CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the multi case analysis of Integrated Marketing communication channel selection mechanism of Automotive Lubricant Companies in India and the factors that have emerged towards adoption of social media by Automotive Lubricant Companies in India. In the first section the findings of the process have been presented along with summary of major observations. In the second section the factors influencing the selection of social media have been discussed.

The conclusions and recommendations of the study have been discussed later in the chapter.

6.2 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ONE

The findings of the research objective 1 have been represented stage wise and construct wise.

6.2.1 STAGE 1-REVIEW OF THE MARKETING PLAN

In this stage there are five areas which are looked into as per the Larry Percy model. These are (a) Product Description, (b) Market Assessment, (c) Source of Business, (d) Competitive Evaluation, & (e) Marketing Objectives. When the same stage is applied to the integrated marketing communication channel selection process of automotive lubricant companies in India, it has been found that these companies are undergoing describing the product, market assessment and competition evaluation. In this research various dimensions like product features, USP of the product, packet size of the product and price of the product under which the product description is carried out in Automotive Lubricant companies were found. While conducting the case study, the market assessment has been presented with very broad views and specific sections under which these are studied have been seen. The market assessment included preparation of product
category comparison sheet with certain details. These grids are specifically used by Automotive
Lubricant Companies and are similar across industry. The competition evaluation gave very
specific perspective under which the automotive lubricant companies understand what the
competitor used towards marketing communication and understand performance. The case study
gave minutest detail of the media communication vehicles. The basis of evaluation of media
vehicles has been studied explicitly as under;

(a) **Television Advertisement**
   - Viewership
   - Visuals Used
   - Money Spent
   - Endorsee Used
   - Media audience
   - Frequency of the advertisement
   - Channel targeted
   - Geography targeted
   - Advertisement length

(b) **Shutter Paint & Wall Paints**
   - Number of shutters painted
   - Workshops included
   - Quality of paints used
   - Creatives used
   - Paint size of the wall
   - Contract amount per region
   - Contractors employed
   - Colors used
   - Time period of the Campaign
   - Size of the shutter painted
- Geographies targeted
- Media Audience
- Money spent

(c) Newspapers
- Quality of Paper
- Choice of page
- News Agency employed
- Creatives used
- Colors preferred
- Time period of Campaign
- Frequency of the advertisement
- Subscription
- Readership
- Space used (in cms)
- Money spent
- Media audience
- Geographies targeted

(d) Hoardings / Banners & Posters
- Number of banners, posters & hoardings used
- Use of number of Lit & Non-lit boards
- Sizes of posters, banners & hoardings
- Sites of placement of Banners, posters & hoardings
- Money spent
- Media audience
- Geographies targeted

(e) Radio
- Time period of the Campaign
• Channel targeted
• Message dictated
• Frequency of the advertisement
• Time slots used
• Money spent
• Media Audience
• Advertisement Length (in sec)
• Geographies targeted

(f) Sponsorships & Events
• Details of event sponsored
• Tools employed at event
• Time period of campaign
• Media audience
• Geographies targeted
• Money spent

These areas gave an insight about the details that a marketer looks while evaluating the competition. The various constructs that have been found are promotional potential, media customer interaction, virality, customer reach, cost reduction potential, visibility, potential of push & pull, positioning, duration, platform dynamism.

6.2.2 STAGE 2- SELECTING THE TARGET AUDIENCE
The Automotive Lubricant companies in India are classifying the target audience in there different ways which are as follows:

(a) General Classification
(b) Domain Classification
(c) Brand Classification
In the general classifications grids are prepared which are very specific to automotive lubricant companies. In the Domain classification, domain grids are prepared on the basis of products that are being served. In the brand specific classification, promotional potential of different brands within the category are considered and this classification is used for profiling. This profiling is very specific to automotive lubricant companies in India. The research has been able to provide detailed description of classification and profiling.

6.2.3 STAGE 3- DECISION ON POSITIONING ELEMENTS TO BE USED

The Automotive Lubricant companies decide on the positioning elements based on both product benefit and user benefit. The product benefit orientation is specific to emotion, character and attribute of the product. The promotional potential has been accounted for here while looking at the user orientation. The Automotive lubricant companies have nothing different among each other while deciding elements of the positioning.

6.2.4 STAGE 4 – DECISION ON FINAL COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE

Over here the automotive lubricant companies consider brand awareness and brand attitude strategies so that they are in proper synchronization with communication towards their target audience. The need is derived out of product category and promotional potential is considered while the brand awareness is considered. The communication objective is framed on the basis of both product and brand.

6.2.5 STAGE 5 – FINAL DECISION ON SELECTION OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION VEHICLES

In the final selection which is the heart of the question to be answered through this research the study has been able to address this stage in a very detailed manner. The companies first choose primary elements which are same for all the automotive lubricant companies. The first primary element is the communication objective decided by the team. The second element is the volume and sales target of the company for which the marketing communications have to be in place and
a very important factor which is budget that has been sanctioned for executing the marketing communication. The marketer then decided on what he compulsorily needs in his media. These components include opportunities to see and reach. The important elements that are necessary for achieving communication objectives are decided thereafter. Here the Automotive lubricant companies consider frequency needed, time available for message processing and visual content. The sum of all these requirements is termed as cost reduction potential, media platform, and commercial interactivity and communication objectives decided. The last key decision is towards selection of necessary media components that address brand recall, brand recognition, high and low involvements and informational and transactional nature. Finally the decision is made on components like virality, promotional potential, customer reach and duration. And this decision is handed over to the accounts executive in the form of a memo.

6.3 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2

After conducting the factor analysis a total of 10 factors have been found that contribute towards selection of social media. These factors are:

1. Promotional Potential
2. Customer reach
3. Cost reduction potential
4. Platform dynamism
5. Potential of Societal Marketing Intelligence
6. Information dissemination
7. Media Customer Interaction
8. Accessibility
9. Potential of Push and Pull Communication
10. Media Platform commercial Interactivity

6.3.1 DETAILED DISCUSSION ON FACTORS

(A) FACTOR 1- PROMOTIONAL POTENTIAL
The promotional potential reflects what is the capability of medium to showcase its potential towards marketing communications. This factor includes 6 variables which are as follows:

- Availability of a number of promotional avenues on the same platform
- Potential of emotional reach for company’s product and services
- Ability to build positive brand association
- Scope of word of mouth marketing
- Ability to increase brand awareness
- Potential platform of product positioning

All these factors highlight the promotional capabilities and elements which are present in social media as a marketing communication vehicle which a company might employ for its marketing communication.

(B) FACTOR 2- CUSTOMER REACH

This factor has the potential of being in the hands of consumers for purposes like seeking suggestions, building loyalty and above all to reach a large number of populations at the same time. This factor includes four variables which are:

- Scope of building customer loyalty
- Scope of seeking suggestion from customer
- Scope of immediate response
- Scope of reaching diversity of consumers over one platform

(C) FACTOR 3- COST REDUCTION POTENTIAL

Every company wants to achieve the outcome of its marketing activities at a minimum cost possible. A marketer will look at the best possible reduction in the costs related to the marketing activities therefore even when it is a marketing communication vehicle there are associated costs
which the company wants to bring down. The three variables accounting for this particular factor are:

- Potential of eliminating shelf space cost
- Excluding of middle party cost
- Ability to reduce marketing cost

(D) FACTOR 4- PLATFORM DYNAMISM

Platform dynamism means the number of ways and types in which a platform can be used for multiple purposes. Any media vehicle should offer multi utility for an effective marketing communication. The four factors accounting to platform dynamism are:

- Feature of being an easy tool of CRM
- Potential of incorporating greater degree of creativity
- Potential platform of e-commerce
- Potential of incorporating entertainment into marketing communication messages

(E) FACTOR 5- POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL MARKETING INTELLIGENCE

This means that social media not just performs a vehicle to communicate with the market but it also has the potential of gathering some more information which is relevant for the company as it pertains to the market. The two variables that account here are:

- Potential of gathering information on marketing intelligence
- Potential platform of Societal Marketing

(F) FACTOR 6- RATE OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Social media can be used at any point of time irrespective of any campaign limitations. One can easily post the content over social media as per their own convenience of time. On the other hand
the rate by which the information spreads across this platform is indeed very high therefore the two variables that are considered here are:

- feature of being time independent
- High speed of information dissemination

(G) FACTOR 7- MEDIA CUSTOMER INTERACTION

The customers definitely have suggestions and reviews for the products but it is not possible for them to communicate with the help of television or radio as a medium to provide reviews. Therefore social media gives this opportunity to the company to gather reviews and rankings for their product and also spread relevant information. The variables that contribute here are:

- Scope of gathering review and product rankings
- Potential of spreading awareness

(H) FACTOR 8- ACCESSIBILITY

Social Media is one platform which can be used by anyone without any third party intervention. It is not only a platform that gives provision to share comments but also provides video chat facilities. The variables considered here are:

- Feature of being an open source
- A Platform for chats and video conference

(I) FACTOR 9- POTENTIAL OF PULL & PULL COMMUNICATION

The push and pull methods are very relevant for marketers to promote their products and generate sales revenue. This also helps them to understand how consumer behaves in a particular market. Social Media successfully caters to both these elements. The two contributory variables here are:
• Effective platform for push & pull online communications
• Potential to analyze buying role of consumers

(J) FACTOR 10 - MEDIA PLATFORM COMMERCIAL INTERACTIVITY

The commercial interactivity through a platform means how well a marketing communication vehicle can contribute to sales and also encourage and motivate people to buy the targeted product or services. The two contributing variables here are:

• Scope of providing order forms
• Platform for offering discount to consumers

6.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO VARIOUS STAGES IN THE CHANNEL SELECTION PROCESS

As seen above 10 factors have emerged out from the analysis of the data collected. When these factors were studies carefully the appearance of these factors has been seen visible in the process also. In the stage 1 which is the review of the marketing plan it is seen that while evaluating competition factor 1 - promotional potential, factor 7 - media customer interaction, factor 2 - customer reach, factor 3 - cost reduction potential, factor 9 - potential of push and pull communication, have been seen contributing in this stage. In the stage 2 while selecting the target audience promotional potential is seen to be taken into account while preparing target audience report.

In the stage 3, determining the best positioning factor 1 – promotional potential and factor 2 - customer reach have been seen contributing while making decision on positioning elements. In the stage 4, deciding the communication objective, factor 1 – promotional potential has been considered while developing statement for communication. In the last stage 5 which is deciding the final media vehicle factor 1, promotional potential, factor 2-customer reach, factor 3 –cost reduction potential and factor 4 – media platform commercial interactivity have contributed
while deciding on final media vehicle selection. Therefore with the above description it is seen that the afore mentioned factors have contributed in one or more stages of final media selection. This has been expressed diagrammatically in the figure 6.1 as shown below.
FIGURE 6.1: STAGE WISE AND STEP WISE CONTRIBUTION OF FACTORS
6.5 FACTORS PECULIAR TO SOCIAL MEDIA SELECTION

Although there are 10 specific factors that are influencing the selection of Social Media as a marketing communication vehicle but there is also a need to look at particular factors that contribute to the selection of social media activities. Out of the 10 factors four factors emerged out to be very specific to be considered while choosing social media as one of the marketing communication vehicles. These factors are:

1. Factor no 4 – Platform dynamism
2. Factor no 5- Potential of Societal marketing intelligence
3. Factor no 6- Rate of Information dissemination
4. Factor no 8- Accessibility

These 4 are the determinants of inclusion of social media into integrated marketing communications apart from the factors used for traditional selection. This implies that apart from the benefits including what traditional mediums provide, social media along with those benefits also extend basket of these four benefits.
6.5.1 REVISITING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the literature review the theoretical premise adopted for integrated marketing communication channel selection mechanism was discussed. Initial conceptual constructs and sub constructs are discussed in literature review. This section presents the actual conceptual process by incorporating the findings of the research for integrated marketing communication channel selection mechanism of automotive lubricant companies in India.
(A) INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION CHANNEL SELECTION PROCESS

As shown in the table below earlier literature discussed six stages of Larry Percy model which forms the theoretical premise for integrated marketing communication channel selection mechanism followed by automotive lubricant companies in India. These stages were expected to be found in the process of integrated marketing communication channel selection mechanism of automotive lubricant companies in India. Six stages were found from the theory while five relevant stages have been found from the empirical data in this research study which includes the new dimensions under which the processes were carried out. ALCs do not follow the third stage of Larry Percy Model as shown in the figure below.
The dimensions are in the form of relevant factors pertaining to specifically automotive lubricant companies in India. Further this research uncovered the categories within the stages that are related to integrated marketing communication channel selection of automotive lubricant companies in India in detail. Even though almost all of the categories and sub categories
emerged out of empirical data are all the same for all the companies, the extent of which the dimensions are followed is also the same within all these companies. It is clearly evident from the empirical findings that the lubricant companies have single process in common and are following a five stage process as depicted in the figure given below.

**FIGURE 6.4: CHANNEL SELECTION PROCESS OF ALC’s IN INDIA**
As shown in the previous figure, earlier literature on integrated marketing communication process covers six stages which include;

Stage 1- Review of the marketing plan in terms of key areas of issue

Stage 2- Selection the target audience

Stage 3 – understanding the target audience decision making

Stage 4 – Determining the best positioning

Stage 5 – Developing a communication strategy

Stage 6- Setting a media strategy

The key findings based on empirical data analysis show that the automotive lubricant companies follow a five stage process which is as follows;

Stage 1- Review of the marketing plan in terms of key areas of issue

Stage 2- Selection the target audience

Stage 3 – Understanding the target audience decision making

Stage 4 – Developing a communication strategy

Stage 5- Setting a media strategy

It is clearly evident that the automotive lubricant companies have five stage model instead of six. As shown in the previous figure, earlier literature identified that in stage one review of the marketing plan in terms of key areas of issues include product description, market assessment, source of business & marketing objectives. In the purview of automotive lubricant companies in India the lube companies are using product description, market assessment & competition evaluation.
As shown in the previous figure, earlier literature on stage 2, which is selecting the target audience, included the target audience grouping in terms of users and non-users. The second part of the same stage was to group the target audience in terms of loyalty and also consider cost implications followed by profiling the target audience and further linking the marketing strategy and communication strategy. In case of automotive lubricant companies the profiling of the target audience is done on the basis of general domain and brand and detailed grids are also made for the same.

As shown earlier in figure, the stage 3 is understanding the target audience decision making where the roles of the participants are defined in terms of initiators, influencers, deciders, purchaser and user and further a target audience decision making grid is developed that describes the time of stage and its nature of occurrence. In case of automotive lubricant companies this stage is not followed.

As discussed earlier the stage 4 of the model is determining the best positioning. In this stage positioning is defined in terms of consumer benefits, user benefits or products benefits. The selection of appropriate benefits is done and the job of the marketer is to use correct benefit focus and convert positive motivation to but a product into an emotion based message. The automotive lubricant companies in India follow defining the positioning and looking for the appropriate benefits.

As seen before in figure, the stage 5 is the development of communication strategy where the communication objectives are set on the basis of category need, brand awareness, brand attitude and brand purchase intention. Decision on brand awareness is made in terms of recognition and recall. The decision on brand attitude strategy is based on low involvement, high involvement, informational and transformational and lastly decision on promotional strategies i.e. use of sales promotion on the basis of immediate sales or delayed sales is looked into. For automotive lubricant companies the communication strategies is developed on the basis of category need,
brand awareness, brand attitude and brand purchase intention and decision on brand awareness is made in terms of recognition and recall. The decision on brand attitude strategy is based on low involvement, high involvement, informational and transformational.

As seen earlier, the last stage is setting a media strategy where the analysis of media is done on the basis of reach, frequency, opportunities to see and media ratings are considered on essential media selection characteristics and thereafter brand awareness strategies are considered. The outcome of the entire strategy is the final decision on selecting media considering the before mentioned requisites. This stage is followed as it is in case of automotive lubricant companies in India.

This study made a contribution to the existing theory as to how the integrated marketing communication channel selection process is executed in the automotive lubricant companies in India. The study unveiled unique grids and formats that are used by marketers of automotive lubricant companies while executing integrated marketing communication process and the stages that they pass through various people involved in the process is also known.

An inference can be made that the company must dedicate time and effort to review the process in order to incorporate the stages that they are not following right now.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Determinants of inclusion of social media into integrated marketing communication apart from the factors used for traditional selection are; Potential of societal marketing intelligence, platform dynamism, accessibility and rate of information dissemination. This implies that apart from the benefits including what traditional media provides, social media along with those benefits also extends additional four new benefits. The strategic fit of social media in the integrated marketing communication channel selection mechanism of the automotive lubricant companies in India is
largely attributed to these four new constructs. The academic significance of this research is to enhance and deepen the body of knowledge on social media inclusion in the integrated marketing communication of the companies and provide research avenues for the future.

Marketers must leverage new benefits to allow for fuller implementation of social media initiatives beyond pure ‘short term promotion’ or sale promotion efforts. The unique characteristics of SM must be accounted for, from the strategic planning at the outset, to the creation of content for SM platform use.

6.6.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Social Media is the fastest growing interest area in marketing journals, with nearly 200 articles published in the last two years alone. The research must move beyond use and usage, tools and tactics, and more focus must be given to questioning where SM fits into the IMC mix. The research conducted here has illuminated some opportunities for further study of SM, namely within the context of IMC as a concept, and as a process in and of itself. Although this study narrows the SM implementation, there are still gaps existing between the current research and what organizations are doing in practice.
6.7 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

The arrival of SM in the IMC mix creates further developmental issues for research in this field. Although this exploratory study was limited to a narrow band of participants, their relative homogeneity allowed for a holistic look at how they execute IMC process. The study would have benefitted greatly had there been time for more in-depth questioning of the participants, a quantitative follow up and scope to report the findings in a more conclusive and exhaustive manner perhaps incorporating a grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis. Despite these limitations, the strengths of the methodology were gaining rich personal insights from the marketers via in-depth interviewing. The challenges and successes experienced by the participants were appropriately captured as a result of the interviews and methodological approach.

General limitations experienced were: gaining access to the appropriate participants, the small sample size and limited time for data collection and analysis. The participants themselves were generous with their information, but there was an inherent conflict of interest, in that most marketers interviewed were assured anonymity and therefore some information could not be shared due to the public nature of the brand’s profiles. It could be said that had the data been more anonymously collected, via survey for example, that the participants might have been more inclined to give more detail in their answers in terms of results, successes and failures.

6.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This section summarizes the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this research study. The contribution of this research to theory and process are discussed in detail. First, the theoretical framework is revisited covering all qualitative associative networks for integrated marketing communication channel selection process. Next emergent factors of influencers of social media have been discussed where factors specifically influencing selection of social media have been seen.