing communication instrument, advertising has several benefits for both an organization and its customers. The core benefits are: large coverage as it is an excellent and effective way of reaching mass audiences; cost per contact is low; advertiser can choose on the media pressure in order to reach target audience; inform consumers about the benefits of the products so as to help them make concrete evaluations; excellent for nurturing customer relationship; and it is relatively effective , efficient, and economical

way to reach large groups of consumers and an excellent way of influencing the knowledge, perception and attitudes of these groups (Shimp, 2010; Gitau, 2012).

Personal Selling

Apart from advertising, personal selling is another component of integrated marketing communication. Just like the name suggests, personal selling is a marketing communication tool that involves the sale of an organization's product offerings to final consumers through the representatives of the organization, especially sales representatives. Chansiri (2009) claims that personal selling is a two-way communication between a sales person and consumer by face-to-face communication or via the telephone. Kotler and Keller (2012) concurs to this claim by indicating that personal selling serves as a face to face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions, and procuring orders. Sales persons normally use stands, leaflets, direct mails during personal selling.

Several researchers (Peter & Donnelly 2001; Pickton & Broderick 2005; Kotler & Keller 2011) have identified six distinct elements of personal selling: prospecting and evaluating, pre-approach, presentation and demonstration, overcoming criticism, closing and follow-up. Prospecting and evaluating deals with looking for new customers or prospects who will successfully make purchase and it is mostly the responsibility of the organization or the salespersons. Pre-approach involves finding more information about the consumer. During the presentation, the sales person attempts to explain the benefits of the product to the consumer and the customer seeks clarification which helps to overcome criticism. The final step of effective selling is to

follow-up in order to know if the customer is satisfied. By doing this, it is easier to contact the customers later and try to sell them even more products.

Unlike other forms of marketing communication tools, personal selling is perceived as very effective in closing sales. Parallel to this assertion, Orasmäe (2017) state that personal selling is regarded as one of the most effective forms of promotion because it provides the salesperson with the opportunity to approach a prospect or a customer the way they see fit. Despite its effectiveness, it is argued that most organizations and marketing scholars ignore personal selling because of the huge cost of training salespersons as well as the creation of separate function in typical organisational structures in most organizations (The Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2009; Cravens & Piercy 2013).

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion (or simply promotion) can be described as different short-term promotional techniques or incentives that influence the trial or purchase of a product or service. Shimp (2010) also defines sale promotions as follows “refers to any incentive manufacturers, retailers, and organisations use that serve to change a brand’s perceived price or value temporarily”. The aim of sales promotion is to have a direct influence on customer’s behaviour psychologically. This statement is supported by Blattberg and Briesch (2012). Floor and Van Raaij (2011) also opine that promotion has several aims including attracting new customers; nurturing customer relationship; stimulate product trial; support particular marketing communication message; and introduce new brands.

In an attempt to induce the purchasing behaviour of consumers, organizations resort to several sales promotion strategies such as coupons and

refunds; temporary discounts; sampling and demonstrations; premiums; loyalty programme; rebates and sweepstakes. There are three key elements in sales promotion. These three elements according to Baker (2003) include non-standard, response oriented and benefit oriented. The non-standard is limited in consumer group or distribution channel and just temporary promotion. The response oriented look forward to the direct response from consumers but sending out promotion brochure to encourage them and not necessary to sale just keep them aware. However, the benefit oriented offers benefits such as coupons and discounts to target audience.

Public Relations

Public relations popularly known as PR can be described as the various programs established to promote or to secure an organization's image or its own offerings. The Institute of Public Relations (as cited in Yeboah, 2013) defines public relation as "the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its public". This includes publications, community relations, seminars, speeches, organization of events, seminars, press kits, sponsorships, among others. The paramount objective of public relations (PR) is to establish and maintain good relationship and keep the reputation between company and its public (Belch & Belch, 2007).

Based on extant literature, the relevance of public relations have been established. Ajai (as cited in Egwuonwu, Adeniran & Egwuonwu, 2017) postulate that, as a result of dialogue and consensus, public relations greatly facilitates mutual understanding, and promotes harmonious co-existence between organizations and its general public as well as stakeholders. This

statements is reinforced by Kotler and Armstrong (2012) who state that public relations helps an organization to build good corporate image, handle unfavorable rumors and events related to the organization, and build relations with an organization's various publics by way of obtaining favorable publicity.

Percy (2008) also claim that the advantages of public relations include such things as: low cost; reach specific target groups; avoid confusion about product/service; avoid message credibility. Public relations brings about low cost because it is much less expensive relative to other communication tools. The reason for this is that there are no direct media costs involved. PR has ability to reach specific target audiences effectively. PR avoids confusion what advertising-like messages can cause and due to message not coming through advertising it is more credible for people. However, Pickton and Broderick (2005) assert that the biggest problem of public relations is that, it lacks of control over the editorial coverage, which can be altered by other editors.

Public relations is primarily used by organizations for several reasons. Floor and Van Raaij (2011) believe that in practice, public relations is mainly used for five things: Introducing new products or services, disseminate product features about existing products, celebrating special events to promote the company, product or service, strengthening an advertising campaign or establishing relationships with important customers and prospects.

The various components of integrated marketing as adopted per this study is summarized and shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Components of Integrated Marketing Communication

Components of Integrated Marketing Communication	Meaning
Advertising	Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor.
Personal Selling	involves the sale of an organization's product offerings to final consumers through the representatives of the organization, especially sales representatives
Sales Promotion	different short-term promotional techniques or incentives that influences the trial or purchase of a product or service
Public Relations	programs established to promote or to secure an organization's image or its own offerings

Source: Author's Own Construct (2018)

Integrated Marketing Communication Process

Based on the work of several scholars (Percy 2008; Kotler & Keller 2011; Orasmäe, 2017), integrated marketing communication some basic but important steps. According to these researchers, the first step of the integrated marketing process is to provide a summary of relevant market issues that might

affect the product's communication via an internal analysis of the company. After outlining relevant market issues via internal analysis, the next step of the integrated marketing communication process is to determine the target audience. This is followed by the development of a message that is intended to effectively appeal to the targeted audience taking into consideration the organization's image.

Kotler and Keller (2011) postulate that establishing brand position as well as setting an organization's communication objective is perhaps the most important step of the integrated marketing communication process. After these steps of IMC process have been followed, it is time to choose the appropriate communication instruments and media in order to reach the target audience and fulfill the communication objectives

Concept of Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour has always been a topic of general interest for researchers in several disciplines, with the marketing field leading the plethora of studies. This is primarily due to the fact that marketing entails understanding consumers and doing everything possible for them to exchange their monies for goods and services that will bring them satisfaction (Imbriale, 2007). As such organizations have become increasingly interested in learning the behaviour of consumers.

Consumer behaviour may be explained as the buying behaviour of the final consumer. Ace (as cited in Alcheva et al., 2009) also defined consumer behaviour as "the process of marketing communication (promotion) takes consumers through three stages of responses: perception, attitude and behaviour stages". Rani (2014) further explains consumer behaviour as the selection,

purchase and consumption of goods and services for the satisfaction of needs and wants. The consumer purchase behaviour may be viewed from three perspectives: the decision making, the experiential and the behavioural influence (Mowen, 1988, as cited in Mihart, 2012).

The behaviour of consumers is mostly regarded as complex and unpredictable because the consumer makes rational choices based on several factors. Bednal and Kanuk (1997) as cited in Mihaela (2014) mentioned the fact that most models of consumer behaviour is based on economic theory. Thus, consumer behaviour is viewed more exactly on the notion that individuals act rationally to maximize the benefits which they can get from buying goods or services. In this regard, it behooves on marketers to find concrete ways to encourage consumers to perceive the message as well as respond affectively in (Phanthong & Settanaranon, 2011). This will enable marketers to approach targeted audience with ease.

According to Solomon (1996), consumer behaviour involves certain aspects: i) buyers and consumers can be different people; ii) people can influence the buying process; iii) the organizations may also be involved in the purchasing process; iv) a large part of marketing activity focuses on adapting the supply of products to the needs and requirements of the target audience; v) stimulation to the existing desires by communication campaigns.

Factors Influencing Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Consumer behaviour and its resulting purchasing behaviour is greatly influenced by a number of factors. An understanding of these factors enable marketers to choose the right blend of marketing communication and marketing mix so as to appeal to the minds of consumers. For the purpose of this study,

the factors are grouped into personal/individual factors, pysocological factors, and social/environmental factors as identified by Rani (2014).

Personal/individual factors

The personal factors includes such variables as age and lifecycle stage, occupation, economic circumstances, lifestyle (activities, interests, opinions and demographics), personality and self-concept. These may explain why our preferences often change as our 'situation' changes. Decisions and buying behaviour are obviously also influenced by the characteristics of each consumer.

Social/cultural factors

Social factors includes groups (reference groups, aspirational groups and member groups), family, roles and status. This explains the outside influences of others on our purchase decisions either directly or indirectly. Social factors are among the factors influencing consumer behaviour significantly. They fall into three categories: reference groups, family and social roles and status.

Culture is crucial when it comes to understanding the needs and behaviours of an individual. Basically, culture is the part of every society and is the important cause of person wants and behaviour. The influence of culture on buying behaviour varies from country to country therefore marketers have to be very careful in analyzing the culture of different groups, regions or even countries. Throughout his existence, an individual will be influenced by his family, his friends, his cultural environment or society that will teach him values, preferences as well as common behaviours to their own culture. For a brand, it is important to understand and take into account the cultural factors

inherent to each market or to each situation in order to adapt its product and its marketing strategy. This plays a role in the perception, habits, behaviour or expectations of consumers.

Psychological factors

Psychological factors that affect our purchase decision includes motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes. Other people often influence a consumer's purchase decision. The marketer needs to know which people are involved in the buying decision and what role each person plays, so that marketing strategies can also be aimed at these people. Among the factors influencing consumer behaviour, psychological factors can be divided into four categories: motivation, perception, learning as well as beliefs and attitudes.

Customer Perception

Consumer perception is regarded an important element in consumer behaviour. This sentiment is reinforced by Phanthong and Settananon (2011) who aver that perception is the principal and the most practical step in consumer buying decision processes. Khan (2010) explains perception as “the process by which people select, organize and interpret information to form a meaningful picture of the world”. Thus, perception is the first step in consumer buying decision processes to select stimuli (price, advertisement, etc) from their environment (Phanthong & Settananon, 2011).

Customers' perception about a product or service determines his/her behaviour towards the purchase of that product or service. Thus, the perception of customers of a particular product or commodity drives their demand for the product and in turn has a significant impact on their buying behaviour and

decision (Yeboah & Atakora, 2013). Consumer perception about an organization's product offerings may either be positive or negative. Ankomah (2017) avers that, while negative perception lowers demand for a company's offerings, positive perception held by consumers about a company's product offerings increases demand.

Zeithaml (1988) found that perception of consumers change over a time as a result of added information, increased by changing expectations and completion in a product category. It is therefore essential for marketers to understand the nature of perception in order to communicate their messages efficiently to consumers. Because the way people perceive and interpret may vary depending on their perspective.

Relationship between Integrated Marketing Communication and Consumer Behaviour and Decisions

Several researchers have highlighted that when a positive relationship between integrated marketing communication activities and consumer buying behaviour and decision. Astha (2017) conducted a study on customers' perception towards IMC practices and disclosed that integrated marketing practices have a great impact on the customer's purchase decision. Sangeetha, Rajamannar, and Devi (2017) also established that IMC influences the consumer buying behaviour. Umbreen and Ali (2013) further found that consumer buying behaviour are influenced by IMC activities and this contributes in consumers' final purchase decisions.

All Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) components transmit to consumers various information, so they support the learning process by which they acquire the purchase and consumption knowledge. Learning process

permanently evolves and changes as an effect of newly acquired knowledge gained from reading, observation, discussions and actual experience (Mihart, 2012). This is a clear indication that when customers have a good or positive perception about the products and services of an organization, their purchasing decision will be positively affected.

Empirical Review

Astha (2017) conducted a study on “consumer perception towards Integrated Marketing Communication tools in FMCG sector”. The principal objective of the study was to understand the impact of IMC tools on the purchase of FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) products like soft drinks, tooth cleaning products, soap, toiletries, and cosmetics. An exploratory research design was employed for the study. The study used structured questionnaire to solicit information from the respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents for the study. The findings of the study revealed that majority of customers were unaware of IMC tools. It was further found that sales promotion in the form of discount, coupons and free gifts influenced customer perception to buy more of FMCG products. Finally, the study found that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) tools have a great impact on the purchase decision of FMCG products.

In a related study, Sangeetha, Rajamannar, and Devi (2017) investigated the impact of integrated marketing communication on consumers’ buying behaviour. Descriptive research design was employed for the study. Convenience sampling technique was adopted to select 145 respondents for the study. Questionnaire was the main data collection instrument used for the study. The findings of the study revealed that Integrated Marketing Communication

(IMC) is influenced by consumer buying behaviour. The study also revealed that sales promotion and personal selling tools are the IMC activities that more effectively influence the consumer buying behaviour.

Miremadi, Samsami and Qamsari (2017) undertook a study on influential integrated marketing communication on Iranian consumer buying behaviour for imported branded cars: Datis Khodro. The principal purpose of the study was to examine consumer buying behaviour about the importation of cars through various IMC tools. The study resorted to an exploratory research design. A simple random sampling technique was employed for the study. The findings from a regression analysis indicated that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) variables (Advertising, Word-of- Mouth (WOM), Internet Marketing, Direct Marketing, Public Relations, and Sales Promotion) influences consumer behaviour. It was further found that online marketing communication (OMC), web and social network was the most effective IMC activities for Datis Company in the Iranian market.

Orzan et al (2017) conducted a study on the influence of the marketing communication on consumer behaviour. The descriptive research design with a case study strategy was used for the study. Random sampling technique was used for the study. Questionnaire was the main collection instrument. The findings of the study concluded that marketing communication has a large influence on consumer behaviour. The study further found that TV, radio, Internet, print and outdoor advertising are the various marketing communication that influences consumer behaviour.

Elsewhere in Pakistan, Umbreen and Ali (2013) also conducted a study on the impact of Integrated Marketing Communication on consumers purchase

decisions. The study employed a descriptive research design with a mixed research approach (both quantitative and qualitative). The non-probability sampling technique, specifically judgmental sampling and convenience sampling techniques were used for the study. Both interviews and survey questionnaires were used to collect primary data from respondents. The findings of the study concluded that consumers are becoming demanding as their demographic profiles and buying behaviour are influenced by IMC activities which contribute in consumers' final purchase decisions.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework, according to Mugenda and Mgenda (2003) provides an explanation of the researcher's perception on the relationship between variables that are deemed to be vital in a study. As such, the present study is based on the premise that, integrated marketing communication has an impact on Consumer Buying Behaviour and Decisions. The conceptual framework developed to guide the study is shown in Figure 1

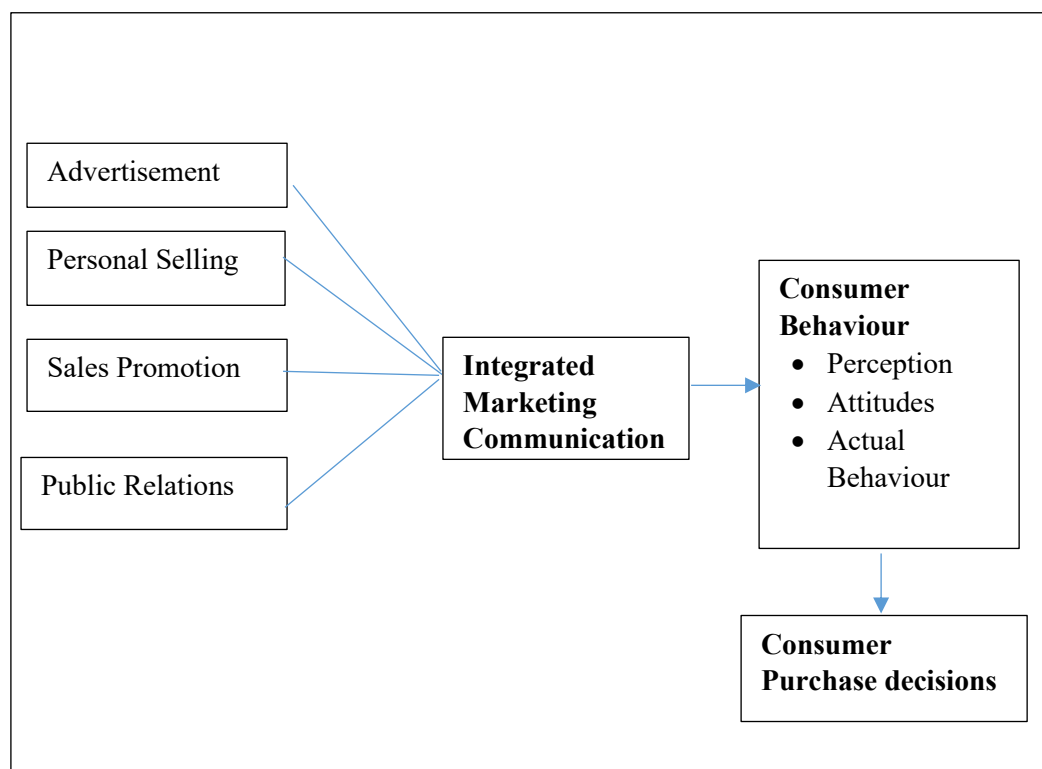


Figure 1: Effect of Integrated Marketing Communication on Consumer Buying Behaviour and Decisions.

Source: Author's Own Construct (2018)

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 illustrates how integrated marketing communication influences consumer behaviour and decisions. From the conceptual framework, integrated marketing communication (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations) is the independent

variable while consumer buying behaviour and decisions is the dependent variable. The goal of Integrated Marketing Communication is to persuade customers' perception and stimulate their behaviour by using communication tools to communicate its messages. Thus, when organizations rightly blends various marketing communication tools effectively and efficiently, it has the tendency to influence the perception and attitude of consumers which are key components of consumer behaviour and this will greatly affect their purchasing decisions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyze customer perception about integrated marketing communication activities at SBC Beverages Limited. Research methods is considered as a scientific and systematic way of solving a research problem (Kothari, 2004). Consequently, the research methods employed in this chapter specifically include: the research design, study area, population, sampling and sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection procedure, validity and reliability, data analysis and ethical consideration.

Research Design

Research design is considered as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems (Kumar, 2012). In this study, the descriptive research design was used to analyze the perception of customers. This is in line with Kotler and Keller (2013) who averred that, descriptive research design is suitable to assess people's knowledge, perception, beliefs, preferences and satisfaction, in an attempt to measuring these magnitudes in the general population.

Descriptive research is popular as they allow the collection of a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). This research design appropriately was used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships. Again, the descriptive research

design helped to describe, explain and validate findings of the study (Creswell, 2003). However, Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2006) assert that descriptive survey is relatively laborious and time consuming method and sometimes susceptible or easily influenced through the introduction of biases in measuring of instruments and so on.

Study Area (Organization)

SBC Beverages Ghana Ltd is the bottlers and distributors of Pepsi, 7up, Miranda orange, Miranda pineapple and Miranda Fruity beverage drinks. The company envisages to be the best fast moving consumer goods organization in Ghana in terms of management, profitability, consumer services and community involvement. In a bid to keep faith with its cherished customers, SBC Beverages Ghana Ltd offer a variety of products including Pepsi, 7up, Miranda orange, Miranda pineapple and Miranda Fruity in addition to Aqua splash bottled and jar water.

The company also offers exclusive services like the distribution of the company's bottled drinks to wholesalers and distributors, as well as customers nationwide. The company has over the years contributed towards development of the Ghanaian community in diverse ways via the sponsorship of events and programmes such as sports, debate in basic schools, and health screening exercises for people living within the communities in which the company operates.

Population

The population of a research is generally a large collection of objects that represents the main focus a scientific research (Taylor, Sinha & Ghoshal,

2011). The population of the study included customers of SBC Beverages Ltd. However, a target accessible population of 380 customers was considered for the study.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample size is sub set of the population drawn to represent the entire population or any combination of sampling units that does not include the entire set of sampling units that has been defined as the population (Garson, 2012). A sample size of 195 was selected and surveyed accordingly. The selection of the sample size was based on the population-sample formula coined by Slovin (1973). This formula is a guide to selecting suitable sample size to a given population size.

At first the researcher conveniently selected 240 respondents to constitute the sample frame. However, the simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 195 respondents for the study. The simple random sampling technique involves the selection of sample at random from a sampling frame by using random numbers. The use of this sampling technique gave each possible sample combination an equal probability of being picked up and each item in the entire population to have equal chance of being included in the sample. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) argues that the simple random sampling technique is appropriate when the sampling frame is accurate and easily accessible. Again, Perez (2009) highlights that one of the major advantages of the simple random sampling is its ease of use and accurate representation of a larger population.

The calculation of the sample is shown below.

The formula for the calculation of the sample size based on the Slovin's formula is given as follows (Slovin, 1973):

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where:

n is the sample size

N is the size of the target population=380

e is the error tolerance =0.05

Therefore, in substituting the target population into the formula, the sample size was 195.

Data Collection Instrument

Questionnaire was the main data collection instrument used for the study. Questionnaire is a formalized set of questions for obtaining information from respondents. Both open-ended and close ended questions were included in the questionnaires. The open-ended questions were relatively few but allowed the respondents to answer the questions using their words as well as allowing the researcher to explore ideas that would not otherwise be heard. Open-ended questions are also useful where additional insights are sought and the researcher is less familiar with the subject area and cannot offer specific response options (Salant, Dillman, & Don, 1994). On the contrary, the close-ended questions allowed the researcher to obtain clear and concise responses from the respondents. The close-ended items employed checklist – a list of behaviour, characteristics or other entities that the researcher is investigating – and Likert scale – which is more useful when behaviour, attitude or other phenomenon of interest needs to be evaluated in a continuum (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

The researcher's decision to use questionnaire stemmed from the fact that it is the best method by which reliable information can be obtained from a large population. This is supported by Taylor, Sinha and Ghoshal (2011) who asserted that the use of questionnaire is a sensible way for data collection if factual information is needed from substantial number of people. The questionnaire was designed in line with the research objectives. It was subdivided into 4 main sections. Section "A" covers the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Section "B" dealt with constructs on integrated marketing communication activities (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations). Section "C" measured the constructs on customer perception of integrated marketing communication activities. Section "D" covered constructs on customer buying behaviour and decisions.

Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect primary data for the study, a letter of introduction was obtained from the Department of Marketing and Supply Chain Management (University of Cape Coast). The researcher also established a good rapport with several owners of retail outlets and 'provision' shops selling products of SBC Beverages Ltd and this made it easier to administer the questionnaire to the various customers. The owners of these retail outlets and 'provision' shops further introduced the various customers to the researcher. This approach introduced the researcher to the sampled respondents and also provided a legitimacy of the study. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents of the study before they answered the questions. Respondents who needed clarifications on any of the questions on the questionnaire were duly assisted.

The respondents were made to understand that their anonymity and confidentiality was assured and that their names and other identities would not be revealed. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher. The researcher used a period of 25 working days to collect the data. This was to allow the researcher ample time to engage in the data collection. The questionnaires were collected right after the respondents had completed filling them. The questionnaires were given to the respondents at various retail outlets and 'provision' shops selling the various products of SBC Beverages Ltd. This approach was important because it provided the opportunity to access all the targeted respondents. In all a response rate of 100% was recorded.

Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity are two key components to be considered when evaluating a particular instrument. Reliability, according to Bless and Higson-Smith, (2000), is concerned with consistency of the instrument, and an instrument is said to have high reliability if it can be trusted to give an accurate and consistent measurement of an unchanging value. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.771 was recorded for the internal consistency and since it is above the standard 0.7, the scale can be considered as being reliable with the sample size (Pallant, 2010).

Auka (2012) define validity as the extent to which the test-items measure what they purport to do. In the same vein, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, (2009) refer validity of an instrument as to how well an instrument measures the particular concept it supposed to measure. To ensure validity of questionnaires, the researcher reviewed other relevant literature that served as evidence and supported the answers found using the questionnaire (Saunders, et al., 2009).

Further, the designed questionnaire was submitted to the project supervisor for vetting, correction and approval before distributing it to the respondents.

Prior to the analysis of the data related to the study, the reliability of the data collection instrument (questionnaire) was estimated. The study employed the Cronbach alpha reliability method and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Overall Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.771	39

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Table 2 presents the reliability statistics related to the study. As aforementioned, the Cronbach alpha reliability method was utilized for the estimation of the overall questionnaire's reliability yielding 0.771. According to Pallant (2010), a reliability co-efficient of .70 and above is enough. This indicates that the questionnaire for the study was reliable given that it is above 0.70 as stipulated by (Pallant, 2010).

Data Analysis

Analysis of data is a process of editing, cleaning, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggestion, conclusions, and supporting decision making (Adèr, 2008). The responses from the questionnaires were then edited, coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22.0 for the analysis. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviations and frequency were used to summarize the processed data. Descriptive statistics was used is analyzing research objective one and research objective two. Regression analysis was used in analyzing research objective three. In order to have a clear analysis of the available data, results from the analysed data, were tabulated.

Ethical Considerations

According to Cooper and Schindler (2008), ethics are the norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others. Research ethics therefore relates to the way in which we carry out our research activities, from formulating the research topic to the analysis of data in a moral and responsible way. Researchers may encounter moral dilemmas due to using methods that are seen to have violation against human rights or possibly causing harm (Gill & Johnson, 2010). Malhotra (2007) pointed that when conducting research, especially, ethical issues related to the respondents and the general public are of primary concern.

To avoid unethical dilemma, the research and ethics rules were meticulously followed by the researcher. An introductory letter was received from the Department of Marketing and Supply Chain Management. The letter introduced the researcher as a student of University of Cape Coast who was on academic assignment to conduct a research to analyze customer perception about integrated marketing communication activities at SBC Beverages Limited.

Permission was sought from the respondents as well. The main purpose as well as the likely benefits for the conduct of the research was explained to the respondents after their consent had been sought. The respondents were then made aware that responses to the questions are not compulsory and that they may withdraw from the study at any time. However, they were encouraged to fully participate in the survey. Their confidentiality, self-determination and subject anonymity were strictly preserved at every level of the study.

Chapter Summary

The study was conducted to analyze customer perception about integrated marketing communication activities at SBC Beverages Limited. The respondents were surveyed through Descriptive survey design and respondents were randomly selected. Questionnaire was the main data collection instrument for the study. Primary data analysis was conducted through the use of SPSS (Version 22.0). Finally, the researcher adhered strictly to the ethical conducts of a research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyze customers' perception about integrated marketing communication activities at SBC Beverages Limited. The preceding chapter looked at the research methods employed for the study: research design, population, sample and sampling technique, data collection instrument. However, the focus of this present chapter is to provide the results of the analyses from field data and assess its related findings taking into consideration the objectives. The chapter is organised into two main parts. The first part deals with the demographic information of respondents while the second part covers analysis related to the objectives of the study.

Demographic Information of Respondents

The findings on the demographic information of the respondents surveyed for the collection of primary data are presented with frequencies and respective percentage in Table 3.

Table 3: Demographic Information of Respondents

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	96	49.2
Female	99	50.8
Age range		
Less than 25 years	122	62.6
25-34 years	45	23.1
35-44 years	22	11.3
45 years and above	6	3.1
Marital Status		
Never married	143	73.3
Married	48	24.6
Divorced	4	2.1
Education level		
None	4	2.1
Primary level	10	5.1
Secondary level	88	45.1
University	93	47.7

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The demographic information of the respondents is presented in Table 3. A good look at Table 3 shows that the findings on the gender of respondents. It was found that majority (50.8%) of the respondents were females while the remaining 49.2% of the respondents were males. It could therefore be inferred that most of the customers of SBC Beverages are females. Concerning the age range of respondents, it was discovered that majority (62.6%) of the respondents were less than 25 years. This was followed by 23.1 % of the respondents who fell between the ages 25-34 years. Those who fell between the age range of 35-44 years were 11.3% while only 3.1% of the respondents were 45 years and above.

Regarding the marital status of respondents, it was found that majority 73.3% of the respondents were never married. This was followed by 24.6% of the respondents who were married. Only 2.1% of the respondents were divorced. On the educational level of the respondents, it was found that majority of the respondents, representing 47.7% had university education, followed by 45.1% of the respondents who have secondary level education. 5.1% of the respondents have primary level education while only 2.1% of the respondents have no education.

Table 4: Respondents who buy products from SBC Beverages

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	195	100.0

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Table 4 shows respondents who buy products from SBC Beverages Ltd. A critical look at Table 4 indicates that all the respondents who were surveyed buy products from SBC Beverages. This means that the respondents could provide concrete information to the researcher regarding the research objective.

Table 5: Regularity with which Respondents buy products of SBC Beverages

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	All the time	82	42.1
	Very Often	80	41.0
	Sometimes	24	12.3
	Rarely	9	4.6
	Total	195	100.0

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Table 5 shows the regularity with which respondents buy products of SBC Beverages. The findings from Table 5 show that majority 42.1% of the respondents buy products of SBC Beverages 'All the time'. 41.0% of the

respondents indicated that they often buy products of SBC Beverages. 12.3% of the respondents indicated that they sometimes buy products of SBC Beverages while only 4.6% of the respondents rarely buy products of SBC Beverages.

Table 6.:Type of product of SBC Beverages that respondents have bought before

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Pepsi	75	38.5
	7up	46	23.6
	Mirinda Orange	41	21.0
	Mirinda Pineapple	11	5.6
	Mirinda Fruity	10	5.1
	Aqua splash bottled	12	6.2
	Total	195	100.0

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Table 6 shows the type of SBC products that respondents have bought before. It was found that majority 38.5% of the respondents have bought 'Pepsi'. 23.6% of the respondents have bought '7up' while 21.0% of the respondents have bought 'Mirinda Orange'. 6.2% of the respondents have bought 'Aqua splash bottled water'. 5.6% and 5.1% of the respondents have bought 'Mirinda Pineapple' and 'Mirinda Fruity' respectively. The findings is an indication that Pepsi is one of the products of SBC Beverages which is bought often by customers.

Table 7: Annual Income of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Less than GH¢ 10000	167	85.6
	GH¢ 10001 - GH¢ 20000	14	7.2
	GH¢ 20001 - GH¢ 30000	10	5.1
	More than GH¢ 30000	4	2.0
	Total	195	100.0

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Table 7 shows the annual income of respondents. It was found that majority 85.6% of the respondents have income less than GH¢ 10000. 7.2% of the respondents have income between GH¢ 10001 - GH¢ 20000. 5.1% of the respondents have income between GH¢ 20001 - GH¢ 30000 while only 2.0% of the respondents have income more than More than GH¢ 30000.

Customers' Awareness of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Activities and the One Which Best Appeals To Customers

The study sought to determine customer awareness of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) activities by SBC Beverages and the activity that best appeals to them. The integrated marketing communication variables that were measured included advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the attitude of the respondents, rated as follows: 1=Least in agreement; 2=Slightly high; 3=Somewhat High, 4=High and 5= Highest in agreement. The findings were descriptively summarised with mean scores as well as the respective standard deviation scores for all the individual indicators of the construct-career development. The findings are presented on Table 8, Table 9, Table 10 and Table 11.

Table 8: Advertising

	Mean	Std. Deviation
SBC Beverages' TV and newspaper advertisement attracts me deeply	2.3538	1.89762
SBC Beverages' advertisements provide clear information regarding the products	2.0462	1.76241
Web based marketing of SBC Beverages focuses on creating good networks with customers	2.0256	1.75110
SBC Beverages provide different attractive social network advertisement	2.8667	2.00069
Weighted Mean	2.3231	

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The findings from Table 8 shows that the respondents agreed that SBC Beverages' TV and newspaper advertisement attracts them deeply (M=2.3538, SD=1.89762). It was also found that the respondents agreed that SBC Beverages' advertisements provide clear information regarding the products (M=2.0462, SD=1.76241). Again, it was found that the respondents agreed that Web based marketing of SBC Beverages focuses on creating good networks with customers (M=2.0256, SD=1.75110). Furthermore, it was found that the respondents agreed that SBC Beverages provide different attractive social network advertisement (M=2.8667, SD=2.00069). Overall, the weighted mean of 2.3231 indicates that respondents agreed that they are aware of advertisement as an integrated marketing communication activity. However, their level of awareness is slightly high.

This findings is consistent with the assertion of Egwuonwu, Adeniran and Egwuonwu (2017) who highlighted that advertising basically creates

awareness, reminds consumers, provide information, and persuade both current and potential consumers about a particular product or brand. This could be attributed to the fact that the various advertising media (TV and newspaper) helps to cover a large pool of consumers.

This statement is parallel to that of Gitau (2012) who disclosed that advertising is an excellent and effective of creating awareness of a product to mass audiences. Customers are also aware of advertising as an integrated marketing communication activity because it is widely adopted by most companies, including SBC Beverages to send message, inform them about the benefits of the product offerings. This in effect helps customers to make rationale choices regarding the purchase of products of SBC Beverages. Yeboah and Atakora (2013) agrees with this claim by indicating that advertising as an integrated marketing communication activity, wraps communication around customers and further helps them move through the stages of the buying process as well as sensitize them.

Table 9: Personal Selling

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can easily get the products of SBC Beverages without going to the shop	4.5282	1.29351
I get access to products within a short time and at my convenience	3.9538	1.76241
SBC Beverages sellers maintain a good relationship with me with good behaviour and effective message	2.5795	1.96033
Weighted Mean	3.6872	

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The findings from Table 9 shows that respondents agreed that they can easily get the products of SBC Beverages without going to the shop ($M=4.5282$, $SD=1.29351$). It was also found that the respondents agreed that they get access to products within a short time and at my convenience ($M=3.9538$, $SD=1.76241$). Moreover, it was found that the respondents agreed that SBC Beverages sellers maintain a good relationship with them with good behaviour and effective message ($M=2.5795$, $SD=1.96033$). Overall, the weighted mean of 3.6872 shows that the respondents agreed that they are aware of personal selling as an integrated marketing communication activity used by SBC Beverages.

Customers' awareness of personal selling as an integrated marketing communication activity could be linked to the regular contact they have with sales executives (persons) of SBC Beverages. Kotler and Keller (2012) concur with this findings by indicating that personal selling serves as a face to face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purpose of making presentations, answering questions, and procuring orders. Salespeople not only inform potential customers about a company's product or services, they also use their power of persuasion and remind customers of product characteristics, service agreements, prices, deals, and much more. Constant contact with customers via sales people has an effect of appealing to the minds of these customers, hence, increasing their level of awareness of personal selling as an integrated marketing communication activity.

Table 10: Sales Promotion

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sales promotional activities appeal more to me than other IMC activities	2.6205	1.96872
There is special value added to products which induces me to buy more during promotions	2.7026	1.98285
My perception of the company's products changes positively which influences my decisions to purchase more	2.3333	1.89047
SBC's promotions are usually attractive	2.8462	1.99921
Weighted Mean	2.6257	

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The findings from Table 10 shows that the respondents agreed that sales promotional activities appeal more to me than other IMC activities (M=2.6205, SD= 1.96872). It was also found that the respondents agreed that there is special value added to products which induces me to buy more during promotions (M=2.7026, SD= 1.98285). It was further found that the respondents agreed that their perception of the company's products changes positively which influences their decisions to purchase more (M=2.3333, SD= 1.89047). Additionally, it was found that the respondents agreed that SBC's promotions are usually attractive (M=2.8462, SD= 1.99921). Overall, the weighted mean of 2.6257 shows that the respondents agreed that they are aware of sales promotion as an integrated marketing communication activity. However, their level of awareness is slightly high.

The findings is consistent with the findings of Floor and Van Raaij (2011) who disclosed that sales promotion attract new customers, nurture

customer relationship, stimulate product trial, support particular marketing communication message; and introduce new brands. All these benefits have cumulative effect on the creation of awareness of sales promotion as an integrated marketing communication activity.

Sales promotion increases customers' awareness of integrated marketing tool because most organizations, including SBC Beverages adopt sales promotion as a strategy to influence the customer's behaviour psychologically. This finding is consistent with that of Blattberg and Briesch (2012) who disclosed that the use of coupons and refunds; temporary discounts; sampling and demonstrations; premiums; loyalty programme; rebates and sweepstakes create customer awareness about sales promotion as an integrated marketing communication activity. Moreover, the findings is in line with the findings of Familmaleki, Aghighi and Hamidi (2015) who disclosed that sales promotion stimulates customer awareness of a company's product offering , thereby increasing customer purchase.

Table 11: Public Relations

	Mean	Std. Deviation
SBC Beverages maintains an effective public relations marketing	2.2103	1.84220
There are different programs organized by SBC Beverages in Ghana or at a location near me	1.7385	1.55594
All the marketing strategies of SBC Beverages emphasize on Public relations	2.2513	1.85934
SBC Beverages sponsor different social activities (Corporate Social Responsibilities)	2.1692	1.82397
SBC Beverages have strong channels to increase the public relations	1.9846	1.72751
Weighted Mean	2.0708	

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The findings from Table 11 shows that the respondents agreed that SBC Beverages maintains an effective public relations marketing ($M= 2.2103$, $SD= 1.84220$). Also, it was found that the respondents agreed that there are different programs organized by SBC Beverages in Ghana or at a location near me ($M= 1.7385$, $SD= 1.55594$). Again, it was found that the respondents agreed that all the marketing strategies of SBC Beverages emphasize on Public relations ($M= 2.2513$, $SD= 1.85934$).

Furthermore, it was found that the respondents agreed that SBC Beverages sponsor different social activities (Corporate Social Responsibilities) ($M= 2.1692$, $SD= 1.82397$). Moreover, it was found that the respondents agreed that SBC Beverages have strong channels to increase the public relations ($M= 1.9846$, $SD= 1.72751$). Overall, the weighted mean of 2.0708 shows that the respondents agreed that they are aware of public relations as an integrated marketing communication activity used by SBC Beverages. However, their level of awareness is slightly high.

The findings of the study is in line with the assertion of Belch and Belch (2007) who highlighted that the paramount objective of public relations (PR) is to establish and maintain good relationship and keep the reputation between company and its public. This good relationship with customers as result of public relations helps theme to be aware of the concept as an integrated marketing communication activity. These public relations activities used to create customer awareness include publications, community relations, seminars, speeches, organization of events, seminars, press kits, sponsorships, among others as highlighted by Yeboah and Atakora (2013). As a result, SBC Beverages has create customer awareness of public relations activities the

sponsorship of events and programmes such as sports, health screening exercises, debates in basic schools, as well as the organisation of annual street parties for people living within the communities in which the company operates.

The findings is consistent with that of Floor and Van Raaij (2011) who disclosed that, public relations helps to create customer awareness about the good image of a company aside introducing new products or services, disseminate product features about existing products, celebrating special events to promote the company, product or service, and strengthening an advertising campaign or establishing relationships with important customers and prospects.

The Component of Integrated Marketing Communication that Best

Appeals to Customers

The study further sought to find out the component of integrated marketing communication (advertisement, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations) that best appeal to customers of SBC Beverages. The findings are descriptively presented in Table 12 and also presented in Figure 2.

Table 12: Component of Integrated Marketing Communication that Best

Appeals to Customers

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Advertisement	76	39.0
	Personal Selling	63	32.3
	Sales Promotion	41	21.0
	Public Relations	15	7.7
	Total	195	100.0

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The findings from Table 10 indicates that among the components of integrated marketing communication, the component which best appealed to

majority of the respondents was advertisement. This was because, 39.0% of the respondents indicated that advertisement appealed to them most. This followed by personal selling, with 32.3%. This was followed by sales promotion with 21.0%. The findings indicated public relations scored the least percent, indicating that it was the least appealing component of integrated marketing communication among the respondents.

This finding is further presented in a pie chart to give a clearer view of the fact that advertising is the internal marketing communication component that best appeals to customers of SBC Beverages. Figure 1 shows that advertising covers the biggest portion (39.0%) among the integrating marketing communication components, indicating that, it is the component that best appeals to customers.

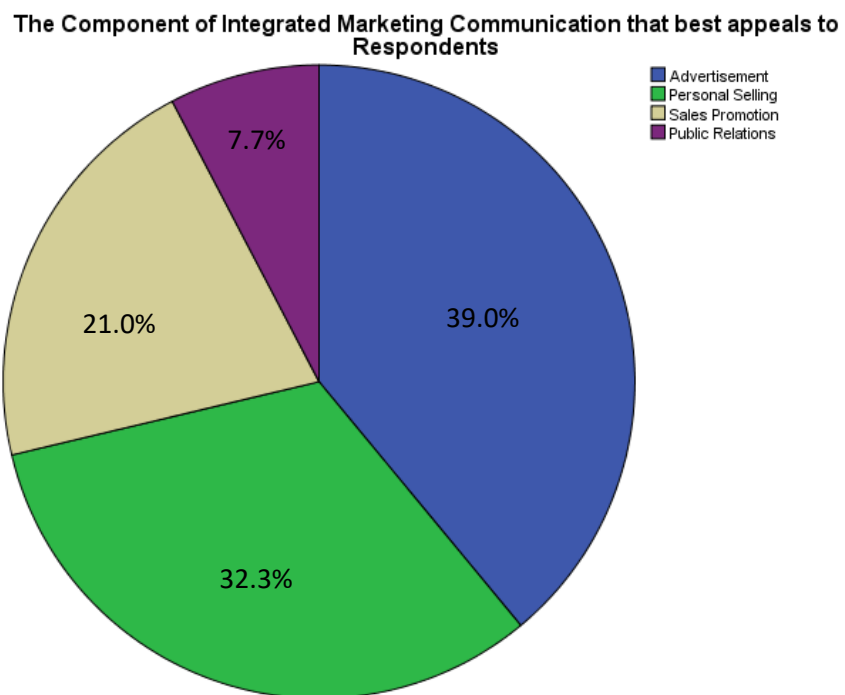


Figure 2: Advertising as the integrated marketing component that best appeals to customers

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Advertising was considered the most appealing integrated marketing activity because it is the most used by companies, including SBC Beverages. This is consistent with the assertion of Shimp (2010) who claimed that advertising is the oldest and often used integrated marketing communication component for informing customers about the product offerings of an organizations. The study findings that advertising is the most appealing component of integrated marketing communication could also be attributed to the perceived benefits and persuasive power advertising has.

Clow and Baack (2002) further concurs with the study findings by highlighting that, the average person is exposed to more than 600 advertisements per day, hence, making advertising an intricate and indissoluble part of everybody's life. The findings of Shimp (2010) further validate this findings as it was disclosed that advertising is relatively effective , efficient, and economical way to reach large groups of consumers and an excellent way of influencing the knowledge, perception and attitudes of these groups, hence, its continuous adoption by various organizations and industries.

Customers' Perception of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Activities by SBC Beverages

The study further sought to assess customers' perception of IMC activities by SBC Beverages. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the attitude of the respondents, rated as follows: 1=Good ; 2=Slightly good; 3= Neither good nor bad, 4=Slightly bad and 5= Bad. The findings were descriptively summarized with mean scores as well as the respective standard deviation scores for all the individual indicators of the construct-integrated marketing. The findings are presented on Table 13.

Table 13: Customer Perception of Integrated Marketing Communication

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Advertisement	2.1385	1.52177
Personal Selling	1.9846	1.23304
Sales Promotion	2.1949	1.47591
Public Relations	2.7231	1.57468
Weighted Mean	2.2603	

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The findings from Table 13 shows that the respondents perception of advertising an integrated marketing communication activity was slightly good (M=2.1385, SD=1.52177). Also, it was found that respondents perception of personal selling as an integrated marketing activity was good (M=1.9846, SD=1.52177). Again, it was found that respondents perception of sales promotion as an integrated marketing communication activity was slightly good (M=2.1949, SD=1.47591). Furthermore, it was found that respondents perception of public relations as an integrated marketing communication was slightly good (M=2.7231, SD=1.57468). Overall, the weighted mean of 2.2603 shows that the perception of the respondents towards integrated marketing communication activities is slightly good.

Customer perception about integrated marketing is very integral to their buying behaviour. The study findings is consistent with that of Astha (2017) who disclosed that customers' perception towards integrated marketing communication practices have a great impact on the customer's purchase decision. Thus, it is important for customers to have a good perception about integrated marketing communication so as to stimulate demand. Mihart (2012) agrees with this finding by indicating that, a good perception of all the integrated marketing communication component (advertising, personal selling, sales

promotion and public relations) convey various information which support consumer learning process, hence, helping them to acquire the purchase decision and consumption knowledge.

Furthermore, Berger (2011) concurs with this finding by disclosing that advertising is a powerful commercial tool that may shape people's mind and behaviour that's why, it is used for a number of purposes by industrial giants, non-profit organization and the smallest retail establishment. Moreover, in tandem to this findings, Zeithaml (1988) found that perception of consumers change over time as a result of added information, and increased expectations of an organization's product offerings. In this regard, it is very important for SBC Beverages to increase its efforts to understand the nature of customer perception in order to communicate their messages efficiently. This is because the way customers perceive and interpret the various integrated marketing communication components may vary.

Effect of Integrated Marketing Communication Activities on Consumer Behaviour and Decision

The study again sought to assess the effect of integrated marketing communication activities and consumer buying behaviour and decisions. In order to ascertain the effect of integrated marketing communication activities and consumer buying behaviour and decisions, standard multiple regression was computed. The integrated marketing activities were the independent variables (predictors) and composite of the individual constructs of the dependent variable (consumer buying behaviour and decisions). The findings are presented on the subsequent paragraph.

Table 14: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.642 ^a	.413	.400	7.55559

a. Predictors: (Constant), Public Relations, Advertising, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour and Decisions

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Table 14 shows the model summary of the standard simple regression. The findings from the Model Summary show that the model Integrated marketing (Public Relations, Advertising, Personal Selling, and Sales Promotion) explains 41.3% per cent of the variance in predicting the dependent variable (Consumer Buying Behaviour and Decisions). This implies that 59.7% per cent of variance in the dependent variable is explained by other variables not included in the model. This means that the more SBC Beverages Ltd adopts and promotes integrated marketing communication activities, the more consumer buying behaviour and decision would be influenced.

The findings of this study is consistent with the findings of Miremadi, Samsami and Qamsari (2017) who disclosed from a regression analysis that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) variables (Advertising, Word-of-Mouth (WOM), Internet Marketing, Direct Marketing, Public Relations, and Sales Promotion) influences consumer behaviour. Orzan et al (2017) also found that integrated marketing communication has a large influence on consumer behaviour. Finally, the findings is in tandem with that of Umbreen and Ali (2013) who found that consumers have become demanding as their demographic profiles and buying behaviour are influenced by Integrated

Marketing Communication (IMC) activities which contribute in consumers' final purchase decisions.

Table 15: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7623.412	4	1905.853	33.385	.000 ^b
	Residual	10846.506	190	57.087		
	Total	18469.918	194			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour and Decisions

b. Predictors: (Constant), Public Relations, Advertising, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The result of the ANOVA component of the standard multiple regression analysis is presented on Table 15. A close observation of the Sig. value indicates that the model is statistically significant in that the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Meaning, statistically, the model could be relied on to positively alter consumer buying behaviour and decisions.

Table 16: Coefficients

Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		3.263	.001
	Advertising	.006	.091	.928
	Personal Selling	.432	6.984	.000
	Sales Promotion	.230	3.629	.000
	Public Relations	.213	3.489	.001

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

On assessing the contribution of the individual independent variables' contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable, the standardized coefficient Beta value for each of the independent variables was computed. The findings are provided in Table 16. The findings indicate that personal selling made the strongest unique but statistically significant contribution to explaining

the dependent variable when all the other variables in the model are controlled for, with Beta value of 0.432 and corresponding Sig value of 0.000.

This was followed by sales promotion with Beta value of 0.230 and corresponding Sig value of 0.000 when all the other variables in the model are controlled for. Public relations made the next strongest unique but statistically significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable when all the other variables in the model are controlled for, with Beta value of 0.213 and corresponding Sig value of 0.001. However, advertising made a unique contribution but not statistically significant contribution to explaining dependent variable when all the other variables in the model are controlled for, with Beta value of 0.006 and corresponding Sig value of 0.928.

Relationship between Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Activities and Consumer Behaviour and Decision

As part of the of findings of the effect of IMC activities on consumer buying behaviour and decision, the study examined the relationship between integrated marketing communication and consumer behaviour and decision. The findings of the study concentrated on the composite relationship between integrated marketing communication and consumer behaviour and decision and further looked at the various components of integrated marketing communication (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations) and its relationship with consumer behaviour and decision. The findings are presented in Table 17 and Table 18.

Table 17: Correlations

		Integrated Marketing Communication	Consumer Behaviour and Decisions
Integrated Marketing Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.585**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	195	195
Consumer Behaviour and Decisions	Pearson Correlation	.585**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	195	195

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Table 17 indicates the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient results for the relationship between integrated marketing communication and job satisfaction. From the analysis, it is clear that there is a strong positive relationship ($r=0.585$) between integrated marketing communication and consumer behaviour and decision. This implies that the more the organization practices integrated marketing communication, the more consumer behaviour and decision changes, especially towards the purchase of products from SBC Beverages. The findings of the study also shows that the relationship is statistically significant because $p<0.005$.

**Relationship between the Individual Component of Integrated Marketing
Communication and Consumer Behaviour and Decisions**

Table 18: Correlations

		Advertis ing	Personal Selling	Sales Promoti on	Public Relation s	Consum er Behavio ur and Decision s
Advertising	Pearson Correlation	1	.409**	.282**	.166*	.283**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.020	.000
	N	195	195	195	195	195
Personal Selling	Pearson Correlation	.409**	1	.263**	.175*	.532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.014	.000
	N	195	195	195	195	195
Sales Promotion	Pearson Correlation	.282**	.263**	1	.408**	.432**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	195	195	195	195	195
Public Relations	Pearson Correlation	.166*	.175*	.408**	1	.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.014	.000		.000
	N	195	195	195	195	195
Consumer Behaviour and Decisions	Pearson Correlation	.283**	.532**	.432**	.384**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	195	195	195	195	195

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

Table 18 shows the relationship between the various components of integrated marketing communication and Consumer Behaviour and Decisions was investigated using Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. From the analysis, it is clear that there is a weak

positive correlation between advertising ($r=0.283$) and consumer buying behaviour and decisions. It was also found that there is a strong positive correlation ($r=0.532$) between personal selling and consumer buying behaviour and decisions. Similarly, a strong positive correlation ($r=0.432$) was found between sales promotion and consumer buying behaviour and decisions. However, a medium positive correlation ($r=0.384$) was found between public relations and consumer buying behaviour and decisions.

The current findings is consistent with the findings of Astha (2017) who conducted a study on customers' perception towards integrated marketing communication practices and disclosed that integrated marketing practices have a great impact on the customer's purchase decision. Sangeetha, Rajamannar, and Devi (2017) also established that Integrated Marketing Communication has direct relationship with consumer behaviour. This findings is consistent with the findings of this study. In tandem with the findings of this study, Sangeetha, Rajamannar, and Devi (2017) further revealed that sales promotion and personal selling tools are the integrated marketing communication activities that more effectively influence the consumer behaviour.

Additionally, the findings of the study is consistent with that of Mihaela (2015) who disclosed that integrated marketing communication represent a source of interest that allows consumers to understand the value of goods and services, hence, an indication that the more companies, including SBC Beverages adopt integrated marketing communication, the more consumer purchasing behaviour and decisions is influenced.

Other factors Customers Consider in Purchasing Products of SBC Beverages

The opinion of the respondents was sought concerning other factors they consider in purchasing products of SBC Beverages. The findings of the opinions of the respondents are presented on Figure 3.

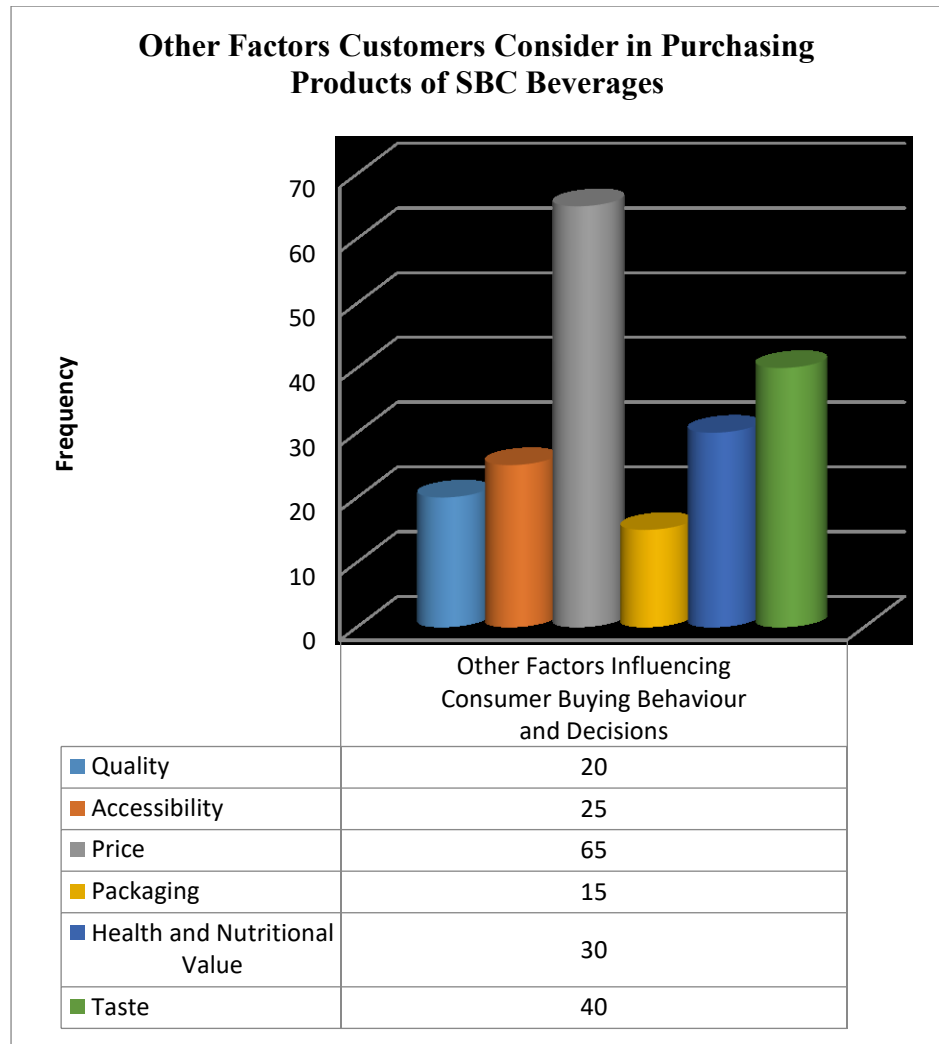


Figure 3: Other Factors Customers Consider in Purchasing Products of SBC Beverages

Source: Field survey, Botchway (2018)

The findings of the study disclosed that other factors that respondents consider in purchasing products of SBC Beverages include quality, accessibility, price, packaging, health and nutritional value, and taste. Among

these factors, majority (65) of the respondents considered price as the factors that they consider prior to purchasing products of SBC Beverages. This was followed by taste, with (40) respondents indicating that they consider taste before they buy products of SBC Beverages.

Also, thirty (30) of the respondents indicated that health and nutritional value was a factor they consider before buying products of SBC Beverages. Twenty-five (25) of the respondents further indicated that they consider accessibility before buying products of SBC Beverages while twenty (20) indicated that they consider quality before buying products of SBC Beverages. Only fifteen (15) of the respondents indicated that they consider packaging before they purchase products of SBC Beverages. It can therefore be inferred from the findings that, price is the predominant factor customers of SBC Beverages consider before purchasing the company's products.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, an overview of the purpose of study, the research objectives and the research methods employed are presented. The chapter also presents the summary of findings, conclusion based on findings, recommendations as well as suggestions for further studies.

The study sought to analyze customers' perception about integrated marketing communication activities at SBC Beverages Limited. The descriptive research design with quantitative research approach was adopted for the study. One hundred and ninety-five (195) respondents were selected through simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as the main data collection instrument for data collection.

Summary

The summary of the key findings of the research are presented alongside the respective specific research objectives. Concerning the research objective which sought to determine customer awareness of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) activities by SBC Beverages and the one that best appeals to them, it was found that customers were aware of advertising as an integrated marketing communication activity. It was also found that customers were aware of personal selling as an integrated marketing communication activity. Likewise, it was found that customers were aware of sales promotion as an integrated marketing communication activity. Additionally, it was found that customers were aware of public relations as an integrated marketing

communication activity. Finally, it was found that advertising was the integrated marketing communication component that best appeals to customers.

Regarding the objective which sought to assess customers' perception of integrated marketing communication (IMC) activities by SBC Beverages, it was found that customers perception of advertising as an integrated marketing communication activity was slightly good. It was also found that customers' perception of personal selling as an integrated marketing activity was slightly good. Furthermore, it was found that customers' perception of sales promotion as an integrated marketing activity was slightly good. Lastly, it was found that customers' perception of public relations as an integrated marketing communication activity was slightly good. Generally, this is an indication that, customers perception of integrated marketing communication is slightly good.

With respect to the objective which sought to assess the effect of integrated marketing communication (IMC) activities on consumer behaviour, it was found that there is a strong positive relationship between personal selling and consumer behaviour and decisions. Similarly, it was found that there is a strong positive relationship between sales promotion and consumer behaviour and decisions. Again, it was found that there is a weak positive relationship between advertising and consumer behaviour and decisions. Finally, it was found that there is medium positive relationship between public relations and consumer behaviour and decisions. In general, it was found that there is a strong positive relationship between integrated marketing communication and consumer behaviour and decisions.

Moreover, considering the objective which sought to assess the effect of integrated marketing communication (IMC) activities on consumer behaviour

and decision, the model summary of the standard multiple regression showed that the model (Public Relations, Advertising, Personal Selling, and Sales Promotion) explains 41.3% per cent of the variance in predicting the dependent variable (Consumer Behaviour and Decisions). The results of the ANOVA showed that a close observation of the Sig. value revealed that the model is statistically significant, in that, the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. Moreover, the findings from the standardized coefficient Beta value showed that consumer buying behaviour and decisions with personal selling, sales promotion and public relations has strongest unique but statistically significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable when all the other variables in the model are controlled for.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that customers of SBC Beverages aware of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations as integrated marketing communication activities. It can also be concluded that among all the components of integrated marketing communication, advertising is the one that best appeals to customers and this could be attributed to the informative, influential and persuasive content advertising conveys. Moreover, it can be concluded that customers perception about integrated marketing communication activities was slightly good, which is an indication that SBC Beverages still has some work to do in so far as integrated marketing communication is concerned.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between integrated marketing communication (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations) and consumer behaviour and decisions,

which means that the more SBC Beverages adopts and implement integrated marketing, the more consumer behaviour and decisions is enhanced. Finally, it can be concluded that personal selling, sales promotion and public relations has strongest unique but statistically significant contribution to explaining the dependent variable when all the other variables in the model are controlled for.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that although customers are aware of the various integrated marketing communication activities, the company need to put more efforts towards increasing the awareness so that more and more people can be influenced by different kinds of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) tools and ultimately help in increasing the sale of product offerings of SBC Beverages. Increasing customers' awareness can be done by conducting customer analysis to find their needs and understand them better so as to tailor the various integrated marketing communication activities to their needs. Alternatively, the company can consider building a range of buyer or consumer persona that will help inform its integrated marketing communication campaigns and activities.

Again, in order to increase customer awareness of integrated marketing, the company can also adopt other integrated marketing communication activities like content marketing and direct marketing to augment the already adopted components. For instance, content marketing will help create and share online material (like blogs, social media, and videos) that will stimulate customer awareness and interest in the product offerings of the company.

The findings of the study revealed that customer perception about integrated marketing communication was slightly good. It therefore behooves

the company, especially the marketing department to pay attention to the various integrated marketing communication components (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations) so as to improve customers' perception. This can be done by adopting multichannel marketing practices. Multichannel marketing practices will not only affect customer perception of integrated marketing communications activities, but also influence customer behaviour. The company can also improve customers' perception of integrated marketing communication activities by designing IMC strategies that connect and appeal to the minds as well as emotions. For instance, the company can establish core operating values like customer care, respect which will serve as a framework for all its integrated marketing communication activities.

In addition, it is recommended that the company engage in constant marketing research (say monthly, quarterly, semi-annually) geared towards understanding consumer behaviour, especially in relation to integrated marketing communication. This marketing research can help the company to collect both qualitative and quantitative regarding present trade drifts, life style of target buyers, external conditions and opportunities, competitive strategies of rival companies to satisfy potential customers. The response from these marketing research can further help the company to adopt the best blend of integrated marketing communication activities that appeals to customers.

The findings from the standard multiple regression prove that the model was statistically significant. This is really a very useful insight to managers of SBC Beverages and other industrial giants, as it shows how important the individual independent variables are to influencing the level of consumer behaviour and decisions. It means management must maintain as well as

continuously find innovative ways to make the independent variables more appealing to their customers as this will enhance their overall purchasing decisions. However, it is advisable for the company to revisit and pay particular attention advertising since it was found to be statistically not significant in predicting consumer behaviour and decisions.

Suggestion for Further Studies

The researcher suggests that a replica study be conducted in a related soft drink and beverage companies like Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Aquafresh, etc. Alternatively, the study could be carried out in unrelated industries like the automobile industry. This will provide the opportunity for the comparison of results. It would be a great contribution for the manufacturing.

The current study resorted to quantitative research methodology to gather information from the respondents (customers). However, if this research will be done by using mixed methodology (questionnaires and interviews) more thought-provoking results could be examine from respondent's perspective. Finally, the current study looked at the customer's perception of integrated marketing activities but future studies can employ mediating effect variables such as brand loyalty.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND SUPPLY CHAIN

MANAGEMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CUSTOMERS

Dear Respondent,

I am a student in the Cape Coast University, pursuing MBA Marketing. As part of my research project, I am conducting a research on “**Analyses of Customer Perception about Integrated Marketing Communication Activities at SBC Beverages Limited**”. You are invited to participate in this study as a consumer of SBC Beverages products (Pepsi, Mirinda, 7up). Your experience and opinions are significant to the research and your involvement is crucial to the success of the study. I can assure you that all information obtained will be held in the strictest confidence and will only be used for research/academic purposes only. Your name will not be included in this research.

INSTRUCTION: Please respond as you deem fit with a tick [] unless otherwise told to specify.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

1. Gender

- a. Male [] b. Female []

2. Age group

- a. Less than 25 years [] b. 25-34 years [] c. 35-44 years []
d. above 45 years []

3. Marital status

- a. Never married [] b. Married [] c. Divorced []

4. Highest level of formal education completed

- a. None [] b. Primary level [] c. Secondary level [] d.
University [] e. Others (please specify)

5. Do you buy products from SBC Beverages?
 - a. Yes [] b. No []
6. How often do you buy products of SBC Beverages?
 - a. All the time [] b. Very Often [] c. Sometimes [] d. Rarely [] e. Never []
7. Which of the following products of SBC Beverages have you bought before?
 - a. Pepsi [] b. 7up [] c. Mirinda Orange [] d. Mirinda Pineapple [] e. Mirinda Fruity [] f. Aqua splash bottled []
8. Annual income/salary
 - a. Less than GH¢ 10000 [] b. GH¢ 10001 - GH¢ 20000 [] c. GH¢ 20001 - GH¢ 30000 [] d. More than GH¢ 30000 []

SECTION B: Integrated Marketing Activities

9. For each of the following statements, please check the response that best expresses the extent to which you agree with that statement. **The ratings range from 1 to 5; where 1= least in agreement, & 5= highest in agreement.**

	ADVERTISEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
A1.	SBC Beverages' TV and newspaper advertisement attracts me deeply.					
A2.	SBC Beverages' advertisements provide clear information regarding the products.					
A3.	Web based marketing of SBC Beverages focuses on creating good networks with customers.					
A4.	SBC Beverages provide different attractive social network advertisement.					

	PERSONAL SELLING					
PS1	I can easily get the products of SBC Beverages without going to the shop.					
PS2	I get access to products within a short time and at my convenience.					
PS3	SBC Beverages sellers maintain a good relationship with me with good behaviour and effective message.					
	SALES PROMOTIONS					
SP1	Sales promotional activities appeal more to me than other IMC activities.					
SP2	There is special value added to products which induces me to buy more during promotions.					
SP3	My perception of the company's products changes positively which influences my decisions to purchase more.					
SP4	SBC's promotions are usually attractive.					
	PUBLIC RELATIONS					
PR1	SBC Beverages maintains an effective public relations marketing.					
PR2	There are different programs organized by SBC Beverages in Ghana or at a location near me.					
PR3	All the marketing strategies of SBC Beverages emphasize on Public relations.					

PR4	SBC Beverages sponsor different social activities (Corporate Social Responsibilities).					
PR5	SBC Beverages have strong channels to increase the public relations.					

10. Which of the following Integrated Marketing activities best appeals to you?

- a. Advertisement [] b. Personal Selling [] c. Sales Promotion [] d. Public Relations []

SECTION C: Customer Perception of IMC activities

11. The following are Integrated Marketing activities of SBC Beverages.

Using a range from Good to Bad, what is your perception of these IMC activities; where 1= Good, 2= Slightly Good, 3=Neither Good nor Bad, 4=Slightly Bad, 5= Bad

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Advertisement					
Personal Selling					
Sales Promotion					
Public Relations					

SECTION D: Customer Buying Behaviour and Decisions

12. For each of the following statements, please check the response that best expresses the extent to which you agree with that statement. **The ratings range from 1 to 5; where 1= least in agreement, & 5= highest in agreement.**

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
DCBD1	I like the way SBC Beverages carries out its promotional activities.					
DCBD2	The promotional activities adopted by SBC Beverages often influences my purchasing decisions					
DCBD3	I am certain about the specific products available for me in SBC Beverages from their marketing communications strategies?					
DCBD4	The good relationship I have with SBC Beverages sales personnel often influences my purchase decisions.					
DCBD5	I prefer SBC Beverages before buying any products as I know the products' information.					
DCBD6	I make many repeat purchases from SBC Beverages as I get the proper information of the product.					
DCBD7	My buying decision could change if I get appropriate information about SBC Beverages.					
DCBD8	CSR activities of SBC Beverages influences my decision to buy more of its products					

DCBD9	I have a positive attitude towards the product offerings of SBC Beverages					
DCBD10	Information received from IMC activities motivates me to buy products offerings of SBC Beverages					

12. What other factors do you consider when purchasing a product/service from SBC Beverages?

a:

b:

c:

d:

e:

THANK YOU.