

# STRATEGY OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION TO INCREASE BRAND AWARENESS IN MILLENNIAL GENERATIONS

**Naufal Mamduh**

Universitas Mercu Buana, Indonesia  
Jl. Raya Meruya Selatan, No. 01, Kembangan, Jakarta Barat 11650

**Inge Hutagalung**

Universitas Mercu Buana, Indonesia  
Jl. Raya Meruya Selatan, No. 01, Kembangan, Jakarta Barat 11650  
e-mail: inge\_hutagalung@mercubuana.ac.id  
Corresponding Author: inge\_hutagalung@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy related to brand awareness among the millennial generation. The research approach is qualitative with case study method and the research paradigm is constructivism.

The results showed that the IMC strategy related to brand awareness among the millennial generation followed the behavior of millennial generation consumers. Company applies the six IMC components in marketing activities through retail and online as well as applies the AIDDA message processing model. The communication pattern of the millennial generation in processing messages from company's IMC strategy due to brand awareness occurs in digital and conventional spaces. The interesting components of IMC are sales promotion, personal selling and publicity.

The constraints in implementing IMC strategy from the producer side are that millennial generation consumers prefer online shopping and have difficulty accessing smartphone credit services. Meanwhile, from the consumer side, constraints occur in the application of personal selling and advertising which is not optimal.

**Keywords:** *Millennial generation, Integrated Marketing Communication, Brand Awareness*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing activities have begun to shift from face to face to online marketing. This shift is supported by technological developments and many e-commerce companies are operating so that Indonesians are increasingly familiar with online shopping.

So far, previous research on brand awareness has studied a lot from the company and the consumer side. Wang's research (2017) examines brand awareness from the company side through a strategy to develop brand awareness in the international market, especially the market in Taiwan. Meanwhile, Switala (2018) and Hutagalung (2016) conducted research related to brand awareness from the consumer side. The results research of Switala show that brand awareness has a strong influence on brand equity compared to brand image. Meanwhile, the results of Hutagalung found that brand community plays a role in the Integrated Marketing Communication system. Brand Community in the aspects of

contribution, similarity and complementary implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication. In addition, brand community can also bring brands closer to consumers because brand community shows the right context for observing the transformation of a brand into a person through social relationships and experiences of community life.

Meanwhile, Anas (2019) conducted research on Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies to increase brand awareness of educational institutions. The results showed that public relations and personal selling were the most effective components to increase brand awareness of an educational institution. Other research that examines the use of six IMC components related to increasing brand awareness was also conducted by Khizar (2016) and Krypton (2018). The results of the research from these two researchers show the same results as Desy's (2019) research, namely that the public relations and personal selling components are the most effective components compared to the other four IMC components related to increasing brand awareness.

Based on previous research, researchers saw gaps for further research. Namely, that no previous research has examined it in the context of millennial generation consumers. The millennial generation is a generation born in 1990, at which time life uses a lot of technology in the communication process. The millennial generation has a different behavior from the previous generation. In terms of communication behavior, millennial generations use different channels and methods. Once obtained, the communication behavior of this generation will be disseminated in cyberspace before a decision or action is taken.

Realizing that the millennial generation has unique communication behaviors, researchers are interested in conducting research due to strategy of IMC related to brand awareness from the perspective of the millennial generation.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Marketing Communication**

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a combination of marketing and communication studies aimed at helping the marketing activities of a company. IMC is an attempt to convey a message to the public about different products in the market. IMC activities consist of a series of communication activities to promote products /services using a marketing mix, namely advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, as well as direct marketing.

IMC is also a marketing activity that seeks to disseminate information, influence, persuade and or remind the target market of the company and its products so that consumers are willing to buy and are loyal to the products offered by the company concerned. In modern marketing, companies are required to not only develop products, set attractive prices, but also provide accurate and actual information to target customers. With accurate and actual information, consumers will not hesitate to make choices and buy a product/service (Kotler, 2012).

So far, marketing has been centered on advertising activities in promotion, but over time, marketing has emerged as a more complex and different form of communication through one or more channels to target audience which is carried out continuously and in two

directions with the aim of supporting effectiveness and efficiency of marketing a product/service by using components of the promotion-mix, such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, personal selling and other components in the various types of media channels available (Blech, 2003).

Through the delivery of messages to consumers, it is expected that the communication carried out will produce three stages of change: knowledge, attitudes, and the desired actions. The first stage to be achieved from the IMC strategy is the stage of knowledge change (awareness change). In this change, consumers know the existence of a product, for what the product was created for, and for whom. Thus, the message conveyed shows important information about the product.

The second stage is the stage of attitude change, which is determined by three elements, namely cognition (knowledge), affection (feeling), and conation (behavior). If these three components indicate a tendency to change, it is likely that there will be a change in attitude in the form of a desire to try a product. The third stage is the stage of behavior change (loyalty change), which is intended so that consumers do not switch to other products and get used to using them or what is commonly known as customer loyalty.

## **2.2. Branding**

Branding is an attempt to strengthen the product's position in the minds of consumers by increasing the equity of the name of a group of products. Brand contains the value of the quality of an item or service obtained from the experience of using one or more products. A successful brand is a brand that has an important history of mastery of information, especially about the advantages of branded products with positive experiences felt by consumers on that product. Usually this experience is expressed in advertorials, testimonial advertisements, television shows that are testimonials both individually and in groups. Brands can help sales. Brand is related to consumer confidence in a product not only in terms of meeting needs, but also providing better and guaranteed satisfaction. Brands help companies to dominate the market, such as Aqua, Kodak, Indomie, Pampers, Pepsodent, and others (Peter, 2010).

Furthermore, giving symbols or labels aims to facilitate consumers in making decisions about buying a product or using a service. The emergence of a brand starts from the brand level which shows a multilevel market domination process. This level is determined by the extent to which a brand is popular with the limitations of its market coverage. Local Level (National Brand), which is the beginning of the emergence of a brand that first mastered the local market. When the company takes steps to expand the market that includes the use and distribution of products nationally, the brand has entered the ladder as a national brand.

The second level, regional brand or domestic brand, is a product characteristic that can represent the previous product's existence. For example, the expansion of Japanese cars in the European region is not as easy as its popularity in the Asian region. Japanese cars have to compete fiercely with top products from American and European cars.

The third level, world brand or international brand, describes a brand that controls the world market, related to franchises around the world or owners of marketing networks that

are spread throughout the world, example Coca Cola, Nike, Adidas, Marlboro, IBM, Boeing, Mercedes, and others (Kotler, 2009).

### **2.3. Message Processing Model**

Processing the message for an advertisement does not immediately get consumers interested and buying the product. There are stages that occur starting from the processing stage to the consumer's response to the advertisements that are made. In general, the message processing model that is widely used is the AIDDA model.

The AIDDA model focuses on the psychological changes of consumers through advertisements that end in the real action of purchasing a company's product. The AIDDA model is an acronym for the words Attention, Interest, Desire, Decision and Action (AIDDA). Each of these acronyms is a stage in influencing consumer decisions (Kotler, 2012).

Along with technological developments, the delivery of messages, including advertisements, is mostly done through social media. This causes changes to the message processing. Namely, the message after taking the action will be shared with the community via social media to get a response. This processing model is known as the AISAS model. The AISAS model is an acronym for the words Attention, Interest, Search, Action and Share. In AISAS model, action is not the last stage that advertisers expect. The final stage of the AISAS model is to distribute the advertisement again from consumers to other consumers (Sugiyama, 2011).

## **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

The paradigm of this research is constructivism with a qualitative approach. The method used is a case study. The data collection techniques to be used are in-depth interviews and documentation. The technique of checking the validity of the data in this study is source triangulation.

The informants of this study consist of two categories, namely producers and consumers. This is done to see the marketing communication strategies carried out by producers, and consumer responses or reactions to product messages conveyed through marketing communication strategies.

## **4. RESULTS**

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) focuses on consumer needs. Strategies are carried out based on consumer behavior, trends and tendencies in making economic transactions. IMC is an integrated marketing strategy that combines various components of marketing activities such as Advertising, Sales Promotion, Direct Selling, Personal Selling, Public Relations, and Internet Marketing into an integrated activity. IMC is a marketing strategy by looking at the marketing process from a consumer perspective so that marketing can be more in line with consumer needs (Percy, 2008).

The maximum implementation of the IMC strategy will result in a good perception from consumers of a brand, knowing the products and services offered and what is different from other products or what theoretically is called brand awareness (Blakeman, 2007). Based

on the research results, it is known that the IMC strategy carried out by companies related to brand awareness is carried out in several IMC components ranging from Advertising to Internet Marketing.

Advertising is part of the IMC component. Advertising is the process of sending messages that are non-personal through conventional media such as through billboards and videotron as well as through digital media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Instagram. Based on the results of research on advertising activities carried out in the IMC strategy related to brand awareness among the millennial generation, it is by displaying advertisements through social media such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Sales promotion is a marketing activity in the form of providing extra value to distributors and consumers to stimulate direct sales. Sales Promotion forms are coupons, discounts, bonuses and sweepstakes. Based on the research results, the form of sales promotion in the IMC strategy related to brand awareness is by presenting discounts or discounts as well as sweepstakes that are delivered through social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram regularly. Besides that, there is also a lottery program that has been held since 2018.

Direct marketing is a marketing communication activity carried out directly to generate responses or transactions. Based on the results of research, Direct Marketing activities carried out are by greeting and providing information about the latest products and promos to consumers who visit product outlets. Furthermore, direct marketing is also carried out by displaying advertisements on social media with promotional offers such as discounted prices and the latest products.

Personal selling is a form of marketing communication that is interpersonal between consumers and sales. Based on the research, personal selling was carried out face-to-face and via WhatsApp messages.

Publicity/Public Relations is non-personal communication about a product and service in the form of news, editorial and other announcements. Public Relations is a program to build relationships with the public, investors and government. Based on the research results, it is known that publicity activities are carried out by providing official information in online media to journalists to be published in the mass media. The published publications are the latest information such as services, promotional programs and the latest products.

Interactive Marketing is a component that allows back and forth flow of information in which consumers can participate in and change information in real time. Through this marketing communication component, consumers can receive and modify information and make purchases online. Based on the research results, the company has an online shopping site. In addition, the company also has an official store or official outlets on e-commerce sites. Through these two sites, consumers can ask questions about products and make purchases.

Furthermore, regarding information processing, it needs to be understood that each generation has different communication patterns. This is because the communication of each generation is in different social, political, economic and technological conditions so that the communication patterns of the millennial generation also follow the differences in those

conditions. Millennials live in a digital age where technology is not a supporting device, but a necessity in carrying out communication (Ramli, 2019).

Millennial generation communication does not only occur in real space, but also in cyberspace which has the ability to penetrate distances and times becomes shorter. In addition, the millennial generation also lives in an age of openness and easy access to information. Millennial generation can easily get a variety of information and are able to make information on the internet (Budiati, 2018). Based on the results of research, the millennial generation looks for information before buying products via the internet, especially social media. The millennial generation takes advantage of various information content on the internet, whether content in the form of written, audio, visual or a combination of these. They process the information obtained to make references before finally buying a product.

Apart from searching the internet, the millennial generation also gets information through recommendations from their community. Information from the community will be studied, and from this information the millennial generation will learn about the experiences of others in buying products. The goal is to make a reference in buying a product.

## 5. DISCUSSION

IMC's strategy regarding brand awareness among the millennial generation has maximized the six IMC components, namely Advertising, Sales Promotion, Personal selling, Direct Selling, Publicity/Public Relations, and Interactive Marketing with the aim of generating brand awareness. The implementation of the IMC strategy for millennial generation consumers is carried out in the form of digital services and presenting social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

An interesting component of IMC is Personal Selling. The service of the counter salesperson gives a positive impression for millennial generation consumers. The information provided about products is in accordance with the information needs of the millennial generation so that maximum communication appears between employees and the millennial generation.

Next, another interesting component is Publicity. The marketing communication strategy through publications in the mass media regarding products has made millennial generation consumers more aware of and understanding the latest products and services from products. On the other hand, the personal selling component also has a weakness because there tends to be an element of compulsion to buy from a counter salesperson when introducing a product.

Meanwhile, every message received by consumers will cause two types of effects: the contrast and the assimilation effect. The effect of contrast occurs when individuals judge a message to be contrary to personal views. The assimilation effect occurs when individuals judge a message in line with their self-view. Referring to Social Judgement theory, it can be seen that the results of the study show that the millennial generation uses internal references and ego involvement as a reference for deciding to buy a product.

Internal references are references based on the experiences of self or others when buying products. Meanwhile, personal ego is a personal relationship regarding certain conditions so that it raises perceptions about the type of product to be purchased. Furthermore, internal reference and ego involvement will give rise to two types of areas that affect changes in individual attitudes. First, the latitude of acceptance where the message will be able to cause changes in individual attitudes when the message enters the area of acceptance. Second, latitude of rejection, namely the message received cannot change individual attitudes.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 6.1. Conclusion

The generation of millennial live in situations where information can be accessed on the internet, social or conventional media such as daily conversations or mass media. With technological developments and the tendency to seek information in digital and conventional spaces, it has created a separate communication pattern among the millennial generation in processing messages from the IMC strategy.

IMC components that are attractive from the perspective of the millennial generation are personal selling and publicity. There are obstacles in implementing the IMC strategy related to brand awareness among the millennial generation from consumers and companies. From the company side, obstacles occur due to the behavior of millennial generation consumers who like to buy smartphones through e-commerce on credit, who often experience difficulties in the repayment process. Meanwhile, constraints from the consumer side related to the IMC strategy arise in the personal selling and advertising components.

### 6.2. Recommendation

Digital technology cannot be separated from the behavior of the millennial generation. This research can be reviewed by looking at the role of digital technology in consumer behavior, especially among the millennial generation.

In terms of methodology, this research can be reviewed with different approaches and data collection techniques such as using a quantitative approach and data collection techniques through questionnaires.

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