



CONSUMER RESPONSES TOWARDS THE 4Ps MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE CONFLICT AFFECTED AREAS OF SRI LANKA: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

In the post-war era, local firms are facing stiff competition from foreign brands. In order to compete successfully they need to develop new marketing strategies on post-war perspective. At the same time, they also need to focus on all the marketing activities from the consumer's perspectives. During war, consumers were more conscious on the product accessibility, and did not consider the other aspects in the brands, but in the post-conflict marketing environment they expect good value for the money which they spent on the product

Extent research on marketing strategies lacks in theory based frame work that explicate what marketing strategies are appropriate for the war/conflict affected places. The present study explored marketing strategies, appropriate to the unique context. Using grounded theory methodology data were collected, through 5 focus group discussions and 25 interviews with the consumers in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Theoretical sampling technique is





used to select the appropriate respondents; Data were collected until the data saturation was arrived. 89 initial codes were identified from the initial coding via Nvivo (version 09) software. From the axial coding and substantial coding 11 categories were found. Marketers adopt 15 strategies to reach the consumers in the conflict affected places. Consumers prefer 05 strategies, such as social responsibility, cultural match, ethical marketing, employee's behavior, and infrastructure development as the best from the 15 strategies. Ethical marketing strategy is needed in the conflict affected places. Findings show that, consumers in the conflict affected places expect ethical behavior in all aspects of marketing activities.

Keywords: Post war marketing environment, Marketing strategies, and grounded theory.

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Introduction

The recovery in consumer and business confidences are also expected to stimulate economic development in the war effected places (ACTED country strategy, 2011/2013). According to Nishantha, NihalPadmasiri (2010), balanced development is needed in all provinces, because more commercial activities are scatters in urban areas, which can be eliminated by establishing industrial based marketing activities in the conflict affected areas.

The development of the practical marketing strategy for post war America involved solving of housing problems of the low income population, while at the same time providing the environmental conducive to successfull marketing programs for the affected local entrepreneurs (Detroit, 1959).

Rural livelihood is at risk in the war affected communities in Sri Lanka (Korf and Benedikt, 2002). Exporting firms made an increasing use of packing, branding and advertising techniques, when the product was exported to the other side of the country. The factors which were identified for strategy making are globalization forces, pattern of consumption & demand distribution system, commercial policy, brand and consumers, protection legislation in markets (Raman Ramon Munoz, 2012).

The government Post war strategy in the North and East has been focused on economic recovery, and development of government's vision is to express the opportunities to make the country a knowledge hub, within the south Asian region. Sri Lanka is expected to be the





international and research and training center for Knowledge (Mahinda Chintana, 2010). President's mandate is to create knowledge hub and commercial hub to show Sri Lanka as a trade potential area in future.

Sri Lanka is a center of excellence for marketing agriculture products, creative industries (Fashion design), hospitality, tourism, travel, and leisure, health and life science (Traditional medicines), architecture, philosophies, conflict and peace studies, Business finance, and Information Technology management (Sunil Jeyantha, 2011).

As post war Sri Lanka gears itself towards sustained fast growth and achieving upper middle status, the importance of attracting greater investment from abroad has raised to the front. Although Sri Lanka has had a steady inflow of foreign investment projects into the country over time, Sri Lanka is in a position to encourage more trade friendly environment by introducing many business strategies (Anushka, Raveen, &Gajen, 2013).

Innovative strategies are lacking in the Sri Lankan context, innovations come from the entrepreneurs, who make them happen and ultimately depend on a society's responsiveness and ability to transform research into high exports, to a thing that adds value to the economy, encourage these entrepreneurs with appropriate policy support is important by setting conducting business environment, business access to incentivizing commercialization of inventions are important (William, Baumol, 2012)

Studied identified that, marketers struggled with distribution system, market infrastructure, business risk, financial infrastructure, economic conditions, political instability, marketing related problems. End of the war solved many problems. Distribution networks, market accessibility, technology and communication application, political stability, lower risk level, investment opportunities, banking services, friendly economic conditions, are administered by the positive post war marketing environment.

In the conflict affected places local marketers lose their status and miss their market shares from penetrated marketers. Retailers build more retail outlets to sell the products to the customers. Marketers get loans from financial organizations and are unable to repay them as their business are penniless. They sell their capitals to repay the loan amount, then they notice a loss of their marketing efforts (pilot study).

The marketers who have entered into the post war marketing environment have succeeded well and gained profitability in a short period and have a good name among customers. They build retail outlets and capture the customers and become as the market leaders. Local





marketers boycott against the advertisements and the sales strategy of the market leaders who have come to the post war marketers (Uthayan, 2013). It is clear that customer responses is must to have the appropriate strategies in the market place.

Research gap

According to Baarney Rumelt & Wernefelt (1991), marketing strategy should be based on the resources available in the particular market. Consumer research should focus on listening for insights and trends on focus group consumer panel (Kohli&, Jowershi, 1992; Kotler,2011), their arguments are based on the changed consumer characteristics due to the devastating experiences in the war situation. First mover advantages strategy for “Tide” doubled the business at the end of World War II in a European market (Dyer, 1953). Market leadership by branding, consumer research on post war perspectives, packing strategy, brand revolution, supermarket delivery platform, were identified as best in the post war marketing environment (Decker, 1989).

The marketing strategy is supposed to develop effective response to the changing environment (Hooley, 2008), companies should understand the needs of the customers, and they have to develop strategies to fulfill the needs of the target audience (Nilson, 1995). Based on the past studies, the present study fills the gap by answering the research question “whether these theories are applicable to the Sri Lankan post war marketing environment?”

Grounded theory approach traditionally associated with sociology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), nursing and health (Sandelowski, 1995; Morse, 1994), and organizational studies (Parry, 1998; Hunt and Ropo, 1995; Brown, 1994, 1995; Turner, 1981, 1988), has, in recent years, started to enter the repertoire of marketing and consumer research (Goulding, 1998, 1999a, 2000a; Pettigrew, 2000).

Hirschman and Thompson’s (1997) grounded theory analysis of advertising and the mass media, Burchill and Fine’s (1997) examination of product concept development, Delacuesta’s (1994) study of marketing and health visiting, Houston and Venkatesh’s (1996) interpretation of health care consumption practices by Asian immigrants, and Goulding’s (1999b, c, 2000b, c) research into consumer experiences at heritage sites and museums are some such examples. However, in comparison to other qualitative methodologies its application is still fairly confined to experiential consumer behavior, despite its potential for theoretical developments across a range of marketing phenomenon that are predicated on a behavioral





component. GT has now started to enter into the marketing (Goulding, 1998, 1999a, 2000a; Pettigrew, 2000).

Post war studies researched the Somalil and Economy (Saman , 2011) found that livelihood marketing strategy, communication facilities, financial service market, small business enterprises, followed the merchantable system were needed in the environment. Imports and exports traders have made a greater impact on local livelihood marketing practices than their pre -war predecessors (Samater, Slisbury, &Bascon, 1988). In the post war Mozambique, massive economic reforms and privatization programs changed the country as a post conflict graduate (Nourse, Ferstle, Snelgrove, Rinck&Mc Vay, 2007). Merchant and agent seller relationships strategies, price reduction, had been used as strategies in Burco (Drysdale, & Grassick, 2000) End of war in Bosnia, has changed it as a visible place to do business. Coca-Cola entered into the market and invest in a privatization projects (Samoter, Salisbury & Bascom, 1988). In Bosnia many banks targeted customers who needed financial assistances for construction consumption, production facilities, and the economic reconstruction. Mangaleswaran, Jayaseelan & Neavis identify, the needs of marketing strategies for dairy milk products in the Vavuniya in the post conflict settings, this research found that packing, branding advertisement strategies are important in the local dairy marketing in Vavuniya district. Different target marketing strategies would be ideal for a tourism marketing organizations in the Eastern province (Thalgaswatte, and Jayasinghe, 2011)

From the above background information researchers derived the following research questions: what is the customers' response towards the 4Ps marketing strategies in the post war marketing environment? to fill the above identified gap.

Research methodology

A better understanding of the customer responses related to business activities can be gained by directly talking with people who are involved in consumer activities in the post war marketing context, and allowing them to tell their practices, as supported by the literature (Creswell, 2007). Organizational reality is essentially socially constructed; hence it is beneficial to examine such reality in a way that taps into the processes used to fashion understanding of that reality by the participants themselves, and avoid the imposition of alien





meanings upon their actions and understanding (Gioia et al, 1994). Therefore, this study followed the grounded theory approach to find the responses of consumers towards the marketing strategies adopted in the post war marketing environment.

This study used theoretical sampling technique to select informants based on their ability to provide an understanding of the phenomenon. Theoretical sampling is a non-random sampling scheme. Its purpose is to obtain a deeper understanding of the issues, and develop explanations and theory rather than provide generalizations (Corbin and Strauss 2008). However, by selecting a various set of theoretically pertinent informants (Marketers and customers), the researcher can see the circumstances under which the developing groups grip factual (Creswell 2007).

Primary data have been collected through focus group discussions, and in depth interviews as qualitative methods. Questions were kept open ended where opinion was sought and the respondents have something to tell from their experience. This was done to give scope to the respondents to express themselves freely. Researchers followed the procedures specified by Krueger and Casey (2009). During the focus group discussion, researcher played the role of a facilitator, facilitating the discussion and allowing informants to guide the discussion flow and content. Interventions were made only to clarify certain aspects of the discussion.

Interviews as well as the focus group discussion were digitally recorded, translated and transcribed. Focus groups, and interview data totaled approximately 82 pages. Toward the end of 05 focus group, and the 25 interviews researchers encountered the same themes over and over, and no new insights were emerging from the data in the case of theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin 1998). In addition to the primary data collection, secondary data were collected from journals articles, newspapers, government records official presentation, images, video clips, brochures, and printed promotional materials.

Data analysis and conclusion

QSR International's NVivo (version 09) software was used to manage the focus group, and interview data. Transcripts were reviewed as the data collection to identify emerging ideas and specific themes, which guided subsequent data collection efforts. To code the data, open coding and axial coding schemes were used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In open coding, researchers identified important concepts using in-vivo codes (concepts based on the actual language used by the informants). Next the in-vivo codes were grouped into higher level





concepts called first-order categories, based on some underlying similarities between them. Next, the researchers used axial coding, wherein searched for relationships between and among the first-order categories, and assembled them into second-order themes. These second-order themes were used to understand the emergent framework (Corley & Gioia, 2004). In table 1, first-order categories, the second-order themes, and the favored marketing strategies that emerged from data were presented.

From the initial codes /sub categories social responsibility concept was identified. From the customer's point of view, they accepted the companies, which have the social responsibility as their strategies. However, many of them said that they could not identify the activities related to social responsibility concepts by the companies which have entered into the market. Consumers expect from the marketers, to help poor, deformed, war exaggerated people, helping war affected places, having concern on society, concern on pretentious places, providing jobs to the help needy people, and rebuilding society.

One of the respondent said, that.

I don't know how much they are concerned about our society, they are trying to sell the products and services whatever they have, banks offer loans to burden customers, we feel that, we have to pay more interest rate, they are pushing us to have vehicles and credit cards, it automatically changes lifestyle of us, we are in a position to purchase the product, a few of them concern on our society, we can't accept that all of them are doing social acceptable behavior"

The customers, who expressed cultural match as important, they prefer to have their cultural people in the advertisements, and the promotional activities made by the Indian marketers are accepted by the consumers, due to the cultural match between the South Indian and Northern Sri Lanka. Dress code, cultural behavior, respecting rituals, values and norms, expressing the traditions, wearing cultural dress by the celebrities and the staff are also preferred by the customers.

The above findings supported with the insights of another respondent is given below.

"See the bill boards at the road corners, celebrities are different from our culture, they represent western culture, and I don't like those advertisements, when we observe the advertisements for cosmetics marketers use western





celebrities, but in the Indian advertisements, celebrities are match with our culture it boosts us to purchase Indian products”

Ethical marketing is a marketing strategy that are ethical and reflect consumer and market expectations. It is not easy to define the term ethical or identify which ethical decisions cater to market expectations. An individual’s view of ethics and morality is influenced by a variety of things including their culture, background, experience, upbringing/family, peers, community, religion and country. Balancing ethics and remaining competitive can be difficult.

A focus group summary notes are given below.

Employees’ approach in sales meetings is purely as price negotiations. They can score wins, and they rarely concede too much; however, we dislike their combative approach. The ‘hard sell’ approach is becoming increasingly unpopular with us but some sales people are taking a long time to learn this lesson. It is possible that some company cultures may also encourage hard selling. Aggressors need to be trained in up-to-date relationship selling methods.

From the customers’ viewpoint, they also accept this strategy, they like the companies which contribute to the post war development, could be considered as a best marketer in their society, they want a certain percentage of the profit for redeveloping context, which are gained from the market.

The data given by the respondents related to the infrastructure development is given below

“we suffered from war, identities are destroyed and damaged, government and companies now try to rebuild them, this is, welcomed we expect this contribution, a company which considers the post war economic development, is accepted by the customers, they repurchase from the company, we are loyal to that company”

The consumers also avoid the business which harms the environment, ecofriendly products are accepted by the society. Some marketers deliver expired products in retail shops, and super markets. Expired products are found by the relevant government bodies many times. They feel the expired product selling is an unacceptable behavior for a good society, or





recovering society. The people who sell expired products only have the objective to close the sales, but do not consider the long term relationship with the consumers.

A focus group summary is given below.

“We expect a lot from the business people but they don’t really understand, forcing to buy products.... advertisements which leads children, adults, for wrong purchase, promotional advertisement to irritate us and pollute the environments. High pitch voices which promotes louder...makes noisy environment, many products are align with the required standard, customers are aware of healthy product’s needs, unhealthy product would be ignored”

The responses regarding the advertisements strategies, which they prefer, the lines extracted from the interviews are given below.

“I every day observe billboards at the roads....they are more attractive ...we are busy..... searching for best good and services consumes much time...this is easy to capture product information through billboardsReading words are much difficult and takes time, images capture mind easilythe words and the images express our damages, war experiences, and our identity, which is good”

Consumers in these places hate aggressive sales, hard selling, supplementary advertisements. They think that the sales behavior of the staff, advertisements, branches have tried to change the life style of the people, who have maintained their cultural unevenness. The sentences derived from the interview with one of the customers are given below.

“In the war environment I know the names of the products that are very limited but now there are many products we are very confused about the many brands and branches which is better to buy we don’t know we see the advertisement is the only one guide to decide which one is better..... the product which destroys our cultural jaggedness, and change the lifestyle are not preferred by me.... I am very much cultural oriented”

A respondents expressed his view point form the interview notes that,





“I always get advice from my peer groups before purchasing any products...and some advertisements are misleading but some of them make awareness about the product....”

From the customers’ thoughts, local marketers should think of the quality of the products, further packing, product design, delivery channels, colors, advertisements should be changed to compete with the other competitive products which are more of quality.

A brief notes form focus group discussion is given below

“Why we avoid the local product is thinkable.... Because they have to change themselvesnow the environment is different. We prefer to consume new and quality products.. In the war time we consumed local products due to unavailability...it is true we should give a chance to the local marketers but as a consumer we have to search for value based consumption. Why we spend money for poor quality products. This is the time to change their quality and style. Lack of research lead to failurethey should collect feedback on their product and its benefits”

They need consumer complaints centers, hotline to express their expectations, satisfaction and gaps. Consumers expect that the government should take necessary actions against the people who violate the business ethics. Consumers want to ensure the safety product purchasing, and security and safe consumption. Consumers in the war affect places are now affected by health problems. They expect very much good and quality products which are good for their health. They also think of the standard marks which should be fixed in each product categories. They expect the education related to standard marks is needy for them. The important lines highlighted from the focus group discussion are given below.

“we always expect healthy buying expired products, are in the market, how we punish the producers we can’t give feedback to them...we expects consumer related organizations are needed to find out the people who harm the environment and consumers.....consumer education is important we don’t know which is better what is good, there should be a good guidance on purchase, our family... we expect a safety consumption....”





“When the gate/door opens and make sound to open the door, it makes tension Adults bring many products and services, and demonstrate them...these activities disturb us to do normal work. We like to purchase product at shops super market... many time they cheat us.....we don't like this kind of sales.....when the staff are from our war affected placesWe never avoid the purchase ...due to our emotional connection on our affected people....but marketers should use these people in ethical manner”

Customers avoid the pushing sales/hard selling activities, many products, trying to change the consumer lifestyle, supplementary advertisements encouraging impulsive product behavior. Compare to war situation, there are many, local , national, and international, brands that are available in retail outlets. This brand proliferation confuses their customers to purchase sales.

Reliability and validity of analysis

Based on Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Silverman and Marvasti (2008) to maintain data trustworthiness and to identify analytical thoroughness NVivo (version 09) software as the data management program was used to exactly maintain the informant contact records, focus group transcripts, field notes, and other related documents, as they were collected.

Proportional reduction in loss method was used to assess the reliability of coding scheme. The proportional reduction in loss for the current study was 0.72, which is well above the 0.70 cut-off level recommended for exploratory research (Rust and Cooil, 1994).

The outside researcher experienced in qualitative methodology were asked to conduct an audit of our empirical processes to insure the dependability of the data. This outside researcher went through our field notes, coding schemes, random samples of focus group transcripts and documentation to assess whether the conclusions reached were plausible. These peer debriefing processes (Corley and Gioia 2004) provided with an opportunity to solicit critical questions about data collection and analysis procedures. These discussions also allowed to have researcher's ideas scrutinized through other researchers' perspectives.

To insure validity, present study followed five interrelated procedures recommended for qualitative research (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008): (a) respondent validation, (b) refutability, (c) constant comparison, (d) comprehensive data treatment, and (e) deviant-case analysis. Respondent validation, also known as member checks (Creswell 2007), requires that researchers go back to the respondents to validate the findings that emerge from the data. To





do so, researchers shared the findings with the study participants and asked them to offer their views on researcher's interpretations of the data and the credibility of the findings. Refutability means that researchers seek to refute the assumed relationship between phenomena. By having a diverse sample of both male and female from different consumers' ideas in Northern Province, within different villages then we try to see if findings emerging in one context could be refuted in another.

Theory development

Researcher went back to the data and examined the participants' response in each of the concepts from the marketer's data: 1) social responsibility, 2) working with people 3) culture match, 4) cost leadership, 5) rebuilding infrastructure, 6) peoples' behavior, 7) ethical issues 8) obeying values and norms, 9) children specific 10) feeling display, 11) integrated communication 12) product service specific 13) advertisement and sales promotion 14) working with partners. And 15) women specific strategies, from the customers data the following concepts were identified: 1) social responsibility, 3) ethical marketing, 4) peoples' behavior, 5) gap, 6) dislike, 7) billboards advertisement 8) confuse to purchase, 9) information search, 10) gaps, and 11) expectation. The following section explains the data and findings in each codes and concept.

Social responsibility is the main strategy followed by the marketers, who have come to penetrate the post war marketing environment. The purpose of this strategy is to position their image in this context. Marketers follow many activities in the market place, such as contributing certain percentage of their profit for social development, rebuilding society, redeveloping affected places, keeping to the words which they have promised, establishing war memories, in touch with the history and heritage, engage with society through continuous research, and social relationship. Only a few local marketers practice this strategy via recruiting war affected people, to work with them, and utilizing the local resources to manufacture the products to express their social responsibility aspects in their marketing communication strategy, But the results or credit of the social responsibility strategy goes to the exterior marketers, because they express their concepts very effectively communicating their social responsible view of their companies. Customers in this context preferred this strategy they think of the marketers who think of customers' lifetime and conscious.





Therefore, the companies/ marketers who have good thinking of the society would gain more sales and profitability in the post war market environment.

Marketers adopt working with people as a strategy for survival, sponsoring sports/related events, participating with the society for example “dengue release programs” “drug free society”, involving the consumers and customers from the affected society to produce / sell /pack the products, being organized with the local people, working together with the multiethnic groups for example, Television broad casting services, trade exhibitions, representation of the poor people in the sales target. Poor people are recruited as sales representatives, who easily capture the consumer mind and make sales. Working with people as a strategy, which is accepted by the customers, who think of that activities related to society and people who were affected by the war. Local industrialist also adopts this strategy.

Recruiting war affected people, participating with the society, are more preferred by the customers. Some local industries were started to offer jobs to the poor women headed organizations, even though they do not have educational knowledge and any skills. Therefore, marketers provide training to them and give jobs for supporting their families, but those industries do not have enough promotional activities and proper distribution channels to deliver their products. From the customer’s point of view, they are ready to purchase those products. However, they are not aware about the products in the market place.

Cultural match as a strategy is adopted by few marketers in the post war marketing environment and they assume that advertisements, sales representatives, which match with the culture of the consumers easily capture their mind. Same view also identifies form the customers’ point of view. Customers contemplated that war destroyed their cultural identities, but many marketers try to destroy their cultural values by selling wrong products which are not match with their culture. They hate the advertisements and the sale promotional activities, and the sales representatives, which are not culturally match with the customers. Customers expects cultural match of celebrities, advertisements which express the basic believes of the culture, and preferred colors.

Marketers espouse matching culture, cultural fit to advertisement, matching color, brand differentiation by culture, standard advertisements as an activity under the cultural match strategy. Consumers also responded cultural match as a strategy they choose as best which has the same people who match with their culture. Indian cultures is same as the culture of





the people in the war affected places they like those celebrities. Customers choose products and those companies which have proper communication channels by having employees who have better cultural dress, which express the traditions, obey the values, rituals, good dress code which group the culture.

Marketers adopt cost leadership as a strategy by delivering products at lowest price at the super markets, investing in advertising to inform their customers about the lowest price of their products, providing after sales service to increase the value of the products, delivering products at free of charges, keeping the manufacturing cost at lower level, and maintaining good quality packing at the minimum price level, closing sales via many discount facilities. From the customer's point of view, they accept this strategy but they don't much bother about the cost and low price they bother about other factors than price.

Through redeveloping infrastructure as a strategy marketers follow the activities such as redeveloping resource capability, renovating primary schools, hospitals, building community infrastructure, redeveloping resource capacity, and contribution to post war development. Companies maintain children parks, schools, pediatric wards, intensive care unit in hospitals, naming roads retail shops, and memorable places. This strategy reaches the customers effectively and it boosts the sales level also. Customers accepts this strategy they welcome the marketers who build schools, hospitals, roads, naming roads, sponsoring clinics and schools, helping to develop the economic condition of the north provinces, developing rural areas by offering job opportunities and having business relationships.

Marketers assume that employees' behavior decides the long term relationship between the customers and companies. They trained their employees, select the people from the selected villages, and practice to wear the companies' uniforms at the road delivery. Marketers teach their employees to help the customers than just making sales. Customers expect that the sales representatives should express the conditions of the sale before closing sales. Also, they expect that employees should speak same language which they could speak. Friendly manner, attractive uniforms which are acceptable, regularity standardization are expected at the delivery of services, customers welcome the sales representatives who are from their same places.

Ethical marketing is another strategy followed by some of the marketers those who have penetrated into the post war marketing environment. Obeying the rules and regulations,





motive for impulsive behavior, attracting consumer mind by offering value based products, assuming the customers as valuable key factors, having Positive attitude toward the consumer customers' suggestions on ethical marketing activities in the post war marketing environment. Customers expressed the ethical marketing as a strategy which is preferred by them in this context. What they expect from the marketers, are patient and honesty behavior when closing sales, or repaying credit amount, having good employees, avoid to hurt them, obey the legislation when producing the products, accepts their feedbacks, answer the consumer hotline, excuse for faults for returning products, or repaying credits.

Companies adopt obeying values and norms as another strategy by introducing satisfaction is first concern, sponsoring cultural events, obeying values and norms in their sales promotional activities, maintaining Public relations through celebrating cultural events of the customers, express the strong benefits of cultural contents in television commercial in the local channels, by doing consumer research to identify the perception of consumers to modify the products and services. Marketers have children specific advertisements through motivation at schools, for example, giving pass books to the children by depositing minimum amount of money, motivating them to push the parents to keep accounts at their banks, educational institutions attract children by offering brochures to them to join with their tuitions.

Patching advertisements posters at parks, targeting children through emotional advertisements at local TV channels, and informing children about the Sales promotion for certain months. From the customers (parents) view, most of the customers they abhorrence these activities to motivate them indirectly to motivate the parents. Customers feel that they have experienced of war for a long period, now they are try to live in a peace environment, marketers try to increase the sale level by using the children as a key mediator. These motivations encourage to purchase unwanted products. Further they felt, rather than having business promotion to target the children, marketers can directly express the benefits of the products and services through proper advertisements or any other promotional activities. Then it is easy for the parents to choose the better products and services for their children.

Marketers follow emotional connection marketing strategies which include, feeling display of packed brands , logical display of products in delivery channels, sentimental





advertisement related to affected places and people, emotional display, as sales promotional strategy for a month to increase the sales for fast moving consumer goods, particular percentage of the sales would go to the contribution for redeveloping war affected places, and Improving availability of brands in delivery platforms, motivating buying via feeling display. Consumers also accept this strategy but they expect to offer these benefits to war affected people and places trustworthiness. If they would feel that the marketers are cheating them they abruptly withdraw from their sales.

Marketers tailor integrated communication strategy as a method to communicate about them to the market, these communication tools are Broachers, Short Message Service (SMS), Multi Messages Services (MMS), dialing and promoting, festival shops, festival offers, radio message, email and customer relationship, and mass media. Consumers in this context have long experience on traditional mass media advertisements as newspapers and radio commercials due to the lack of infrastructure facilities in this context. But now they have more opportunities to access different integrated tools even digital tools also. TV advertisements, web site advertisements, social media advertisements also mostly welcomed by the peoples in the post war marketing environment. Compare to marketers who have penetrated into the special context the local marketers are even now targeting through traditional channels and new channels to promote their products. Lack of these integrated communication strategies, and new channels as the weaknesses of local industrialist to compete with the marketers who have penetrated into the Northern market after war. This is an implication to them to have more attractive integrated communication tools which are currently accepted by the customers.

Another strategy followed by the marketers is Product specific strategies, they offer specific products and services to the customers, such as hospitality services, Additional product features, introducing new products, anytime services, attractive packing, introducing quality products, idealistic characteristics of products are introduced by them. Customers responded towards the product specific strategies, as good for the context but they expect from the local customers to modify the products. They feel that products which are produced out of the Northern Province are very attractive compared to locally produced products. This is an implication for local marketers to modify products and services.





Under the advertisements and sales promotional strategies marketers espouses Attractive advertisements for example attractive TV commercials, billboard advertisements, trade shows, exhibitions, newspaper advertisement festival advertisements, television sales, notice advertisements, repetition of advertisements, web site advertisement and social media advertisements, from the customer's perspective they favor billboard, and festival advertisement are better than the other.

Marketers work with partners as a strategy through strategic collaboration, joint branding with local marketers, outsourcing packing to experienced marketers, agents partnership, consultation for marketing, and value chain advices. This strategy is typically followed by the small industrialist, and local marketers.

Many penetrated marketers implemented women specific strategies, to target women headed families and families in which they have more power in purchase activities. They are using women pages in newspapers, introducing women specific magazines, appointing women sales representative, targeting women headed families, women based TV commercials, women celebrities, product for women, and specifying women segments in the post war marketing environment. Women customers also expects the marketers to respect them as a special segment. In the women headed families and educated families, women are most powerful decider in purchasing activities, therefore this strategy easily reached to that segment.

Consumers responded that what they dislike in the market context, such as hard selling , misleading advertisements, misleading adults, unwanted product motivation, repetitive voice advertisements, high price, un ethical business behavior, harming environment, expired product delivery, and irritating customers. They expect from the companies, government, and related organizations to offer consumer education on product purchasing activities, initiating special laws and punishments, establishing consumer complaint center, action against unethical marketing activities, ensuring healthy product marketing, security for purchasing, establishing consumer organization, ensuring safety consumption, and educating standard marks for both customers and marketers.

Consumers feel that there is a gap between the local marketers and customers such as unawareness about local products, lack of consumer /marketer interaction, poor long term relationship, fail to offer their promise, lack of feedback, lack of research, and poor quality





local products. Consumers search information about the products and services through friends' recommendation, group talking, peer groups, word of mouth, billboards, TV commercials, and in website marketing. From these sources the best sources are TV commercials and word of mouth. From the different advertising methods consumers prefer Billboard advertisements than the others.

They gave the reasons for liking these billboards such as, big screen, images are good, busy to read words, matching celebrities, easy to understand, corner display, and road side display. Consumers in the post war marketing environment complicated to purchase a better product due to the reasons such as confuse among the different brands, established new branches, irritating door to door sales, pushing sales, hard selling, supplementary advertisements, pushing lifestyle, cultural unevenness, and spending culture.

Conclusion

Consumers have expressed their expectations, such as consumer education, special laws and punishment, consumer complaint centers, actions against unethical things, healthy product marketing, and security for purchasing, consumer organization, ensuring safety consumption, and standard marks

Consumers dislike the certain activities in the post war marketing context, such as hard selling, misleading advertisements, misleading adults, unwanted product motivation, repetitive voice advertisements, high price, unethical business behavior, harming environment, expired product delivery, and irritating customers. They search for information about the products through friend recommendation, group talking, peer groups, word of mouth, billboards, TV commercials, and Website marketing, word of mouth is most influencing information search compare to other sources. Billboard advertisement, which is mostly preferred by the customers in the post war marketing context. From the consumers' point of view due to the reasons such as big screen, and good images, simple to read words, celebrities who match the culture of the consumers, easy to understand, corner display, road side display easily capture the consumers' minds. Ethical marketing, social responsibility, peoples' behaviors, infrastructure development, cultural match, are customarily accepted by the customers in the post war marketing environment. They expect honesty behaviors in business. The marketers who penetrate, or regular seller in the special context, are expected





by them to have an ethical business behavior rather than having just sell approaches. Consumers had experiences about marketers' behaviors during the war environment.

Educating consumers about the ethical and legal issues, rights and responsibility, are the strategies to have close relationship between the customers and marketers. Improving the quality of the locally made products, make awareness about those products among the customers, having interaction with the local sellers and the customers, are the expected strategies for local industrialist in the post war marketing environment.

Theory 1: The marketers who practice social responsibility, rebuilding infrastructure, cultural match, peoples' behavior, and ethical marketing as their strategies are accepted by the consumers in the conflict affected places.

Theory 2: Unawareness about the products and marketers, lack of consumer marketer interaction, poor long term relationship, fail to offer promises, lack of feedbacks, lack of research, poor quality local products, which leads the gap between customers and the local marketers in the conflict affected places.

Theory 3: Consumers expect to have special laws and punishments, consumer complaint centers, actions against unethical behaviors, healthy product marketing, security for purchasing, consumer organizations, ensuring safety consumption, and standard marks in the conflict affected places.

Theory 4: Due to more brands, new branches, irritating door to door sales, pushing sales, supplementary advertisements, pushing lifecycle. Cultural unevenness, and spending culture consumers are confused to purchase in the conflict affected places.

Theory 5: Bill board advertisement is the most powerful advertising strategy, accepted by the customers in the war affected places.

Theory 6: Consumers search for information about the products through friend recommendation, group talking, peer groups, word of mouth, billboards, TV commercials, and Website marketing, word of mouth is most influencing information search compare to other sources.

Theory 7: Consumers dislike hard selling, misleading advertisements, misleading adults, unwanted product motivation, repetitive voice advertisements, high price, unethical business behavior, harming environment, expired product delivery, and irritating them in the conflict affected places.





Seven theories have been identified in the present study. These theories fulfill the criteria specified by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The participants for the study were from various industries and organizations, yet they all described a similar nature of strategies in the post war marketing environment (social responsibility, cultural match, working with people, infrastructure development, product service specific, child specific, women specific, peoples' behavior, integrated communication, advertising and sales promotions, working with partners, feeling display, cost leadership, obeying values and norms, ethical marketing).

Companies in the post war environment should have a view of customer rather than the market, because the behavior of the customer is totally changed, due to the devastating experience in the war situation. Therefore, consumers in the conflict affected places need special strategies.

Researcher identifies that local industries need special packing strategies, advertisement strategies, attractive brand names, emotional connection marketing strategies, good design look to compete with the other marketers who have penetrated into this special context.

Due to the war many families loosed their heads, then women headed families are the one effect of war, they have to earn for their families and spend for them. So marketers target them because they contribute to marketing functions as representatives, celebrative, information source, as, they decide purchase patterns

The strategies were not specific to any particular industry. Marketers were asked to say their strategies to specify the all marketing strategies, which were adopted in the conflict affected places. Customers and marketers had discussed a wide range of experiences in their interviews and focus group discussions, while there may be some difference due to organization size and industry type, researcher does not think it would be likely to alter the main discoveries or philosophies.

The ability to provide control with regard to actions related to the phenomenon has different implications for the theory, but researcher believes that the theory does explanation for it. In the answers for the research questions, researcher stated that customers and marketers' interactions are essential for the successful strategy practices. Researcher stated that marketing strategies followed by the marketers are different in the war time and the post war time. Strategies may differ on industries type and the size. Different marketers adopt different strategies in the conflict effected places. Consumers more concern on ethical issues related to all aspects of marketing activities, what they feel is marketers try to sell their





products and services in their places, they expect marketers or sellers should concern on their war affected places. They had many experiences on health related problems of the sold products. They lost many due to war, therefore they expect to have good practices from marketers. Marketers should offer healthy products at the affordable price range.

Advertisements and emotional marketing activities easily reach the customers, but they expect all aspects of marketing communications should match their language and culture. Local marketers losing their status due to the powerful competition, they want to rebuild their marketing activities via having acceptable strategies in the war affected places.

More than 30 years of civil war Northern Province, especially with the Jaffna, Mullaithevu, and Kilinochchi had been closed and did not have connection with the other districts completely. Sudden opening of the A9 road boosts many marketers to target these conflict affected places. Marketers who have come to penetrate the post war market try to capture the consumers via many strategies. These efforts have impact on the livelihood of the marketers in the conflict affected places. They struggle to fight with them, government and relevant bodies related to the business actives in the Northern provinces should give hands to them.

Compare to war affected places in other countries and the strategies adopted in the World War I&II, Sri Lankan post war marketing environment and related marketing strategies have some similar nature. Comparing the consumer expectation with the other countries, in the conflict affected places consumers expect ethical behaviors and social concern on each and every aspect of marketing activities.

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Table 4.11: Concepts Derived from Initial Codes (Respondents: Customers)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. different people 2. Indian culture is same 3. dress code and culture 4. we don't like differ 5. values, rituals, values 6. express the traditions 7. cultural dress 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural match
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. helping poor 2. helping deformed 3. helping war effected people 4. helping war effected places 5. concern on society 6. concern on society 7. concern on effected places 8. providing jobs 9. rebuilding society 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Social responsibility
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. patient behavior 2. honestly behavior 3. good people 4. no hurt 5. obey legislation 6. accept feedback 7. answer consumer hotline 8. excuse for fault 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ethical marketing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. same language 2. friendly 3. uniformity 4. standardization 5. same places 6. consumer concern 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. employees' behavior





<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. explanation 8. no disturbance 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. building schools 2. building hospitals 3. building roads 4. naming roads 5. sponsoring clinics/schools 6. sponsoring events 7. helping to recover economic conditions 8. developing rural 	5. infrastructure Development
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. hard selling 2. misleading advertisements 3. misleading adults 4. unwanted product motivation 5. repetitive voice advertisements 6. high price 7. un ethical business behavior 8. harming environment 9. expired product delivery 10. irritating customers 	6. Dislike
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. consumer education 2. special laws and punishments 3. consumer complaint center 4. action against unethical things 5. healthy product marketing 6. security for purchasing 7. consumer organization 8. ensuring safety consumption 9. standard marks 	7. Expectation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. unawareness 2. lack of consumer /marketer interaction 	8. Gaps





<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. poor long term relationship4. fail to offer the promise5. lack of feedback6. lack of research7. poor quality local products	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. friend recommendation2. group talking3. peer groups4. word of mouth5. billboards6. TV commercials7. Website marketing	9. Information search
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. big screen2. images are good3. busy to read words4. celebrities5. easy to understand6. corner display7. road side	10. Billboard advertisements
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. More brands2. New branches3. Irritating door to door sales4. Pushing sales5. Hard selling6. Supplementary advertisements7. Pushing lifestyle8. Cultural unevenness9. Spending culture	11. Confuse to purchase

