



THE INFLUENCE OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION ON BRAND PREFERENCE: THE CASE OF COCA-COLA ETHIOPIA

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**“The influence of integrated marketing
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MA degree

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DECLARATION

I, Wasihun seid, hereby declared that this thesis titled the influence of integrated marketing communication on brand preference in case of Coca-Cola Ethiopia is my original work. I have carried out the present study independently with the guidance and support of the research advisor, Tewodros Mesfin (PHD). any other source used there in this study have been duly acknowledged. moreover, this study has not been submitted for the award of any degree or other program in this or other university.

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research was to understand the influence of integrated marketing communication on brand preference in case of Coca-Cola in Ethiopia. Five elements of integrated marketing communication as determinants of brand preference: advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, publicity and public relation have been kept in mind while doing this research. The study used both qualitative and quantitative techniques in which 385 respondents from Addis Ababa were included. In this study, structured questionnaire for consumers of Coca-Cola were identified through simple random sampling. The researcher used person correlation and regression analysis to analyze the data. The result of the study shows that integrated marketing communication has a favorable influence on brand preference of Coca-cola since it allows customers to have awareness about the brand and built a positive attitude as well.

Based on the findings the major recommendations are: Coca-cola need to analyze the changing preferences of consumers and act as per this change while formulating and implementing IMC practices, Coca-Cola's IMC practices should be research based and advertising has to be use both national and mother tang language of nationalities in order to advertise the products through the most potent media and by credible sources.

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LIST OF ABBRVATIONS

BA-Brand Awareness

BP-Brand Preference

IMC-Integrated Marketing Communication

CHAPTER ONE

1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Dall'Olmo Riley (2009), the American Marketing Association defines brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.

According to Philip Kotler/Gary Armstrong (2008) brand is defined as a "name, term, sign symbol (or a combination of these) that identifies the maker or seller of the product".

Thus, brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors.

According to Keller (2003:3), the key to creating a brand is to be able to choose a name, logo, symbol, package design or other attributes that identify a product and distinguish it from others. The different elements of a brand that identify and differentiate it can be called brand elements.

Consumers may evaluate the identical product differently depending on how it is branded. They learn about brands through past experiences with the product and its marketing program, finding out which brands satisfy their needs and which do not.

Chernatony and McDonald 1998 and Ghodeswar (2008) define brand as an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique added values which match their needs most closely Hence companies may employ different marketing strategies for their brand to be successful and preferred by consumers other than competitor's brands.

The notion of preference has been considered in different disciplines such as economists, psychologists, sociology. However, there is no commonly agreed definition of preference among these disciplines. For example, economists believe that preferences are exogenous, stable, and known with adequate precision and are revealed through choice behavior. The economic view of preference had been criticized for assuming preferences are stable and endogenous. An individual's preferences are not stable and can be endogenous or exogenous.

In marketing literature, the word preference means the desirability or choice of an alternative. Preferences are above all behavioral tendencies (Zajonc and Markus, 1982). Brand preference is defined variously as the consumer's predispositions toward a brand that varies depending on the salient beliefs that are activated at a given time; the consumer biasness toward a certain brand; the extent to which a consumer favors one brand over another.

For this study, a working definition for brand preference is offered: "the biased behavioral tendencies reflecting the consumer's predisposition toward a brand". Moreover, there is difference between brand preference and brand loyalty. Brand preference represents the attitudinal brand loyalty excluding the action of repeat purchasing; the brand-oriented attitudinal loyalty. Brand preference is closely related to brand choice that can facilitate consumer decision making and activate brand purchase. Knowing the pattern of consumer preferences across the population is a critical input for designing and developing innovative marketing strategies, among these marketing strategies Integrated marketing communication is the one and the major.

Marketing communication has become an integral part of the social and economic system everywhere in the world. A producer believes, Consumers rely on the information from marketing communication to make wise purchase decisions by preferring a specific brand. Businesses, ranging from multinational corporations to small retailers, depend on marketing communication to sell their goods and services. Marketing communication has become an important player in the life of a business. It helps to move products, services, and ideas from manufacturers to end users, builds and maintains relationships with customers, prospects, and other important stakeholders in the company.

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) has emerged as the dominant approach used by companies to plan and execute their marketing communication programs. Many marketers, as well as advertising agencies, are embracing the IMC paradigm and developing integrated campaigns that use a variety ways to communicate with their target audiences. (McArthur and Griffin 1997, Belch & Belch, 2004, Duncan 2005) The shift toward the IMC perspective has been hailed as one of the most significant changes in the history of advertising and promotion (Moriarty 1994; Reitman 1994) and as the major communications development of the last decade of the 20th century (Kitchen, Brignell, Li and Jones 2004).

There are always some specific objectives behind every strategy and these objectives are the end results of that strategy. IMC strategy of communication is also focused to achieve specific objectives. Katrandjiev (2000) described two conflicting objectives of IMC as (1) to achieve considerable sales and (2) to build a strong brand image. Schultz (1993) said that objective of IMC is to influence the behavior of target audience. The goal of IMC is to setup customer oriented sensibilities, help in resource allocation, achieve competitive advantage and develop business process in all direction of organization and its operations that add value for its customer (researchandmarkets.com). Despite these major objectives, there are some common objectives like create brand awareness, favorable customer attitude and to drive business & revenue (ehow.com). Coca -cola is one of multinational companies highly apply integrated marketing communication for the las 130 years all over the world. Coca-Cola was first bottled in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa in 1959 by the Ethiopian Bottling Share Company, which later opened a second branch in Dire-Dawa in 1965.

The two plants were nationalized in 1975 and ran as public companies until 1996 when they were bought by Ethiopian entrepreneurs. Just prior to this, in 1995, Coca-Cola SABCO bought shares in the business and, in 1999, signed a joint venture agreement with the plants.

In 2001, Coca-Cola SABCO increased its shares to 61% and the company changed its name to the East African Bottling Share Company (EABSC). The EABSC continues to run the two plants and has 1500 employees and it is about to have a third plant in Bahir Dar in 2017.

Despite the growing popularity of IMC, theory development and research in this area is still limited. In fact, some scholars have argued that been critical of IMC labeling it as a management fashion that lacks definition, formal theory construction and research and is transient in its influence. (Cornelissen and Lock, 2000).

However, recently more attention has been given to theory development in IMC with the goal of better defining with it is, what it does and how it can be used to guide the development and implementation of marketing communication programs (Gould 2004; Kitchen, Brignell Li and Jones 2004).And most of the extant literature on IMC deals with topics such as discussions and debates over its definition, advantages, acceptance and those studies the student researcher found try to investigate the influence of one or two elements of IMC not the whole elements of IMC. Hence, the student researcher can't find a research done on assessing the influence of IMC (consists of all elements) on brand preference.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Consumers appear to have high willingness to pay for brands, even when the alternatives are objectively similar. Most consumers typically buy a single brand of beer, cola, or margarine (Dekimpe et al. 1997), even though relative prices vary significantly over time, and consumers often cannot distinguish their preferred brand in blind “taste tests” (Thumin 1962; Allison and Uhl 1964).

As consumers are bombarded with a variety of products to meet the same need, branding provides a way for consumers to reduce their decision making to consider only those products that they feel are relevant to them or that have met their needs acceptably in the past.

There is no question that a strong brand is an important corporate asset. Spaeth (1993) asserts that “Brand cannot be measured in Naira and kobo but rather, it is a direct result of how consumers value a brand based on their experiences and perceptions”. It is these experiences and perceptions that permit the brand to earn greater volume or margins than it could without the brand name. The most basic function of integrated marketing communication (IMC) is to identify brands, their sources and products, and differentiates them from others and help consumer to prefer a specific brand among all available alternative brands.

There is a growing number of ways in which a company can communicate with a consumer. IMC brings together all communication content transmitted via all available communication channels including advertising, promotions, events and sponsorships to deliver a unified message to potential and existing customers.

Coca-Cola after it is invented by Dr. John Pemberton in May 1886, Atlanta Georgia, it offers over 500 brands in more than 200 countries all over the world and Ethiopia is one of its destination as well. Coca-Cola IMC Strategy unifies all communication effort from an organization to produce an identifiable brand awareness in the minds of its audience to be preferred among other competitors like Pepsi cola.

Integrated marketing communication elements influencing consumer brand preference have been studied in the past, but due to constant evolution of business practices combined with changing consumer preferences it has now become important to carry out studies on the subject with regular

interval of time and also it needs to incorporate the influence of all integrated marketing communication element. Doing this shall not only help in providing insight information regarding the influence of these IMC elements on consumer brand preference, but shall also aid in designing and development of effective integrated marketing strategies.

It is also studied that Coca-Cola's IMC strategy is successful in creating brand awareness among consumers in many countries in the world. Coca-cola the pioneer company in 360 degree communications as they rapidly understood they had to get in touch with consumers to create links & to look for them wherever they are. It adopts its message to Ethiopia market based on some values like open happiness, like coke side of life, taste the feelings, Share coke with. etc., which are have been running all over the world as the same time.

However, As Per world bank report 2015, Ethiopia is a country of 95 million and out of which only 19% is urban population. And the per capital income is \$590 per year, which is quite different figure unlike that of other consumers of Coca-Cola in developed nation. Hence, the student researcher attempt to investigate the influence of IMC implemented by Coca-Cola on its brand preference separately in Ethiopian market ,because the low level of economic status of Ethiopian consumers to Coca-cola ,the student researcher want to understand if the effect or IMC is quite different from all other world.

In addition, there are numerous Integrated marketing communication elements used by Coca-Cola such as Advertising, personal selling, publicity/public relation and sales promotion but, the important question for a marketer is “do all these elements positively influence the consumers’ brand preference?” If IMC is not creating any positive change in consumers’ brand preference, all the resources such as money, time and efforts spent on IMC elements will go in vain. Therefore, it is essential for a marketer to find out the extent to which the IMC elements creates Positive change in preferring the brand of the company, Coca-Cola n Ethiopia.

1.3 Research question

Attempt will be made in this study to find answers for the following key questions.

- 1.How IMC is related to Brand preference of Coca-Cola in Ethiopia?
- 2.Can a consumer's exposure to integrated marketing communication elements bring about brand preference of Coca-Cola?
- 3.What is the perception of consumers about Coca-Cola Brand?
- 4.Did IMC increase consumer preference of Coca-Cola brand products?

5. What is the individual influence of each IMC element on brand reference of Coca-Cola in Ethiopia?

1.4 Research objective

1.4.1 General objective

The General objective of this study to understand the influence of integrated marketing communication on consumer brand preference of Coca-Cola in Ethiopia

1.4.2 Specific objective

Specific objectives

- 1.To examine the public's perception of the Coca-Cola brand.
2. To explore the extent of brand preference has been able to be created due to integrated marketing communication (IMC).
3. To explain in what ways, has integrated marketing communication (IMC) been able to impact on consumers' attitude towards Coca-Cola.
- 4.To determine the influence of Advertising on consumer brand preference of Coca-Cola
5. To understand the influence of sales promotion on consumer brand preference of Coca-Cola
6. To identify the influence of personal selling on consumer brand preference of Coca-Cola
7. To determine the influence of direct marketing on consumer brand preference of Coca-Cola
8. To determine the influence of publicity and public relation on consumer brand preference of Coca-Cola in Ethiopia

1.5 Significance of the study

The study on the influence of IMC on consumer brand preference in Coca-Cola product is important for different reasons. The Beverage industry is fast growing in Ethiopia, with the special interest in the booming this industry. Hence, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge with current information on IMC on brand preference, for both marketing students and Marketers in Ethiopian beverage industry.

The study will also be essential in ensuring consumers to make smart choices when purchasing soft drinks based on all IMC elements in relation to the brand attributes. This will give value for money to the Coca-Cola consumers.

Moreover, the study will be essential to the local beverage industry by highlighting key data in the soft drink market in ensuring the products available in the market meet the expected standards. This will promote a healthy competitive environment among soft drink players. Lastly, it will be a source of information for policy maker in the sector and It can motivate other researchers to give time and study in this area and other companies other than Coca-Cola.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study is descriptive in nature which will study the impacts of Integrated marketing communication on consumers' brand preference in case of Coca-Cola in Ethiopia. The outcome of this thesis should be understood that it will study the influence of IMC on brand preference, not brand awareness or brand equity. The study will primarily focus on how consumers prefer Coca-Cola brand and will try to identify if there is relationship between IMC and brand preference in case of Coca-Cola. In addition, the paper will study which factors are more influential to Create brand preference for Coca-Cola products among those elements of IMC.

1.7 Limitation of the study

The limitation regarding this study is that it is difficult to investigate a broad topic that requires deep investigation, associated with large number of factors within the budgeted time across the whole country in Ethiopia. Therefore, sample respondents will be taken from Addis Ababa only, this is because Coca-Cola generate 60% of its total sales from this region (Coca-cola sales report 2016).

1.7 Organization of the paper

The study organized in five parts. The first part is all about research proposal which include an introduction, statement of the problem and research hypothesis, the aim of the study, significance of the study and the scope.

The second part is all about review the literature related to the area of the study.

The third part include the research methodology that include the sampling, sample size, method of data collection and analysis.

The fourth will be about data analysis and discussion.

The final part will be about conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF LITRUETURES

2.1 Introduction

The flow of the chapter is on the effect that has been made by other scholars towards studying the influence of Integrated marketing communication on brand preference. This chapter, therefore, specifically reviews related issues such as evolution of Integrated Marketing Communications, definitions of IMC, elements of IMC, Importance of IMC, the relation between IMC and other theoretical and imperial reviews regarding the title.

2.2 Evolution of Integrated Marketing Communications

For many years, the promotional function in most media advertising companies relied primarily on their advertising agencies for guidance, and nearly all areas of marketing communications. Most marketers did use additional promotional and marketing communication tools, but sales promotion and direct marketing agencies as well as package design firms were generally viewed as auxiliary services and often used on a preprocessed basis. Public relations agencies were used to manage the organization's publicity, image and affairs with relevant publics on an ongoing but were not viewed as integral participants in the marketing communications process (Belch & Belch, 2001:10).

Many marketers built strong barriers around the various marketing and promotional functions and planned and managed them as separate practices, with different budgets, different views of the market, and different goals and objectives. These companies failed to recognize that the wide range of marketing and promotional tools must be coordinated to communicate effectively and present a consistent image to target markets.

During the 1980s, many companies came to see the need for more of a strategic integration of their promotional tools. These firms began moving towards the process of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) which involves coordinating the various promotional elements and other marketing activities that communicate with a firm's customers (Adrienne, 1993:1-2).

As marketers embraced the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications, they began asking their agencies to coordinate the use of a variety of promotional tools rather than relying primarily on media advertising. Several companies also began to look beyond traditional advertising agencies and use other types of promotional specialists to develop and implement various components of their promotional plans (Belch and Belch, 2001:10).

Many agencies responded to the call for synergy among the various promotional tools by acquiring public relations, sales promotion, and direct marketing companies and touting themselves as IMC agencies that offer one stop shopping for all of their client's promotional needs (Fortune, 1991:81-85). Some agencies became involved in these non-advertising areas to gain control over their client's promotional programs and budgets and struggled to offer any real value beyond creating advertising. However, advertising industry soon recognized that IMC was more than just a fad. Terms such as, new advertising, orchestration and seamless communication were used to describe the concept of integration (Scott, 1991:17).

2.2.1 Definitions of Integrated Marketing Communications

A variety of definitions have emerged surrounding the concept and understanding of what IMC means. One of the most widely accepted definitions offered by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) as cited by Belch and Belch, (2004:11), asserts that "IMC is a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines (for example, general advertising, direct response advertising, sales promotion and public relations...) and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact."

The above definition focuses on the process of using all forms of promotions to achieve maximum communications impact. However, advocates of the IMC concept, such as Schultz argue for an

even broader perspective that considers all sources of brand or company contact that a customer or prospect has with a product or service.

Additionally, Schultz (1993:17), defines IMC as “the process of developing and implementing various forms of perspective communication programs with customers and prospects over time.” Schultz and others, note that Integrated Marketing Communications calls for a “big picture” approach to planning marketing and promotion programs and coordinating the various communication functions. It requires that firms develop a total marketing communications strategy that recognizes how all of a firm’s marketing activities, not just promotion, communicate with its customers (Belch and Belch, 2001:11).

Consumer’s perceptions of a company and/or its various brands are a synthesis of the bundle of messages they receive or contacts they have, such as media advertisements, price, package, design, direct marketing efforts, publicity, sales promotions, websites, point of purchase displays, and even the type of store where a product or service is sold. Integrated Marketing Communications seeks to have company’s entire marketing and promotional activities project a consistent, unified image to the market place. It calls for a centralized messaging function so that everything a company says and does communicates a common theme and positioning.

Many companies have adopted this broader perspective of IMC. They see it as a way to coordinate and manage their marketing communication programs to ensure that they give customers a consistent message about the company and/or its brands. For these companies, the IMC approach represents an improvement over the traditional method of treating the various marketing and communication elements as virtually separate activities. However, as markets become more than just ideas for coordinating all elements of the marketing and communication programs, the IMC approach helps companies identify the most appropriate and effective methods for communicating and building relationships with their customers as well as other stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, investors, interest groups, and the general public (Belch and Belch 2001:11).

Another definition of IMC was offered by Duncan (2002:24), who states simply that IMC is a process for managing the customer relationships that drive brand value. More specifically, it is a cross functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data driven, purposeful dialogue with them.

From this definition, IMC should be composed of five major elements, cross functional process, creating and nourishing stakeholders’ relationships, profitable customer relationships, strategically

controlling or influencing all messages, and encouraging purposeful communications between organizations and their customers.

Duncan and Moriarty (1998:1-13), note that IMC is one of the “new generation marketing approaches being used by companies to better focus their efforts in acquiring, retaining and developing relationships with customers and other stakeholders.” They have developed a Communication-based Marketing Model that emphasizes the importance of managing all corporate or brand communications, as they collectively create, maintain, or weaken the customer and stakeholder relationships that drive brand value. Messages can originate at three levels – corporate, marketing and marketing communications, since all of a company’s corporate activities, marketing mix activities, and marketing communications efforts have communication dimensions, and play a role in attracting and keeping customers.

At the corporate level, various aspects of a firm’s business practices and philosophies, such as its mission, hiring practices, philanthropies, corporate culture, and ways of responding to inquiries, all have dimensions that communicate with customers and other stakeholders and affect relationships.

At the marketing level, as was mentioned earlier, companies send messages to customers and other stakeholders through all aspects of their marketing mixes, not just promotion. Consumers make inferences about a product on the basis of elements, such as its design, appearances, performance, pricing, service, support, and where and how it is distributed. For example, a high price may symbolize quality to customers, as may be shape or design of a product, its packaging, its brand name, or the image of the stores in which it is sold.

At the marketing communications level, Duncan and Moriarty (1998:1-13), note that all messages should be delivered and received on a platform of executioner and strategic consistency in order to create coherent perceptions among customers and other stakeholders. This requires the integration of the various marketing communication messages and the functions of various promotional facilities such as ad agencies, public relations firms, sales promotion specialists, package design firms, direct response specialists, and interactive agencies. The goal is to communicate with one voice, look and image across all the marketing communication functions and to identify and position the company and/or the brand in a consistent manner.

2.3 Theoretical framework

In today's global economy characterized by high dynamism and fierce competition, companies are looking for the best way of communicating with their consumer and they do everything humanly possible to persuade the customers of their product's quality and the benefits that people get from using their products or services. (Clow K. (2010).

Shimp, T. (2003), communication has become a fundamental aspect of marketing, and a key success factor for the company. Organizations use various forms of marketing communication to meet financial or non-profit targets. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is one of the most important communications trends adopted all over.

Christensen L.T, Firat, A.F, Torp, S. (2008), the emergence of this concept has influenced thinking and acting among companies but also authorities, state owned companies and political parties, all facing the realities of competition in an open economy. Marketing organizations are increasingly paying an emphasis on integrating their messages, procedures, and communications within their formal organizational boundaries³.

Some 25 years ago, academics and professionals discussed theory and practice of business communication but without considering the idea of integration as a realistic approach to reach a competitive strategic position for the company. Some early attempts in the beginning of the 1980s initiated academic interest and articles appeared in the academic literature.

However, the evolution of IMC from promotion management to an integrated marketing communication approach started in the early 1990s with the publication of a book on the subject by Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn (1993). While many authors agreed that IMC has not reached agreement on definition and scope, (Kitchen, 2005; Kliatchko, 2005; Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan & McDonald, 2005; Schultz & Schultz, 1998; Swain, 2004) there is considerable disagreement in the literature as to whether IMC is an accepted discipline and here to stay.

There are opposing views about its relevance and importance. Authors such as Kliatchko (2005) argued that IMC has contentions on definition and theoretical issues remain unsettled, Swain (2004) agreed its definition remains controversial, and Kitchen (2005) claimed there are so many different definitions and ideas of IMC that the theoretical concepts are vague and uncertain. Most of the early discussion and research of IMC has centered on the adoption of and use by product and packaged goods marketers (Nowak, Cameron & Delorme, 1996).

The first formal definition of IMC was developed at Northwestern University in 1989. This definition was used in a survey of major advertisers and advertising agencies in the US, jointly sponsored by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As), the Association of National Advertisers, and Northwestern University (Schultz & Schultz 1998). A review of the literature indicates that this 4As definition has been the most widely used since 1989 up to the present, and the most often cited by academics and practitioners. This definition states that Integrated Marketing Communications is:

“A concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines – general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact.”

Later many scholars give IMC various definition, for example; Shultz (1991) define IMC as” The process of managing all sources of information about a product/service to which a customer or prospect is exposed and which, behaviorally, moves the customer toward a sale and maintains customer loyalty”

Keegan (1992) define IMC as” The strategic coordination of all messages and media by an organization to influence its perceived brand value collectively” As Per Kotler (1999) definition; “IMC is the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its many communication channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organization and its message”

Kliatchko (2005) define IMC as” the concept and process of strategically managing audience-focused, channel-centered and results-driven brand communication programs overtime. “Thus, communicators with an IMC approach will consider all forms of communication, all message delivery channels, customers and prospects, and all brand contact points, while they plan, and implement marketing and communications strategies (Kitchen and Pelsmacker, 2004). They also defined IMC as follows “An integrated marketing communication has become a strategic business process. It is not just about promotion itself, but about communication. Strategic refers to the overall driving force of the organization.

2.4 Importance of IMC

Each strategy has its own importance which can be assessed from the results and impact of that strategy. Although IMC may require a lot of efforts, it delivers many benefits. According to available literature, IMC could create four main benefits such as competitive advantage, a boost in sales and profits, build clear brand image, while saving time, money and stress.

2.4.1 Creates Competitive Advantage

Smith (2008:196), suggests IMC could wrap communications around customers, and help them move through the different stages of the buying process. The organization builds dialogues and relationships with customers. Yeshin (2000:256), also claims that, for the agency, it provides the opportunity to play a significantly more important role in the development of the communication programs and become a more effective partner in the relationship. This marketing relationship could be seen as a powerful competitive advantage.

2.4.2 Boosts Sales and Profits

Smith (2008:197), points out that, IMC increases profits through increased effectiveness. It could increase sales by stretching messages across several communication tools and make messages more consistent and more credible. Yeshin (2000:256), suggests that, for the company, IMC could be used as a strategic tool in communicating its corporate image and the benefits of its products or services. In addition, integration of communication messages leads to creative completeness and consistent messages. Also, media choices are optimized, which can lead to operational efficiency as a result, more ways are created for customers to become aware, motivated and make purchases.

2.4.3 Saves Time, Money and Stress

Smith (2008:197), emphasizes that, IMC could save money, such as graphics and photography; they can be shared and used in advertising, exhibitions and sales literature. Yeshin (2000:256), suggests that within the IMC program, the same message is delivered repeatedly to the target audience. This requires the adoption of an overall strategy for the brand, rather than developing individual strategies for the separate marketing communication tools. Nakra (1999:42-45), also claims that the use of IMC saves time and money and improves the firm or organization's ability

to protect the integrity of the product or service. Moreover, organizations can maximize their return on investments and minimize selling stress through IMC (Tortorici, 1999:20-22).

2.4.4 Builds Clear Brand Image

According to Smith (2008:199), IMC could help a brand to consolidate its image by developing a dialogue and nurture a relationship. In addition, IMC helps businesses and organizations to create brand value in the form of sales, profits and brand equity. Since its focus is on building and sustaining long-term relationships. It is more effective than the traditional advertising and marketing.

Moreover, Yeshin (2000:256), claims IMC highlights “integration” by harmonizing various marketing messages to create “synergy” for a brand and is based on a clear brand image to build relationships with target audience to advance the brand value.

Belch and Belch (2004:14), maintain that one of the major reasons for the growing importance of Integrated Marketing Communications over the past decade is that it plays a major role in the process of developing and sustaining brand identity and equity. Keller (2000:3-10), notes “building and properly managing brand equity has become a priority for companies of all sizes, in all types of industries, in all types of markets.” With more and more products and services competing for consideration by customers who have less and less time to make choices, well-known brands have a major competitive advantage in today’s market-place.

Brand identity is a combination of many factors, including the name, logo, symbols, design, packaging and performance of a product or service as well as the image or type of associations that comes to mind when consumers think about a brand. It encompasses the entire spectrum of consumers, awareness, knowledge, and image of the brand as well as the company behind it. It is the sum of all points of encounter or contact that consumers have with the brand and it extends beyond the experience or outcome of using it. These contacts can also result from various forms of Integrated Marketing Communication activities used by a company, including mass-media advertising, sales promotion offers, sponsorship activities at sporting or entertainment events, websites on the internet, and direct mail pieces such as letters, brochures, catalogs, or videos.

Consumers can also have contact with or receive information about a brand in stores at the point of sales through articles or stories they see, hear, or read in the media; or through interactions with a company's representatives, such as a sales person.

2.5 Elements of IMC

Keller (2009) states that, there are five major modes of communication that make up the elements of the marketing communications mix.

While much theorizing and research has been conducted in an attempt to determine the manner in which advertising impacts on brand preference and the response process of consumers, less attention has been given to other elements of IMC such as sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and the Internet. In practice, other IMC elements other than advertisement, accounts for an equal or even greater amount of the promotional budget than media advertising for most packaged goods companies (Belch and Belch, 2004). The increasing reliance on other promotion activities is, at least in part, attributable to a greater desire by marketers for measurable and quantifiable results as well as an increasing emphasis on return on investment (Neslin 2002).

Advertising: Kotler and Armstrong (2008), "advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor". Three types of advertising can be used: informative, persuasive, and reminder advertising.

This can be described as a paid form of non-personal communications about an organization, its products or its activities that is transmitted through a mass medium to a target audience. The mass medium might be television, radio, newspapers, magazines, outdoor displays, car stickers or directories. It's also a promise made on behalf of a good or service that has value. It is used in moving people to react favorably so as history dates back to ancient Egypt where availability of products was announced by town criers. However, the invention of printing press in the 15th century ushered in placement of advertisement in newspapers or printed matter.

The IMC tool that has received the most attention and theorizing regarding its influence on consumers' brand preference is that of advertising. Much of the theorizing regarding advertising effects deals with consumers' processing of advertising messages. The focus of this work is on more its influence over consumers' brand preference.

Hence, theorizing regarding the effects of advertising over time rather than immediate responses to persuasive advertising messages is through some type of response hierarchy model (Strong 1925; Lavidge and Steiner 1961; McGuire 1978; Vaughn, 1980). As noted by Weilbacher (2001), hierarchy-of-effects (HOE) models have been around in the literature of marketing in one form or another for more than 100 years.

Public relations: It is a non-personal form of communication that seeks to positively influence the attitudes, feelings and opinions of customers, non-customers, shareholders, suppliers, employees and political bodies about the organization.

The personification of Public Relations had been noted and proposed by several scholars, as the part of IMC process. The public relations play an important role which has significant aspects. Baker and Mitchell (2000), the traditional practices of attaining the consumers respect and understanding, while being important, it has been complemented by countless marketing.

A popular form of public relation is publicity, which is a non-paid form of non -personal communication about the organization and its product that is transmitted through a mass medium in the form of new story. It is also a management function meant to create favorable image and reputation in order to achieve mutual understanding and goodwill from an organization's public.

As noted by several scholars, the role of public relations as a component of the integrated marketing communications process has changed significantly. The traditional role of earning public understanding and respect, while still important, has been supplemented by a more marketing oriented approach (Kotler and Mindak 1978; Harris 1993). Some public relations academicians have been critical of the idea of viewing PR as a marketing function and the encroachment of IMC into this area. (Lauzen 1991). However, leading practitioners such as Ries and Ries (2002) argue that for many companies, public relations is moving toward a new role and becoming more of a marketing function versus serving a traditional PR role. They contend that public relation is supplanting advertising as the most important element in the IMC program as consumers are coming to rely more on information they receive from through publicity and other more objective sources.

Sales promotion: It's an incentive based communication activity that offers customers, sales promotion, or resellers or direct inducement for purchasing a product. Sales promotion is a specific marketing communication action that is limited in time, offering a material advantage, and directed at customers and prospects. This inducement, which adds value to or incentive for the product, might take the form of a coupon, sweepstakes, refund, instant gift or display.

Sales promotion programs are usually evaluated in terms of their impact on sales. Many marketers view sales promotion as an acceleration tool that is designed to speed up the selling process and maximize sales volume (Nielsen, Quelch and Henderson 1984). Thus, marketers are more concerned with how sales promotion tools influence short-term sales rather than intervening variables such as awareness or attitudes as the goal of these programs is to produce immediate results.

However, other several researchers have recognized the role sales promotion can play in building brand. Keller (1993) discusses how supporting marketing programs such as sales promotion play an important role in creating brand awareness and brand preference. Chandon, Wansink and Laurent (2000) note that promotions can provide consumers with both utilitarian and hedonic benefits. Utilitarian benefits help consumers maximize the utility, efficiency, and economy of their shopping. They are primarily instrumental, functional and cognitive and provide customer value by being a means to an end. Hedonic benefits are non-instrumental, experiential, and affective and are appreciated for their own sake as they may provide intrinsic, stimulation, fun and self-esteem. They studied the effects of the two types of promotions and concluded that nonmonetary promotions that offer hedonic benefits may be more appropriate for brand activity to induce brand preference than monetary promotions that offer utilitarian benefits.

Personal Selling is the oral presentations made by the individual salesperson. In this case, a conversation with one or more prospective buyers who intended to create sales. It's face-to-face communication with potential buyers to inform them about and personal them to buy an organization's products Here is the definition of selling face to face (personal selling) put forward by the experts.Kotler (2003:564) "Personal Selling: face to face interaction with one or more perspective purchasers for making presentations, answering questions, and procuring orders" Sales to-face verbal communication consists of a sales force with one or more prospective buyers with the aim that the occurrence or influence sales.

Direct marketing: is defined as personal interaction or communication between the customer and marketer. As Kallmeyer and Abratt (2001) explained that personal communication contemplated as more efficient as it provides prompt feedback informing the communicator about the delivery of message conveyed or not conveyed appropriately. The main purpose of direct marketing is to get the immediate feedback of the customer. Direct marketing tactics includes door to door selling where sales persons improve and augment customer loyalty and retention, direct mail and telemarketing. As Curtis (1999) asserted that due to the revolution of high technology communication, the least preferred door to door selling has revived its importance through advance high technological communication tools which includes telephone, emails and data base.

Direct marketing has generally been viewed as a promotional tool that is designed to elicit some type of behavioral response from consumers in the form of purchase, requests for additional information, or providing a sales lead and finally aims at boosting the preference of that specific brand.

One form of direct marketing that has become increasingly popular in recent years is the infomercial, which is a program length paid advertisement used to promote an organization's product or service through information and persuasion (Balasubramanian 1994). Infomercials are sometimes used by major companies to provide information to educate consumers about a product or service and influence attitudes and purchase intentions, and preference (Edwards 2001). As noted by Brodowsky and Belch (2002), infomercials generally follow a formulaic sequence that assumes a learn→feel→do response sequence.

2. 6 IMC and brand preference

According to Kotler (2000: 87) "Promotion involves all the activities the company undertakes to communicate and promote its products to the target market.

Nnolim (1994: 84) asserts that Marketing communication is an important function through which the marketer communicates to inform, convince and persuade the intended target market in all aspects of what the firm has to offer in the area of need and want satisfying products. The objectives, she continues, eventually is to get the consumer to be favorably disposed to the products of the firm and to commit or vote his financial resources in favor of those products.

Olakunori (1986:101) said that advertising as an indispensable component or aspect of Integrated marketing communication has continued to play a vital role in brands of products. According to him, a product without promotion is like music without tune.

Mitchell (1984: 98) believe that sales promotional premiums and other benefits give rise to lopsided evaluation of competing products as these products seem to attract the attention of the consumers rather than the core product itself.

Martueau (1987: 301) states that personal contract via effective and articulated personal selling process among prospects / consumers and salesmen of a product tends to create a long-lasting impression (positive or negative) in the minds of the prospects/consumers about the sales person and the product. In other words, although the use of personal selling as a promotional tool is determined by many factors which include inter alia – nature of the product, nature of market, number of prospective buyers, market proximity, company's policy – the use of personal selling has proved over the years, the most effective means of educating the consumers.

Consumer or marketing-oriented companies concentrate on satisfying the needs and preferences of customers – by selecting one or more specific customer group(s) in the total market, and then developing a market offering for each target group. Marketing-oriented companies achieve their business goals by focusing on the needs and wants of their target markets (Lane et al., 2011:126). The main purposes of marketing communication are to inform, persuade or remind the selected target audience of the market offering (Lamb et al., 2003:329). However, Bearden et al. (2007:403) emphasize that marketing communication's ultimate role is to influence the behavior of the target market, and not only to inform, persuade or remind the consumers.

Communication objectives, such as creating awareness of or interest in the marketing offer, are certainly not enough. Marketing communication should, in fact, lead to changes in the behavior of the target market in the purchase of products or loyalty towards the brand. Marketers can use the marketing communication strategy to convince the selected target market(s) that the products or services offered provide a significant and competitive advantage over those of their rivals (Lamb et al., 2003:315).

Duncan (2005:15) acknowledges that marketing communication can add value for customers, because customers need to be informed on aspects, such as the features and potential benefits of a product, where it can be bought, and whether it is a well-known brand with a good reputation, or whether it has already formed a positive association in the minds of the consumers. In other words,

marketing communication can influence the target audiences' perceptions of crucial features and symbolic associations that are superior to those of the competitors.

Customers will have an advanced purchase intention with a known brand (Kamins & Marks, 1991). Similarly, if a product has increased brand awareness it will have an increased market share (Dodds, 1991; Grewal, 1998). A famous brand will have an increased buying intention than a less famous brand (Hsu, 2000).

From the above literatures, we can generalize that Customers responds powerfully and decide to purchase only recognizable, well-established brands, which IMC supports marketers to do this. (Jacoby, Syzabill and Schach, 1977).

2.7 Review of empirical Literature

Annette W. Mutuku (2001) aims at investigating the influence of marketing mix on consumers' brand preference of smart phones among public university student in Nairobi. The findings indicate that respondents learned about smartphones through various promotional mix like advertisements which enhanced their brand preference. Promotion acts as shopping guide for most consumers and the more winning the promotion is, the more likely it will influence purchase.

M Sayeed Alam and Md. Farhan Faruqui (2009) had presented a case study to investigate the effect of sales promotion on consumer Brand preference of laundry detergent in Dhaka city consumers. The study find that sales promotion will not related to brand loyalty or brand preference. In this case, it is mentioned that the study was conducted on Dhaka city consumers (sample). The Sales promotion increase the sales for short time and the message satisfies the consumers but it has no impact to convince the customer to become loyal towards the promoted brand or in other words it will not increase the deterministic component if the customer utility equation.

John Deighton (2001): The Effect of advertising on brand switching and repeat purchasing, the authors examine switching and repeat purchase effects of advertising in mature, frequently purchased product categories. They draw on consumer behavior theories of framing and usage dominance to formulate a logic choice model for measuring these effects. They estimate the model using single-source scanner data. Their results suggest that advertising induces brand switching but does not affect the repeat purchase rates of consumers who have just purchased the brand, a result consistent with usage dominance rather than framing. They find the switching influence to

be largely confined between the current and previous purchase occasions. They illustrate the magnitude of this effect and explore potential profitability.

Dr. Bandar Khalaf Alharthey 2015: understanding Decision Making of Consumers through Advertising Strategy and Integrated Marketing, the study has found that consumers do not prefer purchasing products about which they are not aware of, which signifies the importance of advertising and integrated marketing. It has been found in this study that advertising strategy is most important tool of integrated marketing program which produce profound and lasting impact on consumers. This explains that advertising is the most important tool in creating brand awareness as well as influencing consumer purchase decision. The study found out that advertising strategy and integrated marketing share a positive correlation with consumer purchase decision; only if they are used effectively through application of appropriate research technic.

Dr. Tahir Ali (2013): on the study made on impact of Integrated marketing communication on consumers purchase decision confirms the importance of IMC activities and concludes that IMC is the best to target the consumers, because the consumers are strongly influenced by IMC implementations.

Abdul Munam Jamil pracha (2012): In a study made on Consumer Preference Coca Cola versus Pepsi-Cola advertisement is important factor for coke customer to choose their brand. It also noticed in this study that promotion scheme & discount are also important to purchase their preferred brand.

Even though above scholars imply that consumers' exposure to IMC elements will leads to brand preference, there are some other effects of IMC happens before brand preference. As per Rossiter and Percy (1987) in a communication process brand awareness preceded all other steps and without brand awareness occurring no other communication effects can occur. For a consumer to prefer brand they must made aware of it brand attitude can't be formed and intention to buy can't occur unless brand awareness can occur. In a situation, a consumer is aware of number of brands which fit the relevant criteria, the consumer is unlikely to spend much time in and effort in seeking out information about the unfamiliar brands.

According to Bandura (1960) as cited by Mazar and James (2008) in observational learning theory, people learn those acts which they are constantly exposed to it can be argued that consumers are likely to choose those products that they have been exposed to not necessarily because those

products are better, but because there is some level of familiarity imagine walking into a supermarket to buy a body cream, would you buy the one you have heard or seen on adverts? Or pick something you have never heard of? The chances of you choosing the former are higher tools of IMC, like advert, registers products in the subconscious which gives a sense of security and familiarity.

2.7.1 Conceptual framework

The consumer decision-making process comprises various steps a consumer passes through when making a purchase decision. This process encompasses all steps from the recognition of a need through the pre-purchase search for information about potential ways to satisfy the need, the evaluation of alternative options to the actual purchase and the post-purchase processes including experience and evaluation of the product (Olshavsky and Granbois 1979; Schiffman and Kanuk 1991).

Like the framework of the decision-making process there is the "hierarchy of effects" (HOE) models in integrated marketing communication. Instead of describing the series of steps a consumer runs through when making a purchase decision, those models focus on the mental stages of the relationship of consumers with a specific product or brand (Mooradian et al. 2012; Ray 1973). Hierarchy of effects refers to the fixed order in which consumers perceive, process and marketing communication information: first, cognitively (thinking); second, affectively (feeling); and third, conatively (doing) (Barry and Howard 1990). This means that the consumer first attains awareness and knowledge about a product, subsequently develops positive or negative feelings towards the product and finally acts by buying and using or by rejecting and avoiding the product (Kotler and Keller 2010). This kind of persuasive model argues for a hierarchical order in which things happen, with the implication that the earlier effects have a stronger impact on consumer's decision-making (Vakratsas and Ambler 1999).

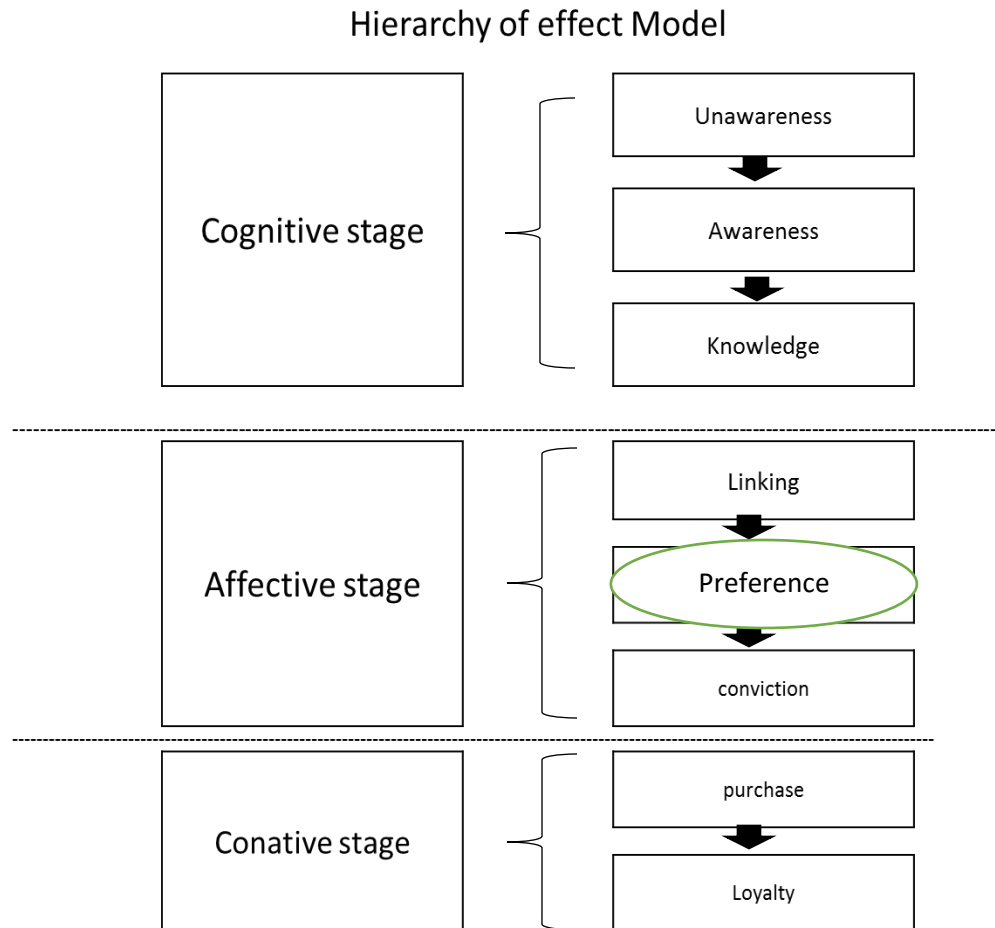


Fig 1. Hierarchy of effect model

Based on this idea a variety of models has been proposed, differing in most cases only in nomenclature or order of effects (Barry and Howard 1990; Vakratsas and Ambler 1999). The best-known hierarchy of effects model is AIDA, which consists of the purchase decision or attitude building phases awareness, interest, desire, and action. Another widely recognized model is the one by Lavidge and Steiner (1961). They included into their model the phases awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. At the beginning of the modeled process, the consumer is unaware of the brand. In the next phase, he becomes aware of the existence of the brand, but has not yet formed any knowledge. Next, the consumer receives (e.g., through advertising or word of mouth) or searches for information about the brand on which basis he learns what the brand has to offer and builds knowledge. After going through the "thinking" he or she will have the attitude towards the brand and finally prefer that specific brand.

The above idea is also supported by Simon (1970) while quoting Politz (1964) stated that repeated (consistent) IMC exposure influences ‘brand familiarity’, willingness to buy and preference. To a large extent, people are influenced by what they see it should be noted that companies that spends more on IMC builds brand preference.

The student researcher has reviewed related literature as above demonstrated so as to see what others have done to the subject in the past. From the review, the student researcher has observed that majority of the scholars agree that IMC has some impact on consumer brand preference after brand awareness and attitude towards a brand is created. Hence the following conceptual framework of the paper is adopted through review of literatures.

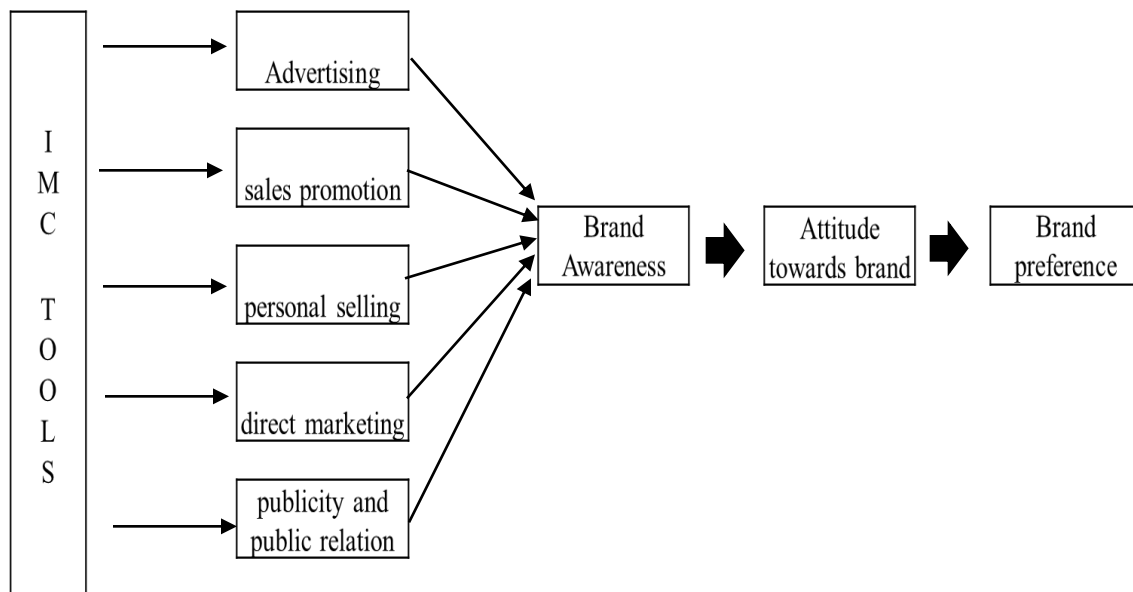


Fig 2 Conceptual framework (adopted from Mooradian et al. 2012& Ray, hierarchy of effect model Barry and Howard 1990 and Politz (1964)

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research approach and method

The research design for this study were both descriptive and explanatory research. For this study, descriptive research was used to obtain a picture of feedbacks of various Coca-Cola consumers with a view to understand how they feel and respond IMC strategy implemented by Coca-Cola in Ethiopia.

Explanatory study was also used to understand and explain the relationship between different Variables (Advertisement, personal selling sales promotion etc.) of IMC and brand preference in case of Coca-Cola in Ethiopia.

The research approach was deductive approach. Hence, the student researcher refers available literatures and theories which study the influence of IMC on brand preference and then in depth observation was made on those studies and finally conclusion deducted.

3.2 Source of data

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data obtained mainly with the research instruments (questionnaire). Questionnaires were distributed to 385 consumers of Coca-Cola products; which are above the age of 18, who frequently visit sooks, supermarket café and restaurants.

On the other hand, Secondary data were collected from books, journals, articles, research papers and internet sources

3.3 Population of the study

The study population include all the customer of Coca-Cola company in Ethiopia which are above the age of 18 year.

3.4 Sampling technic and procedure

The target population is all consumers of Coca-Cola, who are above the age of 18 years all over the country, Ethiopia. Because of the time and budget constraints and the having the fact that 60 % of the Coca-Cola sales is generated from Addis Ababa, primary data was collected from each sub city in Addis Ababa.

Sample size was selected proportionally from 10 subsites. Questionnaire were distributed to samples, which were selected by simple random sampling technique so as the representative samples have equal chance of selection.

3.5 sample size determination

The study population include all the customer of Coca-Cola company in Ethiopia which are above the age of 18 year. Since the number of target population is large, the formula suitable for this study to get the sample size is found by using the Malhotra (2011) determination formula.

Thus, the formula to find out the sample size is

$$n = \frac{p(1-p)z^2}{d^2}$$

where n=sample size

p=the population proportion assumed to be 0.5

since this would provide the maximum sample

d=error acceptance

z=the degree of accuracy expressed as the proportion (0.05)

$$n = \frac{0.5(1-0.5)(1.96)^2}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \underline{\underline{385}}$$

According to the formula the samples will be 385 respondents.

3.6 Method of data collection

This study used structured questionnaire to collect the data. In order to made generalization and get large number of respondent standardized questionnaire were distributed to consumers of Coca-Cola products.

The questionnaire has aimed at fulfilling out the impact of IMC on brand preference of Coca-Cola. The questionnaire dealt with aspects like

- long they have been drinking Coca-cola products
- their awareness and attitude towards Coca-cola brand
- the influence of each IMC elements on their Coca-cola brand preference Factors influencing choice of a brand for consumers of Coca-Cola.

3.7 Validity and reliability

Reliability means that the result is appropriate whereas validity means that the measurement is correct and whether they are measuring what they intend to measure. In reliability, the student researcher has it checked the results through statistical procedure of internal consistency called "Cronbach's Alpha".

Du Plessis (210:12) Cronbach alpha is usually used as a measure of the internal consistency or reliability. A Cronbach alpha is low if the resulted Value of alpha is less than .70 this means the research is not reliable. The result of alpha value in this study found to be 0.944, hence it shows the research instrument were valid. The questionnaires are deduced from the theoretical review which aims at solving the research problem. All the questions were based on the theoretical concept of IMC influencing consumers brand preference.

3.8 Method of data analysis

The data which obtained from sample respondents was analyzed according to the objective of the study. Both descriptive and explanatory analysis were employed to analyze the data in the survey in relation to their attitudes, knowledge, and opinions toward different IMC elements implemented by Coca-Cola company and the influence of it on their brand preference.

The student researcher used SPSS 21 software to process and compute the collected data. Hence, statistical techniques which includes mean values and standard deviation which are computed for each variable in the study.

The statistical method of Pearson Correlation is also used determine the existence of any relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. Additionally, regression analysis was conducted to examine which among the five-independent variable is the most important to affect brand preference. Descriptive analysis was used conducted to describe the profile of respondent. And the result of analysis is presented by tables, frequency and percentage.

3.9 Research ethics

The student researcher collects respondents' feedback based on how they understand the questionnaire. The student researcher makes sure that all the respondents are clear and understand the question before they respond to the questions. The reliability of the research was improved because the questionnaires for consumers did not have any open questions.

Before any question raised to any respondent, the student researcher make sure permission is sought and clearly demonstrate the aim and objective of the research to the respondents on each questionnaire. In addition, the researcher informed the respondents that their feedback will be kept confidential.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to understand the influence of integrated marketing communication on brand preference in case of Coca-Cola in Ethiopia, based on the data which was obtained from sample consumers of Coca-Cola in Addis Ababa, through questionnaires.

In this research, Statistical Package for Social Science programs (SPSS) 21 .0 is used for data analysis. The methods used in data analysis includes descriptive analysis and multiple regression analysis. Descriptive analysis is used to summarize the general profile of respondents while multiple regression analysis is applied to determine whether the proposed independent variables (Advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing and publicity and public relation have influence on the dependent variable (Brand preference). Data for analysis was collected from consumers of Coca-Cola above the age of 18 and 385 questionnaires were distributed for consumers, out of which 339 were valid for the analysis purpose.

4.2 Overall response rate

The survey was conducted during the one week time. As it is shown in the table 1 below, from the total 385 questionnaires distributed only 351 were returned and from which 22 were not properly filled. therefore 339 were effectively used for analysis and the rest 46 questionnaires were not valid, that shows response rate of 79%.

Table 1 overall response rate

Sample	Number	Percent
Number of questionnaire distributed	385	100%
Questionnaire returned	361	93%
Incomplete questionnaire	22	6%
Total usable questionnaire	339	88%

Source: own survey finding,2017

4.3 Reliability and Validity Test

Validity and reliability are the two important characteristics of every measure of materials such as questionnaire. Reliability is fundamentally concerned with issues of consistency of measures whereas validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. (Bryman and Bell, 2003). So before analyzing the collected data the reliability of the main items of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha and validity of the instrument for the present study was ensured as the independent variables and items are identified from the literature and were reviewed by other academicians and by my advisor. Pilot tests were then conducted with twenty consumers who were like to the population for the study. The purpose of the pre-testing was to refine the questionnaire and to assess the validity of measures in Ethiopian context. First reliability of the independent variables (Advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and publication and public relation), intervening variables (brand awareness and attitude towards brand) and the dependent variable (brand preference) was checked then overall reliability for all items which were important for the research was performed by using SPSS.

According to Hair, et al., (2010), if α is greater than 0.7, it means that it has high reliability and if α is smaller than 0.3, then it implies that there is low reliability. In this study, all the independent variables and dependent variable, met the above requirement. The alpha value is identified and summarized in the below table.

Table 2 Reliability of the instrument

No	Dimension	Number of items	Alpha Value
1	Advertising	3	0.95
2	Personal selling	3	0.97
3	Sales promotion	3	.923
4	Direct marketing	3	0.91
5	Publication and public relation	3	0.92
6	Brand awareness	3	0.88
7	Attitude towards brand	3	0.79
8	Brand preference	3	0.80

Source: own survey finding, 2017

Therefore, the reliability of the above 15 items that are critical to determine the influence of integrated marketing communication on brand preference has been tested using Cronbach's alpha. According to Hair et al. (2006) the reliability coefficient which is more than or equal to 70 % ($\alpha > 0.7$) is acceptable. So, reliability of the question was evaluated and the result (Cronbach's Alpha) was used to test the reliability of the material used in this research. Thus, the reliability coefficient of the above items is greater than 70% and the overall reliability test for the items is 94.4%. This implies that the items were reliable and understandable to the respondents. This is shown in the below table.

Table 3 Reliability statistics of Overall Factor of the Likert Five Scale Questions

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.944	15

Source: own survey finding,2017

4.4 General information collected from respondent

4.4.1 Demographic information

As it can be seen from the table 4 below in gender of respondents, out of 339 respondents,71.1% or 241 of them are males and the remaining 28.9 % or 98 are females.

Table 4 Gender of the respondent

Gender of the respondent			
Gender		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	241	71.1
	Female	98	28.9
	Total	339	100.0

Source: own survey finding,2017

In terms of age, as shown below in table 5, 21.8% or 74 of the respondents are between 18 and 25 years of age, 75.5% or 249 of them are between 26-40 years of age, 3.2% or 11 of them are between 41 and 55 years of age and the remaining 1.5% or 5 of them are above 55 years of age.

Table 5 Age of the respondent

Age range		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-25	74	21.8%
	26-40	249	73.5%
	41-55	11	3.2%
	>55	5	1.5%
	Total	339	100%

Source: own survey finding, 2017

As shown below in table 6, the respondents have an educational background range from certificate to masters and above. Out of which 19.2 % or 65 of them have certificate holders, 14.7% or 50 of them have diploma, 60.2% or 204 of them are degree holders and the rest 5.9% or 20 of them have masters and above.

Table 6. Educational back ground of respondents

Educational background of the respondent		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Certificate	65	19.2%
	Diploma	50	14.7%
	Degree	204	60.2%
	Masters and above	20	5.9%
	Total	339	100%

Source: own survey finding, 2017

4.4.2 Coca-cola awareness information collected from despondent

Respondents were asked if they are drinking Coca-Cola products or not and also, they were asked how long they have been drinking Coca-Cola products.as table 6 bellow indicates that all 339 respondents drink Coca-Cola products out of which 13.6% or 46 of them were drinking Coca-Cola products for 5 to 10 years and the remaining 86.4 or 293 of them were drinking Coca-Cola products for more than 10 years. And in the meantime, no one of the respondent drink-coca cola for less than 5 years. This shows that Coca-Cola is very familiar in Ethiopia. This is shown in the below table

Table 7 respondents' Coca-Cola consumption history

Questions	Option	Frequency	Percent
Do you drink Coca-Cola brand products?	Yes	339	100
	No	0	0
	Total	339	100
How long have you been drinking Coca-Cola brand products?	<2 years	0	0
	2-5 years	0	0
	5-10 years	46	13.6
	>10 years	293	86.4
	Total	339	100

Source: own survey finding,2017

4.5 Descriptive Statistics Results of variables

As indicated below in Table 8, consumers mean values show that the consumers' chose more agree among the alternatives of the Likert scale for all dimensions which are the brand image dimensions i.e. independent variables (Advertising mean=4.38, Std. deviation=0.461),(sales promotion mean=3.99,std.deviation=0.593),personal selling (mean=3.73,std deviation =0.719),direct marketing mean=3.21 ,Std deviation =0.811) and (publicity and public relation mean=3.971 ,Std deviation =0.589) as well as the dependent variable which is (brand preference mean =4.05,Std deviation =.693).from all integrated marketing communication elements advertising have the highest mean value and direct marketing holds the lowest mean value.

Table 8 Mean and standard deviation of variables

		Advertising	Sales promotion	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Public relation	Brand awareness	Attitude towards brand	Brand preference
N	Valid	339	339	339	339	339	339	339	339
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.38	3.99	3.73	3.21	3.97	3.71	3.62	4.05
Std. Deviation		.461	.593	.719	.811	.589	.642	.488	.693

Source: own survey finding,2017

4.6 Normality test

Normality test is used to determine whether sample data has been drawn from a normally distributed population or the population from which the data came is normally distributed. Normality was checked by two terms i.e. kurtosis and skewness using SPSS. For kurtosis, the normal value is less than 3 whereas for skewness the normal value is supposed to be less than 6 (Asghar andSaleh 2012).

Therefore, in this research, the data has been drawn from a normally distributed population or the population from which the data come is normally distributed because the value for both kurtosis and skewness is found to be normal. This can be shown below in table 9

Table 9 Skewness and Kurtosis test for each variable

		Advertising	Sales promotion	Personal selling	Direct marketing	Publication & Public relation	Brand awareness	Attitude towards brand	Brand preference
N	Valid	339	339	339	339	339	339	339	339
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skewness		.528	.237	.287	.595	-.356	-.147	-.310	-.914
Std. Error of Skewness		.132	.132	.132	.132	.132	.132	.132	.132
Kurtosis		-1.628	-.581	-.953	-.285	-.587	-1.095	-.967	-.262
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.264	.264	.264	.264	.264	.264	.264	.264

Source: own survey finding,2017

4.7 Pearson correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is a measure of the strength of the association between the variables. Theoretically, there could be a perfect positive correlation between variables which is represented by 1.0 (plus 1), or a perfect negative correlation which would be -1.0 (minus 1) while correlation range between -1.0 and +1.0

As per Marczyk, et al., (2005) general guidelines of correlations of .01 to .30 are considered small, correlations of .30 to .70 are considered moderate, correlations of .70 to .90 are considered large, and correlations of .90 to 1.00 are considered very large.

As can be seen from the below Table 10 there was a significant positive correlation between the three independent variables (Advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing and publicity and public relation and) and dependent variable (brand preference), and there is also a significant relation between the independent variables mentioned earlier and the intervening variables (brand awareness and attitude towards brand preference). And the result was found to be statistically significant at ($P < 0.05$) for each variable. This shows that the factors have moderate correlation and have an impact on brand preference.

Table 10. Pearson Correlation

		Brand awareness	Attitude towards brand	Brand preference
Advertising	Pearson Correlation	0.772**	0.651**	0.552**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	339	339	339
Sales promotion	Pearson Correlation	0.512**	0.468	0.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	339	339	339
Personal selling	Pearson Correlation	0.482**	0.459**	0.433**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	339	339	339
Direct marketing	Pearson Correlation	0.433**	0.452**	0.389**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	339	339	339
Publicity and public relation	Pearson Correlation	0.510**	0.453**	0.427**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	339	339	339

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

Source: own survey finding,2017

4.8 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the influence of all integrated marketing communication elements on brand preference. The following subsections present the results of multiple regressions analysis.

Multicollinearity Test: in multiple regression analysis, multicollinearity refers to the correlation among the independent variables (Kline,1998). According to (Kline, 1998) multicollinearity is not a threat if a correlation value is less than 80%. Before conducting the multiple regression analysis, the researcher examined the result of multiple correlations among the independent variables and found out that, the pair wise correlation between the independent variables is less than 80%, as shown in table 4.8. VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) is another factor for diagnosis of collinearity so it is supposed to be less than five which indicates no multicollinearity problem exists among the independent variables. This is shown below in table 11.

Coefficients ^a

Table 11 multi collinearity test

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
	Independent variables		
	Advertising	.484	2.064
	Sales promotion	.537	1.861
	Personal selling	.344	2.906
	Direct marketing	.372	2.688
	Publication and public relation	.464	2.154

Dependent Variable: Brand preference

Source: own survey finding,2017

The below table 12 represents the analysis of multiple regression models for the beta coefficients of each elements of integrated marketing communication. thus, these Independent variables accounted for 66.2% of the variance in the dependent variable (brand preference) $R^2 = 0.662$. Thus, 66.2% of the variation in brand preference could be explained by these five integrated marketing communication elements which are advertisement, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and publication and public relation and other unexplored variables other than those mentioned above may explain the variation in consumer preference which accounts for about 33.8%.

Table 12 Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.814 ^a	.662	.657	.406

Predictors: (Constant), Advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, publication and public relation

Source: own survey finding,2017

As indicated in below table 13 there is statistically significant effect between independent variable integrated marketing communication and dependent variable (consumer preference) where, (F) value was (130.655) at 0.000 which states that there is significant effect of IMC on consumer preference.

Table 13 ANOVA Result for IMC elements and brand preference

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	107.592	5	21.518	130.655	.000 ^b
	Residual	54.844	333	.165		
	Total	162.435	338			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand preference

b. Predictors: (Constant), Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion, Direct marketing Publicity and public relation,

Source: own survey finding,2017

The linear regression equation

$$BP = a + (B1) AD + (B2) SP + (B3) PS + (B4) DM + B5 (PP)$$

Where BP=Brand preference

- **AD**=Advertising
- **SP**=Sales promotion
- **PS**=Personal selling
- **DM**=Direct marketing
- **PP**=Publicity and public relation and

- B1, B2, B3, B4 & B5 are = beta coefficients.

Therefore, from table below we can say that

$$BP = 1.009 + 1.40AD + 0.85SP + 0.751PS + 0.32DM + 0.65PP$$

Table 14 :Multiple regression analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.009	.217		4.658	.000
	Advertising	1.40	.069	1.81	14.777	.000
	Sales promotion	0.85	.051	1.23	9.84	.000
	Personal selling	0.75	.052	0.91	5.758	.000
	Direct marketing	0.32	.045	0.56	4.577	.000
	Publication and public relation	0.65	.055	.65	8.989	.000

Source: own survey finding, 2017

4.9 Discussion of data obtained through questionnaire

Under this section, the data obtained through questionnaire from consumers about the integrated marketing communication activities implemented by Coca-cola and its impact on their awareness, attitude towards and preference of Coca-Cola brand is described and analyzed below.

- ❖ It is found that 100 % of the respondents where are very aware of Coca-Cola brand, most of them (86.4%) have been drinking Coca-Cola brand products for more than 10 years and the rest 13.6 % respondents have been drinking Coca-Cola between 5-10 years. have retailers are not interested in keeping the activation elements like table top, mobile hanger and cut case display in their outlets.
- ❖ It found that Coca-Cola is doing aggressive advertisement and investing aggressively on advertisement enable the brand to be well know among consumers. I found in some outlets Flange is failed to draw the customer attention because it is not easily visible.
- ❖ Consumers, when they think to purchase soft drink products, Coca-Cola brand products is their priority.61% of the total respondents agree on this.
- ❖ regarding the other intervening variable, attitude towards brand, Coca-Cola has strong positive perception among the respondents, this is supported by their response that everyone is agree that Coca-Cola products give refreshment to them
- ❖ Finally, by using regression analysis the researcher found out that integrated marketing communication have a positive impact on brand preference of Coca-Cola and out of all IMC elements advertising have the highest positive impact on brand preference.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDECTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The main purpose of this research focuses on understanding the influence of IMC implemented by Coca-cola on consumers' brand preference in Ethiopia. The main issue in implementing IMC is to cope up those marketing communication practices with the fusion of available resources and various communication channels and building an understanding of consumers' preferences. The result form this study will helps to recognize the adaptation in their marketing practices according to the changing environment and changing consumers' buying trends and highlight the important tools which are mostly influencing consumers to prefer Coca-cola brand

This research confirms the importance of IMC elements in influencing consumers purchase decision making activities and concludes that IMC is the best to influence the consumers on their brand preference., because the consumers are strongly influenced by IMC implementations. The research also confirms the past research literatures are valid and reliable after data analysis of consumers' feed backs. Concluding the consumers feedback, is obvious that they want firm to incorporate IMC activities as they are well informed and able to purchase from the variety of brands available, so which brand reach them more effectively will influence them more.

The result of correlation analysis revealed that all components of Integrated marketing communication: advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing and publicity and public relation are well correlated with consumers' preference of Coca-cola brand.

Pearson correlation coefficient shows that there is strong relationship with one of the independent variables which is advertising and dependent variable (brand preference) i.e 0.772.The correlation between the rest of independent variables (sales promotion ,personal selling ,direct marketing and publicity and public relation) variable and dependent variable (brand preference is moderate) .i.e 0.512,0.482,0.433 and 0.510 respectively.

The result of regression analysis also shows all IMC elements: advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing and publicity and public relation have significant impact on consumers' brand awareness and attitude towards Coca-cola brand.

Among elements of integrated marketing communication Advertising was the most important factor for consumers to prefer Coca-Cola brand products, which means that they are more in touch with these tools as compare to other. This may be because Television combines motion, sound, and special visual effects so, is a big marketing weapon to attract customers and stay in customers' mind, and it has significant impact on consumers to prefer Coca-cola brand. Consumers do recall and rely on advertisements of Coca-Cola. This recall helps them in preferring Coca-Cola and made impulse purchase any time they are exposed to the advertisement.

Nowadays, technology is important aspect for Coca-Cola's IMC implementation as consumers in Ethiopia are getting more involved in to social media, internet and online activities, they want to feel important so they also preferred direct marketing but, consumers' feedback on direct marketing shows that direct marketing activities are not aggressively implemented and also not efficiently implemented to influence them to prefer Coca-cola brand as compared to other integrated marketing communication tools.

Based on feedback and analysis this study it can be concludes that Coca-cola IMC implementation strategy meets its target in creating brand preference.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the study and conclusion drown above, the following recommendations are made,

- IMC is a non-stop process which transmits a chain of messages to consumers in quest of the organization's objectives, recognition, persuasion, recall, communication and building image to depict product and service (Fill, 2001). Coca-cola need to analyze the changing preferences of consumers and act as per this change while formulating and implementing IMC practices.
- Based on feedback and analysis of this study Coca-cola Should keep practicing all perspectives of marketing tools but do somewhat better activities on direct marketing.
- This study emphasized that IMC practices by Coca-cola should be research based with Ethiopian market and consumers' perspectives because most of the practices those which are done all over the world as a campaign, for effective IMC practices all department should work together.

- Advertisement has great impact on consumers' brand preference of coca- cola. Besides, to have credibility, and to get target audiences attention during advertising there has to be use both national and mother tang language of nationalities in order to advertise the products through the most potent media and by credible sources.
- Television is currently the most potent of all media used in advertising Coca-cola. In view of this, more consideration should keep being given to television as a medium of advertising.
- I recommended strongly Sales promotion still can plays a very important role in brand preference of Coca-cola through its affordability principle, Hence Coca-cola should properly use all sales promotion factor in correct use in correct place.
- As Coca-Cola continue to adopt IMC from the international market to the Ethiopia market as an approach to planning and executing their marketing communication programs, more consideration must be given to how they can evaluate the impact of IMC tools on consumers, both individually and in combination.

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I) Appendix

Dear respondents, the purpose of this questionnaire is to collect primary data for conducting a study on the topic, “The impact of Integrated marketing communication on brand preference in case of Coca-Cola Ethiopia. for the partial fulfillment of the Masters (MA) in Marketing Management Program at Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce. I kindly request you to provide me reliable information. The data collected is confidential and will only be used for analysis of the study and not for any other purpose. Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Note:

- No need to write your name,
- Please complete each parts of the survey with care, honesty and due attention,
- Please encircle the appropriate answer of your opinion.

Questioners

Part I) General information

1. Gender: 1) Male 2) Female
2. Age: 1)18 -25 2) 26– 40 3) 41– 55 4) >55
3. Educational Background
 - 1) High school 2) Certificate 3) Diploma 4) Degree 5) Masters and above
- 4.do you drink Coca-cola brand products
 - 1) Yes 2) No
- 5.How long you have been drinking Coca-cola brand products?

1) Last 2 years 2) 2-5 Years 3) 5-10 4) more than 10 years

Part II Determinants of Brand preference

Direction (1-strongly disagree 2-disagree 3-Neutral 4-agree 5- strongly agree)

No.	Question	Choice				
II- ADVERTISEMENT						
6	Advertising enables me to be more aware about Coca-Cola and its product features.	1	2	3	4	5
7	After watching Coca-Cola advertisement, I regard Coca-Cola as soft drink which gives me refreshment.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Any time I see advertisement, it reminds and initiate me to purchase Coca-Cola any time I see it.	1	2	3	4	5
III- SALES PROMOTION						
9	Sales promotion help me to know about Coca-cola brand	1	2	3	4	5
10	I perceive that Coca-cola is affordable at the time of sales promotion packages.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Packages which I get at the time of Sales promotion influence me to prefer Coca-cola brand.	1	2	3	4	5
IIII- PERSONAL SELLING						
12	I know about Coca-cola through a communication with a Sales man.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I understand that I can find Coca-cola conveniently after communicating with a sales man.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I think the sales man influence me to prefer Coca-cola brand.	1	2	3	4	5
IV- DIRECT MARKETING						
15	Direct mail, telephone and personal conversation which I receive from marketers of Coca-cola enables me to know about facts, importance and some studies done on Coca-cola brand.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I inclined to the idea that says Coca-cola is healthy drink after I receive Direct mail, telephone and personal conversation about Coca-Cola products.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I think direct marketing influence me to prefer Coca-cola brand.	1	2	3	4	5
V- PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATION						
18	I know about Coca-cola brand through publication and press release made about Coca-cola.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I perceive Coca-cola is working on corporate social responsibilities and other social activities after reading publications and listening press release.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Publication and press release about cola-cola influence me to prefer Coca-cola brand.	1	2	3	4	5
VI- BRAND AWARENESS						
21	I am very acquainted with Coca-cola.	1	2	3	4	5

22	When I am thinking of soft drinks, Coca-cola will come first in my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Over all, I know more about Coca-cola brand through Coca-cola Advertisement, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and publicity and public relation	1	2	3	4	5
VII- ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRAND						
24	Coca-cola is the leading soft drink brand in Ethiopia.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Coca-cola brand is characterized by its continuous innovation.	1	2	3	4	5
26	After I see Coca-cola Advertisement, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and publicity and public relation I feel more positive towards Coca-cola brand.	1	2	3	4	5
VIII- BRAND PREFERENCE						
27	I prefer Coca-Cola products because it delivers what they promised.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Whenever I purchase soft drink product, Coca-cola products are my first choice	1	2	3	4	5
29	Advertisement, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and publicity and public relation of Coca-cola influence me to prefer Coca-cola over other brand soft drink brands.	1	2	3	4	5

