

Content Analysis of Promotional Messages Conveyed by Retailers in Mannar District

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Abstract

Since the beginning of conflict resolution in Sri Lanka, Retailers in Mannar have been promoting their products to consumers via different media vehicles. Over the years, the promotional processes and systems used by retailing have been tailored and modified in order to meet the demands of the consumers. Nowadays promotional messages are greatest important to all business to realize the objectives of the businesses successfully. Suitable promotional messages support consumers for their purchase decisions. Promotional message content is important, because those fascinate consumers. Today's retailers must find new ways to attract consumers and inspire high levels of customer retention. Purpose of this research is to identify the different contents of promotional messages conveyed by the retailers in Mannar, where many retailers penetrated after conflict resolution. This research analyzed the contents of promotional messages in 24 Newspaper Advertisements and 26 Catalogs. This research frequently identified the contents of pesticides and herbicides promotional messages. Based on Carlson's classification contents are summarized based on product oriented, process oriented, Image oriented, environmental reality orientated and integrated promotional messages. Content analysis was used to classify those promotional messages into five categories. Different promotional messages are identified from the different product advertisements. There is inadequate promotional messages on environmental reality, and integrated messages identified in this study. Consumers seek for innovation, creativity as well as the environmental friendly concern. Therefore, present study provides implications to retail sector in Mannar to design further promotional messages which integrate the orientations on product, process, Image, and Environmental reality.

Keywords: Advertisements, Content Analysis, Catalogues, Promotional Messages, Retailers.

Introduction

Retailers role in retail marketing is to promote and guide the customers to purchase products in planned or unplanned behavior, and they should encourage them to have a greatest experience, as well as enjoyable memories at the retail market (Levi & Weitz, 2009). Promotional message includes all the vehicles used in getting the attention of customer to make them aware of a brand, a product, or a company. Its main purposes are generating sales and developing customer retention. Retail Promotional messages are designed to inform, persuade, or remind. Promotional messages are closely related with four Ps of the marketing mix: product, place, price and promotion. It is also one of the seven functions of marketing, the other six being pricing, product and service management, place, people, process and physical environment. Objectives of promotional messages are to give information, to increase demand for a particular brand or

product, to differentiate the brand or the company from its competitors, to highlight the value or benefits of the product, to increase and stabilize sales. When organizations are making decisions about promotional messaging the objectives need to be stated clearly and should be measurable. Promotional messages must support the overall goals of the organization and focus on its strategies for successfully competing in the given market. In today's the promotional messages are most important to retailers and customers. Retailers convey the details about their product to the customers through the promotional messages in Catalogs and newspapers. Consumers can obtain more awareness of particular product of retailers. The consumers are mostly attracted by promotional messages.

Promotional messages mean used in bringing customers from a state of relative unawareness to a state of actively adopting the product (Cole, 2011). Its means of communicating with individuals, groups, or organizations to directly or indirectly facilitate exchange of information and persuading one or more audience to accept an organization's product. Promotion as the total marketing communication program of a particular product (Ross et al., 2011). Retail companies have always been close to consumers are now also economically powerful. Strong retail enterprises, organized as chains, decide nowadays what will be offered to the consumers. Their market supply is not limited to producers' brands, but, more and more often, they take the lead on sales by increasing the share of their own brand products. As far as their own brand products are concerned, major retailers, while competing on price, promotion are also positioning their offers on attributes other than price.

A study of Speck & Elliot (1997) analyzed that the Advertising message is a potent and extremely prevalent form of communication in America. Influencing consumers through advertising also require believability. In a survey believability was rated as high importance in an advertisement message (Speck & Elliot, 1997). Not only must an advertisement influence the consumer, it must be presented in a way, so the consumer believes its message.

Joergens (2006) explained the impact of advertising message strategy. This study focuses upon the advertising message strategies used by American Apparel, a global apparel retailer recognized for its socially responsible production practices, and in particular, for its commitment to fair labour (Joergens, 2006). Researchers have devised models to demonstrate the hierarchical effects of advertising on purchase intention (Mitchell and Olson, 1981).

Retailers offer the desired choice by delivering a wide range of retail formats and goods (Clarke et al., 2004), but they also shape, construct and bound consumer choice: physically, by the choice of products; materially, by the price of these products; and symbolically, by creating meaning and identity for the consumer. In today's competitive marketplace retailers should ensure that messages reach consumers about products and services are clear, and concise.

Marketing problems can be solved through the promotional strategies. Promotional message is a way expressing the message contents' products, what they have to attract the consumers. Many past studies identified that green promotion messages can be used as a strategy to survive in the market (Zuhairah Hasan, Noor Azman A, 2015). Retailers compete with them to attract the customers in a geographical segment. Identifying the content of the promotional messages helps the retailers to figure those advertisements on the preferences of customers accordingly. After conflict resolution what are promotional messages target to customers will be enrich the current knowledge in the classification of promotional messages. This research fills the gap by researching promotional messages conveyed by the retailers in manner district.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the contents of promotional messages conveyed by the retailers in Mannar.
2. To categories the promotional messages on *Based on Carlson's classification*.

Related Literature Review

The promotional message going back in time and taking its name from the items when war time aircraft dropped them on to enemy cities for propaganda is a printed means of weekly or monthly communication for retailers and distributors both in store and out of store and employed to communicate deals with retailer image (Pieters et al., 2007). The promotional message commands a substantial part of retailer image. (Pargel et al., 2009; De camillas, 2012; Gazquez Abad et al., 2009). Promotional message is often defined as marketing communication activities which do not include advertising selling or public relations or even more simply as special offers such definitions are very simplistic and do little to communicate the versatility variety and complexity of sale promotion in practices (Peattie and Peattie, 1994). Promotional messages are a crucial retail promotion tools because they influence shoppers both at home and in store and are source of marketing contributions from manufactures who are rely heavily on them to reach consumer directly. (Srinivasan et al., 1995; Yolle, 1997; Arnold et al., 2001; Minouni-Chaabane et al., 2010).

Ross (2001) sees promotional mix as “the total marketing communication programme of a particular product”. Adebisi (2006) defined promotional mix as “any marketing effort whose function is to inform or persuades actual or potential consumers about the merit a product possesses for the purpose of inducing a consumer to either start buying or continue to purchases the firm’s product.”

Advertising is “one of the most prolific and all-encompassing forms of communication in the world” (Reichert, 2003). This form of company to customer communication raises concerns about the ethics of advertising because the practice of it is very persuasive and influential (Treise & Weigold, 1994). Advertising has become a prominent means for organizations to create or adapt their image. Image creation is a public relations strategy that has increasingly targeted young adults and teens because they are not receptive to traditional direct advertising (Goodman & Dretzin, 1999).

This is the process by which the seller sells to the consumer face to face. The personal selling consists of a selling process, which is illustrated below. Personal selling is the most expensive form of promotion. Company that use more of personal selling are said to be adopting push strategy while that of advertising are using pull strategy. Publicity differs from other promotional mix in that it is costless most of the time. Publicity according to Cole (1996) is “news about the organization or its products reported in the press”. Publicity sometimes cost but its cost is always related with advertisement.

Public relation is another form of promotion. It is the means by which the organization related or communicates with the environment. Public relation is aimed at better customer relations and immediate feedback. The marketing and apparel literature generally agrees on the subject of fashion leadership in that fashion leaders are more likely to be young consumers (Goldsmith et al., 1991; Gutman and Mills, 1982; Horridge and Richards, 1984; Mason and Bellenger, 1974; Scrugge, 1977). When compared with other consumer groups, young fashion leaders are those consumers that consider fashion to be of great importance to their lifestyles.

The argument for choice editing is that in a sustainable society, environmentally sound choices should not be difficult to make, rather the sustainable choice should be the default choice (Maniates, 2010). Consumers benefit from choice editing as they are assured that critical sustainability issues are being dealt with upstream (Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, 2006a) and consumers accept that sustainable choices are being edited for them (Goworek et al., 2012).

Consumer trust is predicated by public acceptance and consumer awareness of the issue at stake, and generally requires adequate knowledge in society of environmental issues and to some extent a consensus on accepting reduced sovereignty for the purposes of a “greater good” (Michaelis, 2002). Cristina Ziliani, Marco Ieva, (2015) in their research evaluated the recent evolution retail flyers to illustrate how a tool of traditional marketing can be applied to generate insight on customer “couch-to-cart”

behaviour thus supporting an innovating shopper marketing approach. The authors support this position by elaborating on three themes: first, the recent evolution of flyers, driven by incorporation of customer insight derived from loyalty data and by new features enabled by flyer digitalization; second, the evolution of the flyer planning and management process, related to opportunities and challenges in the retailer organizational structure; and third, the rise of online flyer aggregators. Achchuthan & Charles (2017) demonstrated that information on retailers contributes to enhancing a customer's favorable evaluation of the supermarket's physical aspects, personal interaction and retailing policy.

Michael Clayton, Jun Heo, (2011), suggested that that promotional-based messaging is detrimental to all three brand associations, with quality ratings witnessing the most significant declines. In addition, the current study observed no significant effects of involvement, as measured by attention to the message, on brand association measures for value-based messaging when compared with brand messaging.

Ian Phau, Denise Ong, (2007) enlightened that, Shoppers responded more positively to product-related messages than cause-related messages. They found environmental claims to be more credible if attributed to the green brands than to the neutral brand. Though consumers are becoming increasingly green-minded, the result is not necessarily more consumption of green products, but "better" consumption behavior in general. Retailers should build a store image that clearly transmits their green credentials, as a proxy for the quality and nature of merchandise they carry.

Methodology

Research methodology is the one that provides guidelines to do a research systematically. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) defined research methodology as the general approach the researchers takes in carrying out the research project. Qualitative research helps researchers address issues in a specific context in their research disciplines. There are a number of research approaches which are included under the umbrella of qualitative methods. The social science disciplines have different conventions on best practices in qualitative research.

In this research the population is promotional messages conveyed by retailers in Mannar. Sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in a study, it is a fraction of the whole, selected to participate in the research project (Brink 1996; Polit & Hungler 1999) a general rule of the thumb is to always use the largest sample possible. The sample size of this study is 50 promotional messages, conveyed by the retailers in Mannar District. Promotional messages collected were advertised in 2016 during January–march.

Data Analysis

Content analysis is an acceptable method for redeveloping tools and theories (Carlson et al. 1993). Qualitative content analysis is one of numerous research methods used to analyze text data. Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967). Text data in verbal, print, or electronic form and have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or print media such as articles, books, or manuals (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). The goal of content analysis is "to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Present study followed the content analysis to analyze the messages delivered retailers in Mannar District.

Coding is an analytical process in which data, in both quantitative form results or qualitative is categorized to facilitate analysis. Coding means the transformation of data into a form understandable manner. All the data analysis procedures were accomplished with assistance of coding in this research. According to

Malhotra & Dash (2013) Coding means the assigning a code, usually a number, to each possible response to. Coding is intended as a reference to supplement those existing works. This manual focuses exclusively on codes and coding and how they play a role in the qualitative data analytic process.

Table 1: Classification, of Promotional messages on product type and message category.

| No | Promotional message | Product type | Message category |
|-----|--|--|------------------------|
| 1. | Soft and smoothness Full day moisturizing. Shower soft experience Seven fragrance | Soap | Product oriented |
| 2. | Gentle baby care Safe on skin Proteins content | Soap | Product oriented |
| 3. | New engine and tubeless tire with high warranty | Pleasure bike | Product oriented |
| 4. | Full capacity engine, high level warranty and velocity | Maxi truck (jeeto) | Product oriented |
| 5. | Significant travel and unique | Motor bike (Yamaha) | Product oriented |
| 6. | Innovation and enjoy | Motor plus | Process oriented |
| 7. | Gift offer | Motor product | Product oriented |
| 8. | Control the pest and new grade | Pesticides (peld) | Product oriented |
| 9. | New changes and control the pest | Pesticides (kiseki) | Product oriented |
| 10. | Environment protection | Pesticides (eviseed) | Environ mental reality |
| 11. | Protect the paddy and control the pest | Pesticides (nomini) | Product oriented |
| 12. | Spraying skill and more benefits | Pesticides (break Throo) | Product oriented |
| 13. | Pest control and quick response | Herbicides (sedpridilaclor) | Product oriented |
| 14. | International quality packing | Herbicides (tayisdar) | Process oriented |
| 15. | Help to higher harvesting in paddy field And win the trust of farmers. | Nudec Super-k(enriched) | Image oriented |
| 16. | Bright future and high quality | Education (professional Courses) | Process oriented |
| 17. | National diploma and graduation in lower age | Education (BTEC National diploma in Engineering) | Image oriented |
| 18. | Comprehensive coverage and latest teaching | Education (VLT CAMPUS) | Image oriented |
| 19. | High quality and higher national diploma | Education (DEAKIN UNIVERSITY) | Image oriented |
| 20. | Affordable and internship | Education (be a doctor m.b.b.s) | Image oriented |
| 21. | Enterprise pillar and performance pillar and financial pillar | Cima management level (mcs) | Image oriented |
| 22. | High efficient and lower electronic consumption | (Fan)electronic Instruments | Product oriented |
| 23. | High energy saving and high warranty | Electronic | Image oriented |

| | | Instruments (singer refrigerator) | |
|-----|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 24. | Bluetooth and based blasted | LG bower | Image oriented |
| 25. | High power saving | Inverter | Image oriented |
| 26. | Unexpected consumption and limit children behavior | Tablet | Product oriented |
| 27. | Lower electronic consumption | Electric water pump | Product oriented |
| 28. | Easy to work | Mixi(bullet den- b) | Product oriented |
| 29. | More channels and enjoy the world | Dialog TV | Image oriented |
| 30. | Digital interest and free service, lower interest | Seylfie account | Product oriented |
| 31. | Scholarship offers and high value prizes | Runkekulu (BOC) | Image oriented |
| 32. | Varthana salary booster account and Great life with saving | Deposit(DFCC bank) | Image oriented |
| 33. | Enjoy with music | Getset(Goyo) | Product oriented |
| 34. | Fastest network and more data affordable | Internet card | Process oriented |
| 35. | Bill payment and easy to work Transfer facility and insurance payment | Ez cash | Process oriented |
| 36. | Montero offer and more opportunity | Cash bonanza | Process oriented |
| 37. | Grooviest tune and best collection | M tunes | Product oriented |
| 38. | Valued package and free minute and data grams | Post- paid | Process oriented |
| 39. | Full body massages and meditation | Service of Ayurvedic Center | Process oriented |
| 40. | Environment protection and high quality material and compound paint | Wall kote paint | Integrated |
| 41. | Long term use and soundless, easy to use and high quality | ASA polimar roof | Product oriented |
| 42. | Multi colors and long term use New shape and design and confident | Chairs | Product oriented |
| 43. | Perfect portable and Durable, high mobility and multiuse | Table mate | Product oriented |
| 44. | High quality | Engine oil | Product oriented |
| 45. | Long term use and free gas slender, Consolation prizes | Gas | Process oriented |
| 46. | More confident, durable and attractive | Memorandum | Product oriented |
| 47. | Cotton and cool and extra cooling And fitness, smooth and soft | Diapers | Product oriented |
| 48. | Bright future and high salary | KFC employees | Process oriented |
| 49. | Easy to use and soft and cool | Natural oil | Product oriented |
| 50. | Easy to select the three suitable outside color for roof. | Water tanks (hybrid) | Product oriented |

Carlson *et al* (1993) classified promotional message advertisements into five types as 1) Product oriented messages are oriented towards to product's specifications 2) process oriented advertising messages are oriented towards firms' process 3) Image oriented -claims make the company related with common activity or effect which is supported by public 4) environmental reality: promotional messages related to environmental real problems 5) integrated: any one messages consisted of product, product, image. environmental reality explained as an integrated message. Table 1 explains the message types, those are categorized into product oriented promotional messages, process oriented promotional messages, image

oriented promotional messages, environmental reality messages and integrated promotional messages. Product oriented promotional messages are great number compared to other categories. Environmental reality, and Integrated promotional messages are very few compared to other messages. Form the table 1 it could be seen that no environmental reality advertisements were found from the contents of the promotional messages conveyed by the retailers in Mannar.

Table 2: Classification based on message contents

| No | Product type | Content. |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | Soap (velvet) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft experience • Seven attractive • Fragrance daily • Keeping skin in cool |
| 2. | Soap(baby) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100g new and big soap. • Price is 50/-, pure and gentle baby soap • Olive oil and milk proteins. • Gentle care safe on skin. |
| 3. | Pleasure bike | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New engine • Tubeless tire • High warranty |
| 4. | Maxi truck (jeeto) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full capacity engine • High level warranty • High velocity |
| 5. | Motor bike | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant travel • Unique |
| 6. | Motor plus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Enjoy |
| 7. | Motor product | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gift offer |
| 8. | Pesticides (peld) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control the pest • New grade |
| 9. | Pesticides (kiseki) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New changes • Control the pest |
| 10. | Pesticides (evisecd) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment protection • Control the pest |
| 11. | Pesticides (nomini) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the paddy • Control the pest |
| 12. | Pesticides(break throo) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spraying skill • More benefits |
| 13. | Herbicides (sedpridilaclor) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pest control • Quick response |
| 14. | Herbicides (tayisdar) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International quality packing |
| 15. | Nudec super-k(enriched) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to higher harvesting in paddy field • Win the trust of farmers. |
| 16. | Education (professional courses) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright future • High quality |
| 17. | Education (BTEC National diploma in Engineering) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National diploma • Graduation • In lower age |
| 18. | Education (VLT CAMPUS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive coverage • Latest teaching |

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 19. | (DEAKIN UNIVERSITY) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality • Higher national diploma Education |
| 20. | Education (Be a doctor M.B.B.S) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable • Internship |
| 21. | CIMA(MCS) management level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise pillar • Performance pillar • Financial pillar |
| 22. | (Fan)electronic instruments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High efficient • Lower electronic • Consumption |
| 23. | electronic instruments (singer refrigerator) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High energy saving • High warranty |
| 24. | LG bower | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluetooth • Based blasted |
| 25. | Inverter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High power saving |
| 26. | Tablet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected consumption • Limit children behavior |
| 27. | Electric water pump | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower electronic consumption |
| 28. | Mixi(bullet den- b) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to work |
| 29. | Dialog TV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More channels • Enjoy the world |
| 30. | Seylfie account | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital interest • Free service • Lower interest |
| 31. | Runkekulu (BOC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship offers • High Value Prizes |
| 32. | Deposit(DFCC bank) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varthana salary booster account • Great life with saving |
| 33. | Getset(goyo) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy with music |
| 34. | Internet card | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fastest net work • More data • Affordable |
| 35. | Ez cash | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill payment • Easy to work • Transfer facility • Insurance payment |
| 36. | Cash bonanza | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montero offer • More opportunity |
| 37. | M tunes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grooviest tune • Best collection |
| 38. | Post- paid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valued package • Free minute • Data grams |
| 39. | Service of ayurvedic Center | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full body massages • Meditation |
| 40. | Wall kote paint | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment protection • High quality material • Compound paint |

| | | |
|-----|----------------------|--|
| 41. | ASA polimar roof | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term use • Soundless • Easy to use • High quality |
| 42. | Chairs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi colors • Long term use • 43new shape and design and confident |
| 43. | Table mate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perfect portable • Durable • High mobility • Multiuse |
| 44. | Engine oil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality |
| 45. | Gas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term use • Free gas slender, • Consolation prizes |
| 46. | Memorandum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More confident • Durable • Attractive |
| 47. | Diapers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton and cool • Extra cooling • Fitness • Smooth and soft |
| 48. | KFC employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright future • High salary |
| 49. | Natural oil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to use • Soft and cool |
| 50. | Water tanks (hybrid) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to select the three suitable outside • Color for roof. |

Conclusion

After conflict resolution many retailers were entered in to Mannar, to capture their new geographical segment. Having good messages as strategic benefit for the retailers to compete in the market, because those message are medium for communication, which are designed to be delivered to capture customers in a market. Present study selected 50 promotional messages. These promotional messages contained 24 newspaper advertisement and 26 catalogs. Most of the promotional advertisements contented of pesticide advertisements which target framers in the market. Based on Carlson's classification contents are summarized based on product oriented, process oriented, image oriented, environmental reality, and integrated messages.

There are 26 product oriented promotional messages, 10 process oriented promotional messages, 12 image oriented Promotional messages, 1 environmental reality promotional message, and 1 integrated promotional messages were identified in this research. Environmental reality and integrated messages are insufficient in the contents identified in this study. The consumers expectantly respond to environmental reality advertising, the companies and their products, the firms should stress their environmental reality actions, which will allow consumers to differentiate between "environment reality" firms and "non-environment reality" firms. In addition, the application of environment reality methods in production and green product attributes should be emphasized to convince and attract consumers. A green advertising campaign should be associated with a clear, transparent, understandable and concise environmental claim, through which the

firms will be able to grab the consumers' attention (Bing Zhu ,2013). Therefore, retailers can change their promotional messages to green perspectives.

The chosen promotional messages conveyed by the retailers were not represented the whole population. Similarly, the sample was primarily taken from the advertisements and catalogs, designed by the Mannar Retailers, and consequently it was not geographically representative. This research merely analyzed the promotional messages based on the Carlson (1993) classification.

Based on the findings and the conclusions discussed above, various suggestions for future researchers can be offered. These suggestions such as from this research study it was clear that the sample consists of small amount, an area that would benefit from more detailed investigation, although this study consisted of 50 sample form a given time frame, time can be extended and more advertisements messages will be analyzed further to have different category of messages. Future research can explore the response of the consumers towards the promotional messages conveyed by the retailers.

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