

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**

**Faculty of Economics and Management**

**Department of Management**



**Master Thesis**

**Evaluation of Marketing Communication of a selected  
company**

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# **DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT**

Vinit Kumar Singh

Business Administration

Thesis title

**Evaluation of Marketing Communication of a selected company**

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## **Objectives of thesis**

The main objective of this thesis is to evaluate integrated marketing communication strategy of the selected logistics company DHL Express. By explaining consumer awareness, understanding their perceptions, and evaluating impact of DHL Express's marketing communication efforts on buying behaviour, this study seeks to provide valuable insights crucial for refining marketing strategies in the competitive logistics landscape.

## **Methodology**

The thesis aimed to evaluate consumer perception of DHL Express's integrated marketing communication strategy. Descriptive research methodology will be employed to assess general population knowledge, perception, beliefs, preferences, and satisfaction. Data collection will be conducted through a questionnaire survey. Data analysis will involve descriptive statistics, with correlation and regression analyses to test hypotheses regarding the impact of DHL's integrated marketing communication on consumer behaviour.

## **The proposed extent of the thesis**

60 – 80 pages

## **Keywords**

Marketing Strategy, Marketing Communication, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Perception, DHL Company

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## **Recommended information sources**

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**Declaration**

I have worked on my master's thesis titled "Evaluation of Marketing Communication of a Selected Company" by myself. I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the master thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on date 25/03/2024

VINIT KUMAR SINGH

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# Evaluation of Marketing Communication of a selected company

## Abstract

The study focuses on consumer perception of the integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy of DHL Express. It explores how IMC influences consumer behavior and buying decisions. IMC combines various communication tools to ensure consistency and clarity in marketing messages. The research aims to evaluate consumer awareness and perception of DHL Express' IMC strategy and its impact on consumer buying behavior. The methodology involves descriptive research with a sample size of 400 consumers selected through random sampling. Data was collected via questionnaires administered online. According to the findings, customers know the IMC components of public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, and advertising. Advertising was perceived as the most effective element. Consumers generally had a favorable view of IMC strategies. There was a significant positive correlation between IMC elements and consumer buying behavior. The regression model showed that personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations significantly impacted consumer behavior. The study concludes that consumers understand IMC components well and perceive advertising as the most impactful. DHL Express can improve its IMC strategies based on consumer feedback. The research contributes to understanding the relationship between IMC and consumer behavior, providing insights for marketers to enhance their strategies. The findings can guide future studies and benefit stakeholders in developing effective marketing communication campaigns.

**Keywords:** *Marketing Strategy, Marketing Communication, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Perception, DHL Company*

# Zhodnocení marketingové komunikace zvolené společnosti

## Abstrakt

Studie se zaměřuje na spotřebitelské vnímání strategie integrované marketingové komunikace (IMC) DHL Express. Zkoumá, jak IMC ovlivňuje chování spotřebitelů a nákupní rozhodnutí. IMC kombinuje různé komunikační nástroje k zajištění konzistence a srozumitelnosti marketingových sdělení. Výzkum si klade za cíl vyhodnotit spotřebitelské povědomí a vnímání strategie IMC DHL Express a jejího dopadu na nákupní chování spotřebitelů. Metodika zahrnuje deskriptivní výzkum s velikostí vzorku 400 spotřebitelů vybraných náhodným výběrem. Údaje budou shromažďovány prostřednictvím dotazníků zadávaných online. Podle zjištění zákazníci znají IMC součásti public relations, podpory prodeje, osobního prodeje a reklamy. Reklama byla vnímána jako neúčinnější prvek. Spotřebitelé obecně vnímali strategii IMC pozitivně. Mezi prvky IMC a nákupním chováním spotřebitelů byla zjištěna významná pozitivní korelace. Regresní model ukázal, že osobní prodej, podpora prodeje a vztahy s veřejností měly významný vliv na chování spotřebitelů. Studie dochází k závěru, že spotřebitelé dobře chápou komponenty IMC a vnímají reklamu jako nejpůsobivější. DHL Express může zlepšit své strategie IMC na základě zpětné vazby od spotřebitelů. Výzkum přispívá k pochopení vztahu mezi IMC a chováním spotřebitelů a poskytuje marketingovým pracovníkům informace, jak zlepšit své strategie. Zjištění mohou být vodítkem pro budoucí studie a být přínosem pro zúčastněné strany při vytváření účinných marketingových komunikačních kampaní.

***Klíčová slova:*** *Marketingová strategie, marketingová komunikace, spotřebitelské chování, spotřebitelské vnímání, společnost DHL*

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# 1. Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, organizations must effectively communicate with their stakeholders, including prospective and existing consumers. More is needed for modern marketing than just creating a quality product, pricing it competitively, and ensuring that target customers can obtain it. This has led organizations like DHL Express to adopt integrated marketing communication (IMC), That involves a range of communication methods, including public relations, direct marketing, sales promotion, advertising, and online advertising.

IMC strategically blends several communication tools to provide consistency, clarity, and maximum communication impact. It helps management design and implement impactful and efficient marketing communication programs, avoiding duplication, and benefiting from synergy among promotional tools. It also helps spread the right message, making consumers aware, stimulated, and taking purchase actions.

Consumer behavior is a multidimensional concept that considers consumers' perceptions, attitudes, motivations, and behavior tendencies, influencing consumer buying decisions. Researchers have revealed a positive relationship between integrated marketing communication strategy and consumer buying behavior and decisions. The literature suggests that integrated marketing practices significantly impact consumer purchase decisions, contributing to consumers' final purchase decisions.

Marketing has evolved from a door-to-door sales strategy to a holistic approach, requiring the integration of various marketing communications components into one system. IMC is crucial for firms to profit from, as consumer perceptions influence their behavior and buying decisions. This study analyzes consumer perceptions of the Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy at DHL Express, allowing companies to better tailor their marketing strategies and operations to meet the needs of their consumers.

**Research Significance** - The study aims to provide insights into consumer perceptions and preferences regarding integrated marketing communication (IMC) practices, enabling marketers to design effective marketing strategies and increase product awareness. It will also explore how managers can develop and implement IMC campaigns and investigate its impact on DHL Express. The findings will help organizations understand consumer perceptions and use marketing mix tools to stimulate demand.

## **2. Objectives and Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Objectives**

The study's primary objective is to analyze consumers' perceptions of DHL Express's integrated marketing communication strategy. The specific research objectives are: (1) How aware are consumers of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy implemented by DHL Express? (2) What are consumers' perceptions of the IMC strategy employed by DHL Express? (3) How does the IMC strategy implemented by DHL Express influence consumer buying behavior?

### **2.2 Research Methodology**

This study was to analyze the consumer perception of DHL Express's integrated marketing communication strategy. Descriptive research was chosen methodology to assess the general population's knowledge, perception, beliefs, preferences, and satisfaction. The study was focused on DHL Express, a global leader in the express logistics industry specializing in international document, parcel, and freight shipment. The sample size of 400 consumers was selected using the simple random sampling technique, ensuring an equal probability for each possible sample combination and each member of the population to be included. Data was primarily collected through a questionnaire (see Appendix 1 - Questionnaire Survey form) consisting of close-ended questions designed to obtain reliable information from a large population while maintaining data scrutiny. The first part of the questionnaire contains demographic questions such as age, gender, and service usage of DHL customers along with that, the second part was about Likert scale-based questions related to effectiveness of marketing communication and its impact on consumer behaviour. The study has got balanced number of responses from various demographics, which makes it more reliable. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires throughout January and February 2024 using LinkedIn and other social media networks, guaranteeing respondent anonymity and data confidentiality. The data analysis includes the description of respondents and the hypothesis testing related to the impact of integrated marketing communication of DHL on consumer behavior, correlation, and regression were undertaken, where correlation suggests the strength of the linear relationship, and regression expresses the relationship between a pair of variables.

### 2.2.1 Hypothesis

(H0) *Null Hypothesis*: There is no impact of marketing communication strategies on consumer behaviour of DHL company.

(H0): There is a significant impact of marketing communication strategies on consumer behaviour of DHL company.

(H1) *Alternative Hypothesis*: There is a big impact of DHL's integrated marketing communication strategy on consumer behavior.

*Statistical Testing* - To test the hypotheses, the research utilized inferential statistics, specifically hypothesis testing, correlation, and regression analysis.

#### ***Formulas for Hypothesis Testing***

An analysis of correlation was conducted in order to identify the direction and level of the linear relationship between variables.

Regression analysis was conducted to express the relationship between a pair of variables and predict the impact of marketing communication strategies on consumer behavior.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient:  $r_{xy} = \frac{\sum_1^n (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum_1^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum_1^n (y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Linear Regression:

The straight-line equation is given as  $y = a + \beta x$

$$\beta = \frac{\sum_1^n (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sum_1^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2}$$

$$\beta = r_{xy} \frac{\sigma_y}{\sigma_x}$$

$$\alpha = \bar{y} - \beta \bar{x}$$

In the first data set, where  $X_i$  represents each data point, the mean is denoted by  $\bar{x}$  and the standard deviation by  $\sigma_x$ . The mean and standard deviation of the second data set is denoted by  $\bar{y}$  and  $\sigma_y$ , respectively. In each dataset, there are  $n$  data points.

### 3. Literature Review

#### 3.1 Integrated Marketing Communication

Communication theory is the foundation of marketing communication, providing a framework for understanding how information is exchanged and interpreted. It involves understanding the communication process, which includes the sender (brand or marketer), encoding (converting the message into an understandable form), channel (the medium through which the message is transmitted), decoding (interpreting the message by the receiver), receiver (the recipient of the message, the potential consumer), and feedback (the receiver's response to the message, which can be purchase, positive reviews, or engagement). (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2018).

In Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), communication theory plays a crucial role by ensuring consistency across all communication channels, optimizing channel selection based on the target audience's preferred communication styles and message objectives, and facilitating audience understanding. By understanding the communication process and leveraging relevant theories, marketers can craft audience-centric messages that are clear, concise, and resonate with the target demographics. (Blakeman, 2023).

Figure 1 - Integrated vs Omnichannel Marketing



Source - AdRoll Blog Report (2022)

### **3.1.1 Integrated Marketing Communication Overview**

Any organization that wants to succeed must prioritize marketing communication, which involves strategic planning, creating, implementing, and assessing a range of communication techniques to raise brand awareness, shape consumer perceptions, and motivate desired behaviors. It involves transmitting messages that resonate with the target audience and aligns with the organization's objectives. (Krizanova et al., 2019).

In today's competitive business landscape, marketing communication is vital in building brand awareness, creating brand differentiation, driving sales and revenue, building consumer relationships, supporting product launches and promotions, managing reputation and public perception, and facilitating two-way communication. Effective communication helps increase brand visibility and recognition among consumers by consistently communicating critical messages about the brand's values, offerings, and unique selling propositions. (Belch & Belch, 2018).

In crowded markets, marketing communication is crucial in distinguishing one brand from another through compelling storytelling, creative messaging, and unique brand positioning. Well-executed marketing campaigns can attract new consumers, encourage repeat purchases, and contribute to the bottom line. Fostering meaningful connections between brands and consumers is essential for building trust, loyalty, and long-term relationships. Marketing communication is instrumental in launching new or promoting existing products, creating excitement, generating buzz, and disseminating information about product features, benefits, and availability. (Andrews & Shimp, 2018).

Managing reputation and public perception is crucial in today's digital age, where consumers, media, and other stakeholders constantly scrutinize companies. Effective marketing communication helps companies address issues proactively, communicate transparently, and build goodwill through corporate social responsibility initiatives. Marketing communication is more than just putting out information to customers; it also entails getting feedback and acting upon it via social media and customer support, among other channels. (Dibb, 2019).

Marketing communication has evolved significantly, driven by technological advancements, consumer behavior changes, and market dynamics. The evolution began with the Print Era, where brands used print media to communicate messages. The Broadcast Era, which followed, saw the advent of radio and television, allowing brands to reach larger audiences through audio and visual mediums. The Digital Era, which began in the late 20th century, saw the rise of websites, email marketing, SEO, and social media platforms as critical channels for brand promotion. (Reza & Narwanto, 2022).

The trends in marketing communication include personalization, content marketing, omnichannel integration, influencer marketing, visual and video dominance, mobile marketing, sustainability and social responsibility, and emerging technologies like augmented reality, virtual reality, voice assistants, chatbots, and AI-powered chatbots. Personalization involves delivering targeted messages and customized offerings across various touchpoints. (Krizanova et al. 2019).

Simultaneously, content marketing focuses on providing valuable, relevant, and engaging material to attract and keep consumers, establish brand loyalty, and increase conversions. Omnichannel integration ensures consistency and continuity in messaging and branding across online and offline touchpoints, while influencer marketing leverages individuals with large social media followings to endorse products and services. Visual and video dominance emphasizes visually appealing storytelling to capture the audience's attention and evoke emotions effectively. (Ismunandar et al., 2023).

Marketing communication is vital for businesses to establish and strengthen their brands while fostering meaningful consumer engagement. It involves various channels and strategies to convey brand messages, values, and offerings to target audiences. In today's competitive marketplace, effective marketing communication is essential for businesses to differentiate themselves, build brand equity, and cultivate long-term consumer relationships. Brand building involves establishing a distinct brand identity through consistent messaging, imagery, and tone. (Lyu et al., 2022).

This includes brand name, logo, tagline, and personality. Advertising, public relations (PR), and social media efforts are essential for improving company presence and consumer awareness. Effective marketing allows businesses to communicate their brand values, mission, and unique selling propositions (USPs) to consumers, attracting and resonating with their target audience on a deeper level. Building brand equity, which refers to the intangible assets associated with a brand, significantly contributes to marketing communication efforts. (Kyrousi et al., 2022).

**The AIDA model**, which stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, is a widely used communication model in marketing. It outlines the sequential steps consumers typically go through when exposed to a marketing message. The first step is to grab the audience's attention through attention-grabbing headlines, visuals, or slogans. The next step is to generate interest in the product or service using compelling content, unique selling propositions, and benefits. The final step is to stimulate desire or a favorable disposition towards the product or service by highlighting the benefits, addressing pain points, and creating a desire for ownership or experience. (Pashootanzadeh & Khalilian, 2018).

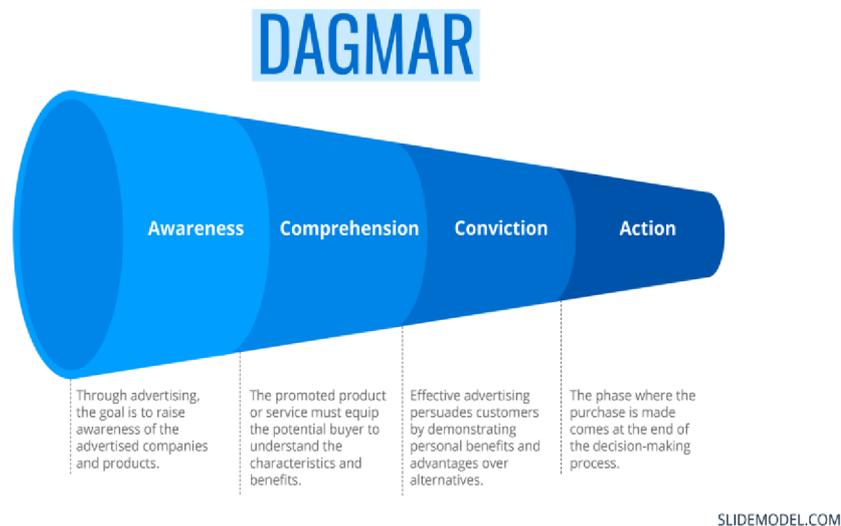
Figure 2 - AIDA Model



*Source - Lewis E. (1978)*

**The DAGMAR model**, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of setting specific and measurable communication objectives. It suggests consumers move through the awareness, comprehension, conviction, and action stages. The initial goal is to create awareness about the product or service among the target audience. Once awareness is established, marketers use various communication channels and messages to educate consumers and build comprehension. After comprehension, the goal is to convince consumers of the brand's superiority and value proposition compared to competitors. This stage involves building trust, credibility, and emotional connections with the audience. (Sabbagh & Ghafari, 2018).

Figure 3 - DAGMAR Model



*Source - Colley R. (1961)*

**Communication channels** are the numerous channels through which marketing messages are delivered to their intended audience. These can be categorized into traditional and digital channels, each offering unique advantages and reaching different audience segments. Traditional channels include television, radio, print media, outdoor advertising, and direct mail. Digital channels leverage the internet and digital technologies to reach and engage with the audience, such as websites, social media platforms, email marketing, mobile apps, search engine optimization (SEO), and online advertising. (Kovaitè et al., 2020).

**Message strategy** describes the creative components and content of a marketing communication campaign that is intended to connect with the target audience and successfully communicate the brand's message. Message strategies can be employed based on the campaign objectives, target audience, and brand positioning. Emotional appeal involves tapping into the audience's emotions to create a memorable and impactful message. Rational appeal focuses on presenting logical arguments, facts, and evidence to persuade the audience of the product's benefits and superiority. (Sarofim & Tawfik, 2022).

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is an organization's strategic approach to coordinating and integrating various communication channels to deliver a consistent, seamless, unified message to target audiences. It aims to create a synergistic effect by linking all forms of communication and messaging together, reinforcing each other's impact and enhancing the overall effectiveness of marketing efforts. IMC strategically integrates advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, and digital marketing to achieve specific marketing objectives. (Reza & Narwanto, 2022).

IMC emphasizes synergy, where the combined effect of different communication elements is greater than the sum of their individual effects. Consistency in messaging across all communication channels is crucial for building brand identity, establishing brand recall, and fostering consumer trust and loyalty. It also puts the consumer at the center of communication strategies, understanding their behavior, preferences, and decision-making processes to tailor messages and experiences that resonate with target audiences. (Šķiltere & Bormane, 2018).

Strategic integration requires strategic planning and coordination across all organizational communication functions, aligning marketing objectives, messages, and tactics across different departments and disciplines. This enables organizations to leverage the strengths of each communication channel while minimizing redundancy and inefficiency. Measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of communication is essential for IMC. (Rehman et al., 2022).

IMC promotes two-way communication between the company and its target audience, with an emphasis on paying attention to what customers have to say, holding discussions, and answering questions right away. It is about short-term promotional tactics and building long-term consumer relationships through consistent communication and positive experiences. IMC's objectives include ensuring brand consistency across all communication channels, increasing brand awareness, improving consumer engagement, enhancing consumer experience, maximizing marketing ROI, and establishing a distinctive and enduring brand image to give a competitive edge. Organizations can tailor their communication to resonate with their audience and reach potential consumers by delivering relevant and personalized messages. (Desta, 2020).

The IMC planning process involves several steps. The first step is the situation analysis, which assesses the current market environment, including the company's position, competitors, consumers, and industry trends. Key components include market analysis, competitive analysis, SWOT analysis, and consumer analysis. The second step is setting objectives, which should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Objectives can be cognitive, affective, or behavioral and should focus on increasing awareness, influencing attitudes, or targeting specific actions.

The third step is developing strategies, which outline how the objectives will be achieved. Key components include target audience segmentation, positioning, message development, and media selection. The fourth step is implementing tactics through various communication channels and promotional activities. Key considerations include creative development, media planning and buying, sales promotion, and public relations. The fifth step is evaluating results, which involves measuring brand awareness, attitudes, behavior, ROI, and continuous improvement. Key metrics include awareness, attitudes, behavior, ROI, and the ability to refine future IMC strategies and tactics for better performance. (Juska, 2021).

### **3.1.2 Integrated Marketing Communication Components**

IMC is a tactic that employs a variety of communication channels to provide target consumers with a consistent message. Key components include advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing, and additional tools like social media marketing, sponsorships, packaging, and content marketing. Advertising is paid, non-personal communication that reaches a broad audience through various media platforms. (Widjaja, 2022).

Sales promotion involves short-term incentives to stimulate product trials or purchases. Personal selling involves direct, one-on-one communication between salespeople and consumers to build relationships and influence purchase decisions. Public relations maintain positive stakeholder relationships through earned media coverage and community engagement. Direct marketing communicates directly with individual consumers through personalized messages. (Laurie & Mortimer, 2019).

Figure 4 - IMC Components



Source - Deskera Report (2022)

### 3.1.2.1 Advertising

Advertising is a crucial aspect of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), serving as a powerful tool for communicating with target audiences, promoting products or services, and building brand awareness. It comes in various forms, employing diverse strategies for creative execution and media planning. Forms of advertising include print advertising, broadcast advertising, and online advertising. Print ads can range from simple text-based classifieds to elaborate full-page spreads with visuals and copy. Broadcast advertising involves commercials aired on radio and television channels, using audio and visual elements to capture the audience's attention and convey messages effectively. (Ford et al., 2023).

There are many digital advertising channels online, including websites or webpages, social media channels, top search engines, and mobile applications. The goal of advertising strategies is to deliver engaging messages to the target audience through creative execution, which involves conceptualizing and developing advertising material. Media planning involves strategically selecting advertising channels and placement to maximize reach, frequency, and impact. Media planners determine the most appropriate mix of media platforms, timing, ad formats, and budget allocation to achieve campaign objectives. (Kerr & Richards, 2021).

KPIs measure ad effectiveness through reach, frequency, impressions, click-through rates (CTRs), conversion rates (CR), and return on investment (ROI). Advertising builds brand awareness by increasing exposure and recognition among target audiences and shaping consumer perceptions of the brand through consistent messaging, storytelling, and association with positive attributes. Effective advertising campaigns can increase sales, revenue, and market share, directly impacting the bottom line and business growth. (Sutherland, 2020).

### **3.1.2.2 Public Relations**

PR is a critical aspect of an organization's reputation, aiming to build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders such as the media, consumers, employees, investors, and the public. PR professionals ensure the organization's actions, messages, and behaviors align with its values and objectives. They work to create a positive perception of the organization among stakeholders by maintaining transparency, honesty, and authenticity in their communication efforts. Media relations involve managing the relationship between the organization and the media to generate positive publicity and manage potential crises. (Wang et al., 2021).

This includes writing press releases and media advisories, pitching story ideas, arranging interviews with key spokespeople, monitoring media coverage, and responding promptly to inaccuracies or adverse reports. Events allow organizations to engage with stakeholders, showcase their products or services, and strengthen relationships. PR professionals plan and execute various events, such as product launches, corporate sponsorships, and community outreach programs. Crisis communication is essential for managing and mitigating reputational damage during adversity or unexpected events. (Jackson et al., 2022).

Public relations efforts significantly impact consumer perception, influencing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward the organization and its products or services. Positive public relations campaigns can boost consumer trust and loyalty, but negative publicity or mishandled crises can harm reputations and undermine consumer confidence. Effective PR strategies can shape brand perceptions by consistently communicating key messages and values across various channels, building credibility and trust by cultivating transparency, authenticity, and social responsibility, and influencing buying decisions through positive media coverage, endorsements from trusted sources, and engaging PR campaigns. (Robson, 2021).

### **3.1.2.3 Sales Promotion**

Sales Promotion is a crucial aspect of integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies to stimulate consumer buying and increase sales volume in the short term. It involves various promotional techniques to incentivize consumers to purchase or take specific actions. Standard sales promotion techniques include coupons, contests, discounts, rebates, samples, loyalty programs, and point-of-purchase displays. Coupons are among the oldest and most widely used sales promotion techniques, offering discounts or rebates on products or services, typically redeemable at purchase. They appeal to price-sensitive consumers and effectively encourage trial, repeat, and brand switching. (Štreimikienė et al., 2021).

They provide marketers with a measurable way to track the effectiveness of their promotional efforts. Contests involve inviting consumers to participate in competitions for prizes or rewards, such as photo, video, slogan, or skill-based competitions. They generate excitement, increase brand awareness, and foster brand loyalty. On the other hand, a discount reduces a product's price under particular conditions or for a limited time, attracting the desire for value among consumers. They effectively clear excess inventory, boost sales during slow periods, and attract price-sensitive consumers. (Suryani & Syafarudin, 2021).

### **3.1.2.4 Direct Marketing**

Direct Marketing is a targeted advertising strategy that communicates directly with consumers or businesses through various channels, bypassing intermediaries like retailers. It involves sending personalized messages to a specific audience to elicit a response or drive a particular action. Direct marketing is highly measurable, allowing marketers to track responses and

analyze the effectiveness of their campaigns in real time. In the modern marketing landscape, direct marketing remains a crucial component of integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategies because it delivers tailored messages directly to the audience. (Lim et al., 2022).

Channels of direct marketing include mail, email, and telemarketing. Traditional mail involves sending physical promotional materials, while email marketing is prevalent in the digital age. Telemarketing involves contacting potential consumers via phone to promote products or services, conduct surveys, or gather feedback. Despite challenges such as regulatory restrictions and consumer resistance, telemarketing remains a viable channel for businesses. Strategies in direct marketing include database marketing, which leverages consumer data to create targeted marketing campaigns, and personalization, which increases consumer engagement and relevance by personalizing communications to specific consumers based on their preferences, behavior, or previous interactions. (Zaki et al., 2024).

For several reasons, direct marketing remains highly relevant in digital marketing and data-driven approaches. First, it allows businesses to target specific audience segments with precision, minimizing wastage of resources and maximizing the effectiveness of marketing efforts. Second, Direct marketing programs are extremely measurable, allowing marketers to watch important data in real time and continuously optimize and modify their campaigns. Third, direct marketing enables personalized consumer communication, fostering deeper engagement and stronger relationships. (Perčić & Perić, 2021).

### **3.1.2.5 Digital Marketing**

A business' ability to reach their target audiences effectively and engage them through digital marketing is crucial in today's interconnected world. It offers global reach, targeted advertising, cost-effectiveness, engagement and interaction, and data-driven insights. Using digital marketing platforms, businesses can capture the demographics, interests, and behaviors of specific audiences. The lower costs and ability to track and optimize campaigns in real-time make digital marketing more cost-effective than traditional marketing channels like print and TV ads. (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Digital marketing encourages brands and customers to communicate with each other in both directions, facilitating engagement, feedback, and relationship-building through social media, email marketing, and other digital channels.

Digital marketing tactics encompass Search Engine Optimization (SEOs), Search Engine Marketing (SEMs), Content Marketing, and Integration with Conventional Channels. SEO aims to improve a website's visibility in organic search engine results by optimizing content, structure, and technical elements. To improve exposure and send relevant visitors to a website, search engine marketing (SEM) employs sponsored promotion on search engines such as Bing and Google. (Thahaet al., 2021).

### **3.1.2.6 Content Marketing**

A content marketing strategy aims to attract and retain a certain audience by distributing timely, informative, and well-written content. Integrating digital marketing with traditional channels can further enhance a brand's overall marketing strategy. Cross-channel consistency, omnichannel marketing, improved targeting, and personalized messaging, and measuring digital campaign effectiveness are essential for optimizing performance and maximizing ROI. Key metrics and tools for measuring digital campaign effectiveness include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Web Analytics, Marketing Automation Platforms, and A/B Testing. By analyzing these metrics, businesses can identify the most effective strategies and optimize campaign performance based on data-driven insights. (Dunakhe & Panse, 2022).

### **3.1.3 Integrated Marketing Communication Significance**

IMC is a strategic approach to coordinating promotional elements and communication channels to deliver a unified and consistent message to target audiences. Organizations in today's competitive business environment must achieve their marketing objectives effectively. IMC ensures consistency and coherence across all communication efforts, enhancing brand recognition and image, building trust and credibility, driving consumer loyalty, and repeat business. IMC also increases brand visibility and awareness by integrating multiple communication channels such as traditional advertising, social media, email marketing, and public relations. (Yamin, 2018).

This broader exposure increases brand visibility and awareness among target audiences, making consumers more likely to remember and consider the brand when buying. IMC optimizes resource allocation by coordinating and streamlining promotional activities, avoiding duplication of efforts, and allocating budgetary resources to channels that yield the highest return on investment (ROI). This strategic approach allows organizations to achieve their marketing objectives within budget constraints while maximizing campaign impact. IMC facilitates two-way communication between brands and consumers, fostering deeper engagement and interaction. (Puspanathan et al., 2021).

By leveraging multiple communication channels, organizations can create meaningful dialogue with their target audiences, strengthening brand relationships and providing valuable insights into consumer preferences and behaviors. IMC improves marketing effectiveness and ROI by coordinating messaging and timing across channels, leading to higher conversion rates, increased sales, and greater profitability. Additionally, IMC allows organizations to adapt to changing market conditions and consumer preferences more effectively, maintaining flexibility and agility in their communication strategies. (Fermindra & Shabrina, 2023).

IMC is a potent instrument that helps companies get a competitive edge. It ensures a consistent brand image across different channels, strengthening the company's identity and distinguishing it from competitors. This enhances visibility and reach, attracting more consumers and increasing brand awareness. IMC also allows for effective targeting by utilizing various channels to reach different segments of the target audience, increasing relevance and resonance. IMC streamlines marketing efforts and allocates resources efficiently, maximizing the impact of marketing investments. (Hutapea & Wulansari, 2021).

IMC allows companies to adapt quickly to market changes and evolving consumer needs and preferences. By integrating different channels and utilizing real-time feedback, businesses can adjust their communication strategies promptly, staying ahead of competitors. IMC also plays a crucial role in building and sustaining long-term consumer relationships. Consistent communication across multiple channels builds consumer trust and credibility, fostering long-term relationships. It facilitates meaningful engagement and interaction through various avenues, such as social media, email marketing, or in-person interactions. (Hassanzadeh et al., 2021).

IMC adopts a consumer-centric approach, delivering value and addressing consumer needs and preferences. This consumer-centricity fosters more substantial relationships, encourages repeat business, and encourages referrals. IMC also allows businesses to gather data and insights from multiple channels, comprehensively understanding consumer behavior and preferences. By leveraging this data, companies can personalize their communication efforts and deliver relevant messages that resonate with individual consumers, strengthening relationships. IMC creates a culture of continuous improvement by enabling businesses to gather feedback and measure the effectiveness of their communication efforts across different channels. (Samlejsin & Kookkaew, 2022).

The IMC contributes to brand equity through the establishment of brand consistency. Consistency in messaging across channels helps build brand recognition and familiarity among consumers, strengthening brand associations and increasing the likelihood of recall and recognition. Consistent messaging also enhances brand credibility and trustworthiness, resulting in positive attitudes and perceptions toward the brand, increasing brand loyalty and advocacy. IMC also facilitates compelling brand storytelling, which is essential for building emotional consumer connections.

By integrating storytelling elements into various communication channels, brands can convey their values, heritage, and personality compellingly and engagingly, fostering deeper emotional connections and attachment to the brand. IMC enables brands to adapt messaging to different audience segments and market contexts while maintaining brand positioning and identity consistency. Over the utilization of market data and consumer insights, brands can customize their communication strategies to connect with certain target audiences over a variety of channels, increasing relevance and resonance. This enables them to build better relationships with customers and increase brand engagement and loyalty. (Aggarwal, 2018).

### **3.1.4 Integrated Marketing Communication Process**

The IMC process involves planning, implementation, and evaluation. Planning involves thorough research to understand the market, competitors, consumer behavior, and industry trends. Target audience identification is crucial for effective communication, as it helps tailor messages and select appropriate communication channels. It is crucial to establish specific goals, such as raising sales, generating leads, improving customer interaction, and strengthening brand perception. (Anani-Bossman & Mudzanani, 2021).

Budgeting is also a critical aspect of IMC planning, determining the optimal allocation of resources for each communication channel and activity. The IMC plan must be executed effectively across various communication channels, ensuring message consistency and coherence across all touchpoints. Consistency in messaging reinforces brand identity and builds brand recognition and trust among consumers. Creative execution involves developing compelling content, engaging visuals, and creative advertising efforts that connect with the intended audience, requiring collaboration between marketers, designers, copywriters, and other creative professionals. (Tibebe & Ayenew, 2018).

Assessment is necessary for establishing the success of IMC campaigns and identify improvement areas. There are several ways to evaluate efficacy, including key performance indicators (KPIs), return on investment (ROI), and feedback mechanisms. ROI measurement helps determine the profitability and efficiency of IMC activities by comparing financial gains generated from the campaign against costs incurred. Feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, focus groups, consumer feedback forms, and social media monitoring, provide valuable insights into consumer perceptions and preferences, allowing marketers to evaluate audience reactions, identify strengths and weaknesses in the campaign, and make necessary adjustments for future initiatives. (Rivandi, 2021).

## **3.2 Consumer Behavior**

Consumer behavior is a multidimensional field that involves understanding how individuals, groups, and organizations choose, purchase, utilize, and discard products, services, concepts, or experiences in order to fulfill their needs and wants. It is a crucial aspect of marketing strategy as businesses strive to understand the factors influencing consumers' decisions. Core consumer behavior concepts include needs and wants, motivation, perception, attitudes and beliefs, learning, culture and social influences, personality and lifestyle, and decision-making. Needs are essential requirements for survival and well-being. (Fitriani et al., 2022).

At the same time, wants are desires for specific products or services that go beyond basic needs and are shaped by cultural, social, and individual factors. Motivation is the internal state that drives consumers to act, which biological, psychological, and social factors can influence. The term "perception" describes how people perceive and make meaning of the inputs they come across in their surroundings. Effective marketing communications require marketers to have a thorough understanding of consumers' perceptions of their brands or products. Attitudes and beliefs are evaluations or feelings toward objects, ideas, or behaviors that influence consumers' preferences, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty. (Pinasang et al., 2020).

Learning involves acquiring knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors through experience, observation, and information processing. Cultural and social influences shape individuals' behavior and consumption patterns, while personality traits like openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism influence preferences, product choices, and brand affiliations. The decision-making process involves stages such as identifying a problem, gathering information, weighing your options, making a purchase, and post-purchase evaluation, each influenced by internal and external factors. By understanding these core concepts, marketers can develop more effective strategies to attract, retain, and satisfy consumers. (Jaeger & Höhler, 2021).

### **3.2.1 Consumer perception**

Consumer perception is the process by which people analyze and comprehend the information they experience through their senses—taste, smell, touch, hearing, and sight. It involves selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory inputs to form a meaningful picture of the world. Critical aspects of consumer perception include sensory inputs, selective attention, perceptual organization, and interpretation. Marketers should manage the sensory elements of

their brand to create a favorable brand image that resonates with consumers' perceptions and preferences. (Majer et al., 2022).

### **3.2.2 Consumer attitude**

Consumer attitude refers to individuals' overall evaluation, feelings, and beliefs toward a product, brand, or service. A combination of cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors come together to generate attitudes, which have a big impact on how consumers behave. Components of consumer attitudes include cognitive components, affective components, and behavioral components. Consumer attitudes can be formed by direct experience, social influence, communication, consumer experience, and influencer marketing. Marketers should strive to create positive brand associations and emotional connections with consumers to influence their attitudes positively. Providing exceptional consumer experiences can enhance consumers' attitudes toward a brand, leading to increased satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. Influencer marketing can help shape consumers' attitudes and perceptions through authentic endorsements and recommendations. (Shastry, 2021).

### **3.2.3 Consumer buying**

Consumer buying involves stages, from recognizing a need or wants to make the final purchase decision. The identification of needs, information search, alternative assessment, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation are steps in the purchasing process. Factors influencing buying behavior include psychological, social, personal, and environmental factors. Psychological factors include consumer perceptions, attitudes, motivations, beliefs, and personality traits. Social factors include family, peers, culture, and reference groups, while personal factors include age, gender, income, occupation, lifestyle, and life stage. (Budiyanto et al., 2022).

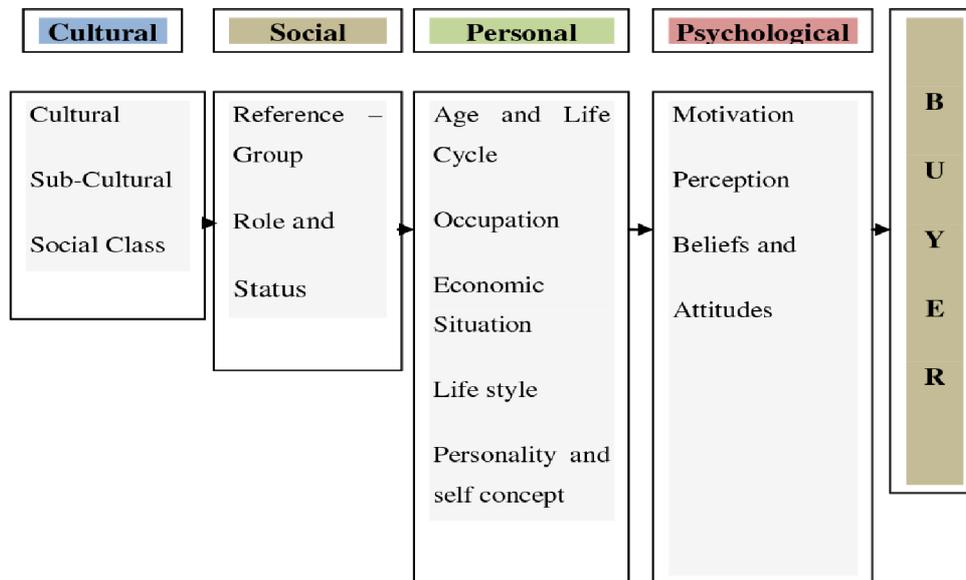
### **3.2.4 Decision-Making Process**

The decision-making process in consumer behavior involves five stages: information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, post-purchase evaluation, and potentially, a feedback loop influencing future decisions. In the information search stage, consumers identify a need or want to be triggered by internal or external stimuli. They gather information from various sources, such as personal experiences, online reviews, advertisements, and comparison shopping. (Panpatte & Takale, 2019).



### 3.2.5 Influencing Factors

Consumer 6 - Consumer Behavior Influencing Factors



Source - Kotler P. (1991)

**Psychological factors** influence consumer behavior, including motivation, perception, learning, memory, and personality. Motivation is the inner urge that drives individuals to fulfill their needs or achieve goals. It can be categorized into physiological, social, and personal needs. Marketers can use motivation to align their products or services with consumer needs and aspirations. Perception is crucial in shaping consumer perception and understanding the world around them. It includes picking, arranging, and analyzing sensory data to create an integrated representation of reality. (Crosta et al., 2021).

Marketers can use perceptual principles to create marketing stimuli that capture consumers' attention and shape favorable perceptions of their brands. Learning is a continuous process through experience and interaction with the environment. It involves acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors influencing buying decisions. Marketers can use repetition, reinforcement, and association to facilitate learning and influence purchase decisions. Memory plays a vital role in consumer decision-making by influencing information retention, retrieval, and recall. (Yuen et al., 2020).

Marketers aim to create memorable brand experiences and associations that resonate with consumers and evoke positive emotions. Personality traits also influence consumer perception, interaction, and buying decisions. Customers can be divided into personality-based groups so that marketers can specifically target them with offers and marketing messages. Understanding these psychological factors helps marketers anticipate their needs, preferences, and behavior patterns, enhancing their marketing efforts. (Guo et al., 2018).

Consumer behavior is influenced by various **social factors**, including culture, social class, reference groups, family influence, and opinion leaders. Culture encompasses shared values, beliefs, norms, and customs, influencing consumers' perceptions, preferences, and buying decisions. Understanding cultural nuances is crucial for marketers to effectively tailor their products, messages, and marketing strategies. Social class, a hierarchical classification of individuals based on income, occupation, education, and lifestyle, significantly impacts consumer behavior by shaping perceptions of status, prestige, and identity. (Mehta et al., 2020).

Marketers often segment target markets based on social class and develop products, pricing, and promotional strategies tailored to each segment's preferences and aspirations. Reference groups are social groups where individuals compare themselves and influence consumers' values, attitudes, and behaviors. Marketers leverage reference group influence by employing celebrity endorsements, testimonials, and social proof in advertising. Family influence is also significant, as family members influence each other's attitudes, preferences, and buying decisions through communication, socialization, and shared experiences. Marketers target family-oriented marketing campaigns, offering family-friendly products and emphasizing convenience, affordability, and quality values. (Chopra et al., 2021).

**Cultural factors** significantly impact consumer behavior, shaping individuals' values, beliefs, and norms. These factors greatly influence how consumers perceive products, make buying decisions, and engage with brands. Understanding the interplay between culture and consumer behavior is crucial for businesses aiming to market their products or services effectively. Values are deeply ingrained beliefs that individuals hold about what is essential, desirable, or worthwhile in life. These values are acquired through socialization processes within the cultural context, including family, education, religion, and social institutions. (Mooij, 2019).

Cultural beliefs are shaped by cultural norms, traditions, and historical experiences, influencing consumers' attitudes and perceptions toward products or services. Norms are societal rules and expectations governing appropriate behavior within a cultural context. These norms can be prescriptive (dictating what behaviors are acceptable) or proscriptive (defining what behaviors are unacceptable). Understanding cultural norms is essential for businesses to align their marketing strategies with societal expectations and avoid cultural insensitivity or backlash. (Agarwala et al., 2019).

Cultural factors pervasively impact consumer behavior across various dimensions, including product preferences, brand perception, consumer decision-making, and marketing strategies. Recognizing the diversity and complexity of cultural influences is essential for businesses to develop culturally sensitive marketing strategies and foster positive consumer relationships. By understanding the cultural context in which consumers operate, companies can better anticipate consumer needs, preferences, and behaviors, ultimately enhancing their competitiveness in the global marketplace. (Yuen et al., 2020).

**Personal factors** significantly influence consumer behavior, including lifestyle, personality, self-concept, and demographic variables. Lifestyle refers to an individual's activities, interests, opinions, and values, which can be analyzed to identify consumer segments and target products or services accordingly. Personality, which reflects enduring characteristics, includes extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and emotional stability. Marketers often employ personality-based segmentation to tailor marketing strategies and brand positioning to align with specific personality types. (Loxton et al., 2020).

Marketers can leverage consumers' self-concepts by positioning their products or brands to resonate with their desired identities. Factors related to age, gender, income, education, occupation, marital status, and family size provide valuable insights into consumers' buying behaviors and preferences. Age influences preferences for innovation and novelty, while gender can influence buying power and brand preferences. Marketers can use demographic segmentation to target specific consumer groups more effectively, tailoring their marketing mix to suit each segment's needs and preferences. (Chin et al., 2018).

**Economic factors** significantly influence consumer behavior, affecting businesses' marketing strategies, pricing strategies, buying power, and overall economic conditions. Income is a crucial determinant affecting consumers' buying power and ability to afford goods and services. While those with lesser salaries might prioritize necessities and choose more affordable solutions, those with higher incomes typically have more discretionary income. Businesses must comprehend these elements to customize their product offerings and marketing plans to the demands and preferences of various customer segments. (ElHaffar et al., 2020).

Price strategies, such as penetration pricing, skimming pricing, or value-based pricing, are essential for businesses to attract consumers and maximize profitability. Factors such as perceived value, competition, and consumer expectations influence pricing decisions. Buying power, customers' capacity to purchase products and services in accordance with their income and prevailing price levels are influenced by factors such as inflation, unemployment, and interest rates. Businesses need to monitor economic indicators to anticipate shifts in buying power and adjust their marketing strategies accordingly. The economic conditions, including GDP growth, unemployment rates, and consumer sentiment, profoundly influence consumer behavior. (Hallet al., 2020).

### **3.3 IMC & Consumer Behavior**

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a crucial aspect of any business strategy, as it helps to shape consumer perceptions and build brand awareness, trust, and credibility. It ensures that every communication channel, including advertising, social media, email marketing, and in-store promotions, conveys a unified message that aligns with the brand's identity, values, and objectives. This consistency reinforces brand recognition and builds trust and credibility among consumers. (Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2020).

Coca-Cola's marketing campaigns consistently emphasize themes of happiness, joy, and togetherness, solidifying its position as a beloved and iconic brand. This consistency in messaging has solidified Coca-Cola's position as a precious and iconic brand. Increased brand awareness is another key aspect of integrated marketing communication. Brands can increase their visibility by leveraging multiple channels, such as advertising, public relations, content marketing, and digital strategies.

Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" campaign, which distributed personalized bottles with individual names, generated buzz on social media and increased brand visibility. Enhanced consumer engagement is another critical aspect of integrated marketing communication. Brands can foster consumer engagement by creating two-way communication, feedback, and interaction opportunities. Social media sites are now essential resources for brands to engage directly with consumers in real time, fostering a sense of community and dialogue.

Shaping consumer perceptions is another crucial aspect of integrated marketing communication. By creating engaging stories and experiences that connect with their target audience, brands may consciously mold these impressions. For example, Apple has built a reputation for innovation, creativity, and sleek design through its marketing communication efforts. Building trust and credibility is another crucial aspect of integrated marketing communication. Brands can build trust and credibility by delivering consistent, transparent, and authentic messages that align with consumers' values and expectations. (Wang et al., 2019).

Patagonia is an outdoor clothing and equipment company that is well-known for its commitment to social responsibility and ecological sustainability. It has gained the respect and loyalty of customers who share these principles. Influencing purchase decisions is another crucial aspect of integrated marketing communication. By strategically leveraging various

communication channels and messaging strategies, brands can stimulate consumer interest, desire, and purchase intent.

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) involves a blend of advertising, public relations (PR), social media channel, and other communication channels to ensure that a brand's message reaches its target audience consistently and cohesively. This multi-channel approach increases the frequency of brand exposure and reinforces brand recall among consumers. As consumers encounter the brand message across various touchpoints, including print and television, as well as digital channels like email and social networking, they become familiar with the brand, laying the foundation for brand awareness. (Kushwaha et al., 2020).

IMC creates communications that are captivating, consistent, and engage with the target audience to shape customer views. By strategically managing the brand narrative across all communication channels, marketers can foster positive associations and strengthen the brand's positioning in the marketplace. Emotional connections are another critical aspect of IMC campaigns, as they can create meaningful experiences that resonate personally, fostering a sense of connection and belonging. These emotional connections transcend transactional relationships, creating lasting impressions that resonate long after the initial interaction. Driving purchase intentions is another crucial objective of IMC. (Liu et al., 2019).

By crafting compelling messages and offers that resonate with consumers' needs and desires, marketers can stimulate interest and motivation to purchase the brand's products or services. IMC campaigns are more likely to have positive results in terms of actual sales and purchase intents when they successfully lead customers through the entire purchasing journey, from awareness to consideration to conversion. IMC fosters a seamless and immersive brand experience that reinforces consumers' confidence and trust in the brand by ensuring consistency and coherence across all touchpoints. Enhancing brand loyalty and advocacy is another crucial aspect of IMC. (Amin & Priansah, 2019).

By delivering consistent and meaningful brand experiences across multiple channels, brands can nurture loyalty and advocacy among their consumer bases. Loyalty stems from the trust and satisfaction consumers derive from their interactions with the brand, which are reinforced through positive brand associations and experiences. IMC campaigns that prioritize consumer engagement, feedback, and support contribute to building a solid foundation of loyalty, as they demonstrate the brand's commitment to meeting consumers' needs and expectations. (Boisen et al., 2018).

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) involves delivering consistent brand messages, providing valuable information, fostering engagement, guiding purchase decisions, and reinforcing post-purchase satisfaction. IMC creates a cohesive brand identity through strategic alignment of advertising, public relations, digital marketing, social media, and experiential marketing efforts. Consistency in brand messaging, visuals, and tone across these channels increases brand recall and familiarity among consumers. (Bıçakcıoğlu et al., 2018).

IMC influences consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward a brand by shaping their perceptions of its values, benefits, and unique selling propositions. IMC can evoke desired emotions and beliefs that align with the brand's positioning and objectives by leveraging emotional appeals, social proof, and persuasive messaging. For example, a brand that consistently communicates its commitment to sustainability and ethical practices can influence consumers' perceptions, leading to favorable attitudes and preferences toward the brand. (John & De'Villiers, 2020).

IMC also serves as a platform for providing information and education about products, services, and brand offerings. Content marketing, product demonstrations, tutorials, and expert endorsements address consumers' needs, concerns, and inquiries, empowering them to make informed decisions. IMC enhances consumers' understanding of the brand and its offerings by delivering relevant and engaging content across multiple touchpoints, facilitating their decision-making process. IMC encourages consumer engagement and interaction through interactive communication channels such as social media, experiential marketing, and consumer relationship management (CRM) initiatives. (Ahn et al., 2021).

By fostering two-way communication and dialogue with consumers, IMC enables brands to build relationships, gather feedback, and address consumer inquiries and concerns in real time. This engagement fosters brand loyalty and advocacy, influencing consumers' decision-making behaviors by strengthening their connection with the brand. IMC also guides consumers through purchase decision-making by providing persuasive messaging, promotional offers, and incentives at various consumer journey stages. Targeted advertising, personalized recommendations, and promotional campaigns influence consumers' purchase intentions and preferences. (Soedarsono et al., 2020).

## 4. Practical Part

### 4.1 DHL Company

Figure 7 - DHL Company Transportation



*Source - DHL Company Website*

In the history of international express delivery, DHL was a pioneer, having been established in 1969 by Adrian Dalsey, Larry Hillblom, and Robert Lynn. The company quickly expanded its operations, introducing innovative approaches to expedited shipping. By 1974, DHL had established its presence across multiple continents, becoming the first international air express company to serve the Eastern Hemisphere. In 1998, DHL was acquired by Deutsche Post, a move that significantly strengthened its global reach and operational capabilities. Over the years, DHL has continued to innovate and adapt to changing market dynamics, solidifying its position as one of the world's leading logistics and express delivery providers. (Rozario & Hamid, 2018).

DHL boasts an extensive global network, encompassing over 220 countries and territories worldwide. With a presence in major cities, remote regions, and emerging markets, DHL has made a name for itself as a dependable worldwide logistics solution provider for companies looking for such services. The company's expansive infrastructure includes a fleet of aircraft, ground vehicles, warehouses, and distribution centers strategically positioned to facilitate the seamless movement of goods across borders. Leveraging advanced technologies and robust logistics systems, DHL ensures efficient and timely delivery of shipments. (Dang et al., 2021).

DHL's core services include express delivery, freight forwarding, and supply chain solutions. Express delivery services provide consumers with rapid and reliable transportation of parcels and documents, ensuring swift and secure delivery to destinations worldwide. Freight forwarding services cater to businesses requiring efficient transportation of large, bulky, or heavy cargo, offering air, ocean, and road freight services and managing the complete logistical procedure, including pickup and delivery. DHL's expertise in customs clearance, warehousing, and cargo insurance streamlines freight forwarding, enabling businesses to optimize their supply chains and minimize operational complexities. (Prange et al., 2018).

In India, DHL's journey began in 1979 when it established its first office in Mumbai. Since then, the company has been pivotal in shaping India's logistics landscape, facilitating trade and commerce. Over the decades, DHL has continuously expanded its operations in India, leveraging its global expertise to meet the Indian market's changing needs. Express delivery services in India offer businesses and individuals a fast and reliable way to send parcels, documents, and goods domestically and internationally. DHL's extensive network of flights, vehicles, and delivery partners ensures timely delivery to destinations across India and worldwide. (Tran et al., 2019).

DHL's freight forwarding services facilitate trade and commerce in India, offering tailored solutions to meet their unique transportation requirements. Businesses must use effective supply chain management to remain competitive in India's quickly changing industry. DHL's supply chain solutions empower Indian companies to optimize operations, improve inventory management, and enhance overall supply chain visibility. By offering services such as warehousing, distribution, and inventory optimization, DHL helps Indian businesses reduce costs, minimize risks, and unlock new growth opportunities. (Seasafira et al., 2020).

DHL's presence in India extends beyond its core services, contributing significantly to its economy and socio-economic development. Through its extensive network and collaborations with local partners, DHL facilitates trade, creates employment opportunities, and drives innovation across various sectors. Additionally, DHL actively engages in corporate social responsibility initiatives, supporting community development, environmental sustainability, and education programs in India. (Jinyue, 2023).

### **4.1.1 Market Positioning**

DHL, a global logistics leader, strategically positions itself as a preferred logistics partner for online retailers and marketplaces due to its extensive network and specialized solutions. The company serves multinational corporations across various industries, including automotive, healthcare, technology, and manufacturing, and caters to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through tailored logistics solutions. DHL also targets emerging markets with high growth potential, capitalizing on the increasing demand for logistics services driven by urbanization, industrialization, and globalization. (Dang et al., 2024).

DHL's consumer segments include business-to-business (B2B) clients, which prioritize reliability, scalability, and cost-effectiveness in their logistics operations. B2C clients seek seamless order fulfillment and delivery solutions, while specialized industries like healthcare, aerospace, perishables, and fashion face unique logistical requirements. DHL offers technical services such as temperature-controlled shipping, customs clearance expertise, and supply chain consulting to address these challenges. DHL faces competition from traditional players and disruptive newcomers in a highly competitive logistics industry. (Perenc, 2018).

Key competitors include FedEx Corporation, UPS, regional players, and startups offering niche services and disruptive business models. FedEx's extensive network and technological innovations pose a formidable challenge to DHL's market dominance. UPS provides a comprehensive range of services like DHL, but its focus on innovation, sustainability, and consumer-centricity presents stiff competition to DHL in critical markets and industry verticals. Regional players and startups also challenge DHL's market position in specific regions or segments. (Vinck et al., 2020).

DHL continually innovates and invests in technology, infrastructure, and talent to maintain its competitive edge, enhance consumer satisfaction, and sustain long-term growth. DHL is a global logistics company that targets various market segments in India, including the e-commerce industry, manufacturing and export sector, SMEs and micro-enterprises, large corporations and multinationals, and individual consumers and online shoppers. The company's expertise in navigating India's complex regulatory environment and diverse geographical landscape gives it a competitive edge in servicing the dynamic e-commerce ecosystem. (Asudi & Shale, 2019).

The e-commerce industry in India is experiencing exponential growth, driven by increasing internet penetration, smartphone adoption, and changing consumer preferences. DHL is a preferred logistics partner for leading e-commerce players such as Flipkart, Amazon, and Snapdeal, offering end-to-end solutions for order fulfillment, last-mile delivery, and returns management. Its expertise in navigating India's complex regulatory environment and diverse geographical landscape gives DHL a competitive edge in servicing the dynamic e-commerce ecosystem. The manufacturing sector in India is a vital contributor to its GDP, encompassing industries such as automotive, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and electronics. (Gronbach, 2023).

DHL provides tailored logistics solutions to support the manufacturing and export activities of Indian businesses, facilitating the transportation of completed commodities, parts, and raw materials across domestic and international markets. With strategically located warehouses, efficient transportation networks, and customs clearance expertise, DHL enables Indian manufacturers to optimize their supply chains and expand their global footprint. A growing population of small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) and small-scale enterprises powers the SMEs and micro-enterprises in India's growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. (Persianov et al., 2019).

DHL caters to these businesses' logistics needs, offering scalable solutions, competitive pricing, and personalized support to facilitate their growth and expansion initiatives. DHL also caters to diverse consumer segments within the Indian market with unique logistical requirements and preferences. These segments include large corporations and multinationals, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and individual consumers and online shoppers. In India's competitive logistics market, DHL faces competition from domestic and international rivals vying for market share and consumer loyalty. (Prange et al., 2018).

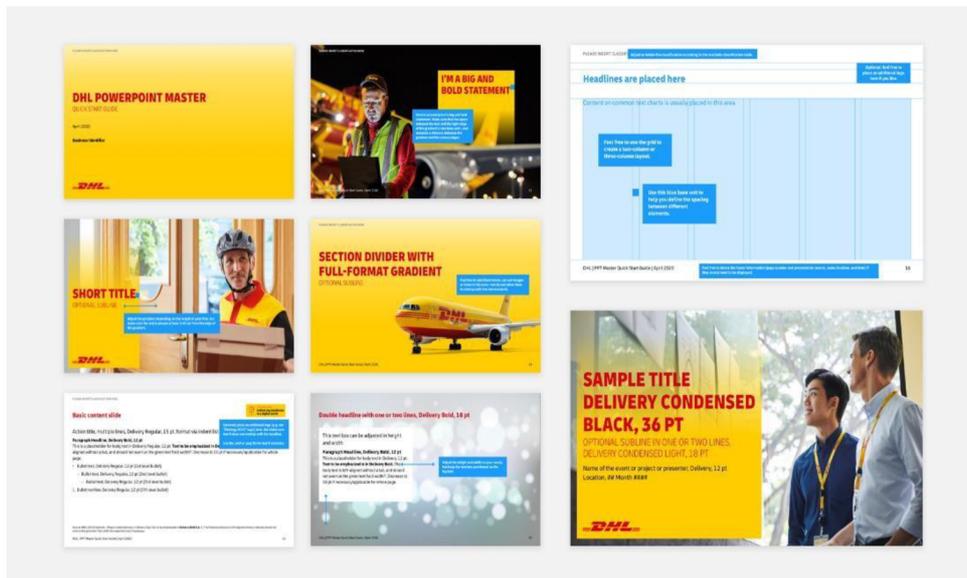
#### **4.1.2 Marketing Communication Strategies**

DHL, a global logistics and express delivery services provider employs strategic advertising campaigns to communicate its key messages effectively to its target audience. These campaigns highlight DHL's reliability, speed, and global reach in delivering parcels and logistics solutions. DHL uses creative storytelling and visually captivating content to engage consumers and reinforce brand recognition. DHL invests in sponsorships to enhance its brand visibility and association with high-profile events and organizations. (Decker & Blaschczok, 2018).

By sponsoring major sporting events, such as Formula 1, soccer leagues, and golf tournaments, DHL increases brand exposure and aligns itself with values like speed, precision, and excellence. These sponsorships provide DHL with extensive media coverage and opportunities for targeted brand activation activities, reinforcing its image as a reliable and efficient logistics partner. In today's digital age, DHL recognizes the importance of leveraging digital marketing channels to engage with its audience effectively. (Prymachenko & Hryhorova, 2020).

The company employs various digital marketing initiatives, utilizing content promotion and social media tools to engage with potential customers, create brand loyalty, and scale sales. DHL keeps up active accounts on well-known social media networks, including Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, where it shares relevant content, engages with followers, and promotes its services. Additionally, DHL produces informative and engaging content such as blog posts, videos, and infographics to educate consumers about logistics trends, industry insights, and DHL's service offerings. (Ziyadin et al., 2020).

Figure 7 - DHL Company Marketing Communication



Reference - DHL Company Website

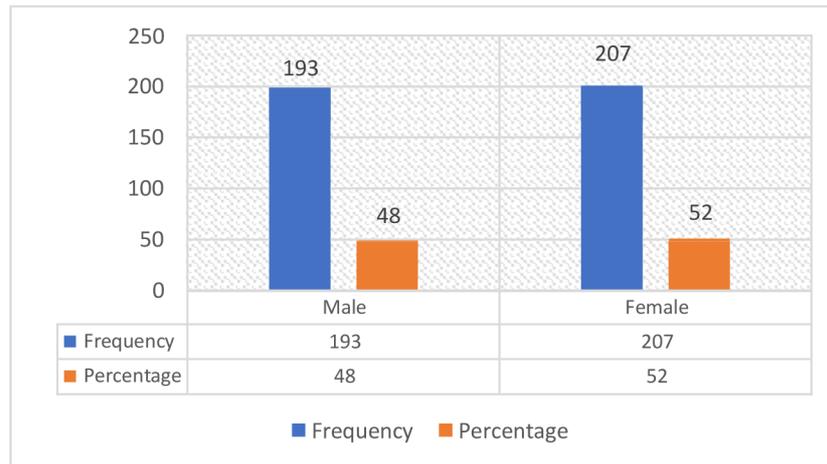
DHL utilizes direct marketing techniques to reach potential consumers and nurture relationships with existing ones. Direct mail, email marketing campaigns, and targeted promotions are critical components of DHL's direct marketing efforts. Through personalized communication and tailored offers, DHL aims to generate leads, drive conversions, and encourage consumer retention. The company also employs consumer relationship management (CRM) systems to manage consumer data effectively and deliver personalized experiences across various touchpoints. For DHL, keeping a positive public image is essential, given its status as a global logistics leader. (Seasafira et al., 2020).

The DHL company engages in various public relations activities to manage its reputation, build credibility, and foster stakeholder goodwill. Through press releases, media interviews, and corporate events, DHL communicates its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, sustainability efforts, and community involvement. DHL's marketing communication strategies in India are designed to resonate with local consumers while maintaining the brand's global identity. The company leverages traditional and digital advertising channels to reach its target audience nationwide. DHL's direct marketing efforts in India encompass a range of tactics to engage prospective consumers and nurture existing relationships. (Dang et al., 2024).

## 4.2 Demographic Analysis

The demographic breakdown of respondents shows a balanced distribution, with 48% male and 52% female, providing insights into DHL's marketing strategies' effectiveness and inclusivity, enhancing consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

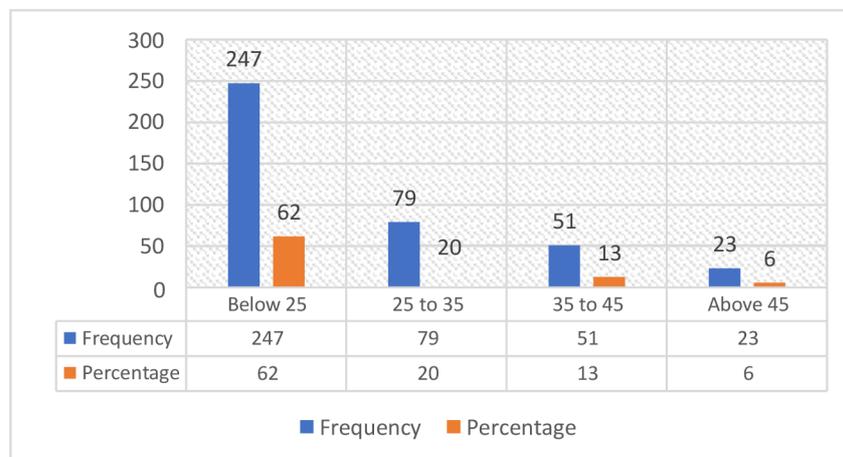
Graph 1 - Gender Analysis



*Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)*

The study reveals that 62% of respondents are under the age of 25, indicating a need for tailored marketing strategies. The smaller proportions of older age groups also require attention, highlighting the importance of understanding and engaging diverse consumer segments.

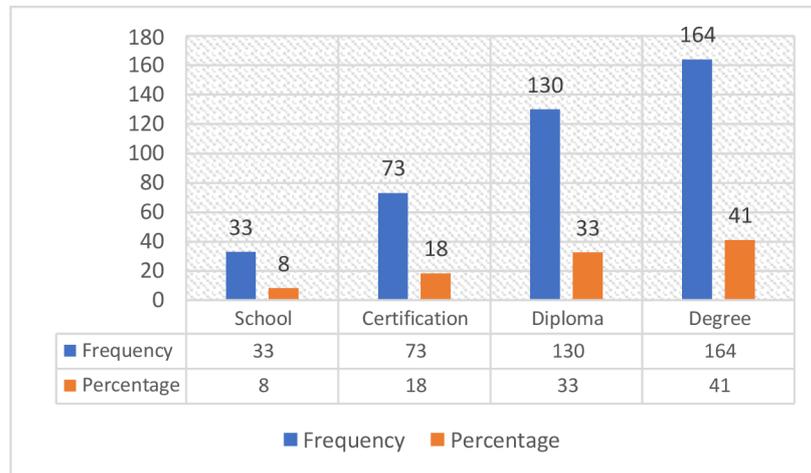
Graph 2 - Age Analysis



*Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)*

The data shows that 33% of DHL consumers hold a diploma or degree, with 41% holding a degree. 18% have certifications, and 8% have completed schooling. This highlights the importance of targeting educated consumers, enhancing the effectiveness of DHL's strategies.

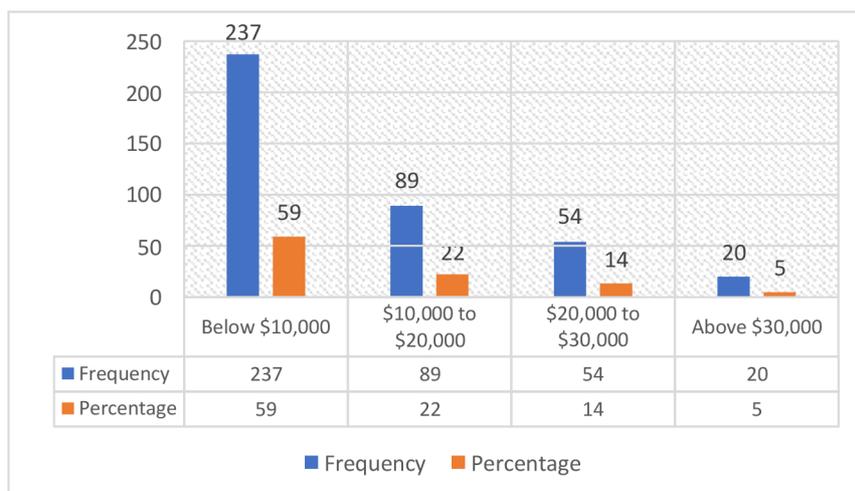
Graph 3 - Education Analysis



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

The study on consumer perception of DHL company's marketing communication reveals a diverse demographic composition, with 59% reporting yearly salaries below \$10,000, 22% between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and 5% above \$30,000.

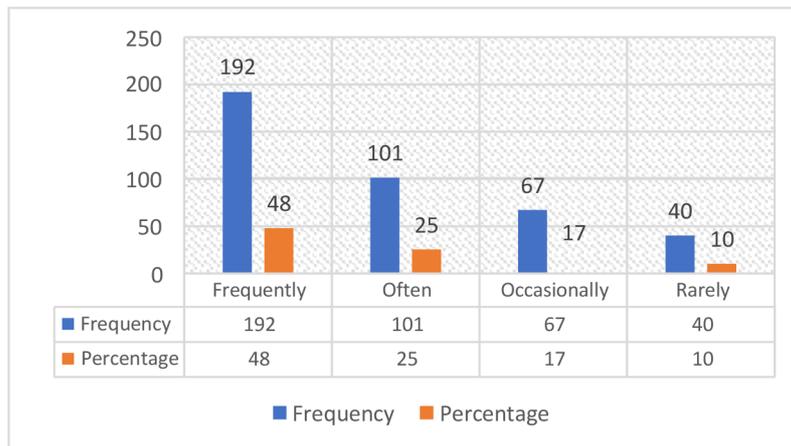
Graph 4 - Income Analysis



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

Most respondents use DHL services frequently, indicating a strong brand patronage. 25% use them regularly, while 17% use them intermittently. 10% rarely use them. This distribution of service usage helps analyse marketing communication perceptions and strategies, revealing varying levels of engagement among consumers.

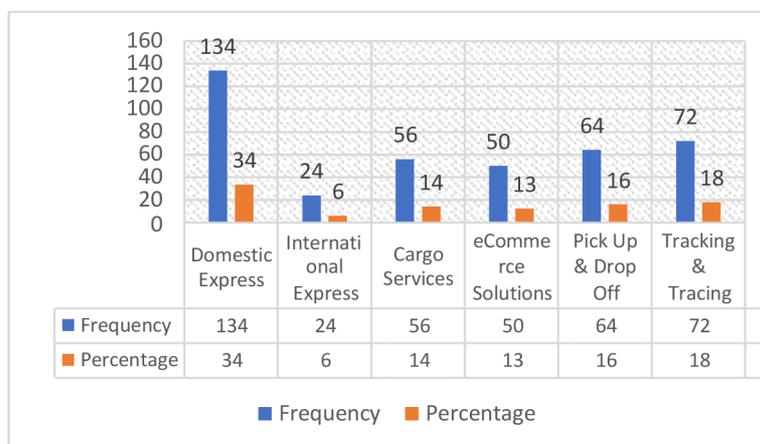
Graph 5 - DHL Services Usage



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

Most DHL consumers use Domestic Express services, accounting for 34% of the sample, indicating a strong domestic market presence. International Express services are less prevalent, with Cargo Services and eCommerce Solutions contributing 14% and 13% respectively. Pick Up & Drop Off services account for 16%, reflecting DHL's accessibility and consumer-centric approach. Tracking & Tracing services account for 18%, indicating an interest in shipments.

Graph 6 - DHL Services Category



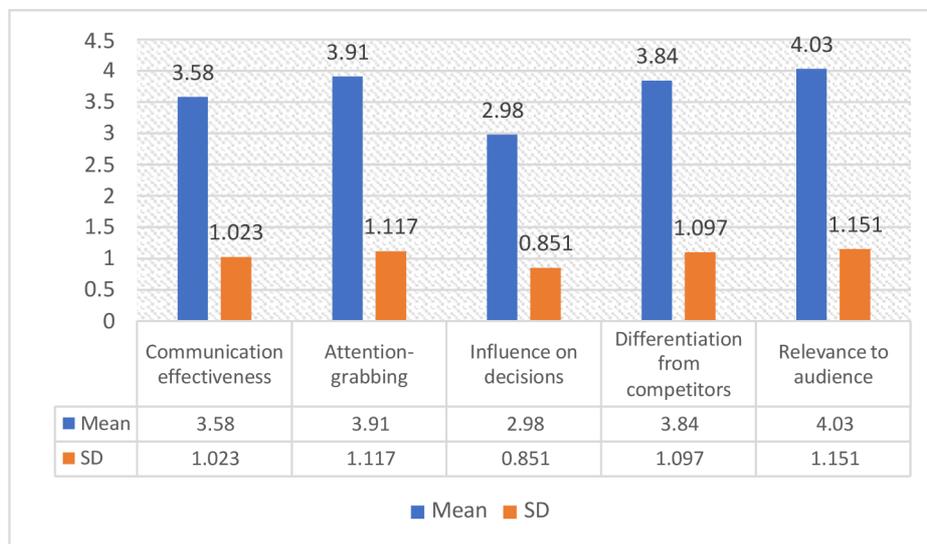
Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

### 4.3 Descriptive Analysis

#### 4.3.1 Marketing Communication Effectiveness

DHL's advertising effectiveness is perceived positively by consumers, with a mean score of 3.58. Attention-grabbing aspects are highly rated, indicating DHL's ability to capture consumer attention. However, their influence on decisions is not significant. DHL effectively communicates its unique value proposition, while relevance to the audience is high, potentially boosting engagement and brand loyalty. Overall, the data highlights the importance of relevance and attention-grabbing elements in DHL's marketing communication strategy.

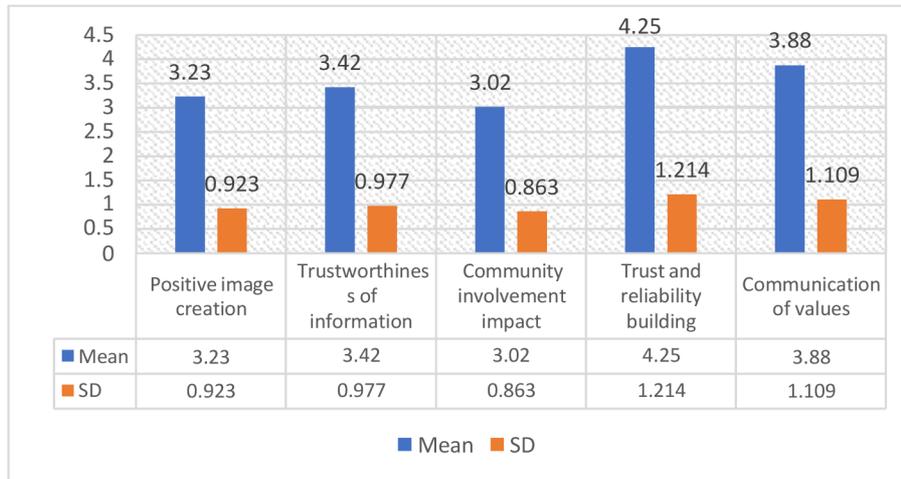
Graph 7 - Advertising Effectiveness



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

DHL's public relations efforts have been praised by consumers for their ability to build trust and reliability. The data shows a high level of consistency in this aspect, with a mean score of 4.25. DHL's communication of values and trustworthiness of information also received favourable ratings. However, there are areas for improvement, such as community involvement impact. Overall, DHL's public relations effectiveness is generally positive, with strengths in trust and reliability building.

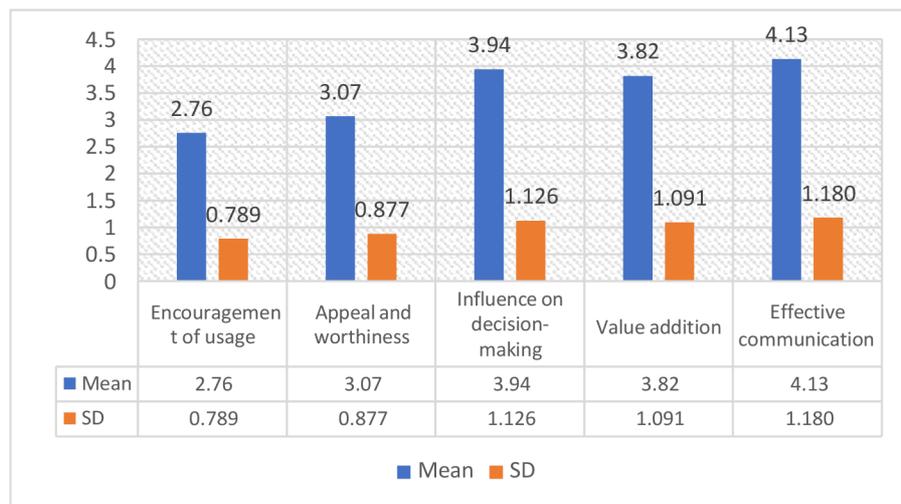
Graph 8 - Public Relations Effectiveness



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

The data on DHL's sales promotion effectiveness reveals a moderate level of encouragement of usage and a perceived appeal. Consumers attribute higher influence on decision-making and value addition to DHL's promotions, indicating their significant impact on consumer behavior. Effective communication is particularly encouraging, with a weighted average of 3.54, indicating a positive perception of DHL's promotional efforts. This highlights the importance of strategic sales promotions in shaping consumer perception.

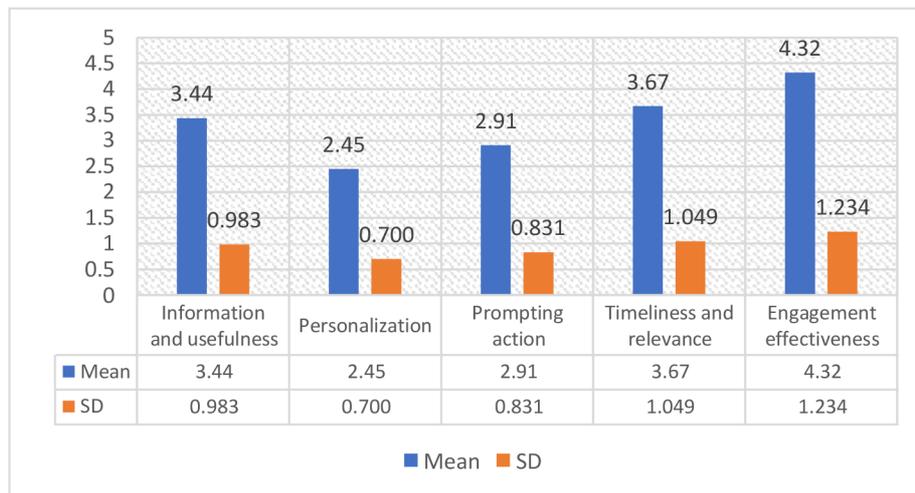
Graph 9 - Sales Promotion Effectiveness



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

The data shows that consumers rated DHL's direct marketing effectiveness as valuable and relevant. However, they rated Personalization lower, suggesting potential for improvement. DHL's Prompting Action and Timeliness and Relevance were moderately effective. Engagement Effectiveness was the highest, indicating strong consumer engagement. The overall perception was positive, but DHL could improve by enhancing personalization and action promptness.

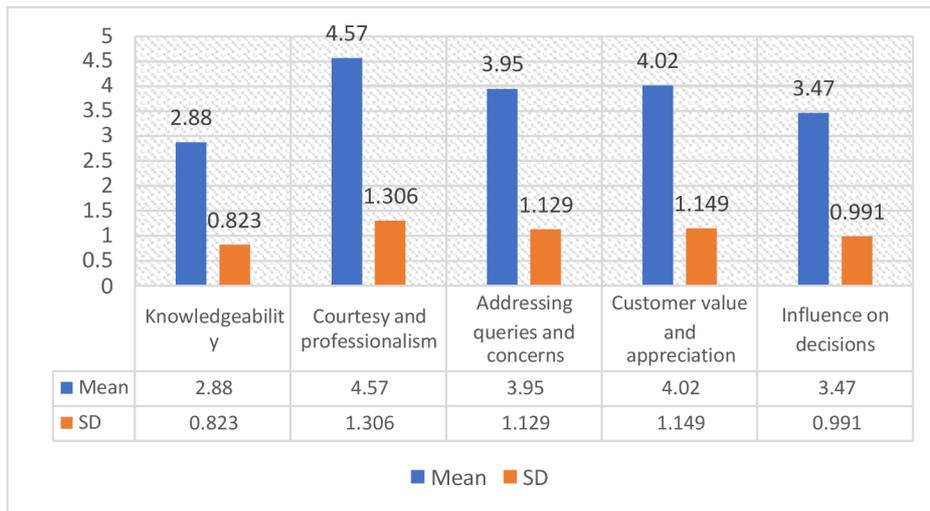
Graph 10 - Direct Marketing Effectiveness



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

The study on DHL's marketing communication reveals that consumers generally perceive DHL's personal selling efforts positively. They rate the courtesy and professionalism of DHL's personnel high, and their responsiveness to queries and consumer value as positive. However, their influence on decision-making processes is slightly lower. The overall weighted average of 3.78 emphasizes the significance of upholding strict professionalism and customer-focused standards in personal selling initiatives.

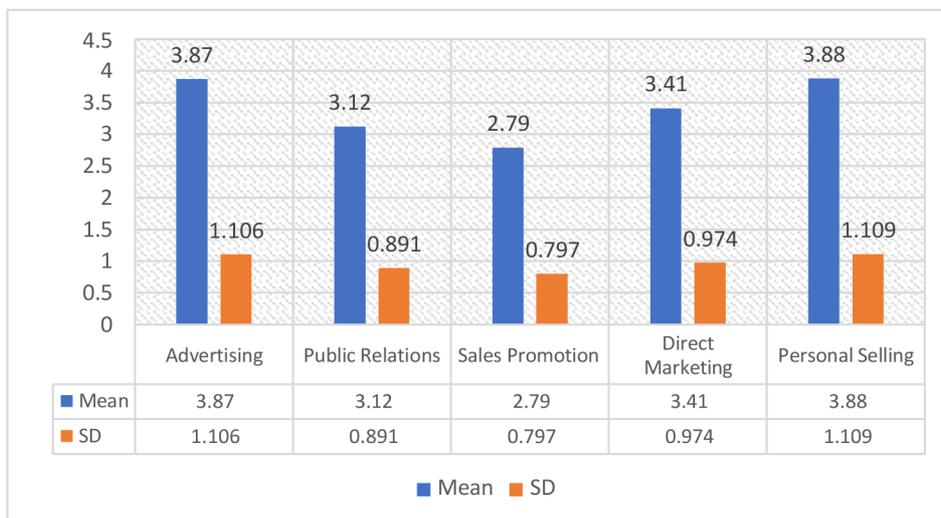
Graph 11 - Personal Selling Effectiveness



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

DHL's marketing communication channels, rated by consumers, have the most significant impact on consumer perceptions. Advertising and personal selling have the highest mean scores, followed by direct marketing and public relations. Sales promotion has the least impact, with the lowest score of 2.79. These findings suggest DHL's advertising and personal selling strategies are effective, but there may be room for improvement.

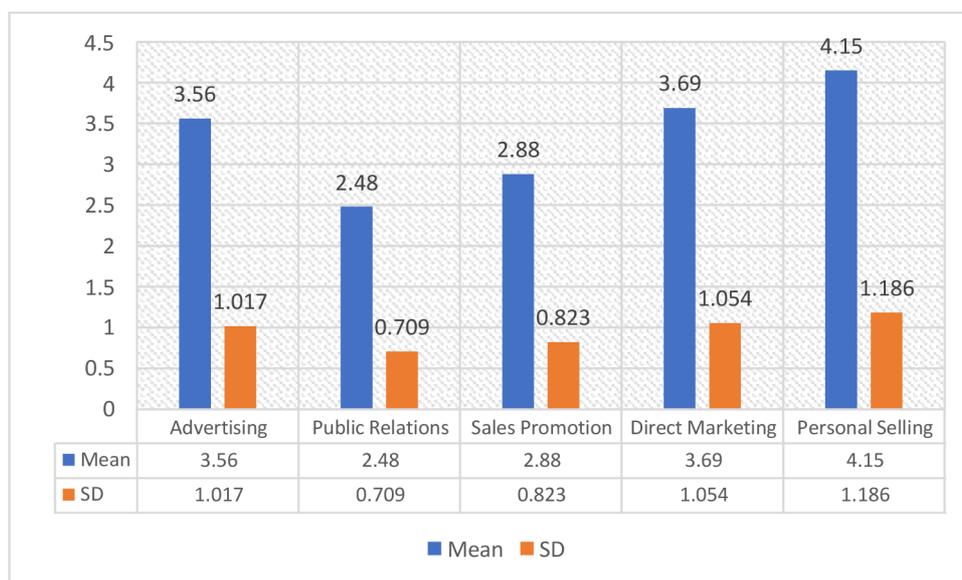
Graph 12 - Marketing Communication Impact



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

DHL's marketing communication strategies are perceived differently by consumers across different channels. Personal selling has the highest mean perception score, followed by advertising and direct marketing. Public relations and sales promotion have lower scores, indicating potential areas for improvement. Understanding consumer preferences is crucial for effective communication strategies.

Graph 13 - Marketing Communication Perception

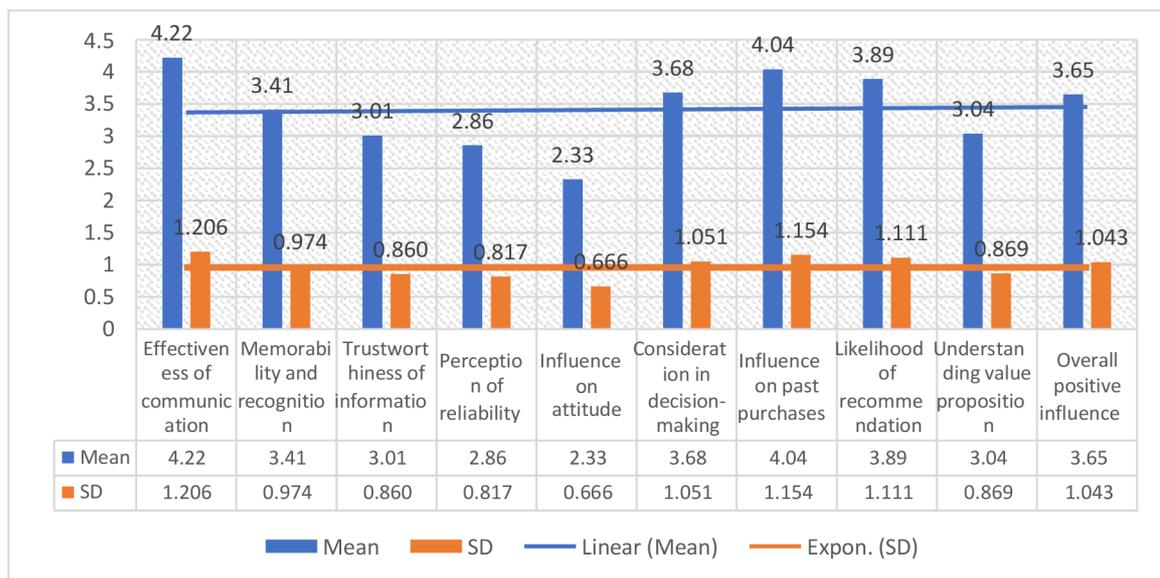


Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

### 4.3.2 Consumer Behavior Impact

The study reveals that DHL's marketing communication has a positive impact on consumer behavior, with a mean score of 4.22 indicating effectiveness. DHL could focus more on enhancing its influence on attitude and understanding value proposition. The study also found a positive correlation between DHL's marketing communication and consumer behavior in terms of repeat purchases and recommendation likelihood. The study also found that DHL's communication efforts effectively influenced consumer decision-making processes.

Graph 14 - Consumer Behavior Impact



Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

#### 4.4 Reliability Analysis

The study on consumer perception of DHL Company's marketing communication found high levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the 0.7 threshold. Sales promotion effectiveness, direct marketing effectiveness, and marketing communication impact showed strong reliability, while personal selling effectiveness had slightly lower reliability. Marketing communication perception was the most reliable dimension, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.887, indicating robust consistency in respondents' perceptions. The combined reliability across all dimensions yielded a commendable Cronbach's Alpha of 0.774, confirming the measurement instrument's reliability.

Table 1 - Reliability Analysis

<b>Reliability Analysis</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Advertising Effectiveness	0.734
Public Relations Effectiveness	0.765
Sales Promotion Effectiveness	0.809
Direct Marketing Effectiveness	0.788
Personal Selling Effectiveness	0.712
Marketing Communication Impact	0.765
Marketing Communication Perception	0.887
Consumer Behavior Impact	0.732
Overall Reliability	0.774

*Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)*

## 4.5 Hypothesis Analysis

H0 - There is no impact of marketing communication strategies on consumer behaviour of DHL company.

H0 - There is a significant impact of marketing communication strategies on consumer behaviour of DHL company.

“According to our statistical study, the null hypothesis—which stated that marketing communication strategies had no effect on consumer behavior—is rejected”.

The objective of the research was to evaluate the influence of an integrated marketing communication strategy on consumer buying behavior. A typical multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of an integrated marketing communication strategy on consumer buying behavior. The independent variables called predictors and composite of the separate constructs of the dependent variable called consumer buying behaviour constituted the integrated marketing strategy. The results are detailed in the next paragraph.

Table 2 - Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.738	0.475	0.460	8.689
<i>Predictors:(Constant), Advertising, Public Relations, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Personal Selling</i>				
<i>Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour</i>				

*Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)*

The model summary of the standard simple regression is shown in the below table. The results obtained from the Model Summary indicate that the integrated marketing communication model, which encompasses advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, accounts for 47.50% of the variability seen in the prediction of the dependent variable, Consumer Buying Behaviour. Consequently, 52.50% of the variability in the dependent variable may be accounted for by other factors that were not included into the model. The adoption and promotion of integrated marketing communication strategy by DHL Express Ltd would have a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.

The results of this research align with the findings of Miremadi et al. (2017) about the impact of integrated marketing communication factors on consumer behavior, as shown by a regression analysis. Based on the research conducted by Wan et al. (2022), integrated marketing communication has a significant impact on consumer behavior. The present study's results align with the findings of Satria (2018), which indicate that consumers' demands have increased because of integrated marketing communication strategies on their demographic profiles and buying behavior, finally impacting their final purchase decisions.

Table 3 - ANOVA Analysis

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Regression	8766.924	8	2191.731	38.393	0.000
Residual	12473.482	392	65.650		
Total	21240.406	400			
<i>Predictors: (Constant), Advertising, Public Relations, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Personal Selling</i>					
<i>Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour</i>					

*Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)*

The table shows the outcome of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) component in the conventional multiple regression analysis. Upon careful examination of the Sig. value, it may be concluded that the model exhibits statistical significance, as shown by the p-value (0.000) being below the threshold of 0.05. Statistically, the model may be trusted to effectively modify Consumer Buying Behaviour in a good manner.

Table 4 - Standardized Coefficients

<b>Model</b>	<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>		
<b>(Constant)</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Variables</b>		3.752	0.001
<b>Advertising</b>	0.007	0.105	1.067
<b>Public Relations</b>	0.497	8.032	0.000
<b>Sales Promotion</b>	0.265	4.173	0.000
<b>Direct Marketing</b>	0.245	4.012	0.001
<b>Personal Selling</b>	0.393	5.349	0.002

*Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)*

The study determined each independent variable's standardized coefficient Beta value in order to assess how well it predicts the dependent variable. The results suggest that personal selling had the most significant and substantial impact on explaining the dependent variable, even after accounting for all other factors in the model. This is supported by a Beta value of 0.497 and a matching significance value of 0.000.

Subsequently, a sales campaign was implemented, exhibiting a Beta coefficient of 0.265 and a matching significance value of 0.000, while accounting for all other factors in the model. When all other factors in the model are adjusted for, public relations emerged as the second most influential and statistically significant factor in explaining the dependent variable. This was shown by a Beta value of 0.245 and a matching significance value of 0.001. Nevertheless, the impact of advertising on the dependent variable was found to be distinct, although not statistically important, even after taking into consideration every other component of the model. This conclusion is supported by a Beta value of 0.006 and a matching significance value of 1.067.

As a component of the research on the influence of integrated marketing communication strategy on consumer buying behavior, this study investigated the correlation between IMC and consumer buying behavior. The study examined the connection between integrated marketing communication and consumer buying behavior. Additionally, it examined the various components of integrated marketing communication, including public relations (PR), sales promotion, direct marketing, advertising, and personal selling) and their impact on consumer buying behavior.

Table 5 - Correlations Analysis (A)

Correlations		IMC	CBB
IMC	Pearson Correlation	1	0.673
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	400	400
CBB	Pearson Correlation	0.673	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	400	400
<i>A significant correlation is found at the 0.01 (2-tailed) level.</i>			
<i>IMC - Integrated Marketing Communication, CB - Consumer Buying Behavior</i>			

Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

Pearson's correlation coefficient values for the association between integrated marketing communication and consumer buying behavior are shown in the table. According to the study, there is a strong positive association between integrated marketing communication and consumer buying behavior. This suggests that there is a positive correlation between the implementation of integrated marketing communication by a company and the subsequent impact on consumer buying behavior, particularly in relation to the purchase of items from DHL Express. The study's results indicate that the association is statistically significant, as shown by a p-value.

Table 6 - Correlations Analysis (B)

Variables		Advertising	Public Relations	Sales Promotion	Direct Marketing	Personal Selling
Advertising	Pearson Correlation	1	0.470	0.324	0.191	0.325
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0.02	0
	N	400	400	400	400	400
Public Relations	Pearson Correlation	0.470	1	0.302	0.201	0.612
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0	0.014	0
	N	400	400	400	400	400
Sales Promotion	Pearson Correlation	0.324	0.302	1	0.469	0.497
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0		0	0
	N	400	400	400	400	400
Direct Marketing	Pearson Correlation	0.191	0.201	0.469	1	0.442
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.02	0.014	0		0
	N	400	400	400	400	400
Personal Selling	Pearson Correlation	0.325	0.612	0.497	0.442	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	0	
	N	400	400	400	400	400

Source - Primary Survey, Author (2023)

The Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to determine the connection between the various elements of integrated marketing communication and consumers' purchasing decisions, as shown in the table. Based on the conducted study, it is evident that a modest positive correlation with an  $r$  value of 0.325 exists between advertising and consumer buying behavior. A significant positive association with an  $r$  value of 0.612 was observed between personal selling and consumer buying behavior of the study. An analysis revealed a significant positive association with a  $r$  value 0.497 between sales marketing and consumer buying behavior. An observed correlation coefficient of  $r$  value 0.442 indicates a moderate positive relationship between public relations and consumer buying behavior.

The present results align with the research conducted by Mitchell et al. (2021), which examined consumers' perceptions of integrated marketing communication strategies and revealed that these strategies significantly influence consumers' buying decisions. Davis et al. (2018) have also shown a clear correlation between integrated marketing communication and consumer buying behavior. These findings are in line with the results obtained in this study. Satria (2020) confirmed that sales promotion and personal selling tools are the integrated marketing communication approach that have a greater effect on consumer behavior, aligned with the results of this research.

Moreover, the results of the research align with the findings of Chambers et al. (2018), who revealed that integrated marketing communication serves as an accelerator for consumer comprehension of the worth of products and services. This suggests that as more companies, such as DHL Express, focus on integrated marketing communication, there is a corresponding impact on consumer buying behavior.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

### **5.1 Key Findings**

The study outcomes are summarized in conjunction with the corresponding research goals. With regards to the study goal aimed at assessing consumer awareness of DHL Express' integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy and identifying the most appealing approach, the findings indicate that consumers possess knowledge of advertising as a component of integrated marketing communication. Additionally, it was shown that consumers have knowledge about personal selling as a comprehensive marketing communication method.

Similarly, prior research has shown that consumers had knowledge of sales promotion as a component of an integrated marketing communication strategy. Furthermore, the study revealed that consumers exhibited knowledge of public relations as a comprehensive commercial communication approach. Ultimately, it was determined that advertising emerged as the most effective integrated marketing communication element in terms of consumer attractiveness.

The study aimed to evaluate consumers' impression of DHL Express' integrated marketing communication (IMC) approach. The findings indicate that consumers generally had a positive view of advertising as an integrated marketing communication strategy. Additionally, the study revealed that consumers had a somewhat positive impression of personal selling as an integrated marketing technique.

Moreover, the study revealed that consumers had a somewhat positive opinion of sales promotion as an integrated marketing technique. Finally, the study revealed that consumers had a somewhat positive impression of public relations as an integrated commercial communication approach. In general, this suggests that consumers have a somewhat positive opinion of integrated marketing communication.

Regarding the goal aimed at evaluating the influence of integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy on consumer behavior, the study revealed a significant positive correlation between personal selling and consumer buying behavior. Researchers found a strong positive correlation between sales promotion and consumer buying behavior. Once again, research has shown the existence of a modest positive correlation between advertising and consumer buying behavior.

According to the research, there is a somewhat positive correlation between public relations and consumer buying behavior. Broadly speaking, research has shown a robust and favourable correlation between integrated marketing communication and consumer buying behavior. Additionally, with regards to the aim of evaluating the influence of integrated marketing communication (IMC) strategy on consumer buying behavior, the summary of the standard multiple regression model indicates that the model encompassing advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling accounts for the variability in predicting the dependent variable, namely Consumer Behaviour and Decisions.

The ANOVA findings indicate that the model is statistically significant, since the p-value of 0.000 is below the threshold of 0.05. Furthermore, the results obtained from the standardized coefficient Beta value indicate that consumer buying behavior and decisions, specifically in relation to personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations, exhibit the most robust and statistically significant impact on explaining the dependent variable. This effect remains significant even after accounting for all other variables included in the model.

## 5.2 Recommendations

According to the study's findings, it is advisable for the company to focus on enhancing consumer awareness of the different integrated marketing communication strategies. This will make it possible for more people to be influenced by various integrated marketing communication (IMC) tools, ultimately leading to increased sales of DHL Express' product offerings.

To enhance consumers' awareness, one may do consumer analysis to identify their demands and get a deeper understanding of them. This will enable the customization of integrated marketing communication strategies to meet their specific requirements. In addition, the organization may contemplate the development of a diverse set of buyer or consumer personas, which will serve as valuable insights for its integrated marketing communication campaigns and strategic initiatives.

To enhance consumer awareness of integrated marketing, the firm may complement the existing components by implementing additional integrated marketing communication strategies such as content marketing and direct marketing. For example, the use of content marketing strategies may facilitate the generation and dissemination of digital content, such as blogs, social media posts, and videos, with the aim of generating consumer awareness and fostering interest in the company's product offers.

The study's results indicated that consumer impression levels regarding integrated marketing communication were somewhat positive. Hence, it is advantageous for the organization, particularly the marketing division, to prioritize the understanding and implementation of diverse integrated marketing communication elements, including public relations, marketing for sales, personal selling, and advertisements, in order to enhance consumers' perception.

One way to do this is by using multichannel marketing strategies. The use of multichannel marketing tactics will have an impact on both the way consumers perceive the integrated marketing communications strategy and their actual behavior. The enhancement of consumers' impression of integrated marketing communication strategy may be achieved by the firm via the development of IMC strategies that effectively engage and resonate with both cognitive and affective aspects.

For example, the organization can develop fundamental operational principles such as consumer care and respect, which will function as a structural basis for its comprehensive marketing communication plan. Furthermore, it is advisable for the organization to actively participate in regular marketing research, conducted on a regular basis such as monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually, with the aim of comprehending consumer behavior, particularly in the context of integrated marketing communication.

The use of marketing research may facilitate the acquisition of qualitative and quantitative data pertaining to current trade trends, the lifestyle of target consumers, external circumstances, and possibilities, as well as the competitive tactics employed by competitor firms in order to meet the needs of prospective consumers. The findings of this marketing research may provide valuable insights for the organization in determining the most effective combination of integrated marketing communication strategies that resonate with consumers.

The statistical significance of the model was shown by the results obtained from the usual multiple regression analysis. This discovery has significant value for managers of DHL Express and other prominent industrial entities, as it highlights the crucial role played by individual independent factors in shaping consumer buying behavior. Management must consistently and innovatively boost the attraction of independent factors to consumers to improve their overall purchase choices. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the corporation reassess and prioritize advertising efforts, since its statistical analysis revealed a lack of significance in forecasting consumer buying behaviour.

### **5.3 Research Directions**

The researcher proposes the implementation of a replicated study inside a relevant logistics industry, such as FedEx, Amazon, TNT among others. Alternatively, the research might be conducted in businesses that are not directly connected, such as the automotive sector. This will provide the chance to compare the outcomes. The industrial sector would greatly benefit from these relevant contributions.

The present study used a quantitative research approach in order to collect data from the participants, who were consumers. However, if this study is conducted utilizing a mixed methodological approach, including both questionnaires and interviews, it would allow for a more comprehensive examination of the respondents' perspectives, leading to more thought-provoking findings. Ultimately, the present study examined how consumers perceive integrated marketing approach. However, future research might include mediating factors, such as brand loyalty, to assess the influence.

## 6. Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis conducted in the Thesis sheds light on the intricate relationship between marketing communication strategies employed by DHL Express and consumer behavior. Through the examination of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations, it becomes evident that these components play pivotal roles in influencing consumer perceptions and decisions.

First and foremost, the findings highlight the significant impact of advertising on consumer attraction. Advertising, with its ability to convey informational, influential, and compelling messages, emerges as a potent tool for engaging consumers and fostering brand awareness. The effectiveness of advertising in capturing consumer attention underscores its importance within the integrated marketing communication framework of DHL Express.

However, while advertising stands out as a key driver in consumer engagement, it is imperative to recognize that integrated marketing communication encompasses a broader spectrum of strategies. Personal selling, marketing for sales, and public relations (PR) each contribute uniquely to the overall communication strategy. Personal selling, for instance, facilitates direct interaction with consumers, thereby enabling tailored communication and relationship-building opportunities. Sales promotion initiatives serve to incentivize consumer behavior, driving short-term sales and fostering brand loyalty. Meanwhile, public relations activities cultivate a favorable brand image, enhancing consumer trust and credibility.

Moreover, the Thesis reveals that consumers generally perceive the integrated marketing communication approach of DHL Express positively. This positive perception underscores the effectiveness of DHL's communication strategies but also signals areas for potential improvement. By continuously refining and innovating its integrated marketing communication efforts, DHL Express can further enhance consumer engagement and loyalty.

Furthermore, the correlation observed between integrated marketing communication strategies and consumer behavior underscores the interconnected nature of these variables. As DHL Express embraces and implements integrated marketing strategies more effectively, there is a corresponding enhancement in consumer buying behavior. This symbiotic relationship underscores the importance of a cohesive and integrated approach to marketing communication within the organization.

While advertising plays a prominent role in consumer attraction, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations emerge as equally significant contributors to shaping consumer behavior. Each component of the integrated marketing communication mix plays a distinct role in engaging consumers and fostering brand loyalty. Moving forward, DHL Express should focus on leveraging these insights to refine its communication strategies, ultimately enhancing consumer satisfaction and driving business growth.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in marketing communication and consumer behavior in several ways. The exploration of integrated marketing communication strategies within the context of DHL Express offers valuable insights into the practical application of theoretical frameworks. By empirically examining the impact of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations on consumer behavior, this research provides actionable recommendations for marketers seeking to enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty.

Additionally, the findings of this study fill a significant knowledge gap by offering a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between marketing communication strategies and consumer behavior within the logistics industry. As businesses increasingly rely on effective communication to differentiate themselves in competitive markets, the insights gleaned from this research have implications beyond the realm of DHL Express, informing strategic decision-making across various sectors.

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## List of Abbreviations

1. AI - Artificial Intelligence
2. AIDA - Attention, Interest, Desire, Action
3. B2B - Business-to-Business
4. B2C - Business-to-Consumer
5. CRM - Customer Relationship Management
6. DAGMAR - Defining Advertising Goal for Measured Advertising Result
7. DHL - Dalsey, Hillblom, and Lynn (the founders' last names)
8. GDP - Gross Domestic Product
9. IMC - Integrated Marketing Communication
10. KPI - Key Performance Indicator
11. ROI - Return on Investment
12. SEM - Search Engine Marketing
13. SEO - Search Engine Optimization
14. SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
15. SME - Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
16. SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
17. USP - Unique Selling Proposition

## **Appendix 1 - Questionnaire Survey Form**

I am presently a student at a Czech university as part of my master's degree in management, currently studying on the consumer perception towards integrated marketing communication strategy of DHL Express as part of my research project. As a consumer of DHL Express services, you are cordially invited to participate in this research. Your expertise and viewpoints are essential in the research, and your participation is important for the study. I guarantee that all acquired information will be confidential and only used for research or academics, and Your identity will be kept private throughout this research.

### **Questionnaire**

1. **Name** -

2. **Gender** - (A) Male (B) Female

3. **Age Group** - (A) Below 25 (B) 25 to 35 (C) 35 to 45 (D) Above 45

4. **Education Level** - (A) School (B) Certification (C) Diploma (D) Degree

5. **Yearly Salary Range** - (A) Below \$10,000 (B) \$10,000 to \$20,000 (C) \$20,000 to \$30,000 (D) Above \$30,000

6. **DHL Services Usage** - (A) Frequently (B) Often (C) Occasionally (D) Rarely

7. **DHL Services Category** - (A) Domestic Express (B) International Express (C) Cargo Services (D) eCommerce Solutions (E) Pick Up & Drop Off (F) Tracking & Tracing

## **Marketing Communication Effectiveness**

*(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Agree (E) Strongly Agree*

### **Advertising**

1. DHL's advertisements effectively communicate the benefits of their services.
2. DHL's advertisements are memorable and catch my attention.
3. DHL's advertisements influence my decision to consider DHL for shipping and logistics solutions.
4. DHL's advertisements effectively differentiate the company from its competitors.
5. DHL's advertisements are relevant to my needs and interests.

### **Public Relations**

6. DHL's public relations efforts create a positive image of the company.
7. I trust the information provided by DHL through its public relations activities.
8. DHL's involvement in community events and sponsorships enhances its reputation.
9. DHL's public relations efforts contribute to building a sense of trust and reliability.
10. DHL's public relations activities effectively communicate the company's values and commitments.

### **Sales Promotion**

11. DHL's promotional offers and discounts encourage me to use their services.
12. I find DHL's promotional campaigns appealing and worth taking advantage of.
13. DHL's sales promotions influence my decision to choose DHL over other shipping companies.
14. DHL's sales promotions provide added value to their services.
15. DHL's sales promotions are effectively communicated through various channels.

### **Direct Marketing**

16. DHL's direct marketing materials (e.g., emails, brochures) are informative and useful.
17. I find DHL's direct marketing materials personalized to my needs and preferences.
18. DHL's direct marketing campaigns prompt me to take action (e.g., visit their website, inquire about services).
19. DHL's direct marketing communications are timely and relevant.
20. DHL's direct marketing efforts effectively engage me with the brand.

### **Personal Selling**

21. DHL's sales representatives are knowledgeable about the company's services and offerings.
22. DHL's sales representatives are courteous and professional in their interactions.
23. DHL's sales representatives effectively address my queries and concerns.
24. I feel valued and appreciated as a consumer during interactions with DHL's sales representatives.
25. DHL's sales representatives play a significant role in influencing my decision to use DHL's services.

### **Consumer Behavior Impact**

*(A) Strongly Disagree (B) Disagree (C) Neutral (D) Agree (E) Strongly Agree*

1. The marketing communication of DHL effectively conveys the benefits and features of its services.
2. DHL's advertisements and promotional materials are memorable and easily recognizable.
3. I trust the information provided in DHL's marketing communication materials.
4. DHL's marketing communication influences my perception of the company as reliable and trustworthy.
5. The marketing communication from DHL influences my attitude towards using their services.
6. I often consider DHL when making decisions about shipping and logistics services.
7. DHL's marketing communication has influenced my past buying decisions.
8. I am likely to recommend DHL to others based on their marketing communication.
9. DHL's marketing communication helps me understand the value proposition of their services compared to competitors.
10. Overall, DHL's marketing communication positively influences my perception of the brand.