

Integrated Marketing Communications and its Influence Among Car Buyers

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Abstract—Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) has become a vital strategy for automotive dealerships in Laguna as they compete to capture the attention and loyalty of car buyers. This study explores how specific IMC tools advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotions, digital marketing, personal selling, and experiential marketing influence consumer responses across the stages of the AIDA model (Awareness, Intentions, Desire, and Action). Using descriptive research design, surveys were conducted among 383 respondents, including car owners and potential buyers who had experienced dealership promotions. Findings revealed that digital marketing and sales promotions were most effective in generating awareness and interest, while personal selling and experiential marketing played a stronger role in driving desire and purchase action. The results highlight that dealerships adopting integrated and well-aligned communication strategies can gain a competitive advantage by meeting consumer expectations and guiding them more effectively through the decision-making process. This study contributes to both marketing literature and industry practice by identifying which promotional tools most strongly shape car buyers' decisions in Laguna's growing automotive market.

Index Terms—Descriptive research, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), AIDA Model (Awareness, Intentions, Desire, Action), Car Buyers, Automotive Dealerships.

1. The Problem and its Setting

A. Introduction

The automotive industry has presently become increasingly competitive, requiring manufacturers and dealerships to adopt innovative strategies to attract and retain customers. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) has emerged as a critical framework for influencing consumer decision-making, as it combines advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotions, digital marketing, personal selling and experiential marketing into a coherent brand message.

By coordinating these tools, IMC not only raises awareness but also strengthens customer relationships, guiding buyers through the stages of the AIDA model—Awareness, Intentions, Desire, and Action. Regardless of the common use of different promotional activities such as roadshows, discounts, and social media campaigns, there is still lack of information and data regarding which of the strategies are most effectively driving the actual purchase behavior, particularly in high-involvement industries like automobiles particularly in the province of

Laguna.

In the Philippine setting, the gap between the number of households and actual vehicle ownership underscores the need to understand how marketing communication tools influence consumer behavior. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have reshaped promotional strategies, particularly among younger audiences. Yet, the direct impact of these campaigns on car-buying decisions remains unclear. While earlier studies have explored promotional effectiveness in areas such as Cavite and the National Capital Region, research focusing on Laguna, a province with a steadily expanding automotive market has been limited. This gap points to the importance of examining which integrated marketing communication (IMC) tools most effectively drive awareness, encourage showroom visits, and ultimately lead to sales conversions in Laguna.

2. Methodology

This study investigates the influence of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) on car buyers' decision-making processes in Laguna, Philippines. A quantitative research design was employed, focusing on the relationship between promotional strategies and consumer responses across the AIDA (Attention, Intentions, Desire, Action) model. The methodology was structured to ensure validity, reliability, and relevance to the automotive industry.

A. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational design with impact analysis to assess how integrated marketing communication (IMC) tools influence car buyers. It examined both the degree of implementation of promotional activities—such as advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotions, digital marketing, personal selling, and event or experiential marketing—and the corresponding consumer responses in terms of awareness, intention, desire, and action. By linking the extent of promotional efforts with buyer behavior, the research aimed to identify which IMC strategies most effectively drive consumer engagement and purchase decisions.

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B. Population and Sampling

The population consisted of car buyers in Laguna Province who had purchased vehicles from Isuzu dealerships within the past one to two years. Respondents were limited to individuals (1) aged 18 years and above, (2) belonging to middle- and upper-income groups, and (3) residing in urban and suburban areas where dealerships operate. A purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that participants had direct exposure to IMC strategies during their car-buying experience.

C. Data Extraction and Analysis

Data were gathered through structured online questionnaires distributed through the digital platforms to maximize accessibility and efficiency. The survey instrument was organized into three main parts: (1) demographic profile, covering age, occupation, educational attainment, marital status, and income; (2) level of IMC implementation, measuring the extent of exposure to each promotional tool; and (3) influence on consumer behavior, capturing responses across the AIDA stages—awareness, intention, desire, and action. To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire was reviewed by marketing experts and pilot-tested prior to full deployment, allowing adjustments for clarity and consistency.

D. Data Analysis

Collected data were processed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to profile respondents and assess IMC implementation levels. Inferential statistics, including ANOVA and Pearson correlation, were applied to test the hypotheses regarding differences and relationships between IMC strategies and consumer responses.

E. Scope and Limitations

The study was limited to Laguna Province and focused exclusively on Isuzu dealerships during the academic year 2025–2026. Results may not be generalizable to other provinces or automotive brands but provide valuable insights into IMC effectiveness in a growing regional market

3. Results

A. Socio-economic and Demographic Profile

The respondent profile highlights a concentrated market segment in Laguna, where Age 25-34 age bracket (52.3%), is the dominant group, followed by 35-44 (22.2%). Occupation, 83.4% of respondents are private or government employees and Income, 68.6% belong to the middle-income market, viewing vehicle ownership as a practical necessity for daily commuting.

B. Implementation of IMC Tools

Dealerships in Laguna demonstrated strong utilization of most marketing channels, with personal selling receiving the highest rating (3.51). This underscores the critical role of direct salesperson engagement in guiding buyers through complex purchase decisions. Advertising (3.48) and digital marketing (3.32) also ranked highly, reflecting their effectiveness in building brand awareness and sustaining visibility in a

competitive market. By contrast, direct marketing scored the lowest (3.05), as respondents perceived automated SMS and generic email campaigns to be less persuasive compared to personalized follow-ups. Overall, the results suggest that buyers respond most positively to strategies that blend broad visibility with meaningful human interaction, while impersonal approaches remain less impactful in influencing purchase behavior.

C. Influence on Purchase Decision (AIDA Stages)

The influence of integrated marketing communications (IMC) varies across the stages of car buyers' decision-making. At the awareness stage, advertising emerged as the strongest driver of brand recognition (Mean = 3.51), underscoring its role in capturing initial attention. During the interest stage, digital marketing and the emphasis on product features encouraged active consideration among buyers (Mean = 3.45). Moving into desire, brand reputation and a consistent image played a pivotal role in fostering confidence and strengthening purchase intentions (Mean = 3.50). Finally, at the action stage, the overall communication mix of the dealership influenced the decision to purchase, though this stage reflected the lowest mean score (3.31). These findings suggest that while advertising and brand image are critical in shaping early and middle stages of the buying journey, a fully integrated communication strategy is essential to convert interest and desire into actual sales.

D. Impact Analysis (Regression)

Multiple regression analysis identified the specific IMC tools that move the buyers into the final "Action" stage:

Table 1
Significant Influence of integrated marketing communications on purchase decisions of car buyers in terms of action

Model		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.039	0.154		0.251	0.802
	ADVERTISINGTOTAL	0.184	0.06	0.157	3.054	0.002
	DIRECTMARKETINGTOTAL	0.182	0.046	0.199	3.929	0
	PUBLIRELATIONTOTAL	0.077	0.066	0.071	1.167	0.244
	SALESPROMOTIONS	0.09	0.057	0.082	1.569	0.117
	DIGITALTOTAL	0.075	0.064	0.066	1.171	0.242
	PERSONALSELLINGTOTAL	0.097	0.059	0.086	1.639	0.102
	EVENTMARKETINGTOTAL	0.265	0.062	0.237	4.255	0

The data confirms that the Event /Experiential Marketing is the strongest indicator of purchase actions. While when it comes to digital marketing it creates desire, however it does not significantly predict the final action phase of a customer compared to firsthand experiences and personalized direct follow-ups.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study illustrate a synergistic consumer journey where different marketing tools dominate specific psychological stages. The following sections analyze the mechanisms through which Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) shape the decision-making process for car buyers in Laguna.

A. The Dominance of Digital and Visual Awareness

The results indicate that the initial stages of the AIDA model—Awareness and Interest—are primarily driven by Advertising and Digital Marketing. With a high implementation mean for visual design in advertisements ($M=3.53$), it is evident that visual appeal is the primary hook for the 25–34-year-old demographic that dominates the sample. Digital platforms serve as a virtual showroom where 68.6% of the middle-income respondents conduct their preliminary research. This suggests that while traditional media still holds value, the "Entry Point" of the modern car-buying journey in Laguna is now firmly rooted in high-quality digital content and consistent brand visibility.

B. Bridging the Gap from Desire to Action

A significant finding in the regression analysis is the shift in influence as the consumer moves toward the final purchase. While Digital Marketing and Public Relations are effective in building "Desire" through reputation and emotional connection, they do not significantly predict the "Action" phase ($p > .05$). Instead, Event/Experiential Marketing emerged as the most significant driver for actual purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.237$, $p=0.000$). This confirms that for high-involvement products like automobiles, firsthand experience remains the ultimate "closer". The data suggests that buyers in Laguna are hesitant to commit until they have physically interacted with the vehicle through demonstrations or test drives.

C. The Role of Personalized Direct Marketing

Although Direct Marketing received the lowest implementation rating ($M=3.04$), it proved to be a statistically significant predictor of final purchase action. This indicates a "Quality over Quantity" effect; while generic automated SMS or email blasts are often ignored by price-conscious buyers, personalized and timely follow-ups from sales representatives effectively motivate consumers to take concrete steps toward acquisition. This highlights a critical opportunity for dealerships to move away from impersonal mass communication and toward a more consultative, relationship-based direct marketing approach.

D. Demographic Neutrality in IMC Implementation

The Kruskal-Wallis H tests was revealed and no significant differences in the perceived implementation of IMC across age, occupation, or income groups ($p > .05$). This suggests that the current marketing strategies employed by Isuzu dealerships in Laguna are implemented with a high degree of consistency across the population. This uniformity ensures a stable brand image but also points toward a need for the "contextualized" marketing intervention proposed in the enhancement plan, specifically targeting the unique accessibility and financing pain points of the private-sector workforce.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of integrated marketing communications (IMC) among car buyers in Laguna yields several important insights into the local automotive market. The majority of buyers are

single or married young professionals, primarily aged 25–34, who belong to the middle-income segment and value financial flexibility and practical utility. Dealerships demonstrate strong implementation of traditional advertising and personal selling, yet direct marketing remains underutilized and is perceived as the least effective tool.

The findings confirm that IMC tools play distinct roles within the AIDA framework. Advertising and digital marketing are the primary drivers of awareness and emotional desire, while brand reputation reinforces confidence during the consideration stage. However, first-hand experiences, such as test drives and product demonstrations emerge as the most decisive factor in the action phase, highlighting the importance of experiential marketing in closing sales. This suggests that while online presence is vital for initiating the buyer journey, physical interaction ultimately converts interest into purchase.

Finally, the absence of significant differences in IMC implementation across demographic groups indicates that current strategies are applied uniformly throughout Laguna. To improve sales conversion, dealerships must shift from generic, automated promotions toward contextualized, experiential approaches. The proposed enhancement plan, which is bringing the test-drive experiences directly to workplaces and integrating on-site financing offers a practical pathway to bridge the gap between consumer desire and final purchase action, thereby strengthening overall market performance.

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