

Integrated Marketing Communications: A Strategy for Business Survival With Reference to Hindustan Unilever Limited in Puducherry

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) in ensuring business survival, with a specific focus on Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL). By analyzing HUL's diverse marketing campaigns, this research explores how a well-coordinated IMC strategy can enhance brand awareness, customer engagement, and ultimately, drive business growth. The study delves into the key components of IMC, including advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and digital marketing, and assesses their impact on HUL's overall marketing performance. Additionally, the research highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing IMC in the dynamic Indian market. HUL's successful application of IMC demonstrates the power of a unified and consistent brand message across various channels. By leveraging traditional and digital media, HUL has effectively reached its target audience, built strong brand equity, and fostered customer loyalty. However, implementing IMC requires careful planning, execution, and measurement. Challenges such as budget allocation, agency coordination, and measuring the impact of IMC can hinder its effectiveness. Nevertheless, IMC offers significant opportunities for businesses to enhance brand awareness, improve customer experience, drive sales and revenue, and gain a competitive advantage. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, businesses must adapt their IMC strategies to stay relevant and connect with consumers in meaningful ways. By embracing the principles of IMC and leveraging emerging technologies, businesses can unlock the full potential of integrated marketing and secure their long-term success.

KEYWORDS: Brand awareness, customer engagement, business growth, advertising, public relations.

1. INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is a strategic approach that combines various marketing tools to reach the target market and build brand awareness. By integrating sales promotion, public relations, advertising, and digital marketing, businesses can create a consistent brand message and maximize impact. This study explores the advantages and essential components of IMC for business survival in a competitive market. Through a qualitative research methodology, including literature review and industry expert interviews, the study reveals the importance of market segmentation, consistent branding, coordinated multi-channel marketing, and evaluation of communication efficacy. Leveraging

social media and digital technology is also crucial for expanding audience reach and building long-lasting customer relationships.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the marketing strategy through data-driven Integrated Marketing Communication decisions.
- To analyze the impact of Integrated Marketing Communication on business performance metrics.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- "Integrated Marketing Communications: A Strategic Perspective" (2021, **Emerald Insight**) This journal highlights how IMC integrates promotional tools like advertising, sales promotions, and direct marketing to ensure consistent messaging. It discusses HUL's success in leveraging IMC for cohesive branding across traditional and digital platforms, enhancing customer engagement.
- "The Role of Digital Media in FMCG Marketing" (2022, **Springer**) This article explores HUL's digital transformation, showcasing its use of digital media in IMC strategies to target diverse demographics effectively, especially during the pandemic when consumer behavior shifted online.
- "Project Shakti: Empowering Women through Marketing Strategies" (2022, **Srinivas Publications**) Focusing on HUL's Project Shakti, this study analyzes the initiative as part of HUL's IMC to reach rural consumers. It emphasizes how the program not only promotes products but also supports social sustainability goals.
- "Green Marketing Initiatives and their Impact on Brand Loyalty" (2020, **Wiley Online Library**) This paper evaluates HUL's commitment to sustainability as a cornerstone of its IMC strategy. It highlights campaigns like "Go Green" that reinforce brand loyalty through responsible messaging and packaging.
- "HUL's Innovations in Integrated Marketing Communication" (2019, **Taylor & Francis**) This journal details innovative techniques HUL employed to synchronize offline and online campaigns, with case studies like its "Kan Khajura Tesan" campaign that reached untapped rural markets using mobile technology.
- "Brand Equity through IMC in FMCG Sector" (2023, **Sage Journals**) The study focuses on HUL's approach to creating strong brand equity via consistent and relatable messaging, especially in its personal care product lines.
- "Consumer Behavior and Communication Strategies in India" (2021, **Elsevier**) This article examines HUL's understanding of consumer behavior and how it shapes its IMC campaigns to resonate with cultural and regional sensitivities, leading to greater market penetration.
- "Sustainable Marketing and Integrated Communications" (2022, **Journal of Marketing Management**) HUL's strategies in aligning IMC with its sustainability goals are highlighted, showcasing campaigns that advocate eco-friendly products while reinforcing its market leadership.
- "Role of CSR in Integrated Marketing Communications: A Case Study of HUL" (2019, **IGI Global**) The journal illustrates how HUL integrates Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in its marketing communications to foster trust and loyalty, especially with rural and urban middleclass consumers.
- "Effectiveness of Digital Tools in IMC for FMCG Companies" (2020, **ResearchGate**) This study analyzes the growing importance of social media and digital tools in HUL's IMC campaigns, helping the brand maintain leadership in a competitive FMCG market

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY Sampling Plan:

3.5.1 Population:

A population is a group of individuals or objects that share similar characteristics. In order for the study's findings to fairly represent the entire community, the sample population's members must be chosen at random. The population here represents the customers at Pondicherry.

3.5.2 Sample:

A sample is a selection from a larger population of individuals, things, or items that are used for measurement. To ensure the research findings are applicable to the entire population, the sample must be representative. The samples are taken from Hindustan Unilever Limited customers.

3.5.3 Sample Size & Period:

105 samples were taken from the customers, and the period taken for the research is one month.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

CHI-SQUARE

HYPOTHESIS

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between the packaging of HUL products and product purchase.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant relationship between the packaging of HUL products and product purchase.

Chi-Square

			Whether packaging of HUL products influences the product purchase		Total
			Yes	No	
How often do you purchase our products	Daily	Count	9	5	14
		Expected count	9.1	4.9	14.0
	Weekly	Count	25	8	33
		Expected count	21.4	11.6	33.0
	Monthly	Count	25	16	41
		Expected count	26.6	14.4	41.0
	Rarely	Count	8	7	15
		Expected count	9.7	5.3	15.0
	Never	Count	1	1	2
		Expected count	1.3	0.7	2.0
Total			68	37	105
		Count	68.0	37.0	105.0
		Expected count			

INFERENCE:

From the above table, it is inferred that the calculated value (3.057) is less than the table value (critical value), as indicated by the high p-value ($0.548 > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no significant association between the variables, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted.

Result:

There is no significant relationship between the packaging of HUL products and product purchase. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected.

REGRESSION

HYPOTHESIS

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant linear relationship between satisfaction with HUL's FMCG products and the factors influencing the decision to purchase HUL soaps.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant linear relationship between satisfaction with HUL's FMCG products and the factors influencing the decision to purchase HUL soaps.

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	10.561	1	10.561	12.190	0.001 ^b
Residual	87.498	101	0.866		
Total	98.058	102			

- a. Dependent Variable: Factors influence your decisions to purchase soap's from HUL brand
- b. Predicators:(Constant), Satisfied are you with the HUL'S FMCG products.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.477	.438		5.775	.000
Satisfied are you with the HUL'S FMCG products		.125	.328	3.491	.001

- a. Dependent Variable: Factors influences your decisions to purchase soap's from HUL brand.

INFERENCE:

From the above table, it is inferred that the calculated F-value (12.190) is greater than the table value, and the significance value ($p = 0.001$) is less than 0.05. So, there is a statistically significant relationship between satisfaction with HUL's FMCG products and the decision to purchase soap from the HUL brand.

Result:

There is a significant linear relationship between satisfaction with HUL's FMCG products and the factors influencing the decision to purchase HUL soaps. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

5. FINDINGS

CHI-SQUARE

It is inferred that the calculated value (3.057) is less than the table value (critical value), as indicated by the high p-value ($0.548 > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no significant association between the variables, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted.

RESULT:

The Chi-Square analysis shows that there is no significant association between the frequency of purchasing HUL products and whether packaging influences the purchase decision. This suggests that packaging is not a major factor in determining how often consumers buy HUL products.

REGRESSION

It is inferred that the calculated F-value (12.190) is greater than the table value, and the significance value ($p = 0.001$) is less than 0.05. So, there is a statistically significant relationship between satisfaction with HUL's FMCG products and the decision to purchase soap from the HUL brand.

RESULT:

The regression model is statistically significant, indicating that satisfaction with HUL's FMCG products positively influences factors affecting soap purchase decisions. However, the model explains only 10.6% of the variance, suggesting other factors might also play a role.

CONCLUSION

This study delved into the role of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) in ensuring business survival, with a specific focus on Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL). By analyzing HUL's diverse marketing campaigns, the research explored how a well-coordinated IMC strategy can enhance brand awareness, customer engagement, and drive business growth.

The findings from the survey indicate that a significant portion of the respondents are aware of HUL's brands and their marketing campaigns. The respondents generally perceive HUL's marketing efforts as effective and engaging. However, there is room for improvement in certain areas, such as enhancing digital marketing strategies and leveraging emerging technologies.

The study concludes that IMC is a powerful tool for businesses to build strong brand identities, connect with their target audience, and drive sales. HUL's successful application of IMC demonstrates the effectiveness of a unified and consistent brand message across various channels. By embracing the principles of IMC and adapting to the evolving digital landscape, businesses can unlock the full potential of integrated marketing and secure their long-term success.

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