

Cross-Media Synergy: Exploring the Role of the Integration of Ads in Cross-Media Campaigns

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1 Introduction

In the current media landscape, advertisers can choose numerous media for their advertising campaigns. Not surprisingly, almost every campaign in the Netherlands makes use of more than one medium (Bronner, Neijens and Van Raaij, 2003). While we are not familiar with international statistics, it can be expected that the Netherlands is not an exception regarding the widespread usage of multiple media in one campaign.

Basically, there are two reasons why advertisers decide to integrate multiple media in their advertising campaigns. The first reason is to broaden the reach of a campaign (Bronner et al., 2003; Dijkstra, Buijtelts and Van Raaij, 2005). For example, newspapers can be used to reach the older, highly educated part of the target group, while the campaign can be supplemented with online advertising to reach the younger part of the target group. The second reason why advertisers choose to use cross-media campaigns instead of single medium campaigns is the potential to realize synergy effects (Bronner et al., 2003; Dijkstra et al., 2005). Synergy refers to the combined effect of multiple media communications that exceeds the sum of their individual effects (Naik and Raman, 2003). That is, one plus one equals three, or at least more than two. Using multiple media instead of a single medium to communicate a message thus can generate 'extra' effects and improves campaign results (Chang and Thorson, 2004). Over the years, researchers and practitioners have embraced the notion that cross-media campaigns are more effective and produce more positive consumer responses than single-medium campaigns (Bronner et al., 2003; Chang and Thorson, 2004; Chatterjee, 2012; Confer and McGlathery, 1991; Dijkstra, 2002; Edell and Keller, 1989; Naik and Raman, 2003; Voorveld, Neijens and Smit, 2011, 2012).

However, when studying the results of earlier academic cross-media studies in detail, it should be concluded that not all studies show that cross-media campaigns are more effective than single medium campaigns. Thus, while the main conclusion of these studies is that cross-media campaigns result in more positive consumer responses than single medium campaigns, the pattern of results is often more nuanced. The current study tries to explore a possible explanation for

the 'contradicting' results of studies into the effectiveness of cross-media campaigns.

The possible explanation that is explored in the current study is the integration of ads used in cross-media campaigns. Similarity and congruence of the ad execution across the different media is assumed to be an important factor in creating cross-media synergy (Bronner, 2006). The integration of ads in cross-media campaigns might play such an important role because integration links different ads in a campaign to each other. In this way, integration or congruency makes consumers realize that the ads are part of one integrated campaign instead of separate ads. A lack of integration between ads might explain why in some studies cross-media campaigns do differ from single medium campaigns in terms of consumer responses. The first aim of the current study is to review the current cross-media literature to explore whether the lack of integration between ads in cross-media campaigns can explain why cross-media synergy is not always present in earlier research.

The level of integration can only play a role in explaining earlier 'contradicting' results when the integration is not always very good in cross-media campaigns. Content analyses from a decade ago revealed that different ads in a campaign are not necessarily well-integrated (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001; Kanso and Nelson, 2004). Since then, no research has been conducted to examine integration of ads in cross-media campaigns. Therefore, the second aim of this study is to provide preliminary insight into the current state of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns in the Netherlands. By studying the content of real advertising campaigns people are confronted with on a daily basis when they read the newspaper, browse the internet, watch television at home or even are outside on the streets, this study gives insight in how cross-media campaigns look like in the field. By giving insight into the appearance and the possible role of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns, this research is of high practical relevance and may help marketers and advertisers to get the most out of their marketing budgets.

2 Literature review

2.1 *Results of earlier studies into cross-media synergy*

Despite the popularity of cross-media campaigns, academic research still studies advertising effects in isolation by focusing on only one medium (Voorveld, 2011). There are only about a dozen of academic peer reviewed journal articles on cross-media synergy. Within these studies a distinction can be made between experimental studies and field studies. The experimental studies typically have the following design. Participants are forcefully exposed to advertising in a combination of media or to only one of these media, after which consumer reactions in terms of cognition, affects and behaviour are measured. The combination of media is usually presented in two sequences, (medium A, then medium B, or medium B then medium A), to correct for possible sequence effects. In the single medium conditions participants are usually exposed to only one medium twice (medium A, then medium A, or medium B, then medium B). Such repeated exposure is needed to cancel out the alternative explanation that the cross media condition results in more positive consumer reaction simply because consumers were exposed twice, instead of only once to the experimental ad (Voorveld, 2013). Three overarching types of consumer responses were studied in the experimental studies; cognitive responses like ad recall and ad recognition, affective responses like ad and brand attitudes, and behavioural responses like purchase intention. The results of the earlier experimental studies are discussed below, followed by the results of the field studies.

2.1.1 Cognitive responses

Six studies investigated cross-media synergy in terms of cognitive responses. These studies do not reveal a straightforward pattern of results. Regarding cross-media campaigns in which radio and online advertising were combined and compared to online or radio advertising only, no differences were found for half of the measures taken, while for the other half of the measures it was shown that a combination of media was better than a repeated exposure to radio, not than a repeated exposure to Internet (Voorveld, 2011). For the combination of print and television, Tang, Wang and Newton (2007) found that a combination of media was better than only one medium. Regarding the combination of print and online advertising, Wakolbinger, Denk and Oberecker (2009) found no significant differences at all. For the combination of TV and websites, Chang and Thorson found that a combination of media was performing better than a repeated exposure to the same medium. For the combination of print and TV, Edell

and Keller (1989) found no differences on half of the measures, while for the other half of the measures it was found that a single medium condition performed better than the cross-media conditions. Finally, Dijkstra et al. (2005) investigated the combination of TV, Print and Online ads and found that a single exposure to TV resulted in more cognitive responses than exposure to a combination for two-third of the measures taken. Thus, some experimental cross-media studies showed a positive effect of cross-media conditions versus single medium conditions on cognitive responses, while others did not find this effect, or even found a reversed effect.

2.1.2 Affective responses

Eight studies investigated affective responses like attitudes towards the ads and the brand, and again, no straightforward pattern can be detected. Some studies found that cross-media conditions resulted in more positive affective responses than single medium conditions. Chang and Thorson (2004), found a positive effects for one of five measures taken. Tang et al. (2007) found a significant effect on all measures. There are also some studies that found a positive effect only when comparing the cross-media conditions to only one of the two single medium conditions. Voorveld (2011) found that a combination of radio and Internet resulted in more positive affective responses than repeated exposure to radio, but not than the Internet-Internet condition. Voorveld et al. (2011) studied a combination of websites and TV commercials and found that a combination performed better than the website only condition, but not better than TV only. Edell and Keller (1989) found that a combination performed better than radio only, but not better than TV only. Finally several studies found no significant differences at all (Dijkstra et al., 2005; Stammerjohan, Wood, Chang and Thorson, 2005; Wakolbinger et al., 2009). Thus, also for affective measures it should be concluded that cross-media campaigns are not always more effective than single medium campaigns.

2.1.3 Behavioural responses

The six studies that investigated behavioural responses almost all found that a combination of media resulted in more positive behavioural responses than only one of the two single medium conditions. Tang et al. (2007) found that a combination of media performed better than a repeated exposure to TV, not than a repeated exposure to print. Voorveld (2011) found that cross-media campaigns performed better than a repeated exposure to radio, but not than a repeated exposure to internet. Voorveld et al. (2011) found that a combination performed better than the website only condition, but not than the TV only condition. Two studies (Chang and Thorson, 2004; Dijkstra et al., 2005) found no differences

between the cross-media and the single media conditions at all, and Edell and Keller (1989) even found that one cross-media condition resulted in a lower behavioural intention than exposure to TV only (not than radio only). Thus, also for behavioural measures it should be concluded that cross-media conditions did not always result in a higher behavioural intention than single-medium conditions.

2.1.4 Field studies

The field studies did not specifically focus on comparing cross-media campaigns with single medium campaigns. Naik and Raman (2003) concluded based on Kalman filtering methodology that as synergy increases, advertisers should allocate a larger part of the media budget to the less effective medium. The study of Havlena, Cardarelli and de Montigny (2007) investigated synergistic effects of print ads, TV commercials and Internet advertisements (e.g., banners, pop ups) by using respondent level frequency analysis from a media planning perspective. Results showed that banners and pop ups made a small contribution to the effectiveness of the campaign especially for light TV viewers. Finally, Naik and Peters (2009) developed a model on the optimal allocation of the media budget within and across multiple media.

We propose that the lack of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns might explain why not all cross-media studies show more positive consumer responses to cross-media campaigns than to single medium campaigns. In the next section we discuss how integration is defined in this study, then we discuss why integration might be so important after which we discuss earlier research in the integration of ads in campaigns. After this, we will present a small-scale content analysis to see how well-integrated cross-media campaigns are nowadays.

2.2 *Definition and conceptualization of integration*

In this book chapter, integration is defined as the degree to which the ads in cross-media campaigns are similar or make use of overlapping elements (Bronner, 2006). Basically, two types of integration can be distinguished (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001): tactical integration and strategic integration. Tactical integration is present when the same visual and verbal elements, also referred to as *retrieval cues*, are used across the different media (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001). These retrieval cues are identifiable ingredients such as slogans, key visuals, symbols and distinctive phrases (Keller, 1996). Strategic integration implies an integration of the different communication efforts on a higher level (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001). More specifically, strategic integration refers to the use of an overarching strategy to move audiences through different stages of

the decision process by integrating the higher objectives of the different communication efforts (e.g. from creating brand awareness to stimulating interest), (Thorson and Moore, 1996). Notwithstanding the importance of the latter, the present research will focus on tactical integration. There are two reasons for the focus on tactical integration. The first is that strategic integration is difficult to assess by the audience based on the campaign ads alone. To assess the strategic integration of ads it is needed to ask brand managers and advertisers about the strategy behind a campaign. The second reason for focusing on tactical integration is that tactical integration is of particular relevance to attain cross-media synergy, an issue we will discuss later. Therefore, throughout this study we will focus on tactical integration of ads within cross-media campaigns.

2.3 Importance of integration between ads in cross-media campaigns

The theoretical notion stressing the need for integration of ads in cross-media campaigns is the framework of Integrated Marketing Communication. Integrated Marketing Communication focuses on the joint effects or synergies of the various marketing activities and media (Naik and Schultz, 2007). Integrated Marketing Communication suggests that all communication efforts, and thus the ads in all media, should speak with one voice. Also when ads in different media are not integrated by the company itself, consumers will integrate the information they receive from various media themselves. Companies might want to prevent that consumers integrate different ads from one brand in an inconsistent way because this can result in unintended perceptions of their brands (Naik and Schultz, 2007)

Also in the cross-media literature itself there are some theoretical ideas that state that it is important to carefully integrate ads in several media. Two experimental studies have given insight into why cross-media campaigns can lead to synergy. These studies suggest that two or three psychological processes might explain why cross media campaigns are generally more effective in terms of cognitive, affective and behavioural consumer responses than single medium campaigns. Both experimental papers investigate the same three processes. The first process is priming (Dijkstra 2002) or forward encoding (Voorveld et al., 2011), which means that exposure to the ad in the first medium triggers interest in the ad in the second medium. The second process is image transfer, which means that consumers think back to the ad in the first medium when they are exposed to the ad in the second medium (Dijkstra 2002; Voorveld et al., 2011; Bronner 2006). This process is called radio replay in an early study into the topic by Edell and Keller (1989). The third process is multiple source perception, which indicates that people see ads from several sources as independent sources of information and because such cross media campaigns should be very

expensive, the advertised brand must be good (Voorveld et al., 2011; Dijkstra 2002).

Central to these processes is the fact that consumer think back or forward to other media when they are exposed to an ad in a certain medium. To facilitate these processes to take place, it is important that retrieval cues present in one medium are also present in another medium. In other words, a high level of integration of ads between media is needed because this integration facilitates the psychological processes to occur, which ultimately can result in cross-media synergy. In conclusion, both work on Integrated Marketing Communications and cross-media effects stress the importance of a good integration between ads in a cross-media campaign.

2.4 Empirical research on integration of ads in cross-media campaigns

To our knowledge, there are two studies that assessed the integration of different marketing communication efforts (i.e. Kanso and Nelson, 2004; Sheehan and Doherty, 2001). In contrast to the present study however, these studies did not specifically focus on cross-media campaigns, but on the integration of print ads and websites. First Sheehan and Doherty (2001) performed a content analysis to assess the level of integration between websites and print advertisements. They did not only analyse 186 advertisements from 20 magazines, but they also developed a valuable code scheme.

To assess tactical integration, Sheehan and Doherty analysed which creative elements were used in both print advertisements and websites, such as: logo, product picture, slogan, spokesperson, key visuals, and colours. It was found that although many advertisers succeed in tactically integrating their websites and print advertisements to some extent, elements such as the slogan and the spokesperson were less likely to be used in both communication efforts (Sheehan and Doherty, 2001).

Second, Kanso and Nelson (2004) investigated the integration of companies' websites and print advertisements in six major American magazines. Next to investigating the placement of web addresses in print advertisements, the study also investigated the integration between the two media. A total of 413 advertisements were analysed on several aspects. The authors compared the number of product visuals and the amount of product information on the website and in the print advertisements. It was also coded whether the print advertisement included a specific URL and if the advertised product could be easily located on the website referred to.

Results showed that print and online advertising efforts are pretty well integrated in terms that the website showed more product visuals and product information than the print advertisements. In addition, the promoted product could also be relatively easily located on the website. Only a third of the print adver-

tisements specifically mentioned a web address. Kanso and Nelson (2004) concluded that the integration between print ads and websites should be enhanced. Conclusion of both earlier studies is that despite the wide-spread idea that ad execution should be consistent across websites and print ads good integration is not always present. The lack of integration between ads might be caused by the fact that many advertising agencies are operating under tremendous time pressure (Aronson and Zeff, 1999).

3 Content analysis

Because the literature review showed that the level of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns can be a key factor in explaining cross-media synergy, we performed a content analysis to give insight into the current state of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns in the Netherlands.

3.1 Sample

All campaigns selected for this small-scale content analysis were Dutch cross-media campaigns broadcasted nationally between March 2010 and December 2011. Each campaign was selected to make use of two or more different media, ranging from TV, print, online and online video to outdoor advertising. It is important to note that the medium radio was not included in the coding process. This was done because of the single modality nature of this medium; because radio is an audio-only medium visual elements cannot be coded, resulting in a lower integration of campaigns that include radio. In total 12 cross-media campaigns belonging to 12 different brands were selected. These brands can be categorized into three different product types: service brands, durable goods, and non-durable goods. For an overview of the campaigns that were analysed in this study, see Table 1.

3.2 Coding instrument

To assess the integration of the selected cross-media campaigns, the coding instrument included seven elements that are traditionally included in advertising. These elements were based on the coding instrument developed by Sheehan and Doherty's (2001) to analyse the tactical integration of print advertisements and websites. Integration was determined by analysing whether the different campaign elements were consistent across ads placed in different media. Thus, it was coded whether different ads within a cross-media campaign consistently included visual elements (i.e. 1. product/service logo, 2. key visual, 3. product picture, 4. colours and 5. spokespeople) and verbal elements (i.e. 6. single most important message and 7. slogan).

Table 1: Overview of the cross-media campaigns included in the content analysis.

<i>Product type</i>	<i>Market</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Media included</i>	<i># media</i>
Services	Financial services	1	TV/ Radio/ Outdoor/ Online	4
		2	TV/ Radio/ Outdoor/ Online	4
	Insurances	3	TV/ Online/ Online Video	3
		4	TV/ Radio/ Print	3
	Mobile network providers	5	TV/ Online	2
		6	TV/ Radio/ Print/ Outdoor/ Online	5
		7	TV/ Radio/ Print/ Outdoor/ Online	5
Durable goods	Televisions	8	TV/ Online	2
	Mobile phones	9	TV/ Online Video	2
Non-durable goods	Cheese	10	TV/ Online Video	2
	Drinks	11	TV/ Online Video	2
	Fashion	12	Print/ Outdoor/Online	3

3.3 Procedure and inter-coder reliability

All campaign ads were coded by two coders. For each campaign, it was determined by both coders whether integration between the campaign ads was present (score 1) or absent (score 0) for all seven elements. A total index score of integration was calculated for each campaign by dividing the total integration score by the maximum integration score of 7 (*100). It is important to note however,

that when one of the advertising elements was absent in all campaign ads, the integration score was computed on the remaining elements. Inter-coder agreement on all elements was very high (96.4%). Differences were solved upon discussion until 100% agreement was achieved.

4 Results

Cross-media campaigns on average scored moderately on integration ($M = 70.3$). Cross-media campaigns had the best integration regarding the presence of the logo (integration present in 100% of the campaigns) and the key visual (integration present in 92% of the campaigns). The largest part of the campaigns also consistently used the same colours (integration present in 92% of the campaigns). Integration with regard to the slogan was also present in the majority of the campaigns (integration present in the 75% of the campaigns). Campaigns were the least integrated with regard to the spokesperson and single most important message in the ads (integration present in 33% of the campaigns). Thus, while campaigns generally communicated the same logo, key visual, colours and slogans, they were very dissimilar regarding the spokesperson used and single most important message communicated.

A one-way analysis of variance showed that integration index scores did not differ significantly across the different product types (e.g. services, durable goods and non-durable goods), $F(2, 9) = 1.02, p > .10$. Nor did integration index scores differ as a function of the number of media included in the campaigns, $F(3, 8) = .08, p > .10$. Thus, when brands integrated more media in their campaigns, this did not negatively or positively influence the integration between the ads in the campaign. For an overview of the integration index scores per product type, see Table 2.

Table 2: Integration index scores as a function of product type

	<i>Services (N=7)</i>	<i>Durable goods (N=2)</i>	<i>Non-durable goods (N=3)</i>	<i>Total (N=12)</i>
Product/service logo	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Key visual	85.7	50.0	100.0	91.7
Product picture	-	100.0	100.0	100.0
Colours	100.0	50.0	100.0	91.7
Spokespeople	14.3	50.0	66.7	33.3
Message	28.6	50.0	33.3	33.3
Slogan	57.1	100.0	33.3	75.0
Integration index score	64.28 ^a	71.43 ^a	84.92 ^a	72.63

Note. Cell values indicate percentage of campaigns in which integration was present on each aspect. The last row displays integration index scores for each product type.

5 Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of the current study was twofold. By studying the literature, we aimed to explore whether the lack or presence of integration between ads in cross-media campaigns can explain why cross-media synergy is not always found in earlier studies. Based on theory on psychological processes underlying cross-media synergy, we conclude that the integration of ads in cross-media campaigns seems to play an important role in stimulating cross-media synergy. It seems that when a good integration is present, there is a larger chance that cross-media campaigns are more effective in terms of consumer responses than single medium campaigns.

The second aim was to provide preliminary insight into the current state of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns in the Netherlands. By giving insight into the current state of integration of cross-media campaigns we could explore whether our idea about the role of integration is feasible. When campaigns are very well-integrated nowadays, there is small chance that the level of integration could still play a role in the realization of cross-media synergy. The results of a small scale content analysis showed that while the overall integration

of ads in cross-media campaigns was reasonably, integration regarding the spokesperson used and single most important message communicated was much lower. Therefore the general conclusion of this book chapter is that the level of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns might be an important factor in explaining cross-media synergy and therefore requires further research.

5.1 *Limitations and future research*

While the current study gave an in-depth literature overview on cross-media synergy and the possible role of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns, the study also has its limitations. The most important limitation of the current study is the preliminary nature of the content analysis. By analysing 12 Dutch cross-media campaigns, we gave insight into the state of integration between ads in cross-media campaigns in the Netherlands, but the conclusions drawn should be treated with caution. A larger scale, preferably international content analysis should be performed to give a more definite insight into the state of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns.

By performing an additional content analysis on a larger scale several additional comparisons can be made. It might for example be interesting to distinguish between different combinations of media. It is not clear whether the degree of integration differs for varying media combinations. More importantly, by examining the integration of ads in cross-media campaigns, we did not take into account the complementary effect of the different media (Bronner et al., 2003). Each medium has its own strengths and weaknesses, such that TV is best suited for attracting attention, whereas print is more suitable for elaborating on the topic and giving more detailed information (Bronner et al., 2003). In this research we did not take into account the fact that the integration between ad executions is also affected by the specific strengths and weaknesses of each medium. Moreover, it should be recognized that marketers often deliberately choose to use different ad executions across the media. After all, an online advertisement is better suited to stimulate purchase or to stimulate consumers to click through to the advertiser's website than a TV ad (Dijkstra et al., 2005).

Future research is also needed to test whether the integration of ads in cross-media campaigns indeed provides an explanation for synergy effects. While there are multiple theoretical arguments for the importance of ad integration, empirical research is needed. Such research could be based on experimental research in which consumer responses to a well-integrated cross-media campaign are compared to the responses to a non-integrated cross-media campaign. It might also be interesting to combine a content analysis of real campaigns with survey research to enhance our understanding of cross-media effects in real-life.

5.2 Implications for practitioners

The results of the literature review and content analysis conducted in this book chapter have implications for advertisers and media planners. On the one hand, the literature review showed that there are indications that the degree of integration of ads in cross-media campaigns plays a role in the realization of cross-media synergy. On the other hand, the content analysis showed that cross-media campaigns of twelve recognized and well-known brands in the Netherlands are only moderately integrated. Therefore, advertisers and media planners could strive for an even better integration of the different ads in their cross-media campaigns. Advertisers could specifically focus on a better integration of the spokespeople used in multiple media and single most important message communicated throughout ads in several media. A good integration of ads in cross-media campaigns also requires a good collaboration between media exploiters and the different agencies involved in a cross-media campaign (Bronner, 2006).

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6 References

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