

Examining the Factors and Constraints Influencing the Choice of Marketing Communication Mix Elements in Rural and Community Banks (RCB's) in Ghana

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Article Info

Volume 83

Page Number: 16096 – 16110

Publication Issue:

May - June 2020

Abstract:

To a very large extent, no organization can survive without paying attention or considering integrated marketing communications as a major operational activity because of the dynamism and competitiveness of the banking industry and the economy at present. The study aimed to examine the factors and constraints influencing the choice of marketing communication mix in Rural and Community Banks (RCB's) in Ghana.

A mixed-method approach was used with 561 rural banks spread over 10 regions of Ghana chosen as the study area. Questionnaires were a major tool for data collection. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources utilizing a structured questionnaire based on the objectives of the study.

Findings from the study revealed that major constraints like the high cost of implementation, the size of the bank, limited management capacity among others were facing the implementation of marketing communication mix strategies by the RCBs. On the determinants, the results showed that age of RCB, total deposits and a net worth significantly influence a bank to use Advertising and Personal selling as a marketing communication mix strategy with a positive coefficient of 0.1122, 0.0109 and 0.0728 at 1% and 5% levels. It was inferred that RCBs that have been in existence for a longer period were 0.1122 likely to choose Advertising and Personal selling as a communication mix strategy at 1% compared to all the six tools. Also, a one Ghana Cedi increase in the total deposit mobilized by RCB will increase the probability that it will choose Advertising and Personal selling as a communication mix strategy by an estimated coefficient of 0.0109 at 1% compared to all the six tools.

Keywords: *Communication mix strategy, marketing communications, Public Relations, Advertising, Rural and Community Banks (RCB's), Ghana.*

Article History

Article Received: 1 May 2020

Revised: 11 May 2020

Accepted: 20 May 2020

Publication: 24 May 2020

INTRODUCTION

Marketing communications (MCs) remains very essential to the success of every business. People can start a business, but it is not everyone that can nature and see the business survive over time especially in the presence of fierce

competition. The most vital aspect of any business to survive the competition is marketing their brand(s) to sustain the business, Uppal (2010). Selling as a marketing activity involves promoting products and services extensively. Marketers cannot conjecture in today's world of competition that their customers will always continue to stick by

them solely because of an experience of them. The fierce competition presents in today's service sector and banking, for example, has presented customer alternatives, thereby, dwindling the hold firms would have had on customers. This situation has called for marketers to break the curve and adopt marketing strategies and innovations that will help gain a sustainable competitive advantage over their rivals. According to Smith and Taylor (2004), the more efficient marketers become in the usage of the marketing communication mix elements, the better their companies would be, as they would be sending the appropriate messages to their customers.

Firms do communicate with their customers to achieve a certain purpose. Stafford (2012), posits that there are three main goals of marketing communications. He says the firms must first communicate to attain brand awareness. He explained further that the second objective is to communicate to make customers express the need for the product and what solution the product provides. The third he says is to direct the customer's behaviour towards your company's goals and desires. Efforts must be made in the communication process to incite a behavioural change favourable to the company who is communicating.

Marketing communications elements and marketing strategies in influencing customer selection and purchases processes at the market place have become very essential in today's banking operations (IFAD, 2008). Despite some studies supporting the link between marketing orientation and performance in the market, many scholars have also posited strongly that a direct relationship between marketing strategies and performance is too simplistic and that future research should investigate how marketing communications is used in firms to achieve performance and hence create an advantage in the already competitive marketing place (Han *et al.*, 1998). Accordingly, this current study tries to fill a gap by exploring and evaluating the orientations, perceptions, factors and constraints of marketing

communications mix also known as the promotional mix in creating a sustainable competitive advantage for small and medium-scale firms like Rural and Community Banks (RCBs). More so, even though there have been studies conducted on marketing communications in America, Europe and Asia, there have been little or no studies on marketing communications practice, perceptions, implementations and constraints in creating a sustainable competitive advantage for Ghanaian banks especially the Rural and Community Banks (RCBs) whose mandate is to serve largely the informal sector (ARB APEX Report 2006). Most of the research work in this area has largely focused on bigger firms and multinationals. Many peculiar problems face smaller firms, like Rural and Community Banks (RCBs) in Ghana, because of their composition, structure and size, and because of this, it is worrying that little studies have been done to find out about the various marketing communications strategies employed and how they are being implemented to help them gain an advantage in an overcrowded market place. Again, the little research work on marketing communications has focused on insurance, telecommunications among other disciplines, and have not covered the service sector like the Rural Banking sector in Ghana. The other studies done in Africa in marketing communications were limited in scope and did not cover, for example, the constraints and factors influencing the choice of a marketing mix. For example, a study in marketing communications and organizational performance in Nigeria by Abubarkar (2014) only focused on only two commercial Nigeria banks and was devoid of the aforementioned key areas. Consequently, this study is being done to explore and gain an understanding of those areas concerning marketing communications and fill the gap left by previous studies. Another problem area is that it has been generalized in literature studies that, it needs additional and strenuous effort to market services than to market tangible products. (Ray & Suchetana, 2006). Whether the claim is still holding

needs to be investigated to assess and evaluate the impact of marketing strategies like marketing communication methods are contributing to creating a sustainable competitive advantage for a service industry such as RCBs in Ghana. Moreover, studies have been done to state the role of marketing communications in organizational performance in other sectors but result from available studies like that of Abubarkar *et al.*, (2011), was silent on some other prominent components in the marketing communication mix, the constraints and factors influencing the choice of a marketing communication method by firms. This does not give a complete assessment of marketing communications practice by banks and does not cover the subject matter in its totally for firms to appreciate the benefits thereof. Govini (2004). Again, many of the banks marketing studies have been based on marketing theory more than effective marketing communications practice (Ramesh, 2013). This study sought to research into those areas and provide useful information to operators in the financial sector, academia and marketing practitioners. This study also intends to fill the gap in research and add on to existing knowledge on bank marketing strategies. This study is being done to extend the limited understanding of marketing communication mix strategies in respect to industry and bring to evidence whether marketing communications is impacting on competitive advantage for a sector that has unique problems and challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many factors may drive the selection of a marketing or promotional strategy by firms. Empirical evidence of factors influencing the choice of marketing communications methods by banks has been a bit scanty in previous studies.

Cheong *et al.*, (2013), in their study to determine advertisement and promotion implementations in firms, found that decentralization is important. In this context,

associating the business size, profitability, brand value, brand type and price and the effect of marketing and finance department with decentralization level in budgeting while planning and choosing marketing communication budget is key. They also revealed that this relationship is important in budget size and allocation and that will inform the choice and implementation strategies.

Adeluyi (2004) researching into factors facing new challenges in banking and adoption of strategies, found that several factors have been responsible for moving banks towards adopting the marketing mix concept. These include declining profitability as a result of falling sales, slow growth, changing customer buying patterns, increased competition and changing government regulations. He concluded that consumers will always be unaware of the many good products and services banks offer if they do not communicate them.

Odabaşı and Oyman (2012) list the factors in determining marketing communications choice concerning the total resource to be allocated for marketing communication mix as profit rate, product features, location of the product in the life cycle, aims, budgeting period, business resources, size and age, rival strategies, distribution policies, economic conditions and market structure.

Chung (2003) assessed the structure of the organization and what may influence the marketing standardization of a marketing strategy of New Zealand firms. He found that factors influencing marketing strategy choices are inconclusive. However, he found out that the price decision structure has a significant impact on the selection process. His study further revealed that both place and process structure were confirmed to be an indirect influence on standardization strategy.

Haslem (1968), in a study that investigated the factors influencing bank performance, highlighted two major factors, i.e., internal factors

and factors external to the bank. Balance sheets and especially profit and loss statements form the internal factors while environmental forces such as economic conditions contribute to the operation and performance of financial institutions externally.

Several explanatory variables have been suggested in the literature for both the internal and external determinants of factors that inform the choice of a strategy. The typical internal determinants employed are variables, such as size and capital. Akhavein *et al.* (1997), and Goddard *et al.* (2004).

In clan-type businesses, importance is given to the internal structure and forming an environment tightly-locked with strong personal ties. In businesses where such a culture prevails, instead of depending on operational processes, marketing communication budget planning is conducted through bargaining and agreements. Businesses with an entrepreneurial spirit focused on creativity and innovations. In such businesses, decentralization and employee empowerment are important. While determining the marketing communication budget, models based on the operational process are adopted. Also, Low and Mohr (2000) emphasize that the points marketing managers should consider while doing rational allocation out of marketing communication budget as follows: the main thing to do is using a brand team approach. In this context, executives from different departments should work together while deciding upon the marketing communication budget and while planning a marketing communication budget, they should be ready for semi-annual and trimester potential changes. Marketing strategy determines the selection of target market segments, positioning, marketing mix and resource allocation. They are more effective when they are an integral part of a company's overall strategy, and determine how successful the organization engages clients, prospects, and competitors in the market arena. As the customer is the company's revenue source, e.g.

they dictate deposits mobilization volumes, profitability etc and therefore marketing communications strategy is closely related to sales. A key element in a marketing strategy is often to maintain marketing in line with the company's overall mission statement. Innovation, technology, quality of service and staff efficiency as major independent variables (Allen, 2002, Azhar, 2008)

Empirical Review of Constraints facing the Implementation of marketing communications methods

Literature point out the role marketing communications play in communicating the brands and offerings of firms to their targeted audience. Marketing communications affect the brands of firms in many ways and may hinder the growth and competitiveness of firms is not properly implemented. (Ka- Mann and Gerald, 2015). The inability of firms to implement effectively sound strategies and for that matter marketing mix strategies have been a bane to industry and such constraints are inhibiting their growth (Sarpong, 2015).

Tsikirayi *et al.*, (2013) assessed the impact of integrated marketing communication mix in small to medium enterprises in Zimbabwe and discovered that managers of the firms did not emphasize the need for communicating their products let alone adopting marketing communications because they were not properly oriented. Their study revealed that management capacity and power play were some of the reasons why the implementation of MC strategies was poor. They pointed out that in such firms, little efforts were put in place in their communication strategies. Their study again revealed that even where management utilized marketing communications, proper planning and appreciating of the marketing mix concept hindered the effectiveness and success of marketing communication programs. This revelation fell short of Hakansson (2005) who argues that firms should place a premium on the promotional mix elements,

optimal utilization of the communication mix was going to send the right messages to their clients and prospects and create a sustainable advantage for firms.

In a related study carried out in Nigeria by Onah & Ogwo(1991), the researchers found that firms and especially small firms pay no or little attention to marketing communication. Aligning reasons for this development, the study revealed that, the major constraints inhibiting the implementation of MC programmes by firms was budgetary shortages. Firms were unable for instance to participate in roadshows, trade fairs among others because they could not raise the budget for them. Their inability hinders their growth since communications play a pivotal role in their growth.

In a similar study conducted again in Nigeria, by Ogechukwu and Liatinwo (2010), the researchers looked at marketing communications implementation, lack of competence and appreciation of MC methods and its usefulness came up from their study as the major constraints. Their findings asserted that most small and medium firms thought marketing communications programs were for large and multinational companies. Their study further discovered that external bottlenecks such as lack of demand for their products, access to capital, communication tax clearance (VAT) issues were hindering the implementation efforts of marketing strategies.

Mafini, C. (2016) researched the constraints to strategy implementation and their influence on business performance in South Africa, using the quantitative research method and employing a cross-sectional survey design and again collecting data from 309 staff members found that incorrect implementation of the strategy was a major limitation in itself, and was a major failure of most companies. Also, factors such as organizational culture, organizational age and size, power and politics, employee motivation, organizational structure, learning organizations, often influence the success of strategy implementation.

In Ghana, Tandoh (2015), reported in his study that looked at the impact of marketing communications on the performance of financial institution in Kumasi, a case study of five selected banks, with a sample size of 625 customers, using data from both primary and secondary sources, that, one of the major constraints facing the implementation of MC programs were lack of a properly constituted marketing departments in the five selected banks he used for his study. His studies further found that there were limited or no personal specially trained in marketing communications who were supposed to attached professionalism and efficiency in the discharge of their duties and ensure proper planning and implementation.

Harrison, Bosse and Phillips (2010) posit that the conventional functional mentality that prevailed during the industrial revolution is still manifested in many organizations today and tends to promote counterproductive attitudes and attitudes that hinder the implementation of the strategy in the present-day business environment.

Blettner, Chaddad, and Bettis (2012) assessing the impact of CEO' role in strategy implementation found that, organizational structure, power and politics, whether the organization is learning or stagnating, organizational culture, and employee motivation as critical internal constraints.

Even so, dozens of companies with good strategies fail to implement these strategies because of a shortfall in available resources. Thus, strategic capacity is reinforced by the available resources (staff, working capital, management information systems and intellectual resources), since these resources are used in the organization's activities to create competencies (Ployhart and Moliterno, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Theories of Marketing and Communications

Several theories abound under marketing and communications. Some of the notable theories

discussed under this section are innovation diffusion theory, cognitive dissonance theory, resource-based theory, the theory of reasoned action, and mass communication and agenda-setting theory.

i. Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DIT)

The Diffusion of Innovation theory explains how ideas and innovations are spread. According to Rogers (1996), diffusion can best be described as a continuous process by which an innovation is strategically communicated over time through channels among members of a social group. He further explained that the diffusion of innovations involves the usage of both interpersonal and mass communication mediums.

Rogers in his book 'Diffusion of Innovation' Rogers further summarizes members of the social system innovative decision as a five-step process that includes; Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, Implementation, Confirmation. A weakness of the diffusion of innovation theory is the pro-innovation bias.

ii. Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT)

Cognitive Dissonance theory could be calved from a broader subject of persuasion. The theory of Cognitive Dissonance is a form of persuasion that can be used to influence individuals' beliefs about an object or an issue, which includes attributes, interpretation, definition, outcome, etc. It is often assumed that to persuade others to do something, an outside source simply must provide enough ammunition to change another's attitudes or beliefs.

iii. Theory of Reasoned Action

Propounded by, Martin Fishbein and lack Ajaz, this theory posits that individual behaviour is predicted by individual behavioural intention to use. The limitation is that the significant risk of confounding between attitudes are norms since attitudes may change and be reframed as norms and vice versa.

iv. Mass communications agenda-setting theory

Mc Combs and Shaw is credited to have developed the Agenda- setting theory. The theory describes the ability of the media (both electronic and print) to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. That is, if the new item is covered frequently and promptly, the audience will regard the issue as important. This theory is not suited for this current study because its targets are the masses and the public, while marketing communication sends information to a defined audience with a specific message.

v. Resource-Based View (RBV).

The resource-based view states and provides a crucial framework for predicting and explaining a firm's competitive advantage and overall performance based on the resources available to the firm (Barney et al 2013).

The resource-based view (RBV) argues that the competitive advantage of an organization lies basically in the usage of a bundle of valuable intangible or tangible resources. (Wernerfelt, 1984). According to Kozlenkova *et. al*, (2014), the use of resource-based view in conducting marketing research has increased in the excess of 500 times in the last ten or more years which underscores is hugely important as a powerful framework for explaining competitive advantage.

vi. The selected theoretical framework for this study

This present study adopted sound and efficient communication theories such as Diffusion of Innovation and Cognitive Dissonance. Again, since the study looked at MC on the competitive advantage of the RCBs, the study also adopted the resource-based view as an additional framework to make the study complete and well-grounded. The various tools of marketing communication exude persuasion, aimed at influencing customers to accept the products or services of an organization or even to perceive it in a good light. For the

suitability of this study, it was appropriate to adopt the theories of cognitive dissonance, diffusion of innovation theory and the resource-based view (RBV). The entire concept of marketing communication sits on persuasion and attitudinal change. Norman Hart (1995) defines MC as across the board communications to help move a potential customer from a state of ignorance towards a position of decision and action. Because of this, it was necessary using the following theories to best describe the phenomena.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach Position for this study

From the philosophical position grounded in this study and espoused in the preceding sections, it demands that the study adopts an approach that allows for the combination of both objectivism and subjectivism on one hand and positivism and interpretivism on the other hand. The strategy, therefore, appropriately combines both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in achieving its stated objectives.

As much as the study admits to a large volume of theories in the area of Marketing communications (with some of them discussed in the literature), the study also seeks to test these theories in the context of Ghana and perhaps generally contextually fitted sets of theories that can appropriately be used locally.

In such cases, a mix method research is always appropriate and offers the better of the two main approaches- qualitative and quantitative since it relies on the strength and weakness of both methods. This strategy is what has been popularized by researchers as mixed-methods or multi-strategy research (Bryman, 2004). The choice of mixed methods is grounded in (and discussed in Kaplan and Duchon 1988) further explain that mixed methods allow collecting different kinds of data by using methods and from different sources.

Hence, it provides a wider range of coverage that may result in a fuller picture of the unit under

study that would have been achieved otherwise (Kaplan and Duchon, 1988). Additionally, this strategy tends to provide opportunities for triangulation, thereby, increasing the robustness of findings and results.

Furthermore, the research discourse in Marketing communications and its related areas has been characterized by mostly quantitative methodologies with only a few cases of an application of qualitative strategy (De Silva, 2011). This situation, according to Brannen (2005) and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), is attributable to the popularity and identification of quantitative methods as an accepted research method, its ability to judge rigour in terms of reliability, replicability, generalizability and validity, data accessibility, time frame and time constraints, and researcher independence (De Silva, 2011). To this extent, content analysis was predominantly used during the period 1988-2003 as the main tool for collecting data in most Marketing communications research. The choice of mixed methods approach is, therefore, not out of place but will also add and explore new areas in methodologies for marketing communications research. Within the mixed-method approach, Creswell (2009) identified two in six major types of strategies that researchers who intend to use the mixed method can adopt. These include Sequential Design- (1) Sequential Explanatory Design; (2) Sequential Exploratory Design; and (3) Sequential Transformative Design; and Concurrent Design- (4) Concurrent Triangulation Design; (5) Concurrent Embedded Design; and (6) Concurrent Transformative Design. These designs, according to Creswell (2009), are classified according to the priority given to the qualitative method or otherwise quantitative method. In this study, Concurrent Transformative Design is considered appropriate. This is because, and as explained by Creswell (2000), it allows for the concurrent collection of qualitative and quantitative data. As indicated earlier, the study seeks to dwell on and test existing theories in the context of Ghana and perhaps generate a

contextually-fitted set of theories that can appropriately be used locally. The choice of this strategy makes it easy for the study to pursue this intention.

Additionally, the concurrent transformative design makes a combination of triangulation and embedded strategy and, hence, allows the researcher the opportunity to triangulate qualitative data with quantitative data, as has been the intention in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Factors Influencing RCBs in Ghana Choice of a Marketing Communication Mix Method.

Table 1 below presents a summary description of the variables used in the model. The results show that the mean age of the various RCBs used in the study is about 27 years. This indicates that RCBs in Ghana generally has been in existence for about 27 years now. Thus, it can be inferred that they have experience in terms of rural banking in Ghana. The results further indicate that the mean number of branches of RCBs across Ghana is about 5. This means that generally, RCBs in Ghana has about five branches across the country. The results again show that the mean amount of paid-up capital mobilized by RCBs in Ghana for the 2015 year-end was about 985,872 Ghana Cedis. It can, therefore, be concluded that the amount of shares purchased by shareholders for that accounting year is quite

low given the number of RCBs across Ghana employed in the study. On the other hand, the results further show that RCBs across Ghana received a mean deposit of about 2,080,000,000 Ghana Cedis. The total assets based on RCBS in Ghana as indicated by the results show that it's about 6,070,000,000 Ghana Cedis which include total liabilities of the RCBs. The results also indicate that the total number of products and services offered by RCBs in Ghana to their clients and the general public is about 10. This shows that RCBs typically have ten different products and services they operate with. Another important factor that ensures the success or failure of a company is its amount of profit or loss. The results show that RCBs in Ghana generally recorded about 853,209 Ghana Cedis profit before tax for the year ending December 2015. The results further show that the net worth of RCBs in Ghana is about 2,939,203 Ghana Cedis as of December 2015. This is quite low given the total asset-based recorded for that accounting year. It can, therefore, be inferred RCBs in Ghana generally have high liability which could have a negative influence on the survival of the RCBs if they fail to mobilize enough deposits. This finding is consistent with Tandoh (2015) and Odabasi et al., who found that profitability was a factor in determining the choice of a marketing strategy. The results lastly show that about 57% of RCBs across Ghana perceive that marketing communication mix is important to the survival of RCBs in this diverse and growing population.

Table 1: Descriptive of variables

Variable	Mean (Standard deviation)
Age of RCB	26.86 (9.55)
Number of branches	5.47 (2.50)
Paid-up Capital	985872.40 (924699.50)
Total Deposits	2080000000.00 (2.030000000.00)
Total Assets	6070000000.00 (2.410000000.00)
Total number of products and services	9.82 (3.31)
Profit before tax in 2015	853208.70 (1986478.00)
Net worth	2939203.00 (3908340.00)
Perception of on Marketing communication	0.57 (0.50)

Source: Field survey, 2018

A multinomial logit model was estimated to find out the factors that influence RCBs choice of marketing communication mix strategy and the results are presented in Table 5.2. There were six marketing communication tools also known as promotional mix including Advertising, Personal selling, sales promotion, Public relation, Branding and social media. However, none of the tools is used in isolation by RCBs in Ghana. The descriptive show that 9 banks use only Advertising and Personal selling as marketing communication tools, 20 banks use Advertising, sales promotion and Public relation. Also, 10 banks use Advertising, Personal selling, sales promotion and social media whereas 12 banks use all the six marketing communication mix strategies. A combination of the six marketing communication tools was used as the reference category because it combines all the tools.

The results show that age of RCB, total deposits and a net worth significantly influence a bank to use Advertising and Personal selling as a marketing communication mix strategy with a positive coefficient of 0.1122, 0.0109 and 0.0728 at 1% and 5% levels. This means that RCBs that has been in existence for long is 0.1122 likely to choose

Advertising and Personal selling as a communication mix strategy at 1% compared to all the six tools. Also, a one Ghana Cedi increase in the total deposit mobilized by RCB will increase the probability that it will choose Advertising and Personal selling as a communication mix strategy by an estimated coefficient of 0.0109 at 1% compared to all the six tools. Also, an increase in the net worth will increase the probability that RCB will choose Advertising and Personal selling as a communication mix strategy which is also known as a promotional mix by an estimated coefficient of 0.0728 at 5% compared to all the six tools. The above results indicate that RCBs who uses advertising and Personal selling is older banks, with high deposits and huge net worth.

Also, the age of RCB, number of branches and profit before tax significantly influence a bank to choose Advertising, sales promotion and public relation as a marketing communication mix strategy with a positive coefficient of 0.2569, 0.6536 and 0.0282 at 1%, 10% and 10% respectively. This means that RCBs that has been in existence for long is 0.2569 likely to choose Advertising, sales promotion and public relation at 1% compared to all the six tools. An RCB with more branches will

choose Advertising, sales promotion and public relations as a marketing communication strategy by 0.6536 at 10% compared to all the six tools. Also, an increase in the profit before tax accrued by RCB will increase the probability that it will choose Advertising, sales promotion and public relations at 10% compared to all the six tools. Thus, the above results indicate that RCBs who uses Advertising, sales promotion and public relation are older banks, with more branches and high profit before tax.

Furthermore, age of RCBs, profit before tax and a net worth significantly influence a bank to choose Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media as a marketing communication mix strategy with a positive coefficient of 0.2423, 0.0384 and 0.0144 at 5% and

10% levels. Specifically, RCBs that have been in existence for long is 0.2423 likely to choose Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media at 5% compared to all the six tools. An increase in the profit before tax accrued by RCB will increase the probability that it will choose Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media by 0.0384 at 5% compared to all the six tools. A Ghana Cedi increase in the net worth will increase the probability that RCB will choose Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media by 0.0144 at 10% compared to all the six tools. Thus, the results indicate that RCBs that choose Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media are older banks, with huge profit before tax and net worth.

Table 2: Determinants of marketing communication mix by RCBs

Variables	Advertising and Personal selling		Advertising, promotion and relation		Sales Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media	
	Coefficient	dy/dx	Coefficient	dy/dx	Coefficient	dy/dx
Age of RCB	0.1122 (0.0265)***	-0.0016 (0.0054)	0.2569 (0.0982)***	0.0175 (0.0077)**	0.2423 (0.1080)**	0.0061 (0.0070)
Number of branches	0.7086 (0.5137)	0.0823 (0.0368)**	0.6536 (0.3881)*	0.1325 (0.0345)***	0.2592 (0.4364)	0.0568 (0.0268)**
Paid up Capital	0.0485 (0.0657)	0.0001 (0.0006)	0.0071 (0.0072)	0.0021 (0.0013)	0.0162 (0.0189)	0.0021 (0.0018)
Total Deposits	0.0109 (0.0026)***	0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0007 (0.0036)	0.0001 (0.0005)	0.0004 (0.0060)	0.0000 (0.0006)
Total Assets	0.0035 (0.0023)	0.0002 (0.0002)	-0.0027 (0.0030)	-0.0000 (0.0005)	0.0054 (0.0056)	0.0004 (0.0006)
Total number of products and services	-0.4024 (0.3592)	-0.0401 (0.0280)	0.1859 (0.2097)	0.0522 (0.0257)**	-0.2016 (0.3285)	0.0257 (0.0275)
Profit before tax in 2015	-0.0095 (0.0075)	0.0016 (0.0009)*	0.0282 (0.0147)*	0.0016 (0.0016)	0.0384 (0.0192)**	0.0041 (0.0016)
Net worth	0.0728 (0.0308)**	0.0002 (0.0003)	0.0007 (0.0023)	0.0011 (0.0006)*	0.0144 (0.0082)*	0.0015 (0.0008)**
Perception of on Marketing communication	0.9124 (1.4417)	0.2005 (0.1088)*	2.6517 (1.4785)	0.2881 (0.1219)**	1.8331 (1.6610)	0.0311 (0.1022)***
Constant	-2.4528		2.4091		2.9499	

	(1.3280)*	(1.4462)*	(1.6849)*
Predicted Prob.	0.18	0.22	0.28
No. of Obs	51		
Log pseudo-likelihood	-39.3558		
Wald chi2 (27)	55.26***		
Pseudo R2	0.4129		

Note: Values in parentheses are standard errors; ***,** and * denotes significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively, a combination of all the six communication mix was used as the base category.

Source: Field survey, 2018.

For policy implication, the marginal effects were alongside the coefficients estimated. The marginal effect shows that a unit increase in the number of branches of RCB will increase RCBs choice of Advertising and Personal selling by 0.0823 at 5%. Likewise, a unit increase in the profit before tax accrued by RCB will increase the choice of choose Advertising and Personal selling by 0.0016 at 10% whereas a change in the perception of RCBs on the importance of marketing communication tools to the survival of RCB will increase their choice of Advertising and Personal selling by 0.2005 at 10% all things being equal. About 18% of the sampled RCBs are predicted to choose Advertising and Personal selling as a marketing communication mix.

The estimate for Advertising, Sales promotion and Public relations as a marketing communication mix indicates that a unit increase in the number of years an RCB has been in operation will increase the choice of Advertising, Sales promotion and Public relations by 0.0175 at 5%. Also, a unit increase in the number of branches of an RCB will increase their choice for Advertising, Sales promotion and Public relation by 0.1325 at 1% while additional products and services is offered by an RCB will increase their choice of Advertising, Sales promotion and Public relation by 0.0522 at 5%. Likewise, a one Ghana Cedi increase in the net worth of an RCB will increase their choice of Advertising, Sales promotion and Public relations by 0.0011 at 10%. A change in the perception of RCBs on the importance of marketing communication tools to the survival of RCB will

increase their choice of Advertising, Sales promotion and Public relations by 0.2881 at 5% all things being equal. About 22% of the sampled RCBs are predicted to choose Advertising, Sales promotion and Public relations as a marketing communication mix.

Also, the estimate for Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media as a marketing communication mix indicates that a unit increase in the number of branches of an RCB will increase their choice for Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media by 0.0568 at 5%. Again, a one Ghana Cedi increase in the net worth of an RCB will increase their choice of Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media by 0.0015 at 5% while a change in the perception of RCBs on the importance of marketing communication tools to the survival of RCB will increase their choice of Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media by 0.0311 at 1%. About 28% of the sampled RCBs are predicted to choose Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media as a marketing communication mix. The Wald Chi-square estimate of 55.26 which is significant at 1% level indicates that the variables used in the model jointly and significantly influence RCBs choice of a particular marketing communication mix strategy. The overall findings weaken Chung (2013) assertion that factors influencing marketing strategy choice are inconclusive. However, the findings are consistent with Odabaşı and Oyman (2012) who list the factors in determining marketing communications choice about the total resource to

be allocated for marketing communication mix as profit rate, product features, location of the product in the life cycle, aims, budgeting period, business resources, size and age, rival strategies, distribution policies, economic conditions and market structure.

Constraints to the Implementation of Marketing Communication Mix of RCBs in Ghana

Table 4 below presents the results on the constraints faced by RCBs in Ghana in the implementation of their choice of marketing communication mix strategy. The staff of RCBs was asked questions based on the constraints they face in promotional mix implementation. Based on the results, the high cost of implementing the marketing communication mix poses the major and first constraint confronting RCBs in implementing their choice of marketing communication strategy. This finding is very consistent with Blettner *et al.*, (2012) who posited that shortfall in resources was the major bain for strategy implementation by small firms. This is followed by the lack of proper marketing research and insufficient funding also being the second major constraint confronting RCBs in implementing their choice of marketing communication strategy. Another major problem confronting RCBs in implementing their chosen marketing communication strategy is that of limited management capacity, the nature of competition in

the banking industry and the lack of technological infrastructure. Others include the lack of banking culture among the rural areas, peri-urban and the urban poor, RCBs copying, competing and mimicking the practices of universal banks as the fourth constraint confronting RCBs in the implementation of their choice of marketing communication strategy. Although as a constraint confronting RCBs in the implementation of their choice of marketing communication strategy, improper regulatory framework, less attention on financial sustainability, lack of linkages between formal and informal financial institutions, lack of effective and appropriate personnel and the lack of understanding of the definition and concept of RCB by clients does not pose a major threat to RCBs in Ghana as they ranked fifth to seventh based on the mean scores.

The overall results seem not to be directly consistent with Mafini C. (2016) in terms of ranking who posited that incorrect implementation was the major constraint to strategy implementation.

The Kendall's W^a value of 0.680 indicates a 68% level of agreement between the rankers who are the staff of RCBs across the country on the constraints to the implementation of marketing communication mix strategy by RCBs in Ghana.

Table 3 Constraints to the implementation of marketing communication mix by RCBs

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean Score	Overall Rank
High cost of implementing marketing communication mix	91	181	7	21	6	1.9	1 st
The size of your bank	22	229	33	19	3	2.2	3 rd
Improper regulatory framework	31	181	48	32	14	2.4	5 th
Limited management capacity	25	217	38	20	6	2.2	3 rd
Less attention on financial sustainability	28	189	51	24	14	2.4	5 th

Lack of understanding of the definition and concept of RCB by clients	7	187	63	17	32	2.6	7 th
Lack of proper marketing research	60	186	36	14	10	2.1	2 nd
Lack of effective and appropriate personnel	23	191	32	46	14	2.5	6 th
The nature of competition in the industry	44	197	27	31	7	2.2	3 rd
Lack of banking culture among the rural areas, peri-urban and the urban poor	19	208	51	19	9	2.3	4 th
Insufficient funding	44	202	45	9	6	2.1	2 nd
RCBs copying, competing and mimicking the practices of universal banks	28	202	53	4	19	2.3	4 th
Lack of technological infrastructure	44	171	70	13	8	2.2	3 rd
Lack of coordination and collaboration among all branches	32	196	53	19	6	2.3	4 th
Lack of linkages between formal and informal financial institutions	22	185	63	19	17	2.4	5 th

(Kendall's $W^a = 0.680$, Sig. = 0.00)

1 = Strongly agree 2 = Agree 3 = Indifferent 4 = Disagree and 5 = Strongly Disagree

Source: Field survey, (2018)

CONCLUSIONS

The multinomial logit model was estimated to find out the factors that influence the RCBs choice of marketing communication mix strategy. The results show that age of RCB, total deposits and a net worth significantly influence a bank to use Advertising and Personal selling as a marketing communication mix strategy with positive coefficients of 0.1122, 0.0109 and 0.0728 at 1%, 1% and 5% levels respectively. Also, age of RCB, number of branches and profit before tax significantly influence a bank to choose Advertising, sales promotion and public relation as a marketing communication mix strategy with a positive coefficient of 0.2569, 0.6536 and 0.0282 at 1%, 10% and 10% respectively. Furthermore, age of RCB, profit before tax and a net worth significantly influence a bank to choose Advertising, Personal selling, Sales promotion and Social media as a marketing communication mix

strategy with a positive coefficient of 0.2423, 0.0384 and 0.0144 at 5% and 10% levels.

Constraints faced by selected RCBs in implementing their choice of marketing communication mix in Ghana

The study also assessed the constraints faced by the selected RCBs in implementing their choice of marketing communication mix in Ghana. The results showed that the high cost of implementing marketing communication mix poses the major constraint confronting RCBs in implementing their choice of marketing communication strategy. It was followed by the lack of proper marketing research and insufficient funding also being the second major constraint confronting RCBs in implementing their choice of marketing communication strategy. Other major problems confronting RCBs in implementing their chosen marketing communication strategy are that of limited management capacity, the nature of competition in the banking industry and the lack of technological

infrastructure. Others include the lack of banking culture among the rural areas, peri-urban and the urban poor, RCBs copying, competing and mimicking the practices of universal banks as the fourth constraint confronting RCBs in the implementation of their choice of marketing communication strategy. Although they are constraints confronting RCBs in the implementation of their choice of marketing communication strategy, improper regulatory framework, less attention on financial sustainability, lack of linkages between formal and informal financial institutions, lack of effective and appropriate personnel and the lack of understanding of the definition and concept of RCB by clients do not pose major threats to RCBs in Ghana as they ranked fifth to seventh based on the mean scores.

Academic Contributions

This current study has expanded and added valuable insights into available marketing literature and has highlighted, displayed and brought to evidence the relevant theories of marketing communications mix to small firms like Rural and Community Banks in a developing country like Ghana.

It has also contributed to the growing literature and theories in marketing communications in academia. Additionally, and to a large extent, this present study contributed to useful debates in marketing communications literature and how it can be utilized for small firms in a developing country like Ghana. There have been no or very few studies that have attempted to look at all the six objectives set for this study and have brought a deeper understanding of the concept of marketing communications.

Contributions to Practice

This study has practicalized the concept of marketing communications and has highlighted important findings when adopted by the management of RCBs is going to help them make a lot of progress in their marketing approach and thinking. To a large extent, it has set a good road

map for marketing communications practice in rural and community banks in Ghana and has challenged marketing managers of RCBs to pay critical attention to MCs especially with social media and PR. Additionally, the study also explored and brought out the constraints faced by the RCBs in their quest to implementing marketing communications programmes. This study is unique in its rights and has provided useful lessons for practitioners and will serve as a springboard for sector players, investors and the general public to draw lessons and make RCBs competitive by employing and taking the right steps toward the communication of their products and services to their customers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Budgets and records of marketing communications programs should be properly kept by the RCBs for easy cost and benefit analysis to be done on their marketing activities.
- RCBs should involve and engage their employees in MC planning and implementations. It also recommended that RCBs involve their clients in their marketing research as an indication shows it is a worry to them based on a mean score of 0.27 which is low.

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