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Pandemic and VUCA World: Analyzing Indian Scenario of Integrated Marketing Communication on Digital Platform

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Abstract

The marketing sector in the recent pandemic of COVID-19 time has seen a massive transformation. In order to retain its consumers, different innovative approaches have been strategized to hold its brand positioning or to sustain its equity in the market. The comprehensive advertising networks globally set in motion the measures with their distinctive magnetism and quipped the branded content is imperative in today's VUCA world. Branded content is getting more attention and is able to create brand recognition. Consumers tend to like branded content because they believe the content is more consumer focused. There comes the market confront and their struggle to build brand personality because "Advertisements are ephemeral but its residues are rock hard." The main objective of this research is to understand the trends of digital marketing communication campaigns in the VUCA world related to covid-19 pandemic awareness in India; it explores the consumers' perception related to the phenomenon of brand communication. The present research finds that, there is a thorough understanding of creative strategies of marketing (advertising/public relations) messages, information, and appeals emerged in pandemic period (Covid-19 and post covid scenario) in today's imperative VUCA world. This study argues that by adopting the new embedded strategies businesses in this crisis time, companies have emphasized their continued existence and their capability to go on with the delivery to their prospective customers for the same products and value despite the disaster.

Keywords: digital media, marketing communication, Covid-19 scenario, reach, engagement, consumer response.

1. Introduction

The marketing sector in the recent pandemic of COVID-19 time has seen a massive transformation. In order to retain its consumers, different innovative approaches have been strategized to hold its brand positioning or to sustain its equity in the market. The vision is to cater to the needs, to be empathetic, and most important to craft its approach in such a way that it would touch the senses of its target consumers.

The paradigm shift has occurred tremendously in the area of marketing communication with no doubt; suddenly the convergent approach has emerged to disseminate in omni channel platform to scattered heterogeneous audiences. The Indian marketing communication adopted a new strategy of brand, creativity, and craft; sensitivity in storytelling method has been experimenting with different types of 'appeals' and architectures.

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Understanding the modern world is never been very easy and today's world is called the VUCA world which means a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous world. This situation makes living life uncertain. Though difficult to cope with in this merciless complex situation, if one communicates properly then he or she can survive well enough through this situation (Mehdi, 2018).

The comprehensive advertising networks globally set in motion the measures with their distinctive magnetism and quipped the branded content is imperative in today's VUCA world. Branded content is getting more attention and is able to create brand recognition. Consumers tend to like branded content because they believe the content is more consumer-focused. There comes the market confront and their struggle to build brand personality because "Advertisements are ephemeral but its residues are rock hard."

Various contents are evolved but how the branded content can be stayed there in consumer's minds and how can they be brand resilient is the main aim of the present research. Most of the problems are created in consumers' minds because of 'clutter'; people don't want to watch the advertisements. There are many strategies adopted by consumers to ad avoidance. In many media, the percentage varies from 60 % to 92 %. But in this crisis pandemic period, it is worth researching how sponsorships and advertorials were the reason for distractions in the popular media. The 'era of product placements' is the key strategy and implementation and it is beautifully crafted in a film like 'Cast Away' and 'Ye Jawani hai Deewani'. The rise of 'Entertainment Options' in terms of context started in the early to mid-1900s in the Indian context.

There comes the 'media integration' where the brands started approaching media owners to integrate their content to be relevant in the story itself. The best example in the Indian context is MTV roadies. In developing engagement with the potential consumer is the need for great storytelling and an unobtrusive part of content, content marketing. The strategy of digital marketing communication highlighted the importance of advertising, public relations, and brand communication in this crisis situation.

Research objective: The main objective of this research is to understand the trends of digital marketing communication campaigns in the VUCA world related to covid-19 pandemic awareness in India; to explore the different types of appeals and intended messages for brand communication and lastly to have a thorough understanding of creative strategies of marketing (advertising/public relations) messages, information, and appeals in this pandemic period in today's imperative VUCA world.

Scope of the research: The expected variable has been chosen to see how the consumers have been influenced by the content or the appeal. Audience Analysis also is done which will explore the possibilities to understand the advertising appeals changing scenarios and strategies. The research explores the effectiveness of content and consumer awareness measurement also is an integral part of this research.

2. Materials and methods

Recent research is done on "Marketing aspects of innovative development of business organizations in the sphere of production, trade, transport, and logistics in VUCA conditions" by Popova et.al in 2020. Researchers tried to identify recent trends of innovation and integration in marketing which in turn will help the business organization to develop marketing activities towards sustainable innovative development. The researcher aimed at finding the impact of modern characteristics of the digital world on the innovative development of the business organization (Popova et al., 2020).

Recent research is done on "Soft Skills – The only Set of Skills that Help Sustain in the VUCA World" by Mehdi et.al in 2018. The researchers aimed at discussing the importance of effective soft-skill communication in the VUCA world. The researcher tried to analyze how good communication skill is essential for this complicated business world. The researcher has also analyzed the role played by verbal and non-verbal communication sustaining in the VUCA world (Mehdi, 2018).

Recent research is done on "Management of VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity). Using machine learning techniques in industry 4.0 paradigm" by Mohanta et al. in 2020. Researchers have reviewed VUCA terminology and how it is important in Industry 4.0. The researchers have also studied the challenges and peripherals related to this (Mohanta et al., 2020).

Recent research is done on “Personnel development at enterprises with regard to adaptation to the VUCA world” by Popova et.al. in 2020. Researchers describe the result of the study related to personnel working at transport and logistic enterprise and how they are adapting to the VUCA environment. The study reveals the formation, development, and maintenance of a competency framework for the working personnel is a mechanism to adapt to the VUCA environment for the enterprise (Popova, Shynkarenko, 2016).

Recent research is done in the area of “Modelling and analysing the impact of Circular Economy; Internet of Things and ethical business practices in the VUCA world: Evidence from the food processing industry” by Persis, et.al. and published in 2021. The researcher mainly focuses on exploring different facets of circular economy (CE), IoT, and ethical business practice (EBP). The researchers tried to evaluate all these concepts with respect to the food processing industry. Factors responsible for the company’s preference for CE, IoT, and EBP were analyzed by researchers in this paper. Factor analysis is done also Fuzzy ANN system for the classification of factor were used to examine the level of adoption intention. Researchers suggested in their result that deployment of the “Ant Colony Optimization” method makes decision-making more efficient and robust. It also helps the ANN system work more efficiently (Persis et al., 2021).

Research is also done on “Improving Brand Performance in Vuca World” by Nidhi Sinha in 2018. The researcher focuses on identifying behavioral responses, consumer preferences, and consumption patterns. For achieving this researcher has divided the market into several sub-market which are homogeneous in nature. The researcher collected the data from the focus group through the interview method. The researcher analyzed 50 brands. Findings revealed that by using K-means clustering researcher created 11 consumer clusters where the performance of each cluster was aligned with the specific functions of a brand (Sinha, 2018).

M.A.S. Raja 2020 published a research article on “Digital integrated marketing communication (DIMC) and its logical relationship with co-branding and brand values with reference to coke studio.” The researcher aimed at exploring the variables which contributed to the success of Coke Studio and contribute to the creation of a new digital integrated marketing communication model which explains key variables like brand equity, brand value, and co-branding effect. The researcher has tried to explain the effect of DIMC and cobranding, brand equity, and brand value diagrammatically to identify the reason behind the success of Coke Studio. Researchers claimed that this model will help in understanding customer preference, experience, and loyalty which will in the future help to develop good relations in this digital world with the end customers (Raja, 2020).

Research gap: There is research done on marketing aspects of innovative development of business organizations in the sphere of production, trade, transport, and logistics in VUCA conditions. There is also research done in the area of Soft Skills–The Only Set of Skills that Help Sustain the VUCA World. There is little more research in the area of management of VUCA in Industry 4.0. Research is done in the area of personnel management in enterprise with reference to adoption in the VUCA world. But there is hardly any research on digital integrated marketing communication strategies in today’s VUCA world with reference to covid -19 scenario in India.

Theoretical framework – VUCA stands for:

Volatile – fast-changing and unpredictable;

Uncertain – The present is unclear and the future is uncertain;

Complex – many different interconnected factors play a chaotic situation;

Ambiguous – there is a lack of clarity and awareness of the situation.

In 2009 B. Johansen in his book “Leaders Make the Future” adopted the VUCA model for the business world. He used it to reflect turbulent, unpredictable factors that affect any organization. According to him new skills, behavior, and approach are required to manage any of the four VUCA threats (MTCT, n.d.).

All four characteristics are applicable to the situation faced by the world during the Covid-19 crisis.

Volatile: Changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic that is affecting every day in a dramatic and unpredictable way.

Uncertainty: No individual can predict when this pandemic will end and normalcy will return.

Complexity: The pandemic is affecting all sectors including business, economy, healthcare, and social life in a very complex manner.

Ambiguity: No best practice can be found to manage this challenge due to the pandemic (Ghabour, 2020).

Organizations and leadership can use the VUCA model to successfully build strategies to fight the crisis. Likewise, the organizational vision can be redefined. Understanding five competitive forces that reshape the strategy is required. Clarity is another factor that is much required in current times to give direction to employees of the organization about their job and future (Ghabour, 2020).

Integrated Marketing Communication:

There are seven levels of integration for integrated marketing communication:

a) Vertical Integration of Objectives: Overall organization goal should fit in the communication objective in marketing.

b) Horizontal Integration: Marketing communication needs to align with other branches like HRM, manufacturing, and operations.

c) Integration of Marketing Mix: Message communicated needs to fit in with the marketing mix.

d) Integration with communication mix: Communication tools are used to portray the proper message to the customer.

e) Integration of Creative design: It is the consistency that should be maintained between creative design positioning of services or products.

f) Internal or External integration: There is inter-departmental alignment and cohesion and they need to work with external agencies of the organization.

g) Financial integration: The budget should be optimal for various activities to achieve efficiency in attaining the “desired goal” (Rai, 2020).

Oancea (Oancea, 2015) in her research paper “The Model of Integrated Marketing Communication: Who has the Role to Influence Consumer Behaviour” proposed an updated integrated marketing communication model. In this model, she included a correlation between several factors influencing any favorable buying decision.

These factors are:

a) sociological variables which include family, membership group, reference group, culture, sub-culture, social class, etc.

b) external stimuli which include prices, attributes of the product, quality, brand, packaging, emotional values, etc.

c) integrated marketing communications which include communicating messages, communicating tools such as mass-media advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, online marketing, etc.

The researcher has proposed this updated version of the Integrated Communication Model to determine the actual purchase behaviour of the consumer. If a consumer decided to purchase the product or service then this Integrated Marketing Communication model is maintained and updated. But if the consumer does not express purchase intention, then the IMC model needs to be reviewed and modified to influence the positive purchasing behaviour of consumers (Oancea, 2015).

Research questions – The following are the research questions formed for this present study:

RQ 1. What are the trends of digital marketing communication campaigns in the VUCA world related to covid-19 pandemic awareness in India?

RQ 2. How the agenda setting has been changed for the digital marketing communication campaign related to covid-19 pandemic awareness from an Indian perspective?

RQ 3. How is the consumer’s perception existing related to the recent phenomenon of brand communication?

RQ 4. What are the creative strategies of marketing (advertising/public relations) messages, information, and appeals in this pandemic period in today’s imperative VUCA world?

Research methodology. The present research is qualitative in nature. It will adopt content analysis (qualitative) and case study (particularistic) methods along with code will be assigned for content analysis. In this research paper, the researchers intend to analyze the trends of these digital marketing communications depending on the theme COVID-19 pandemic awareness campaign and its intended approach for consumers. The research explores the effectiveness of content and appeal measurement of brand communication is an integral part of this research.

3. Discussion

Imran Ali et.al. published a research article on “Risk and resilience in agri-food supply chain SMEs in the pandemic era: a cross-country study, *International Journal of Logistics Research and Applications*” in 2022. Researchers tried to examine how small-scale enterprises (SMEs) and Agri-Food Supply Chains (AFSC) in both developed and developing countries are disrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic and what are measures taken to restore supply chain resilience (SCRE). The researchers have applied a qualitative research method with the semi-structured interview in both developing countries (Pakistan and Tanzania) and developed countries (Australia). Cross-country analysis done by the researchers made the difference in risk and supply chain resilience more prominent. Researchers have developed a possible list of covid inflicted risks and related supply chain resilience strategies to survive covid-19 pandemic and other future crises. The result has created the roadmap for building more resilient agri-food small-scale enterprises (SMEs) (Ali et al., 2022).

Soomro et.al published a recent research article on “Workforce resilience in the post-COVID-19 era: differences based on manufacturing-service orientation and firm size, *Production Planning & Control*” in 2022. The researchers tried to explore whether the workforce resilience factor will affect the post covid era. They tried to examine if this factor has performed differently in service versus manufacturing sectors and small-scale enterprises versus large firms. Results showed six factors were complicated regarding workforce resilience in small enterprises. They are positive thinking, differentiation, degree of involvement, sense of responsibility, cognitive process, and innovation. Whereas in large firms there are two factors of workforce resilience that are complicated. They are decision-making and work-life balance. Findings will help managers to design strategies to leverage workforce resilience in post covid era (Soomro et al., 2022).

Carvalho et.al published a research article on “35 Years of Excellence, and perspectives ahead for Excellence 4.0” in 2021. Researchers tried to examine how “excellence” faces challenges in the new industrial paradigm. They analyzed the current scenario and future challenges of excellence through various literature reviews and an understanding of broad history. The result highlights the challenges and limitations of excellence and provides a key concept for the scope of solutions for dealing with an industrial model in upcoming times (Carvalho et al., 2021).

Jaiswal et.al published a research article on “Rebooting employees: upskilling for artificial intelligence in Multinational Corporations” in 2022. Researchers tried to analyze key skills that are required to upskill employees for the adoption of AI in business. Researchers have applied qualitative methods and interviewed twenty people from MNCs in India’s IT industry. Findings revealed five skills are crucial for employee upskilling; they are digital, decision-making, complex cognitive, data analysis, and continuous learning skills (Jaiswal et al., 2022; Gálik, 2020; Gálik, Oprala, 2021).

V. Butkouskaya et.al published a research article on “Inter-Country Customer-Perspective Analysis of Strategic Antecedents and Consequences for Post-Purchase Behaviour in Integrated Marketing Communications” in 2021. Researchers tried to analyze integrated marketing communication consequences and antecedents from the consumer’s perspective in developing and developed nations. Findings revealed that consumer orientation directly influences Integrated Marketing communications and indirectly post-purchase behavior. In developing countries, the positive influence of IMC depends on the evaluation of post-purchase behavior. Whereas, in developed countries, consumer satisfaction rules the relationship between IMC and post-purchase behavior (Butkouskaya et al., 2021).

Nikseresht et al. published a review article on “Using artificial intelligence to make sustainable development decisions considering VUCA: a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis” in 2022. Researchers examined sustainable development-related decision-making in the light of VUCA threat phenomena. Researchers applied bibliometric and network analysis to examine recent trends in this area. Findings give the conceptual idea and practical managerial aspects (Nikseresht et al., 2022).

Sahoo et al published a research article on “Identification of critical success factors for leveraging Industry 4.0 technology and research agenda: a systematic literature review using PRISMA protocol” in 2022. Researchers tried to explore and identify existing and critical success factors taken for implementing Industry 4.0 in the VUCA environment. Researchers have applied the SLR method with a systematic review, meta-analysis, and content analysis of preferred items. Findings revealed the gap in the literature of previous research studies which has ignored that

Industry 4.0 implementation in the manufacturing sector and service sector creates value addition like an increase in productivity. Secondly, the researchers have identified twelve critical factors behind the successful implementation of Industry 4.0. These factors are organizational culture, training and development, infrastructure, innovation capacity, security system, top management support, financial resource, technical infrastructure, standardization of process, change management and governance, communication, and cooperation (Sahoo et al., 2022).

Monohar and Rehman published a research article on “Brand resurrection in an emerging economy” in 2018. Researchers have done a case study of Amalya Diary Pvt Ltd, to study why the adoption of a new integrated marketing communication technique is important in today’s business for building brand image after a major crisis. Researchers have also analyzed how the brand Amalya Diary Pvt Ltd adapted to this new communication world when faced with a major brand crisis (Manohar, Rehman, 2019).

In their study (García et al., 2022) finds that the level of smart phone addiction during the pandemic is higher in female students in comparison to male students. The very reasons were identified as the risk of not getting adequate information and to evaluate the perception gathered in various media/sources.

Online instructional learning is vehemently done in Nigeria during Covid-19 and the study suggests that FOSS, Android and computer apps were largely used (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

4. Results

Case Study 1

Brand name – ITC Ltd. Period of study – 2020-2021. Industry – FMCG. Country – India.

Introduction – The pandemic has shifted the focus of ITC Ltd. to a more digital platform for marketing and launching new products. ITC Ltd. started investing in IoT, AI, and ML to develop cutting-edge technology to enhance productivity at a minimum cost (PTI, 2020).

In their annual report for 2020-21 ITC Ltd. has mentioned diverting “investment” on innovation through digital platforms. It is a priority to make the company a “digital first” brand at the beginning of the pandemic. The pandemic has boast the e-commerce segment manyfold as consumers could do shopping sitting back at home during lockdown situations. Further, internet penetration has rapidly increased which has increased online payment, a wide range of products faster delivery through channels. The report claims that the company has witnessed a double in revenue generation from the e-commerce sector in FY21 which is equivalent to 5 % of the FMCG segment revenue (PTI, 2020).

Digital Integrated Marketing Communication strategy followed

Anticipating customer preference for “contactless shopping” and “home delivery” the company has “proactively engaged” in the e-commerce platform and also aligned with stock delivery channels for faster delivery of stock. Further, the company focuses on the recent demand for chemist products and specialist outlets and has designed specific strategies to capture emergent differentiated market opportunities (PTI, 2020).

The need for direct-to-consumer facility is augmented by channels like Swiggy, Zomato, Dominos, etc. and the company’s engagement with them has solved this issue and made products available to customers.

During the lockdown phase people preferred to consume in-home products like sanitizing products for health and hygiene and ITC Ltd. has focused on producing more content on health and wellness from experts which was the demand of the time. Therefore, ITC Ltd has informed in their annual report that purposeful communication was done during this phase to meet the growing consumer demand in the new space (PTI, 2020).

ITC Ltd. has already established a marketing command center in 2019 which enable the company to watch “real-time” consumer trends and at the same time craft suitable response for them. Thereby, it creates new avenues for contextual communication. ITC Ltd. claims that this procedure enhanced their real-time monitoring of consumer reaction to the communication, therefore, helping in delivering effective communication. In 2019, the company claimed to have started 500 campaigns on social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This is said to have given them insight into consumer preferences and trends with respect to various spaces which helped them grow in the area of new products (Mukherjee, 2019).

ITC Ltd. has developed a digital ecosystem with new initiatives like social media engagement, and contextual communication for the entire period of the pandemic which has gained the ground

for the company into profit-driven initiative. The company has developed such a center to look into consumer insights to invest in new areas of the product that fit the situation which is induced by the pandemic. Also, they have set up online stores like ITCstore.in and classmateshop.com and have developed the e-choupal segment to aid the agricultural sector smoothly during the pandemic (Dutt, 2021).

Case Study 2

Brand name – Nykaa. Period of study – 2020-2021. Industry – FMCG. Country – India.

Introduction – Nykaa is an eight-year-old brand for beauty and wellness products. During the pandemic and lockdown in 2020, the company faced difficulties in running offline outlets. With Govt. guidelines to restrict online sales to essential items company further needed to redefine its inventory and started selling essential items for sanitizing products and related essential products. The offline stores were converted to inventory stores and the entire business become online-based. Reports have shown Nykaa revived its sales by up to 93% by mid-June 2020. In the FY20 the company generated enough revenue to make a profit of Rs. 78 lakhs against a loss of Rs.21 crore in the previous financial year. The company has engaged actively in social media promotion of the brand prior to the pandemic which proved beneficial during the pandemic to enhance its marketing strategy (Ghosh, 2021).

Digital Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy

Nykaa has been successful to date due to its ability to use social media platforms most effectively. They have used the social media voice to promote their product. They have turned social media voice into credible voice and at present into conversation. They have also used community building as a key to excel in their social media promotion. They have created engaging content with video to support it. Focus on video has earned them more focus. They have started videos on “how to” and beauty tips and hacks for Youtube and Instagram. All these contents have targeted beauty enthusiasts who are likely to transform into prospective clients (Ghosh, 2021). Nykaa targeted their customer in the age group 18-35 in India and so they preferred to go digital in brand promotion. They took special care in writing blogs and reviews under the product label. The beauty product industry to a large extent depends on education, correct application, and usage of the product to enhance beauty. So, Nykaa has correctly banked on social media influencers for educating on the correct usage and application of a wide range of products to enhance beauty (Nazi et al., 2020).

Therefore, in the wake of the pandemic when the entire fashion industry shifted online, Nykaa also moved to a 360-degree marketing strategy through influencers on social media and providing appropriate content to promote the brand by educating customers to make the right choice for the purchase of any beauty product. Influencer marketing is a strategy of marketing followed by brands where they use vloggers, bloggers, and social media influencers to promote their brand through strategic content publishing (Buch, 2020).

Case Study 3.

Brand name – FABINDIA. Period of study – 2020–2021. Industry – Textile. Country – India.

Introduction – Fabindia is a store-based brand in the pre-covid era. It started its journey in the 1960s. The company was doing business in India and overseas. But from 2020 march onward when India went into lockdown the company faced a tough time coping with the new normal. The brand deals with handcraft and artisan products which means they do not categorize into essential items. So, the brand started re-booting its inventory and product line by focusing on essential product sales like safety masks, PPE kits, and sanitizing products to survive in the difficult period. After July 2020 the brand started opening the store and the company invested a lot in covid safety measures ranging from changing toilet patterns to proper sanitization installation and regular screening of employees' health and temperature check-ups. Though it cost lots of revenue it was essential measure that was requirement of time to get customers back on stores. Fab India also started a “white glove service” for their loyal customer who is allowed to choose the design and customized fabrics from the catalog book for their lifestyle products and company employees will bring the product to try at home comfortably (Doshi, 2020). All these attempts are taken to give a boost to the business in the handicraft sector which is hard hit in India by the pandemic.

Digital Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy: Fabindia has based its marketing strategy on integrated marketing communication and started using it to understand the way to retain customers. They have used the online platform for creating meaningful communication in

360-degree online and offline connections with customers. They have analyzed every review, feedback, and other customer comments and engagement on social media platforms to understand their preference and accordingly develop themselves to cater to their need. This approach has enhanced collaboration across an internal team like design, supply chain, store, merchandise, e-commerce, etc. along with seamless communication on various social media platforms as well as in-store communication; which in turn has created a 360-degree approach to marketing success. Fabindia.com has been promoted digitally to bring loyal customers back to the store when the situation normalized (David, 2021). Fabindia has launched a home and lifestyle concept store in Delhi to cater to the growing need of making homes adaptable to new scenarios (Gupta,2021). Fabindia has already installed Experience Centre for their loyal clients in different locations which are reopening in 2021 with adequate covid norms and protocols to give customers a safe shopping environment (David, 2021). Fabindia spends 40% of its advertising revenue on digital promotion and creates content that is tailored to suit consumer preference which helps them to understand consumer trend insight (Jangid, 2017).

Case Study 4.

Brand name – Jio. Period of study – 2020-2021. Industry – Telecommunication. Country – India.

Introduction–During the pandemic just like any other company jio also faced a tough situation with people locked up in their houses due to the pandemic lockdown and shops all closed so recharge of pre-paid subscriptions become impossible. Reports say that 70 % of wireless customers are pre-paid subscribers so Jio faced the problem of supporting and servicing their customers who are used to going to a physical retail shop for recharge. To cope with the situation Jio field team had come up with solutions like Jio Associates Program. This program created 1.2 million associates for recharge in their hyperlocal community. Jio Associates can recharge their customers’ connections by using JioPOS Lite app without letting them leave their homes (Sawhney, 2020). This program went successful and helped the company to retain customers even during the lockdown. Also, Jio started a touch network service and work-from-home customer care service to adapt to the new normal situation in the coming days (Sawhney, 2020).

Digital Integrated Marketing Communication Strategy – In the wake of the pandemic, Jio transformed its marketing strategy into a digital platform. Before the pandemic breaks Jio used to reach out to small businesses in person and educate them on the facilities of Jio cloud service. But lockdown made physical visits impossible so Jio transformed to promote digitally by conducting several webinars with these small enterprises and informing them about various services of Jio cloud (Sawhney, 2020). Jio Mart along with other Jio digital services and cloud services has gone online to facilitate the need of the time. Healthcare sectors are also opting for telemedicine systems to deal with the situation. Jio aimed at keeping all their customers digitally connected and also announced recently to remain accessible and affordable to a maximum subscriber during this ongoing pandemic. Jio phone has recently launched an affordable scheme and aimed that connect every Indian digitally (ETTelcom, 2021).

Appeal Analysis

Several brands have strategically used appeals for their brand communication during this time of the pandemic.

Here are some glimpses of appeals used by different brands on or before Covid-19.

Table 1. Glimpses of appeals used by different brands on or before Covid-19.

Brands	Appeal	Mode and Major Objective of Communication	Target Audience	The theme on Digital Media (website)
BMW	Emotional	Email concerning all their stakeholders and prospective buyer and consumers	Rich and High Earned	‘One World, one country, and one people
Panera	Rational	Emails turned from solemn to determined (rational)	To all customers emphasizing to	‘Mindfully Packaged’

Brands	Appeal	Mode and Major Objective of Communication	Target Audience	The theme on Digital Media (website)
		appeal cum promise	deliver of food eliminating the hassle of contacting	
CVS	Empathetic	Made sure for the visit a health professional those who seek medical attention	Those who are ill or need medication	'Consultation and comfort from home'

By adopting the new embedded strategies businesses in this crisis time, companies have emphasized their continued existence and their capability to go on with the delivery to their prospective customers for the same products and value despite the disaster.

During this Covid-19 phase, brands have banked on the following essential components for effective communication-

a) *Abstract Concepts*. for different businesses, companies focus on what are the things that the buyers have in their minds. For example, the various brand triggers the punchline of 'beat coronavirus' or boost immunity by using their product (disinfectant liquids, floor cleaner (Lizol, Nymile), fan (Crompton, Bajaj), Acs, and even packaging of products also follow the same category (like Amazon, Flipkart, etc), health drinks and vitamin supplements (Revital, Glucon D, Chawanprash, etc) There is an emergence of products like a face mask, hand sanitizer, toilet paper (local as well as established brand) during Covid-19.

b) *Intended Action*. This is the second most important to execute the ideas to do good business with an effective strategy. Most companies follow the elements like social currency, triggers, emotions, practical value and utility, and stories.

c) *Mood*. By knowing the aims and potential customers/consumers, the intended messages can be clear and meaningful. The mood or tone of the message can be proved as empathetic in times of pandemics.

Changed Preferences of Marketing Approach- the trends of digital marketing communication campaigns in the VUCA world related to covid-19 pandemic awareness in India drastically modified. Potentially now its focus has been changed to 'knowing the customer segment (customer data platform)' from the concept of 'marketing begins with knowing the consumers (potential)'.

Changed Agenda in Digital Mode – The present 'Z' and 'Y' generations are now very tech-savvy and mostly rely on digital mode (from food to fun). So, the acceleration of digital transformation has made companies integrate the 'direct to consumers' phenomenon by hyper-personalizing personal data through niche or search advertisements.

So, the brands for effective marketing communication especially to the VUCA world need to be incorporated the content (which should accelerate the personal usage through apps or emails) and the commerce or businesses should be triggered with hybrid experiences; the community must be assembled with business to business approaches to satisfy the needs of the consumers and finally, the convenience which redresses the easiness of buying e-experience (visiting the websites, offers, discounts and many more).

5. Conclusion

The key to managing VUCA can be breaking down the elements of VUCA and identifying the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous situation prevalent for a particular business. Also handling it according to the need of the situation. Johansen has proposed a possible framework to tackle and manage the VUCA threat for any business and it is named VUCA prime (Ghabour, 2020).

Indian entrepreneurs and digital marketers are likely to see an influx of requests from brands all over the world as they make their journey into the virtual terrains. It's a moment of reckoning, one that digital marketers and developers in India are more than ready to embrace.

The risk of physically going to the market during current times has made even the technologically unaware familiar with online shopping. And only now are they realizing the sheer

advantages of being able to order everything from a book to a water purifier from the safety of their homes (Balis, 2021).

While the plan was there before, the moment to deliver has arrived now. That is because marketing trends at the moment are not just calling for a transformation but a digital revolution.

While doing this research paper researchers face a few limitations like a lack of adequate updated data from the company website for their current marketing strategy. Apart from this, there is a lack of enough literature to support the change in Integrated Marketing Communication theory in the VUCA world during the Covid pandemic and how it applies to Indian customers.

Future studies can be done in empirical research methods to support the theory of the digital integrated marketing communication model. Further, research is also possible in exploring how brands of specific sectors follow different integrated marketing communication strategies to influence consumer purchasing behavior.

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