IDENTIFYING MARKETING COMMUNICATION MEDIA THAT ARE INFLUENTIAL TO CONSUMERS

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Abstract

Marketing communication is essential for any business as it informs the consumer about the business and the products and services that it offers. The way in which the retailer decides to communicate with the customer is important as it can influence the consumer to purchase from the retailer. With the rapid increase in new communication mediums, retailers now have much more mediums at their disposal to communicate and interact with their customers. This study thus aimed to determine which mediums of marketing communication media is most influential for the consumer. Convenience sampling was used for this study and a self-administered web-based questionnaire was used to collect the data. The data was collected from available consumers in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The results indicated that consumers regard marketing communication mediums such as television, radio as influential and would react to marketing communication that included discounts and vouchers.

Keywords: Marketing Communications, Retailers, Traditional Media, Social Media, Real-Time Marketing, South Africa

1. INTRODUCTION

Retailers may have the best products and services to offer customers, but ultimately, retailers' success relies on persuading customers to select their retail store and to buy their products rather than buying from a competitor. Retailers make use of various marketing communication mediums in order to communicate with potential customers and to attract them to their stores. Marketing communications refers to the elements that the retailer uses to deliver messages to the customer (Chitty, Luck, Barker, Valos, Shimp & Andrews, 2014: 3). Essentially, marketing communication informs customers about the retailer's products and services, it persuades them to purchase products from the retailer and it reminds the customers about the retailer and their product offerings (Pride, Hughes & Kapoor, and 2014: 424). There are various traditional and non-traditional marketing communication media that are available to retailers in order to attract the attention of customers and to persuade them to make purchases.

Developments in technology have led to many new communication mediums such as social media, e-mailing, mobile phones and real time marketing (Koekemoer, 2014b: 433). Retailers have had to progress with technology and adapt these new communication mediums into their businesses to reach customers (Deloitte, 2011: 7). These new communication mediums provide retailers with new approaches to delivering their messages to customers which allow customers to engage with the retailer in their own time and at a place that is suitable for the customer (KPMG, 2013: 4). Technology has brought about new methods of not just informing the customer about the organisation's products, but also new ways of interacting and building relationships with the customers (Ferrell & Pride, 2014: 236).

These new interactive methods of communication have removed the limitations of traditional media, such as one-way communication from the retailer to the customer, a limited amount of information being delivered, limited reach and the cost of advertising (Samuels, 2013: 1). New developments in the field of technology have also made it possible for retailers to target specific customers effectively and to gain accurate information about the target market (Ferrell & Pride, 2014: 235).

With the increase in the use of these new marketing communications media the question arises as to which marketing communications media is considered to be more influential for consumers. This study thus aims to determine which mediums of marketing communication media is most influential for the consumer.

2. MARKETING COMMUNICATION MEDIA

Marketing communications is essential in managing the perceptions of consumers and influencing the attitudes and beliefs that consumers form about the retailer (Hamway, 2013). Through marketing communication, the retailer can create a positive image of the retailer and his/her products. It is thus important for retailers to understand their consumers and to identify all the internal and external influences of consumer perception as well as consumer perception of the various marketing stimuli to which they are exposed (Kroon, Mostert, Van der Walt & Meintjies, 2010: 4). The way in which a retailer delivers his/her messages and communicates with his/her consumers is important as it is a means of getting the customers' attention and influencing them to purchase specific brands from a specific retail store. With the increased

amount of marketing communications to which consumers are exposed, consumers screen out the messages that they perceive to be irrelevant to them (Boundless, 2014). It is thus important for retailers to select the correct marketing tools to deliver their messages to the intended audience and to select tools that will influence the intended consumers to form a positive perception about such retailers.

2.1. Traditional mediums of marketing communication media

Marketing communication encompasses all the methods of communication which can be used, such as advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations and personal selling (Chitty et al., 2014: 3). The method of communication and the best time to communicate the organisation's message will depend on the target audience and their buying behaviour and the product itself (Chitty et al., 2014: 32). The methods traditionally used by retailers to inform, persuade and remind consumers about their store are advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and direct mail.

•Advertising is regarded as the non-personal, one-directional paid-for communication of information promoting a certain product to generate sales (Koekemoer, 2014a: 61). It includes mass communication such as television, radio, billboards, pamphlets and newspapers (Chitty et al., 2014: 4).

•Personal selling is the process of identifying the customer's needs and delivering information about a specific product to a prospective customer via face-to-face communication (Koekemoer, 2014a: 220). Personal selling is one of the methods retailers use to build and retain relationships with the customer (Van Heerden & Drotsky, 2014: 209).

•Sales promotion refers to the marketing tactic where customers are given incentives in the form of promotions or free trails for a limited period in order to motivate consumer action and encourage sales (Chitty et al., 2014: 5). Sales promotion focuses on encouraging an action. It is a unique, separate event and it comprises a tangible object.

•Direct marketing is a means of marketing the organisation's products by directly contacting the prospective buyer by means of mail or telephone (Boone & Kurtz, 2015: 512). Direct mail has many advantages for the retailer such as personalising the messages that are sent out, selecting the relevant target market, providing complete information and the response rates are measurable (Boone & Kurtz, 2015: 512).

Traditionally, the methods used by retailers to communicate with the consumer, such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and direct mail, had the desired effect of reaching and informing consumers about their products. Today however, consumers are exposed to so many different types of media on a daily basis that, in order to gain their attention, marketers must find new and exciting ways of marketing their products (KPMG, 2013: 4).

2.2. Non- traditional mediums of marketing communications media

Developments in technology have led to non-traditional methods of communication such as social media, e-mailing, mobile phones and blogs (Koekemoer, 2014b: 433). Retailers have had to evolve with technology and adapt these new communication mediums into their businesses to reach customers (Deloitte, 2011: 7). These new communication mediums provide retailers with new approaches to delivering their messages to customers, such as digital advertising and social media, which allow customers to engage with the retailer in their own time (KPMG, 2013: 4). Technology has brought about new methods of not just informing the customer about the organisation's products, but also new ways of interacting and building relationships with the customers (Ferrell & Pride, 2014: 236).

Within the span of a few years, there has been an explosion of available electronic marketing communication media. As a result, there have been many changes to the way in which business is done and the way in which businesses and consumers communicate with each other (Siddique & Rehman, 2011: 184). New digital technologies and the internet now provide consumers with access to much more information than before. Consumers are now able to interact with businesses, compare products, get expert advice regarding purchases and view their opinions regarding the business and their products to a large audience. Consumers are also able to make safe payments for their purchases on the internet (PayPal, 2013). Technology has influenced the way in which consumers see, read and process information and, as a result, technology plays a major role in the marketing communications methods used to communicate with customers (Rodriguez-Ardura & Gretzel, 2012: 1). Technology has provided retailers with various marketing communication tools for engaging with their target audiences in a way that is compelling and through a medium that is convenient for the customer. The use of technology enabled media to conduct marketing communication is often referred to as digital marketing.

Digital marketing is the term used to describe the use of one or more electronic media to promote a product, brand or retailer (Ferrell & Pride, 2014: 236). Some of the more prominent forms of digital media used by retailers are e-marketing, e-mail marketing, mobile marketing and social media and real-time marketing. These digital forms of marketing are briefly discussed below:

•E-marketing, internet marketing or digital marketing refers to the process of marketing an organisation and its products or brands using digital media and digital marketing methods to communicate with customers (Ferrell & Pride, 2014: 236). This type of marketing comprises all activities that the business does through the internet such as the business website. It also includes online pop-up that appear on a webpage and online banner advertisements that appear on a webpage as the customer is browsing.

•E-mail marketing can be defined as a type of digital marketing that uses electronic mail to communicate with customers, providing information about the organisation, the products they offer and the services that they provide by sending them relevant promotional material (Stokes & Quirk, 2013: 31). This type of marketing communication typically involves the business engaging with consumers via e-mail and sending them advertisements, newsletters, catalogues, sales or donation solicitations and coupons.

•Mobile marketing refers to the promotional activity of the organisation that allows for two-way communication between the firm and its customers through the use of mobile devices such as mobile phones, PDAs and tablet PCs (Heart, 2014: 5). Mobile marketing initiatives include mobile advertising through the use of promotional SMSs that are sent directly to the customer (Shankar & Carpenter, 2013: 217).

•Social media marketing refers to the process of using social media such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube as a means of interacting with target audiences (Nations, 2013). It is the process of engaging in conversations with the customer by using interactive social media platforms (Nations, 2013). Social media marketing allows the retailer to engage in conversation which results in building trust and confidence with the customer and which improves the retailer's products and services so that it can better serve the needs of the customer (Packer, 2013).

•Real-time marketing (RTM) is the ability of a brand to engage with their customers in a way that is non-intrusive, to be able to share information that is relevant via multiple media channels and to do so in real time (GolinHarris, 2013). RTM focuses on enhancing customer experiences and communicating with consumers in real time. Real-time marketing makes use of various media such as mobile media, social media and online or digital media to send communication directly to the customer in real-time.

With these new communication medium, retailers have much more options when selecting their marketing communication mediums to use. In order for the consumer to pay attention to and attend to a message, the retailer needs to select communication methods that the consumer prefers, that they will pay attention to and that may possibly result in action. This study aims to determine which mediums of marketing communication media is most influential for the consumer. An understanding of the marketing communication mediums that are considered to be most influential for the consumer will provide retailers with more insight into what communication media they should make use of when communicating with their customers.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study was to determine:
•which mediums of marketing communication media used by retailers is considered to be more influential.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study followed a quantitative research approach as it made use of numerical measures, statistics and figures to achieve the objectives of the study. For this study, descriptive research was deemed most appropriate as this type of research focuses on an in-depth analysis of a specific group, a situation or phenomenon or attitudes of the consumer (Wiid & Diggines, 2013: 55).

In order to achieve the desired objectives of the current study, survey research was selected. A web-based self-administered survey was used to collect data from the sample for this study. Consumers were sent an e-mail, which included the details and purpose of the study, followed by a link to an online platform, LimeSurvey, where they were able to complete the survey.

The sample population consisted of individuals who were over the age of 18 and who had made a purchase at a retail store in Gauteng, South Africa. The study focused on the population in Gauteng as this province is considered to be the 'powerhouse' of the South African economy (Gauteng Provincial Treasury 2012: 29). Based on the sampling frame, the most appropriate sampling method for the study was that of a convenience sample. Due to the sample method being that of convenience sampling, the results cannot be generalised to the entire population. The sample was gathered by collecting data from retail consumers with whom the researcher came into contact. Various social media was also used to recruit respondents for the study.

A total of 201 consumers indicated their willingness to participate in the study. The survey was sent to these 201 individuals of which 201 responses were received back. From the responses that were received some of them were partial responses. The partial responses were the result respondents answering selected questions only and as a result, the number of responses for each question differed. The analysis of the primary data collected comprised descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics. The analysis of the data gathered from the sample is discussed in the sections that follow.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In order to analyse the data that was collected from the sample, descriptive research was used. Descriptive research is a basic form of statistical analysis that is used to provide a summary of characteristics of individuals, groups, environments or objects, such as distribution, central tendency and variability (Zikmund & Babin, 2013: 354). Inferential statistics was also used to draw inferences regarding the population based on the data that was collected.

5.1. Demographic profile

The demographic profile of respondents include factors such as income level, gender, age and highest qualification which is used to learn more about the characteristics of the respondents. In the current study, understanding the demographic profile of respondents was important as it assisted in providing more clarity on the customers.

Respondents were asked to indicate their income level from a given list of income groups. The results (as indicated in Table 1) show that the majority of the respondents (26%, n=30) earned more than R30 000 per month and only 6% (n=7) of respondents earned between R0 and R2 500 per month. It is clear from Table 1 that more than half (68%, n=72) of respondents earned above R17 501 per month.

These results contribute to the overall image of the participating consumers and who they were.

Table 1. Income level of respondents

3 Level	Frequency	Percentage
R0–R2 500	7	6%
R2 501–R5 000	9	8%
R5 001–R7 500	3	3%
R7 501–R10 000	5	4%
R10 001–R12 500	4	3%
R12 501–R15 000	9	8%
R15 001–R17 500	6	5%
R17 501–R20 000	12	10%
R20 001–R22 500	9	8%
R22 501–R30 000	21	18%
R30 000+	30	26%
Total (n)	115	100%

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender. It was clear from the results in Table 2 that more than half of the respondents (67%, n=78) were female while the remaining respondents (33%, n=38) were male.

Table 2. Gender groupings of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	78	67%
Male	38	33%
Total (n)	116	100%

In order to determine the age group of the sample, respondents were asked to indicate into which age group from a given list of age groups they fell. As shown in Table 3, more than half of the respondents (53%, n=61) were between the ages of 26 and 35 and only 10% (n=12) of respondents were between the ages of 36 and 45 years and 46 and 65 years respectively. This result could be due to the fact that convenience sampling was used to gather the sample and the researcher came into contact with more consumers between the ages of 26 and 35 years.

Table 3. Age group of respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
18–25 years	30	26%
26–35 years	61	53%
36–45 years	12	10%
46–65 years	12	10%
65+ years	1	1%
Total (n)	116	100%

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest qualification in order to determine the education level of the respondents. This was important as it provided additional context regarding the type of consumers represented in the sample. It also assisted in identifying any possible links between the respondents' education levels and their behaviour towards RTM campaigns. The results obtained, as shown in Table 4, illustrate that 47% (n=54) of the respondents held a post-graduate qualification while a further 23% (n=27) of respondents had a degree. Only 1% (n=1) of the respondents did not complete high school.

Table 4. Qualification levels of respondents

Level	Count	Percentage
Did not complete high school	1	1%
Completed Grade 12/matric	21	18%
Post-school qualification – diploma/certificate	13	11%
Post-school qualification – degree	27	23%
Post-graduate qualification	54	47%
Total (n)	116	100%

Table 4 clearly indicates that the majority (99%) of respondents completed matric and had some form of higher qualification.
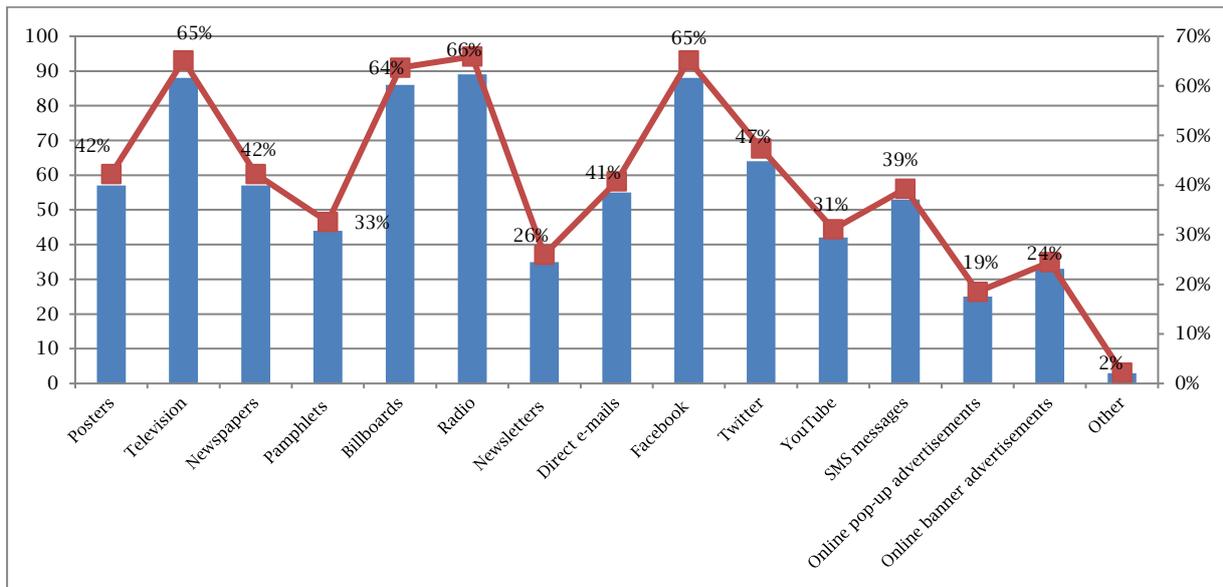
In determining which marketing communications media were most influential for consumers, the research identified which marketing communication media consumers preferred followed by the consumers response to various marketing communication tools.

5.2. Consumer preference of marketing media used by retailers

In order to determine which marketing communication media consumers preferred retailers use in communicating with them, consumers were given a list of communication tools and asked to indicate the marketing tools they preferred retailers to use in communicating with them.

In Figure 1, the various marketing communication media selected by respondents are shown. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents (66%, n=89) indicated that they preferred radio as a form of communication from retailers, while more than half (65%, n=88) of the respondents selected television, Facebook (65%, n=88) and billboards (64%, n=86) as a form of marketing communication media.

Figure 1. Marketing communication media that respondents preferred to receive from retailers (n=135)

The results in Table 5 indicate that respondents least preferred marketing communications in the form of online pop-up advertisements (81%, n=110), online banner advertisements (76%, n=102) and newsletters (74%, n=100).

Table 5. Marketing communication media that respondents preferred to receive from retailers (n=135)

Marketing communication media	Not selected	Percentage	Selected yes	Percentage
Posters	78	58%	57	42%
Television	47	35%	88	65%
Newspapers	78	58%	57	42%
Pamphlets	91	67%	44	33%
Billboards	49	36%	86	64%
Radio	46	34%	89	66%
Newsletters	100	74%	35	26%
Direct e-mails	80	59%	55	41%
Facebook	47	35%	88	65%
Twitter	71	53%	64	47%
YouTube	93	69%	42	31%
SMS messages	82	61%	53	39%
Online pop-up advertisements	110	81%	25	19%
Online banner advertisements	102	76%	33	24%
Other	132	98%	3	2%

5.3. Relationship between demographics and consumer preference of communication media

In order to determine whether there was a significant relationship between consumers' age groups and the marketing communication media used by retailers preferred by consumers the chi-square test was conducted. The chi-square test is done to determine whether two normal independent variables are independent of each other (Feinberg *et al.,* 3013: 408). A probability value (p-value) is produced from the chi-square test, which indicates a statistical significance if this calculated p-value is smaller than 0.05 at a 95% level of confidence. The level of confidence refers to the percentage that the parameter represents for the true population (Wilson, 2014: 150). The value of this lies in the fact that retailers who are specifically targeting consumers in different age groups will have an idea of which marketing communication media should be used for consumers of different ages.

The results of the chi-square test, as indicated in Table 6, show a p-value of (0.0131), which is below 0.05, whose significance is an indication of a relationship between age group and the preference of YouTube as a marketing communication media used by retailers at a 95% level of confidence.

Table 6. Chi-square test: YouTube vs age of respondents

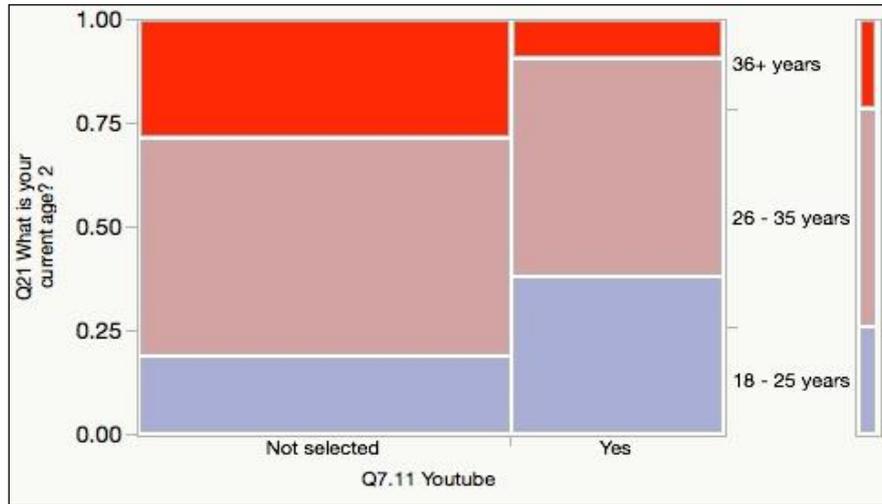|	Chi-square	df	Prob > ChiSq
YouTube vs age	8.665	2	0.0131*

Significant difference

From this analysis, it would seem that respondents in the age group 18–25 years preferred YouTube as a means of communication from retailers, compared to respondents in the age group

36+ who did not select YouTube as a communication media used by retailers, (Figure 2). This difference may be attributed to the fact that it is generally the younger generation that is more focused on the use of technology than the older generation (Kerstin, 2014: 1106).

Figure 2. Chi-square – YouTube and age groups of respondents

In order to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the gender of the consumer and the marketing communication media consumers preferred to receive from retailers a chi-square test was done. Determining whether there is a relationship between the gender group of consumers and marketing communication media preferred by the will provide an understanding of the relationship between the gender of consumers and their preference for marketing communication media received from retailers. Such knowledge will allow retailers to target specific customers with specific marketing communication media. Table 7 indicates the p-values that were derived from the chi-square test. The results indicate p-values below 0.05 for newspaper advertisements (p-value=0.0343) and advertisements on Twitter (p-value=0.015). The significance of a p-value below 0.05 is that it shows a significant relationship between gender and newspaper advertisements and gender and Twitter advertisements at a 95% level of confidence. Newspaper advertisements and advertisements on Twitter are thus ideal for targeting specific gender groups. The relationship between gender and newspaper advertisements and gender and Twitter advertisements is made clear in Table 7, which highlights the respondents' preference for the specific types of media.

Table 7. Chi-square gender vs consumer preference of marketing communication used by respondents

Significant variable	Chi-value	df	p-value
Gender vs newspaper advertisements	4.482	1	0.0343*
Gender vs Twitter advertisements	5.913	1	0.015*

Significant difference

Table 8 clearly indicates that more females do not prefer newspaper advertisements (39%, n=45) compared to males. However more females prefer Twitter advertisements (32%, n=37) compared to males. It can be inferred that the difference in the preference of advertisements on Twitter could be because females may prefer a faster, more interactive form of media compared to males. Further research regarding this is needed to provide more insight. Retailers can make use of this relationship to ensure that they are communicating with their consumers through the correct marketing communications media. They can use this relationship to personalise their newspaper advertisements for their male consumers and Twitter advertisements for their female consumers.

Table 8. Gender vs consumer preference of marketing communication media used by respondents

	Marketing communication tool		Female	Male	Total
Not selected	Newspaper advertisements	n	45	14	59
		%	38.79%	12.07%	50.86%
	Twitter advertisements	n	41	11	52
		%	35.34%	9.48%	44.83%
Yes	Newspaper advertisements	n	33	24	57
		%	28.45%	20.69%	49.14%
	Twitter advertisements	n	37	27	64
		%	31.90%	23.28%	55.17%

In determining which marketing communication tools were the most influential consumers were asked to indicate their response to the various marketing communication tools.

Consumers were asked to indicate whether they would 'disregard', 'consider at a later stage', 'pay selective attention to' or 'attend to immediately' in terms of items in a list of marketing communication media. Table 9 and Figure 3 indicate the range of results regarding consumers' responses to various marketing communication tools. The results provide an indication as to which marketing communication media will attract the consumers' attention and which will most likely result in purchases.
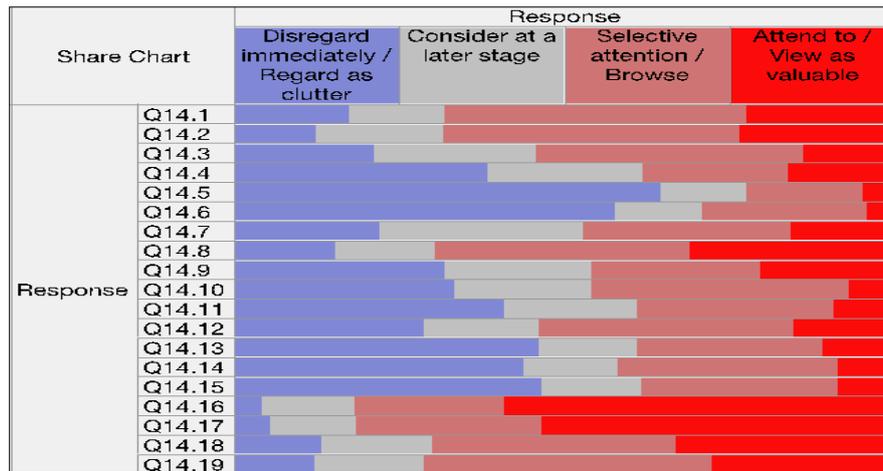
Table 9. Consumers' responses to various marketing communication tools

		Disregard immediately / Regard as clutter		Consider at a later stage		Selective attention / Browse		Attend to / View as valuable	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Traditional media									
Q14.1	Television advertisements	20	17%	17	15%	53	46%	26	22%
Q14.2	Radio advertisements	14	12%	22	19%	51	45%	27	24%
Q14.3	Newspaper advertisements	24	21%	28	25%	46	40%	16	14%
Q14.4	Pamphlets received from retailers	44	38%	27	23%	25	22%	19	17%
Online media									
Q14.5	Pop-up online advertisements	74	64%	15	13%	20	17%	6	5%
Q14.6	Online banner advertisements	65	58%	15	13%	28	25%	5	4%
Q14.7	Personalised e-mails from retailers	25	22%	35	31%	36	32%	18	16%
Q14.8	Personalised retailer websites	17	15%	17	15%	43	38%	35	31%
Mobile devices									
Q14.9	Personalised text messages from retailers	36	32%	25	22%	29	26%	23	20%
Q14.10	Product information that pops up on the retailer's mobile website	37	33%	23	21%	43	39%	8	7%
Q14.11	Retailer advertisements on mobile applications	47	41%	23	20%	34	30%	11	10%
Social media									
Q14.12	Advertisements on Facebook	33	29%	20	17%	44	38%	18	16%
Q14.13	Advertisements on Twitter	53	46%	17	15%	32	28%	13	11%
Q14.14	Advertisements on YouTube	50	44%	16	14%	38	33%	10	9%
Q14.15	Advertisements on LinkedIn	52	46%	17	15%	33	29%	10	9%
Real-time marketing									
Q14.16	Discounts received based on current purchases from a retailer at the time of purchase	5	4%	16	14%	26	23%	68	59%
Q14.17	Discount vouchers received based on what is most frequently purchased at the time of purchase from a retailer	6	5%	15	13%	32	28%	61	54%
Q14.18	Text messages regarding store sales as they walk past a store from a retailer	15	13%	19	17%	42	37%	38	33%
Q14.19	Retailers engaging with consumers directly through social media in real time	14	12%	19	17%	50	43%	32	28%

The statements presented in Table 9 are represented in the share chart (Figure 3) by the numbers Q14-1–Q14.19. It is clear from the results in Table 9 and Figure 3, that respondents regarded online and social media tools, such as pop-up online advertisements (64%, n=74), online banner advertisements (58%, n=65), advertisements on Twitter (46%, n=53), advertisements on LinkedIn (46%, n=52) and YouTube (44%, n=50), as clutter and would immediately disregard these advertisements. Respondents indicated that they paid selective attention to traditional media such as television advertisements (46%, n=53) and radio advertisements (45%, n=51). Respondents also indicated that they would attend to and view discounts received from the retailer based on their current purchases at the time of purchase (59%, n=68) and discount vouchers received based on what they most frequently purchase at the time of purchase (54%, n=61) as valuable to them.

Figure 3. Consumer response to marketing communication media

6. DISCUSSION

It is clear from the results that consumers preferred that retailers use traditional media tools (radio, television and billboards) in communicating with them. The possible implication for this is that consumers may regard other forms of media received from retailers (online media, social media, mobile media, etc.) as clutter and disregard it. It is clear that Facebook was the main online tool that participating consumers preferred retailers to use in communicating with them. Retailers should thus ensure that they know which communication media consumers prefer, and make use of these in communicating with consumers.

The results indicate a significant relationship between age and the use of YouTube as a communication method preferred from retailers. The results indicate that the respondents in the age group 18–25 years preferred YouTube as a means of communication from retailers. YouTube can be an effective marketing communication tool for retailers if used correctly, and retailers should thus keep in mind the age group of their target audience when planning their marketing campaigns, which make use of YouTube as a tool.

The study also found a clear relationship between gender and the type of marketing communication media customers prefer to receive from retailers. Table 8 clearly indicates that more females do not prefer newspaper advertisements (39%, n=45) compared to males. However more females prefer Twitter advertisements (32%, n=37) compared to males. It can be inferred that the difference in the preference of advertisements on Twitter could be because females may prefer a faster, more interactive form of media compared to males. Further research regarding this is needed to provide more insight. Retailers can make use of this relationship to ensure that they are communicating with their consumers through the correct marketing communications media. They can use this relationship to personalise their newspaper advertisements for their male consumers and Twitter advertisements for their female consumers.

Respondents indicated that they paid selective attention to traditional media such as television advertisements (46%, n=53) and radio advertisements (45%, n=51). Respondents also indicated that they would attend to and view discounts received from the retailer based on their current purchases at the time of purchase (59%, n=68) and discount vouchers received based on what they most frequently purchase at the time of purchase (54%, n=61) as valuable to them. Most (64%; n=74) respondents regarded online pop-up advertisements, online banner advertisements, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube advertisements as clutter. Respondents also indicated that they did not prefer online pop-up advertisements and online banners as a form of communication from retailers. These tools did not influence the respondents' behaviour and were often regarded as clutter. The reason for this result could be that these media platforms could be seen as invasive and disruptive and participating consumers did not find value in marketing communications from these platforms.

7. CONCLUSION

Marketing communications is essential for the success of any retail business as it provides a means of communicating to the customer what the retailer offers. It also assists in managing the perceptions of consumers and influencing the consumer's attitudes towards the retailer. The way in which the retailer communicates with their customers is thus important as it is a means of getting the customers' attention and influencing them to purchase specific products from a specific retail store.

Traditionally, marketing communications such as advertising through newspapers, pamphlets, radio or television; personal selling, sales promotions or sending direct mail or making direct phone calls to customers were used to inform consumers about the retailer and their products. Technology and the evolution and development in the mediums used to communicate has provided retailers with much more mediums of reaching their target audience directly and in real-time.

With the increase in the different marketing communication mediums used to communicate with consumers the question arises as to which mediums of marketing communication media is most

influential for the consumer. This study thus aimed to determine which marketing communication mediums were more influential for the consumer. A self-administered online survey was sent out to consumers asking them to indicate which marketing communication mediums they preferred and to indicate their purchase behaviour with the regard to the different marketing communication mediums they received.

The results indicate that consumers prefer traditional media such as radio, television and billboards when communicating with them. Facebook was the only digital media that was preferred by consumers. The results also show a clear link between the consumers age and gender and the type of marketing communication that is preferred by the consumer. Consumers also indicated that they would pay selective attention to television and radio advertisements and would attend to marketing communication that involved immediate discounts at the time of purchase and discount vouchers based on what they purchase frequently. It is clear from the results that consumers preferred marketing communication mediums such as television, radio and would react to these mediums by paying selective attention to them. These mediums are thus regarded as influential marketing communications for the consumer. Consumers also found marketing communication that included discounts and vouchers as influential as it would result in changes to the consumer's behaviour.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the study following a convenience sampling method, it cannot be generalised to the entire population. Further research will thus have to be done on a larger sample of the population. The study was also focused in the Gauteng province of South Africa and as such, in order to obtain a holistic view of what marketing communication mediums influence consumers the most, further research will have to include the entire population.

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