

## Assessment of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Customer Patronage of Selected Nigerian Noodles

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### Abstract

Amid intensifying competition in Nigeria's fast-moving consumer goods sector, this study assesses how Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategies influence customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. The objective is to determine the most prominent IMC tools driving patronage and to compare stakeholder perceptions of IMC effectiveness. Employing a survey research design, the study analyzes audience responses to the IMC activities of selected noodle brands. Key findings indicate that mass media advertising is the foremost IMC strategy promoting patronage, followed by souvenir distribution. Results further show that celebrity endorsement most strongly differentiates perceptions of IMC effectiveness across stakeholders—staff of noodle-producing companies, customers, and marketing communications organizations—followed by product quality. Overall, the IMC mix effectively shapes audience perceptions and converts prospects into regular consumers. The study concludes that IMC plays an indispensable role in promoting patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in the study context. The contribution lies in clarifying the relative

salience of IMC instruments in a local market and highlighting practical implications: firms should review stringent in-house media policies to enhance agency collaboration, manage prime-time slots transparently (e.g., first-come, first-served) to curb favoritism and unhealthy competition, and avoid deceptive messaging, particularly given its potential impact on younger audiences.

**Keywords:** Integrated Marketing Communication; Consumer Behaviour; Customer Patronage; Noodles Market; Mass Media Advertising

## INTRODUCTION

The need for an organization to properly coordinate its marketing communications strategies in order to deliver a clear, consistent, credible and competitive message about itself and its product has become a challenge today for every result oriented firm. This has necessitated the emergence and growth of marketing communications in organisations and business establishments globally. Effective marketing communications should therefore be an integral part of every efficient and result driven organization. How innovative and creative marketing communications practitioners are inappropriately combining, coordinating and efficiently using marketing communication tools will have great impact on their companies' products/services and by extension, on such products' market share. This again could pose serious challenge to competing companies across markets in the country.

The Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach believes that a company must leave no chance for error, no patience for miscommunication, and no time for confusion (Picton and Broderick, 2005). The IMC approach placed much premium on the consistency of messages, that by this, it posits that communications effort of a company through its different products must project a unified voice. Business (companies) must be able to deliver the right message in the right medium to elicit the right results (Schultz and Kitchen, 1997 cited in Muzondo, 2009).

The development of IMC can be traced to the early 1980s when many American advertising agencies started to feel threatened by their clients' attempt to save money through direct media buying and patronage and creative boutique operations (Joseph, 2009, p. 3). Belch and Belch (2004) noted that if customers are fragmented then, they would get annoyed because different parts of the company don't know what others are saying.

Consumers might feel that they are talking to many different companies instead of one, which is not the way to build relationship. Akande,(2001) raised the concern that marketing has moved from customer acquisition (winning new customers) through ‘customer relations’ (keeping customers for life) towards customers’ de-selection (dumping unprofitable customers while selectively seeking and keeping the profitable ones).

In the Nigerian marketing environment today, many organizations have not appreciated the importance of the strategic blending of the promotional mix elements so as to produce cohesive, consistent, clear, precise and efficient messages. The common explanation is that through IMC, a firm or a manager can attain synergy between all the firm’s marketing communications activities and decisions and can also foster customers’ patronage. This synergy in turn improves performance. With the pace at which globalization is moving, there is need for Nigerian advertising and marketing Agencies to wake-up to a new reality in the marketing world. Many clients (advertisers) are now asking themselves questions such as “How do I allocate the marketing budget over a variety of promotional tools”? Here, many rely on the professional advice from advertising agencies. Today some advertising agencies are trying to become marketing consultants, independent media purchasers and multi-dimensional communication practitioner (Kallmeyer and Absatt, 2001). The words of these scholars revealed the need for these advertising agencies to become total marketing oriented professionals rather than just advertising driven in order to convince clients that they can add value to their marketing efforts.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The stiff competition in noodle manufacturing companies is giving rise and popularity to the application of integrated marketing communication strategies in order for brands to gain advantage over competitors and to secure customers’ patronage. A research conducted in 2015 on six popular noodles brands (Chiki, Dangote, Golden Penny, Honeywell, Indomie and Mimeo) in 12 states among 2000 respondents ranked Indomie as the most delicious, the best advertisement innovation, quality, and availability. This survey, no doubt is a proof that majority of Nigerians prefer Indomie noodles not just for its taste but also its advertisement, availability and quality (FinIntell Magazine, 2016). Research has also shown that Indomie Noodles has managed to transcend all age groups, winning the hearts and taste pallets of both young and old. Nigeria is currently ranked the 12th largest consumer of instant noodles in the world with the demand of 1.79billion packets of

noodles, according to World Instant Noodle Association (WINA) (FinIntell Magazine, 2016).

Many Nigerian noodles producers are using different promotional mixes without due consideration for the cost and appropriateness of the stage of product in its life cycle. They are often skeptical as to how to properly coordinate the communication mix at different stages of a product life (Thomas, 2001). Many noodles producers have not fully appreciated the fact that communicating effectively with customers and other stakeholders involves not only a mix of the traditional tools but rather an efficient coordination through the adoption of the IMC approach. Noodles producers are constantly looking for how to catch and retain the youth especially school children (catch them young syndrome) and build strong brand loyalty with these school age children (Thomas 2001). Swan 2004 argued that companies face the challenge in identifying what could efficiently promote or hinder IMC implementation as various departments are faced with bulk passing of marketing communication responsibilities.

More so, IMC elicits different results from different customers depending on the communication strategies of the product or service, their environment, exposure and perception among other factors. It is in light of the varying behaviour from customers that this study seeks to assess the impact of Integrated Marketing Communication on customers' patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) on consumers' patronage of Nigerian noodles products. However, the specific objectives of this study are to:

- Find out IMC strategies that were used to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis.
- Establish the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations.
- Determine whether the proper use of IMC at the different stages of the product life cycle could be a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products.

## **Review of Concepts**

This section reviews the major concept as contained in the topic.

### **Concept of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)**

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) a subset of marketing communication has its roots in the 1980's where prominent choice was mass media and advertising and was considered the only solution for product promotion. During this time, direct marketing, public relations and sales promotion were in rapid development, which challenged the dominance of advertising (Belch & Belch, 2009). The idea behind IMC was to combine the strength of all marketing tools to communicate with a cohesive message, put across a single strategic idea to consumers, and conveys the right message in the right way through creating a synergy amongst the promotional tools by creating a tailored marketing mix (Belch & Belch, 2009, p. 11-13).

Duncan, Caywood & Newsom (1993, p18 cited in Muzondo, 2009) define IMC as "a management concept which enhances the planning of marketing communications. The strategic role of different communication tools (advertisement, direct marketing, POS, PR) get more appreciated in favor of a clear, consistent communicational effect". According to Brown (1997) by combining different marketing communications tools a higher level of synergy would be created. Lehmann (1994) cited in Gabrielsson and Johansson (2002), says that the consistency and the unity of marketing mix, the interactive media contact of consumers, and the re-engineering of company course recreates IMC and this recreation needs strategic engagement. **Review of Related Literature**

### **The role of marketing communications in promoting Customer patronage**

In its broadest application, marketing communications are about the promotion of both the organisations and product offerings. The implicit importance of marketing communications is representative of the ever increasing role that organisations (including private companies, industry bodies and cooperatives) must play in the marketing process, and the impact that organisational and environmental factors can have on the minds of consumers. The integrated marketing communications campaigns are drawn from all of the elements of the promotional mix which have been discussed in this chapter. The businesses' communications objectives may not change much over time. However, the promotional campaigns may run for a few weeks, sometimes even for a few years. Consequently, it is usual for the overall promotional campaigns to be based on clear

strategies that will help the respective business to achieve its goals and objectives. The different marketing tools are distinct from each other in terms of their purpose. However, they may be used together in unison – something which is easier said than done. Therefore, marketing managers are faced with important decisions with respect to their IMC planning, organisation, implementation and control. They need to coordinate the various promotional activities into a concerted, organised, promotional campaign. They will have to allocate financial resources in support of every marketing tool; and coordinate their spending so that all customer touch points are getting consistent messages. The marketing communications activities will be planned according to specified timescales, which outline the dates by which the business hopes to achieve all or some of its promotional objectives.

There are many marketing communications tools, including digital media and traditional channels. Managers must also ensure that each of their promotional activities will truly represent their product or services, in a consistent manner. The worst thing that can happen is to have different media conveying conflicting marketing messages. Such discrepancies may confuse customers and undermine brands. One practical way to avoid inconsistency is to review the IMC programme on a regular basis.

The job of specifying the right communications mix has grown more complex simply due to the number of options, variations and combinations to be considered. Usually, a large chunk of the IMC budget is dedicated to an advertising or media agency. For instance, a TV commercial is strictly a one-way message; it can create awareness, and it may impart information about the features and benefits of the product. Personal selling, involves a two-way conversation where the salespersons can describe the features and attributes of their products or services. At the same time, customers may ask for specific information, or may voice their concerns on certain issues. The salespersons and the buyers can negotiate and perhaps conclude with a transaction. Therefore, two-way communication methods are effective in moving the buyer along the final steps of the marketing funnel. In a similar vein, direct marketing and interactive communications, offer some of the advantages of two-way communications.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Integrated marketing communication theory was used to serve as theoretical underpinning for the study.

## **Integrated Marketing Communication Model**

Integrated communication is the notion and the practice of aligning symbols, messages, procedures and behaviors in order for an organization to communicate with consistency, coherence, clarity and continuity within and across formal organizational boundaries (Christensen et al., 2008). This process is referred to as Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). It is abbreviated and perhaps more recognisable form (IMC). Its genesis can be traced directly to early academic work at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, led by Professor Don Schultz in the early 1990s (Nadube, 2018).

Integrated Marketing Communication model is a holistic model based on the correlation between a series of factors which can influence in a favorable way consumer buying behavior, thus: (a) sociological variables - the family, reference groups, membership groups, social class, culture and subculture; (b) external stimuli - the price, quality, packaging, brand, emotional value, attributes of the product, offers; (c) integrated marketing communication - communicational message, communication tools, such as: Advertising through mass-media, Sales promotion, Direct marketing, Public relations, The sales representatives, Online marketing.

IMC model postulates that integrated marketing communication has the role to determine an actual behavior, more precisely the purchase of a product and/or service by the consumers. Where consumers have manifested a purchase behaviour to the product and/or service, the integrated marketing communication model will be maintained or improved, and if this behavior was of the non-purchase, the integrated marketing communication model will be reviewed and modified, so this generates a positive effect on consumer purchasing behavior.

## **METHODS**

The survey research design suits this research because, as Baran (2004) notes, it provides the necessary scientific tools for finding, describing and interpreting existing phenomena. The population of this study therefore, shall be 445,300 which is the population of Lafia Local Government Area according to 2021 projected population. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents in the various area councils because this method gave all the respondents an equal chance of selection for the study.

The sample of this research is calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1967) formula with 95% confidence level and 0.5 margin error in order to avoid sampling error. The calculation formula of Taro Yamane is presented as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where :

n= sample size required

N = number of people in the population

e = allowable error (%)

Substitute numbers in formula:

$$n = \frac{445,300}{(1 + 445,300(0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{445,300}{(1 + 445,300(0.0025))}$$

$$n = \frac{445,300}{(1 + 1113.25)}$$

$$n = \frac{445,300}{1114.25}$$

$$\frac{445,300}{(1 + 1113.25(0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = 399.64$$

$$n = 400$$

After calculating the sample size by substituting the numbers into the Yamane formula, the numbers of sample is 399.64 persons. In order to obtain reliable data, researcher has approximated the sample size to 400 persons

## RESULTS

The analysis and presentation is based on the data obtained from the questionnaire administered from the field work through the instrument of questionnaire. Below is a tabular presentation of the data obtained.

**Table 1 Promo (Discounted) sales were used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 87         | 22.3%        |
| Agree          | 228        | 58.5%        |
| Neutral        | 12         | 3.1%         |
| Disagree       | 35         | 9.0%         |
| Strongly Agree | 28         | 7.1%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Data on the table above shows Promo (Discounted) sales was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. 87 respondents represented by (22.3%) said they strongly agree and 228 respondents represented by (58.5%) say they agree that Promo (Discounted) sales was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, and 12 respondents represented by (3.1%) say they are neutral about Promo (Discounted) sales was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, and 35 respondents represented by (9.0%) say they disagree while 28 respondents represented by (7.1%) say they strongly disagree that Promo (Discounted) sales was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. This indicates that a good number of respondents agree that Promo (Discounted) sales was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis as shown by 228 respondents represented by (58.5%) of the entire population.

**Table 2 Souvenir distribution was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis.**

| Responses      | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree | 99        | 25.3%      |
| Agree          | 246       | 63.1%      |
| Neutral        | 12        | 3.1%       |

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Disagree       | 7          | 1.8%         |
| Strongly Agree | 26         | 6.7%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 2 above shows Souvenir distribution was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. 99 respondents represented by (25.3%) say they strongly agree and 246 respondents represented by (63.1%) say they agree that Souvenir distribution was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, and 12 respondents represented by (3.1%) said they are neutral about Souvenir distribution was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, and 7 respondents represented by (1.8%) say they disagree while 26 respondents represented by (6.7%) say they strongly disagree that Souvenir distribution was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. This implies that majority of the respondents agree that Souvenir distribution was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis as shown by 246 respondents represented by (63.1%) of the entire respondents.

**Table 3 Transit advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis.**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 84         | 21.5 %       |
| Agree          | 219        | 56.2%        |
| Neutral        | 21         | 5.4%         |
| Disagree       | 25         | 6.4%         |
| Strongly Agree | 41         | 10.5%        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The data on the table above shows Transit advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. 84 respondents represented by (21.5%) say they strongly agree and 219 respondents represented by (56.2%) say they agree that Transit advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, and 21 respondents represented by (5.4%) say they are neutral about Transit advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, and 25 respondents represented by (6.4%) say they disagree while 41 respondents represented by (10.5%) also say they strongly disagree that Transit advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. This indicates that majority of the respondents agree that Transit advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, as shown by 219 respondents represented by (56.2%) of the entire population.

**Table 4 Mass Media advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis.**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 257        | 65.9%        |
| Agree          | 93         | 23.8%        |
| Neutral        | 5          | 1.3%         |
| Disagree       | 27         | 6.9%         |
| Strongly Agree | 8          | 2.1%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: field Survey (2023)

Table 4 above shows Mass Media advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. 257 respondents represented by (65.9%) say they strongly agree and 93 respondents represented by (23.8%) say they agree that Mass Media advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, and 5 respondents represented by (1.3%) say they are neutral about Mass Media advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia

Metropolis, and 27 respondents represented by (6.9%) say they disagree while 8 respondents represented by (2.1%) say they strongly disagree that Mass Media advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. This implies that majority of the respondents strongly agree that Mass Media advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis, as shown by 257 respondents represented by (65.9%) of the entire respondents.

**Table 5 Use of Mass media for advertisement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations.**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 87         | 22.3%        |
| Agree          | 237        | 60.8%        |
| Neutral        | 22         | 5.6%         |
| Disagree       | 16         | 4.1%         |
| Strongly Agree | 28         | 7.2%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The table above shows Use of Mass media for advertisement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations. 87 respondents represented by (22.3%) say they strongly agree and 237 respondents represented by (60.8%) also say they agree that Use of Mass media for advertisement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, and 22 respondents represented by (5.6%) say they are neutral that Use of Mass media for advertisement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, and 16 respondents represented by (4.1%) say they disagree while 28 respondents

represented by (7.2%) say they strongly disagree that Use of Mass media for advertisement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations. This implies that majority of the respondents agree that Use of Mass media for advertisement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, as shown by 237 respondents represented by (60.8%) of the entire respondents.

**Table 6 Celebrity endorsement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations.**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 86         | 22.1%        |
| Agree          | 258        | 66.2%        |
| Neutral        | 14         | 3.6%         |
| Disagree       | 29         | 7.4%         |
| Strongly Agree | 3          | 0.7%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The table above indicates Celebrity endorsement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations. 86 respondents represented by (22.1%) say they strongly agree and 258 respondents represented by (66.2%) say they agree that Celebrity endorsement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, and 14 respondents represented by (3.6%) say they are neutral about Celebrity endorsement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, and 29 respondents represented by (7.4%) say they disagree while 3 respondents represented by (0.7%) say they strongly

disagree that Celebrity endorsement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations. This indicates that a good number of respondents agree that Celebrity endorsement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations as shown by 258 respondents represented by (66.2%) of the entire population.

**Table 7 Product quality promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations.**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 93         | 23.8%        |
| Agree          | 238        | 61.0%        |
| Neutral        | 9          | 2.4%         |
| Disagree       | 37         | 9.5%         |
| Strongly Agree | 13         | 3.3%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Data on the table above shows Product quality promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations. 93 respondents represented by (23.8%) say they strongly agree and 238 respondents represented by (61.0%) say they agree that Product quality promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, and 9 respondents represented by (2.4%) say they are neutral about Product quality promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, and 37 respondents say they disagree while 13 respondents represented by (3.3%) say they strongly disagree that Product quality promotes the level of

difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations. This shows that majority of the respondents say they agree that Product quality promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, as shown by 238 respondents represented by (61.0%) of the entire respondents.

**Table 8 Proper use of IMC at pioneering stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products.**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 88         | 22.6%        |
| Agree          | 244        | 62.6%        |
| Neutral        | 8          | 2.1%         |
| Disagree       | 33         | 8.4%         |
| Strongly Agree | 17         | 4.3%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 8 above shows Proper use of IMC at pioneering stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products. 88 respondents represented by (22.6%) say they strongly agree and 244 respondents represented by (62.6%) say they agree that Proper use of IMC at pioneering stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, and 8 respondents represented by (2.1%) say they are neutral about Proper use of IMC at pioneering stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, and 33 respondents represented by (8.4%) say they disagree while 17 respondents represented by (4.3%) say they strongly disagree that 244 respondents represented by (62.6%). This implies that majority of the respondents agree that Proper use of IMC at pioneering stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, as shown by 244 respondents represented by (62.6%) of the entire respondents.

**Table 9 Proper use of IMC at competitive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products.**

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 91         | 23.3%        |
| Agree          | 261        | 66.9%        |
| Neutral        | 21         | 5.4%         |
| Disagree       | 10         | 2.6%         |
| Strongly Agree | 7          | 1.8%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 9 above shows Proper use of IMC at competitive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products. 91 respondents represented by (23.3%) say they strongly agree and 261 respondents represented by (66.9%) say they agree that Proper use of IMC at competitive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, and 21 respondents represented by (5.4%) say they are neutral that Proper use of IMC at competitive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, and 10 respondents represented by (2.6%) say they disagree while 7 respondents represented by (1.8%) say they strongly disagree that Proper use of IMC at competitive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products. This indicate that a good number of the respondents agree that Proper use of IMC at competitive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, as shown by 261 respondents represented by (66.9%) of the entire population.

**Table 10 Proper use of IMC at retentive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products.**

| Responses      | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree | 100       | 25.6%      |
| Agree          | 210       | 53.8%      |
| Neutral        | 13        | 3.4%       |

| Responses      | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Disagree       | 34         | 8.7%         |
| Strongly Agree | 33         | 8.5%         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>390</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Data on table 10 above shows Proper use of IMC at retentive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products. 100 respondents represented by (25.6%) say they strongly agree and 210 respondents represented by (53.8%) say they agree that Proper use of IMC at retentive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, and 13 respondents represented by (3.4%) say they are neutral about Proper use of IMC at retentive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, and 34 respondents represented by (8.7%) say they disagree while 33 respondents represented by (8.5%) say they strongly disagree that Proper use of IMC at retentive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products. This indicates that a good number of respondents agree that Proper use of IMC at retentive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products, as shown by 210 respondents represented by (53.8%) of the entire population.

## DISCUSSION

The research data collected were analyses in this section thematically in tandem with the primary objective of the study.

### **IMC strategies used to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis**

This objective examined the IMC strategies used to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia metropolis. Based on the data presented in the study, the findings revealed that 87 respondents represented by (22.3%) said they strongly agree and 228 respondents represented by (58.5%) said they agree that Promo (Discounted) sales was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis; 99 respondents represented by (25.3%)

said they strongly agree and 246 respondents represented by (63.1%) said they agree that Souvenir distribution was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis; 84 respondents represented by (21.5%) said they strongly agree and 219 respondents represented by (56.2%) said they agree that Transit advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis; 257 respondents represented by (65.9%) said they strongly agree and 93 respondents represented by (23.8%) said they agree that Mass Media advert was used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis. Among the various IMC strategies used, Mass Media advert was found to be the foremost IMC strategy used to promote customers' patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis seconded by Souvenir distribution was also highly used as an IMC strategy to promote customer patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles in Lafia Metropolis.

This is in line with the perspective of Camilleri(2018), who stated that sales promotions are marketing strategies that provide an incentive to stimulate immediate action. There are two types of sales promotions: consumer-oriented and trade-oriented. Consumer-oriented sales promotions can be considered as a pull strategy that creates demand. Consumer promotions may include; samples, redeemable coupons, special offers, freebies, complementary upgrades, contests, competitions, sweep stakes, et cetera. Retail promotions are used by the trade and may be addressed to the end consumer; for instance, they may include offering; point of purchase pricing, point of purchase displays, like discounted items and loyalty programmes. These tactics are usually more effective when used as a short-term inducement to generate purchase behaviours.

Asemah(2012), also added that the elements of integrated marketing communication are: advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotion and personal selling. Integrated marketing communication requires a lot of effort. Khan (2017), also stated that to reach different target markets, companies are using tools such as advertising, sales promotion, publicity, public relations, personal selling, direct marketing, internet and interactive marketing, etc. They are also recognizing that these communication tools are most effective when they are coordinated with other elements of the marketing program (Belch & Belch, 2003).

French and Story (2004), also added credence where he found that children exposed to advertising will choose advertised food products at significantly higher rates than children who were not exposed. In addition, it was discovered that children's exposure to food television advertising increases the number of attempts children make to influence food purchases their parents buy while purchase requests for specific brands or categories of food products reflect product advertising frequencies. Saeed, and Behal (2014) report a powerful relationship between consumer defection rate and increased profits. In recent times, due to increased service of women outside the home and wide changes in lifestyle especially in child upbringing, the use of noodles and fast food is rising at home and restaurant. This can provide a very good market for this industry.

### **Perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations**

The aim here was to ascertain the perception of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organisations. The study revealed that 87 respondents represented by (22.3%) said they strongly agree and 237 respondents represented by (60.8%) stated they agree that Use of Mass media for advertisement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations; 86 respondents represented by (22.1%) said they strongly agree and 258 respondents represented by (66.2%) say they agree that Celebrity endorsement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, 93 respondents represented by (23.8%) said they strongly agree and 238 respondents represented by (61.0%) say they agree that Product quality promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies. The study established that Celebrity endorsement promotes the level of difference in perception of the effectiveness of IMC above all others in improving customers' patronage by staff of noodles producing companies, customers and marketing communications organizations, followed by Product quality.

This partly agrees with Ibidunmi, Kesena and Lateefa(2019), who confirmed that Indomie noodles is topmost on the taste pallet of most children. Findings show that 64.8% craved for Indomie noodles after watching the advertisement due to its appeals. It concludes that the indomitable advertisement influenced their perception and preference for Indomie noodles. It was recommended that marketers and advertisers should avoid using concepts projecting false claims in advertisements targeted at children.

Similarly, Hazeer (2013) also established a strong relationship between Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and on Customer perceived Value (CPV). This study adopted Duncan and Moriarty five dimension of IMC to examine the relationship. The study focused on customers in the South West Nigeria, Lagos to be précised.

### **Integrated Marketing Communication factors responsible for increasing customer patronage for noodle products**

This focused in identifying the integrated marketing communication factors responsible for increasing patronage for noodle products. The study indicated that 88 respondents represented by (22.6%) said they strongly agree and 244 respondents represented by (62.6%) said they agree that proper use of IMC at pioneering stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products; 91 respondents represented by (23.3%) said they strongly agree and 261 respondents represented by (66.9%) said they agree that proper use of IMC at competitive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products; 100 respondents represented by (25.6%) said they strongly agree and 210 respondents represented by (53.8%) said they agree that proper use of IMC at retentive stage of the product life cycle is a major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products. Based on the above findings, the study revealed that proper use of IMC at competitive stage of the product life cycle ranked topmost as the major factor in increasing customer patronage for noodle products followed by proper use of IMC at pioneering stage of the product life cycle as another major factor in increasing customer patronage.

This contrasts with the study of Chernin (2008), which found that exposure to food marketing significantly increased children's preferences for advertised products. While it is often argued that the perception of younger children is easily influence than older children, the results indicated that age did not moderate the effects of advertisement exposure on product preference. This indicates that integrated marketing communication is highly

influential in being a major contributing factor responsible for increasing customer patronage for noodle products even though indomie noodle seems to enjoy lion share in the noodles market and as such can be classified as a product at retentive stage. This clearly shows that, regardless the product life circle stage, advertising still plays a paramount role in influencing and increasing patronage.

## CONCLUSION

Sequel to the above summary of findings, the study concludes that integrated marketing communication performs indispensable roles in the promotion of patronage of Indomie and Dangote noodles within the study. The various IMC strategies used by the noodle companies were found to be effective in influencing the perception of the audience by converting them from being prospects to being regular consumers of the products. These strategies have to be sustained to retain the results achieved over time in the industry and to stem the tide that might challenge same. There is therefore the need for media regulatory bodies to intervene in regulating the ever increasing cost of time and space of advert on media platforms. There is also the need for the formulation of media policies that will promote health marketing and advertising activities.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusion drawn from this study, the following recommendations were given;

1. There is the need for the overhauling of the cost of time and space for marketing and advert on the media space in order to make it affordable.
2. There should be a review of in-house media policies that are too stringent and not industry-friendly to encourage patronage from advertising agencies.
3. Prime-time competition should be settled via timing (first come, first served) and meeting of media marketing and commercial policies to avoid favouritism and unhealthy competition.

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