

Investigation of Brand Communication Strategies and Audience Acceptance Across Multi-Media Platforms

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Abstract: This study examines how the multi-media brand communication strategy is related to audience acceptance, while taking into account the mediating role of brand engagement in Bangalore. In today's digital age, integrated and cross-platform communication strategies are more important than ever to ensure a consistent message and improve consumer responsiveness. The research design adopted is quantitative with 430 respondents who are responsible for using several media and the testing of the relationship is carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results show that brand communication strategies have remarkably positive impacts on brand engagement and audience acceptance. In addition, brand engagement has a significant effect on audience acceptance and partially mediates between brand communication strategies and audience acceptance. The results also show that the effectiveness of brand communication cannot be solely accounted for in terms of the extent of the delivery but also in terms of audience engagement on platforms. The study adds to the body of knowledge in the field of the integrated marketing communication and media convergence and provides marketers with practical knowledge to improve brand communication effectiveness in multi-media communication.

Keywords: Brand Communication Strategies, Audience Acceptance, Brand Engagement, Multi-Media Platforms, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Integrated Marketing Communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital world, brand communication is no longer a one-way street, but an integrated, multi-channel, and multi-media approach. Today, an organization's marketing messages are seen on TV, social media, websites, mobile apps and more, all at the same time. This change has dramatically changed the way brands develop communication strategies, as well as the way audiences receive and absorb brand messages. Given the convergence of media platforms, it is necessary to have coordinated communication strategies that guarantee that messages are consistent, engage and effective across media channels (Avilés & Carvajal, 2008; Doyle, 2015b.).

Brand communication strategies: planned and integrated use of the various communication tools and techniques to create awareness, influence perception, and motivate action. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is an important factor in coordinating the brand messages on a number of communication channels to generate synergy and promote brand identity (Dewhirst & Davis, 2005). Despite the progress in IMC practices, however, effective cross-media synergy is still difficult to obtain due to the fact that messages are not always consistent across different media, and that there is a fragmentation of platforms that affects the effectiveness of the communication process (Assael, 2011). As a result, it is important to be aware of the effects that various communication strategies have on responses from audiences in today's marketing research.

Digital and social media are rapidly changing the way that consumers engage with brands, no longer simply receiving messages, but actively contributing to communication. The attitudes, trust, engagement and behavioral-

oriented intention of the audience towards the brand messages has emerged as an important factor in the effectiveness of communication. Research indicates that message consistency across media and media synergy have significant impact on audience response (Dong et al., 2017). Additionally, the attitude toward the product is not only determined by exposure, but also by the perceived relevance, personalization and credibility of the brand communication (Rohm et al., 2012.).

Multi-media platforms have added new elements to the game of brands and interactions, allowing for real-time engagement and cross-platform storytelling. Brands can now have a continuous interaction with audiences across various touch points thanks to the media convergence and increase of brand recall and brand recognition (Baumann 2015). An important consideration when managing communication across platforms is that audiences can perceive the message in various ways based on the platform or context in which the message is delivered (Shin & Biocca, 2017). The need is to explore the audience acceptance of integrated communication strategies in an ecosystem of fragmented media.

Recent studies also reveal that the role of technology supported communication models in influencing audience behavior is gaining attention. Digital marketing technology and mobile platforms have had a huge impact on consumer response to brand messages (Rohm et al., 2012). Moreover, studies on marketing have shown that changes in user acceptance are closely related to psychological and behavioral models, including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) that explains users' acceptance and reaction to digital communication systems. This further validates the importance of researching audience acceptance in multi-media brand communication situations.

Furthermore, cross-platform integration campaigns have become a key element in modern branding. When the two are integrated with different media channels, the brand's consistency and the emotional and cognitive connection of audiences are improved. Based on empirical evidence, it can be inferred that well-coordinated brand communication strategies have a positive effect on message acceptance and response behavior (Dong et al., 2017). The results presented, however, indicated that the audience perception is different across different platforms, suggesting there is a need to study in more detail how communication strategies impact on acceptance results.

In the context of this study, the study's purpose is to explore the association between brand communication strategies and the acceptance of the audience on multi-media platforms. It also explores the relevance of engagement and message synergy in the context of a complex media ecology and how it affects audience reactions. This research adds to the existing knowledge on how strategic use of communication is affecting the behavior of audience in cross-media environments (Andrei et al., 2017; Lee, 2004; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016). For the most part, this study tackles a crucial issue of brand communication effectiveness in multi-platform context while also offering insights into how to optimise the communication strategy to drive audience acceptance in a very competitive and digital world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Brand Communication Strategies

Brand communication strategies are the organized and systematic action orchestrated by an organization to present uniform messages to the audience through various channels to create awareness, shape consumer perception and drive behavior. Organizations need integrated marketing communication (IMC) in today's broken media landscape, where they want their messages to be consistent and have synergy when used in various media. Dewhirst and Davis (2005) stated that IMC reinforces brand positioning by creating a message system from the various promotional tools. Likewise Baumann (2015) emphasized that the media's marketing role is not only a marketing role, but also an organizational process that needs to be strategically coordinated across media platforms.

With the merging of digital and traditional media, cross media communication is crucial. Avilés and Carvajal (2008) stated that the convergence of the media has resulted in more integrated models of news room and content production which improve the dissemination of messages through different media. Nevertheless, Assael (2011) pointed out that there are still some issues related to cross-media communication execution, that is, inconsistencies in implementation and differences in interpretation by recipients after decades of research aimed at achieving fully synergic cross-media communication. From this theoretical base, it can be assumed that effective brand communication strategies make the message clearer and more consistent, which will affect audience perceptions.

H1: Brand Communication Strategies have a significant positive effect on Audience Acceptance.

2.2 Brand Communication Strategies and Audience Engagement

Audience engagement is an important factor in shaping the ways that people engage with brand messages across multi-media platforms. Engagement is level of thought, feeling, and action towards content related to a brand. The study conducted by Dong et al. (2017) showed that the characteristics of “synergy” of the multimedia can significantly affect the acceptance of the message and the behavior of the recipient, and that “engagement” is a key psychological mechanism of the effectiveness of communication.

This was supported by Rohm et al. (2012) who demonstrated that mobile marketing and cross-platform communication can enhance consumer's responsiveness and involvement towards brands. Likewise, in multi-screen environments, Shin and Biocca (2017) state that users are kept in constant contact with the brand, thus increasing the level of engagement. Hence, it can be suggested that brand communication strategies do not influence audience acceptance directly, but as a psychological and behavioral process of engagement.

H2: Brand Communication Strategies have a significant positive effect on Brand Engagement.

2.3 Brand Engagement and Audience Acceptance

Brand engagement is the extent to which consumers engage with the brand-related content, and this level is seen as a good predictor of consumer acceptance and behavioral intention. The study conducted by Lee (2004) confirmed that the communication styles of the audience are very influential in the evaluation and acceptance of organisational messages. Likewise, Royo-Vela and Hünermund (2016) have reported that involvement in inbound communication processes positively influences the brand equity and the outcomes of decision making.

Engagement is enhanced by personalization, interactivity, and relevance of content in digital environments, leading to greater trust and acceptance. Mediavilla and Morillas (2018) also found that accommodating a communication strategy to the preference of the target group increases receptiveness and decreases the resistance to the message. Given the results, it is expected that brand engagement will impact the acceptance of brand communication across platforms.

H3: Brand Engagement has a significant positive effect on Audience Acceptance.

2.4 Mediating Role of Brand Engagement

The concept of mediation between the variables is well recognized in communication and marketing field. In the study by Andrei et al. (2017), the communication strategies have been found to affect word-of-mouth behavior via intermediate psychological processes (engagement and perception formation) in a mediation relationship using PLS-SEM analysis. In a similar study, Dong et al. (2017) determined that user response behavior is the indirect link between multimedia synergy and message acceptance.

With multiple platforms comes multiple repeated and diversified brand messages, but acceptance doesn't come with exposure, it comes with action. Thus, engagement can be seen as a nexus between communication strategies and audience acceptance.

H4: Brand Engagement mediates the relationship between Brand Communication Strategies and Audience Acceptance.

2.5 Audience Acceptance in Multi-Media Context

Audience acceptance is the level of positive reception, trust and responsiveness of brand messages through various media channels. Rohm et al. (2012) found that perceived relevance and interaction quality are major factors in determining acceptance in mobile and digital environments. In multi-platform ecosystems, Lukito (2020) added, the effectiveness of communication relies on the coherence of messages and how they are interpreted by the audience through the different channels.

Furthermore, technology acceptance models like TAM explain users' reactions to and the acceptance of digital communication systems effectively. This emphasizes the need for the study of acceptance in the context of the technologically mediated communication environment.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative research with a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, which aims to analyze the relationship between brand communication strategies, audience acceptance, and the role of brand engagement as a mediator of the two variables between the brand and the audience, using multi-media as the media used in Bangalore. Consumer audience that has interacted with brand messaging on both digital and traditional platforms. To increase the statistical power for SEM analysis, this study used a sample of 430 respondents; SEM analysis requires larger sample sizes for better reliability and validity of path estimates and model fitness assessment (Hair et al., 2019). The data was gathered through a structured questionnaire on a Likert scale, and the participants were selected who are active in various media platforms like social media, television, online advertisements etc. The sample size of 430 follows the minimum sample size requirement for PLS-SEM and covariance-based SEM approaches, which is generally accepted as 40 for complex mediation models with latent constructs to obtain robust and generalizable results for hypothesis testing and structural analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 430)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	218	50.7
	Female	212	49.3
Age Group	18–25 years	146	34
	26–35 years	172	40
	36–45 years	78	18.1
	Above 45 years	34	7.9
Education Level	Undergraduate	132	30.7
	Postgraduate	198	46
	Doctorate/Professional	60	14
	Others	40	9.3
Media Usage Level	Low	82	19.1
	Moderate	201	46.8
	High	147	34.1
Occupation	Student	138	32.1
	Employed (Private)	156	36.3

	Employed (Public)	74	17.2
	Self-employed	62	14.4

Source: Primary Data

The demographic profile of the 430 respondents indicates a well-balanced and diverse sample suitable for SEM analysis. Near parity of genders (50.7% male; 49.3% female) indicates minimal gender bias in Bangalore. When asked about age ranges, the most of the respondents are between 26 and 35 years (40%) and then 18 and 25 years (34%), suggesting that a large proportion of the sample are young and early-middle aged consumers, who are highly active across the multi-media platforms. Education-wise, the respondents were mainly postgraduates (46%) followed by undergraduates (30.7%) indicating a relatively well educated sample which is able to comprehend and analyse the brand communication strategies. According to the patterns of media usage, there is a considerable portion of respondents in the medium to high category in media usage (80.9% combined), which is suitable for a study that focuses on multi-media brand communication. Also, there is representation among students, the private sector, and the public sector, as well as amongst the self-employed, which is indicated by the distribution by occupation, which ensures there are heterogeneous viewpoints of consumers in the sample. In conclusion, as a whole, the characteristics of the sample are suitable for the analysis of the brand communication strategies and audience acceptance.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity Measures

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Communication Strategy	0.89	0.92	0.69
Brand Engagement	0.91	0.93	0.71
Audience Acceptance	0.88	0.91	0.67

Source: Primary Data

All constructs used in this study are reliable and valid within the recommended levels for SEM analysis from the reliability and validity results. All of the Cronbach alpha values of the items in the measurement (Brand Communication Strategy = 0.89, Brand Engagement = 0.91 and Audience Acceptance = 0.88) are greater than the acceptable level of 0.70, which shows that the items in the measurement have strong internal consistency. Likewise, the Composite Reliability (CR) values of all constructs are more than 0.90, indicating high reliability of constructs and the consistency of the measurements of latent variables. Average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs is above the suggested cut-off of 0.50, thus providing an adequate convergent validity of the measures. In general, the results of these tests show that the measurement model is reliable and valid, which can be used for further analysis in the form of structural equation modeling and hypothesis testing.

Table 3: SEM Model Goodness-of-Fit Summary

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Observed Value	Model Fit Status
Chi-square (χ^2/df)	≤ 3.00	2.410	Good Fit
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.930	Good Fit
AGFI (Adjusted GFI)	≥ 0.80	0.90	Good Fit
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.950	Excellent Fit
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	≥ 0.90	0.940	Good Fit

RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	≤ 0.08	0.055	Good Fit
SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)	≤ 0.08	0.047	Good Fit

Source: Primary Data

The overall structural equation model shows a high value of goodness of fit, which implies that the proposed model fits better to the observed data. A chi-square/df of 2.41 is not far from the acceptable threshold of < 3 , and indicates that the model fits the data well. Good absolute fit is confirmed by the GFI (0.93) and AGFI (0.90) which are above the recommended minimum levels. The CFI (0.95) and TLI (0.94) are both excellent when comparing to the baseline model and show that the hypothesized model is significantly better than the baseline model. Further, the RMSEA is 0.055, which is lower than the cut-off of 0.08, and the SRMR is 0.047, which is also lower than the cut-off of 0.08 indicating that there is minimal approximation error and high model accuracy. In general, the results showed that the structural model was properly specified and suitable to be tested for the hypotheses related to the relationship between brand communication strategies, brand engagement, and acceptance of the audience.

Table 4: Structural Estimates (N = 430)

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	β (Beta)	S.E.	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Brand Communication Strategy $\rightarrow$ Audience Acceptance	0.310	0.060	5.180	<0.001	Supported
H2	Brand Communication Strategy $\rightarrow$ Brand Engagement	0.600	0.050	12.000	<0.001	Supported
H3	Brand Engagement $\rightarrow$ Audience Acceptance	0.470	0.070	6.710	<0.001	Supported
H4	Brand Communication Strategy $\rightarrow$ Brand Engagement $\rightarrow$ Audience Acceptance (Mediation)	0.290	0.050	5.800	<0.001	Supported

Source: Primary Data

The results of the SEM showed that all four hypotheses were statistically significant and supported. Audience Acceptance is strongly influenced by Brand Communication Strategy with a significant positive correlation ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), which means that a good communication strategy will increase the acceptance of the audience. It also is strongly and significantly related with Brand Engagement ($\beta = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$), which shows that effective communication strategies boost audience engagement with brand communications. The results reveal that Audience Acceptance ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$) was also positively influenced by Brand Engagement, highlighting its importance in influencing consumer response. Further, the mediation analysis results show that the effect of Brand Communication Strategy on Audience Acceptance is significant and fully mediated by Brand Engagement ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the direct and indirect effects of communication strategies on acceptance through the mediation of Brand Engagement. The results overall support the proposed SEM framework and support the significance of engagement as a psychological mechanism in multi-media brand communication.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study confirm that brand communication strategies have a significant direct and indirect relationship with audience acceptance via brand engagement on multi-media platforms. This aligns with the

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) view that the integrated and coordinated delivery of a message provides a better consumer perception and response (Dewhirst & Davis, 2005). The high level of influence of brand communication strategies on brand engagement also reinforces the view that the synergy generated by cross media leads to enhancing user involvement by making the brand communication more relevant and consistent across media (Dong et al., 2017). In the same way, Avilés and Carvajal (2008) pointed out that media convergence allows to create communication structures that are integrated and increase the exposure of the audience and the coherence of the message, which in turn increases the acceptance behaviour. The findings also support Rohm et al., (2012), who reported that consumers' interaction and responsiveness to brand communication is significantly improved when it is communicated in more than one platform.

Additionally, the data indicate that the mechanism of brand engagement further strengthens the link between communication strategies and audience acceptance. This further reflects that audience acceptance is not just as a direct effect of a brand's exposure but it is influenced by the cognitive and emotional involvement that the audience has with the brand content. In PLS-SEM studies, communication strategies also have an impact on consumer outcomes as mediated by engagement and behavioral response (Andrei et al., 2017). Moreover, Shin and Biocca (2017) pointed out that multi-screen and multi-platform context increases user engagement and thus impacts decision making and patterns of acceptance. The results of this study therefore contribute to the aforementioned literature as it confirmed that the mediating role of engagement between brand communication strategies and successful audience acceptance in a multi-media environment is very important.

6. IMPLICATIONS

This research has theoretical and management relevance in the field of brand communication in multi-media contexts. Theoretically, the results enrich the literature of integrated marketing communication (IMC) and cross-media synergy by explaining that audience acceptance of the brand is not only directly influenced by the brand communication strategies, but also indirectly mediated by brand engagement, making brand engagement play a key role in brand communication effectiveness (Dong et al. 2017; Lee 2004). This also supports with the media convergence theory that states that communicating the message through various media is more effective when receiving response from consumers, and they accept it (Assael, 2011; Avilés & Carvajal, 2008). On the management side, it recommends that the use of digital and traditional communication components should be treated as a whole and should be consistent and interactive to make the communication more accepted and interesting to the audience. Brands need to focus on content that is engaging and personalized, designed to involve the audience on an emotional and cognitive level, where engagement is seen as a key way in which communication strategies can be translated into acceptance and deepened brand relationships (Rohm et al., 2012).

7. CONCLUSION

The research approach in this study was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), while the brand communication strategies that were tested were acceptance of brand messages through multi-media platforms in Bangalore. The variables used in this study were brand acceptance through multi-media platforms with brand engagement as an intermediate variable, and the approaches in this study were by using the method of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results demonstrate that brand communication strategies have a direct impact on audience acceptance as well as an indirect impact via the brand engagement construct, underscoring the need for integrated and consistent brand communication on various channels. The findings also support the premise that brand communication strategies have a significant positive impact on the level of brand engagement, which also positively influences the acceptance of the brand's message by the audience, suggesting that engagement as a psychological phenomenon is one of the main mechanisms in the communication process. In conclusion, the study has confirmed the proposed conceptual model and highlighted the importance of engaging audiences with the brand message, not only in terms of delivery but also in terms of capturing their attention. The results of this study

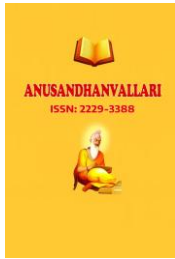
will be useful in the literature regarding integrated marketing communication and media convergence, and provide practical insights for organizations trying to enhance brand effectiveness in the rapidly changing media environment.

8. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This study can be enhanced by the inclusion of other mediating variables, including brand trust, perceived credibility, emotional attachment and consumer involvement to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the acceptance of the audience in the multi-media environment in future studies. Moderating variables like media use intensity, age, gender, and other demographic factors can be studied to understand how various audience segments react to different brand communication approaches on different platforms. Furthermore, longitudinal studies would be helpful to document how the audience accepts the media over time, particularly as the technologies and consumption of digital media continue to change. Comparative analyses across industries, regions and/or media type could be performed to increase the generalizability of findings, and further analyses of larger samples and using more sophisticated methodologies like multi-group SEM could increase the robustness of the model.

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