

**UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**  
**FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE**

**Bachelor of Business Administration (Semester VII) Examination 2020**

**MKT 4237 - Contemporary Issues in Marketing**

**Two (02) Hours**

**Answer Question No. 01 and three (03) other questions.**

**There are six (06) questions printed on five (05) pages.**

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1. Tadajewski and Brownlie (2008) suggest that critical marketing does not reject marketing concepts or practices but adopts a limit attitude in studying marketing practices, concepts and underlying values.

i. Briefly explain the above idea, paying special attention to the phrases does not reject and limit attitude.

(08 Marks)

ii. Think of your own experiences. Describe an incident in which marketing had a negative effect on you, not because marketers had misused marketing tactics or engaged in illegal activity, but simply because they had been able to execute a strategy/tactic perfectly. Critique the marketing strategy/tactic used by the marketers in this instance with a limit attitude.

(17 Marks)

**(Total 25 Marks)**

2. Dixon (2008) states that when we say consumer sovereignty exists in the market, we assume that three conditions are satisfied.

i. Identify these three conditions. (One sentence each is sufficient.)

(06 Marks)

- ii. In group assignments two groups argued that (a) Lifebouy being advertised as an essential soap to kill germs while having a comparatively high price, (b) Anlene milk powder being advertised in relation to bone disease, and (c) unavailability of Highland milk powder in the market when consumers want to buy it are three examples for how marketers influence consumer sovereignty. Do you agree? Discuss each one with reference to what you consider as relevant of the three conditions you identified in (i) (It could be one, two or all three conditions).

Note: You are not required to describe the marketing activities of any of the brands. Assume what is described above is correct and discuss whether those activities could influence consumer sovereignty.

(19 Marks)

**(Total 25 Marks)**

3. Freedom to do what one wants has two elements: *negative* and *positive* freedom (Varman & Vikas, 2007).

- i. Briefly explain what is meant by negative and positive freedom.

(10 Marks)

- ii. Following is a quote from an economically disadvantaged consumer interviewed in a group assignment:

“People don’t accept us, if we fail to live a better life with fancy things. ... If we don’t have a mobile phone it will be a bigger problem than not having something to eat. Sometimes my parents save money without eating to buy me a nice dress for Christmas. It is terrible.”

Although this consumer does not speak of marketing, discuss how her positive freedom might have been taken away by marketing, and how it creates special problems for her because she is an economically disadvantaged consumer.

(09 Marks)

iii. Following is an interview quote from a group report:

Wimala said “My son and daughters understand what our economic level is and what they should ask from parents. So, they do not bother us too much by asking things we cannot buy”.

The group report claims that Wimala’s family here does not have negative freedom, but they do appear to have positive freedom. Do you agree? Justify your answer with reference to positive and negative freedom.

(06 Marks)

**(Total 25 Marks)**

4. i. Although sustainable marketing has been identified as a strategy of gaining competitive advantage Peattie (2007) claims that the competitive advantage approach does not result in true sustainable marketing. Critically examine Pettie’s view.

(10 Marks)

ii. In a presentation one group argued that rapid introduction of technological advancements to the market leads to the throwaway consumption of mobile telephones. Explain how the manner in which marketers introduce technological advancements to the market leads to the throwaway consumption of another product, other than the mobile telephone using one example. Use the consumption habits of your own or others you know in relation to that product to justify the answer.

(10 Marks)

iii. In a presentation one group argued that price discounts and seasonal offers could persuade consumers to engage in throwaway consumption. Discuss this idea briefly in relation to one of the above (either price discounts or seasonal offers). Use the consumption habits of your own or others you know to justify the answer.

(05 Marks)

**(Total 25 Marks)**

5. Advertising to children could result in biased brand evaluations that could continue into adulthood due to the combined effect of how children evaluate advertising and the enduring effect of childhood learning (Connell et al., 2014).
- i. Do you agree with the above idea? Discuss with reference to how children evaluate advertising and enduring effect of childhood learning, using experiences of your own or someone who is known to you.

(12 Marks)

- ii. In group assignment reports two groups have claimed that the strong influence marketing has on children could sometimes lead to positive impacts on children. Briefly explain this with an example of any marketing activity targeting children in the Sri Lankan market that you are aware of.

(05 Marks)

- iii. The group assignments identified several adverse impacts marketing could have on children. These can be categorised as adverse social, psychological and health impacts. Briefly explain how a specific marketing activity of your choice (e.g. a specific type of packaging activity, a specific advertising tactic, etc.) might lead to adverse impacts of any two of the above three categories.

Note: You may use examples to support your explanation if necessary, but it is not compulsory.

(08 Marks)

**(Total 25 marks)**

6. Creative marketing can, at times, deceive consumers without presenting any false information (Hastak & Mazis, 2011).
- i. Select any creative advertisement/advertising campaign in Sri Lanka. Using the concepts of *signifier*, *signified* and *external referent system* explain the meanings communicated through the selected advertisement/advertising campaign.
- Note: Examples discussed in class or presented by the assignment group will not earn you any marks.

(15 Marks)

- ii. In a presentation one group discussed how, in a toilet soap advertisement, combining the highlighted presentation of the herbal ingredients of the soap with endorsement of a sports celebrity associated with strength led to deception of two types identified by Hastak and Mazis (2011): source-based misleadingness and performance claim. The group argued that this resulted in a strong combined deceptive effect. That is, the idea of strength of the celebrity exaggerated the belief that the performance of herbal ingredients was strong. Using either a *real* or *fictional* example of your own creation, explain how the *combined use of any two categories* of deception identified by Hastak and Mazis (2011) might lead to strong deception.

Note: Select any two of the following deception categories in Hstak and Mazis (2011): omitting key information, semantic confusion, uniqueness claims, performance claims, inter-attribute misleadingness, and source-based misleadingness

(10 Marks)

**(Total 25 Marks)**

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