Role of Integrated Marketing Communications in Building Brand Equity: A Review and Research Agenda

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The paper makes a context for the integration of the largely separate literatures of integrated marketing communication (IMC) and Brand Equity (BE) research. The paper categorizes the existing literature on the basis of Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand Equity framework theory, revealing the impact of IMC on Building Brand Equity. The contributions of the paper lie in drawing together the existing literature in the area, charting the topography of the ground, finding some gaps in the current literature and suggesting some potentially fruitful future study agendas. The conclusions of the review suggest that integrated marketing communication (IMC) plays a very important role in branding. If companies use properly integrated marketing communication (IMC) components and correctly use in correct place than they easily increase the brand equity of customers. Building and accessing to energetic and influential brand is one the first priorities in companies as it brings about lots of privileges and status for them. Branding is fetching ever more significant as firms face an increasingly global and competitive marketplace.

Key Words: *Advertising, Brand, Company, Consumer, Promotion*

INTRODUCTION

Belch and Belch (2007), defined Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) as a strategic business procedure used to execute, evaluate, develop and coordinated programs with stake holders over a period of time, Meanwhile early last era, the concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC) has been mostly regarded as an important marketing management issue because of the efficiency of the integration of marketing communications tools (e.g. public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, and personnel selling) to enhance the impact of communications on target consumers (Kotler, 2000; Schultz & Kitchen, 1997). Furthermore, there are numerous reasons for the growing importance of IMC. These include: 1) a program away from depend on advertising-focused methods which highlight mass media to targeted communication tools such as sponsorships, event marketing, sales promotion ,direct mail, and the Internet, 2) marketing dollars change from promotion to other forms of media advertising , particularly trade-oriented and consumer sales promotions, 3) accountability demands from advertising agencies and changes in the way agencies are compensated, 3)a change in marketplace power from producers to sellers, 4) the fast growth of the Internet, which is changing the nature of companies how to do business and the ways they interact and communicate with consumers, 6) the rapid development and growth of database marketing, 7) efforts increased to improve and measure marketing communication return on investment (ROI) by both agencies and clients. (G. Belch & M. Belch, 2004; Cornelissen, 2000, 2001; Shimp, 2000). As a result, this concept of IMC has been enormously accepted and discussed in Western countries among academics and marketing communications practitioners. There are lot of studies which showed the adoption of IMC by various marketing managers in their organizations in the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and India (Eagle & Kitchen, 2000; Kallmeyer & Abratt, 2001; Kitchen & Schultz, 1998, 1999; Low, 2000; Reid, 2003, 2005). The IMC concept are in continuous progress that has progressed from a "one voice" method, based on constancy and coordination, of consumer cantered approach more strategically . As Shult specified, "the IMC process starts with the customer or prospect and then works back to determine and define the forms and methods through which persuasive communications programs should be established". Marketing programs and IMC play important role in building up overall brand equity. These marketing programs are associated to price, product and distribution channels and are very essential in creating brand image and also to build brand awareness. This job is done through medium of marketing communication, in the form of advertising. Marketing communication is essential in creating point of resemblance, as well as point of alteration with competition, which helps to make an impression in consumer's mind leading to development of strong consumer based brand equity and also to develop long-lasting relationship. Brand equity is strategically critical, but famously tough to measure. Many experts and practitioners who have developed tools to analyse this asset, but there is no universally accepted way to measure it. As one of the sequential challenges that marketing professionals and academics find with the concept of brand equity, that is disconnect between quantitative and qualitative equity values is difficult to reconcile. Quantitative brand equity contains numerical values such as market share, profit margins but fails to capture qualitative elements such as prestige and associations of interest. Overall, maximum marketing practitioners take more qualitative approach to measure brand equity because of this challenge.

METHODOLOGY

Given the aims of the paper, a systematic review using an archival method is adopted to build a reliable knowledge base of the IMC and Brand Equity field. Our analysis process includes categorizing and classifying the existing literature in IMC and Brand Equity (across the full range of marketing practices), using papers published across more than two decades plus until 2013. Research papers were delimited from the review if they did not have a focus on IMC and Brand Equity, widely defined. This process produced over number of books, journal articles, edited works and discussion papers that were available for analysis. In this review we focus only on those papers that report empirical findings or develop theoretical arguments for the IMCBrand Equity impact and relationship. Papers that provide only unsupported prescription on what organizations should/should not do to develop IMC to Build Brand Equity were not included. This review draws on a range of IMC and Brand Equity practices revealed through several types of papers, including case studies, business reports and survey findings.

In deciding what to include in a review of IMC and Brand equity, we used Integrated Marketing Communications Model (IMC) (Schultz and Pilotta

2004) and Aaker (1991), Brand Equity model to identify the highlights role of joint effects or synergies generated due to the adaptation of multiple activities. This model is one of the most commonly used conceptualizations of the impact of IMC and Brand Equity practices on organizational performance in empirical studies also we included promotional mix elements in our Review which are the tools for IMC on Building brand equity.

IMC model (Schultz and Pilotta 2004), Aaker Brand equity model (1991) and promotion mix tools suggests that integrated marketing communication (IMC) plays impact of Building brand equity in every organisation. IMC plays a serious role by making firms more operative and effective in reaching their goals. This operative reaches would increase the brand equity of the firm thus will help firms in reaching greater financial performance.

Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand Equity Framework

Integrated Marketing Communication is an approach to brand communications where the different methods work together to create a whole experience for the customer and are presented with a similar manner and style that reinforces the brand's core message. Its objective is to make all aspects of marketing communication such as sales promotion, advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, online communications, personal relations and social media work together as a combined force, rather than allowing each to work in isolation, which exploits their cost efficiency.

Schultz and Pilotta's IMC Model

To prevent consumers from integrating them contradictorily, they must take responsibility of this process, and this practical view of IMC signifies the new method to media planning (Schultz and Pilotta 2004). The overall purpose of IMC is to accomplish all marketing activities that impact profits, sales, and brand equity.

In Figure 1, Schultz and Pilotta (2004) developed the IMC model that emphasises the role of joint effects or collaborations created due to the adaptation of numerous activities. The concept of IMC is much

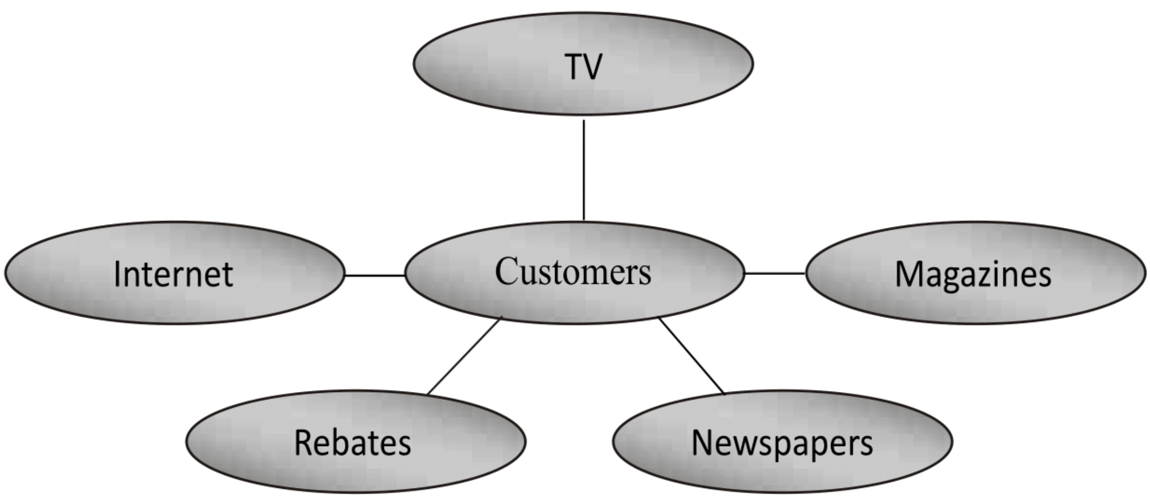

Fig1. Integrated Marketing Communications Model
(Source: Schultz and Pilotta 2004)

more than simply using multiple media simultaneously as in the standard multimedia model, where the effectiveness of each activity does not depend upon any other activity. In contrast, the main difference in the IMC model is that the effectiveness of each activity depends upon all other communications used by the firm.

Erdem et al., (1999) identified building and sustaining company's brand is essential in order to achieve competitive advantage compared to competitors and obtain well-organised long term performance. In 1980s, the perception of brand equity appeared and at that time it was one of the most standard and significant marketing notions (Keller, 2008). Various studies, conducted over a period of time, in the field identified that the main purpose of many sponsors is to develop brand, corporate image and to increase brand awareness (Quester, 1997; Cornwell et al., 2001; Marshall and Cook, 1992; Gilbert, 1988; Shanklin and Kuzma, 1992).

According to American Marketing Association brand is “a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers”. Therefore, it can be concluded that the brand plays an essential role in marketing as it splits identical businesses' market offerings. Whereas, the term equity appears from the segment of finance and in general links to 'ownership in any asset after all debts related with that asset are paid off' (Investopedia, 2012). The combination of both of the terms is defined as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to the firm's customers” (Aaker, 1991).

Aaker's Brand Equity Model

Aaker (1991) has developed a model where he emphasised five sections of assets as being the ground of brand equity (see Figure 2). The model consists of five dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and other proprietary assets.

Brand Loyalty: Loyalty is a main concept in marketing approach. Aaker assumed that brand loyalty is the core of brand equity. Loyalty triggered consumers spend less time for searching information. Solomon (1922) presented that loyalty-based buying judgments might turn into a habit and this may be resulted from current brand equity. The loyal consumers would have advantage for an organization in reducing costs and realising its works (Rundle and Bennet, 2001). Furthermore, loyalty can get a chance to business to react against threats such as competition because as consumers become loyal to a brand they become less sensitive to a price increase because of the product's ability to satisfy their needs (Graham et al, 1994).

Brand awareness: Brand awareness is the memorization power of consumer's mind in recalling a brand. According to Bumm and Gon Kim, (2005) there are four types of brand awareness: a) high mental awareness, b) brand reminding, c) brand recognition, d) unawareness. The role of brand awareness depends on the level of awareness realised. In the higher awareness level buying the possibility of considering brand and the effect of awareness on buying decision are increased (Rundle and Bennet, 2001).

Perceived quality: Simon and Sullivan (1993) concluded perceived quality is the customer's decision about a product's whole quality or superiority of one product or service in comparison with customer's tendency to its substitutes. For understanding overall perceived quality, measuring and recognising its main dimensions will be valuable. The brand is related with customer's perceived quality; a perception which only shows

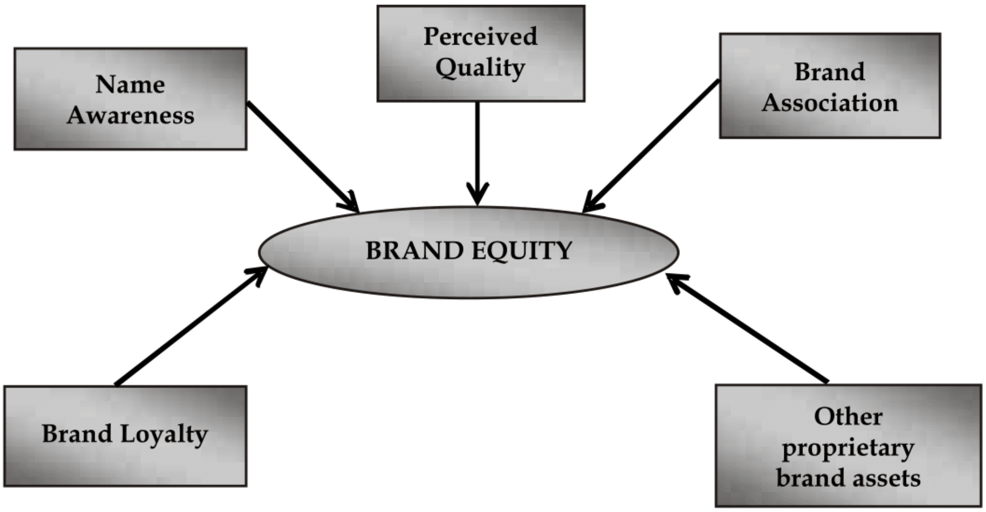

Figure 2. Aaker's Model of brand equity

general excellence and is not essentially in concern with its unimportant characteristics. High excellence could be a base for emerging the field of brand (Farquhar et al, 1991).

Brand Association: According to Aaker (1991), brand associations are the category of a brand's assets and liabilities that include anything "linked"' in memory of consumer to a brand. Keller (1998) defines brand associations as informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory that contains the meaning of the brand for consumers. Brand associations are significant to marketers and to consumers. Marketers use brand associations to distinguish the situation, and spread brands, to generate positive approaches and feelings toward brands, and to suggest qualities or benefits of purchasing or using a specific brand. Customers use brand associations to support development, create, and regain information in memory and to aid them in making purchase decisions.

Other brand's private property: First three groups of brand equity are specified customer's perceptions and reactions. The fourth part is the customer's base. The last one specifies the other brand's private properties such as franchises and registration rights, trademarks, channel relationships etc. If brand's properties are prevented from competitors' entry for weakening costumer's loyalty; they have the most evaluation (Farquhar et al, 1991).

According to Keller (1996), the roles of IMC are improving brand equity for an individual consumer that can be categorised into two parts. The first one is to create the brand in consumer's memory and link favourable, strong and unique associations to it. Second, marketers can generate consumer motivation, aptitude, and opportunity to process influential messages and recover brand information from memory when making a brand choice.

Edell (1993) found that that IMC can influence brand equity in two major ways. First, communications can impact consumer's brand attitude, an overall evaluation to the brand measured as the sum of several assessment scales regarding the communicated product. Specifically, it can develop positive evaluation and attitudes (Farquhar, 1989). Second, communications can impact brand equity by influencing a consumer's memory structure for a brand. If the brand is proximately recovered from the purchaser's memory, it shows a highly reachable association between communications elements and the brand.

Keller (2003) found that the marketing communications of firm's contribute to brand equity. That is, actual communication permits the formations of brand awareness and a constructive brand image. These, then, form the brand information constructions, which, in turn, generate the differentiated responses that constitute brand equity. Therefore, actual IMC is an essential part of an actual brand equity strategy. Moreover, actual IMC possibly enhances the efficiency of the firm's portfolio of brands, and hence, could positively impact brand equity.

Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE)

However, numerous valuable and effective perspectives of brand equity were projected over the years. The customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model, offered by Keller (1998), provides an exclusive approach to the concept and the way it should be constructed, measured and achieved. The concept of brand equity from the consumer's viewpoint is defined as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand" (Keller, 1998). Hence, Keller (1998), claims that the definition of customer-based brand equity consists of three key elements: brand knowledge, differential effect and consumer response. The differential effect represents the difference of the brand, accordingly, if no differences arise, then the brand can be recognised as a product or generic version of the market offering. Moreover, brand knowledge, which is formed through the marketing communication activities, builds the difference effect and exist in the minds of consumers. The customer response links to the customer's behaviour that might occur (willingness to pay extra, repeat purchase) and favourable associations with the brand (Keller, 1998).

THE ROLE OF IMC IN BRANDING

The main reason for the increasing significance of integrated marketing communications (IMC) over the past several years is that it plays a key role in the process of emerging and sustaining brand identity and equity. As branding professional Kevin Lane Keller (2000) summarises, "building and properly managing brand equity has become a priority for companies of all sizes, in all types of industries, in all types of markets". With extra products and services, challenging for deliberation by consumers who have less time to make choices, familiar brands have a major competitive advantage in today's marketplace. Building and sustaining brand identity and equity require the creation of well-known brands that have positive, strong, and unique associations in the mind of the consumer. Companies recognise that brand equity is as significant asset as factories, patents, and cash because strong brands have the power to command a premium price from customers as well as investors. Table 1 shows the world's most valuable brands, as provided by Inter-brand, an important brand consultancy company.

Table 1: The World's 10 Most Valuable Brands

S No	Brand	Growth
1	Coca-Cola	+8%
2	Apple	+129%
3	IBM	+8%
4	Google	+26%
5	Microsoft	- 2%
6	GE	+2%
7	McDonalds	+13%
8	Intel	+12%
9	Samsung	+40%
10	Toyota	+9%

Source: Inter-brand

Promotional Mix: The Tools for IMC on Building Brand equity

Promotion has been defined as the organisation of all Seller-initiated efforts to set up channels of information and urging in order to sell goods and services or promote an idea. While inherent communication occurs through the various fundamentals of the marketing mix, maximum of an administration's communications with the marketplace take place as part of a sensibly strategic and measured promotional program. The simple tools used to realize an organization's communication purposes are often stated to as the promotional mix (Figure 3). Usually the promotional mix has encompassed four elements: advertising, sales promotion, publicity/public relations, and personal selling. However, in this manuscript we view direct marketing and interactive media as major promotional-mix elements that modern marketers use to communicate with their target markets. Each component of the promotional mix is viewed as an integrated marketing communications (IMC) tool that plays an individual role in an IMC program for Building brand equity. Each may take on a variety of forms and each has certain advantages.

Advertising is defined as any paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by a recognised sponsor. The paid aspect of this definition replicates the fact that the space or time for an advertising message usually must be accepted. An occasional exclusion to this is the public service announcement (PSA), who's advertising space or time is donated by the media. The non-personal element means that advertising involves bulk media (e.g., TV, radio, magazines, newspapers) that can spread a message to large groups of persons, frequently at the same time. The non-personal nature of advertising means that there is usually no occasion for instant response from the message receiver (except in direct-response advertising). Therefore, formerly the communication is sent, the promoter must study how the viewers will comprehend and reply to it. Advertising is also a valued instrument for building company brand equity as it is a powerful way to deliver consumers with information as well as to influence their observations. Advertising can be used to generate constructive and exclusive images and associations for a brand which can be very significant for companies selling products or services that are difficult to distinguish on the basis of practical attributes. Brand image plays a significant role in the buying of many products and service area, and promotion is still familiar as one of the highest ways to build a brand. Similarly Direct-marketing tools and methods are also being used by businesses that distribute their products through traditional distribution channels or have their own salesforce. Direct marketing plays a great role in the integrated marketing communications (IMC) programs of consumer product companies and business to business marketers. These companies use big amounts of money each year for developing

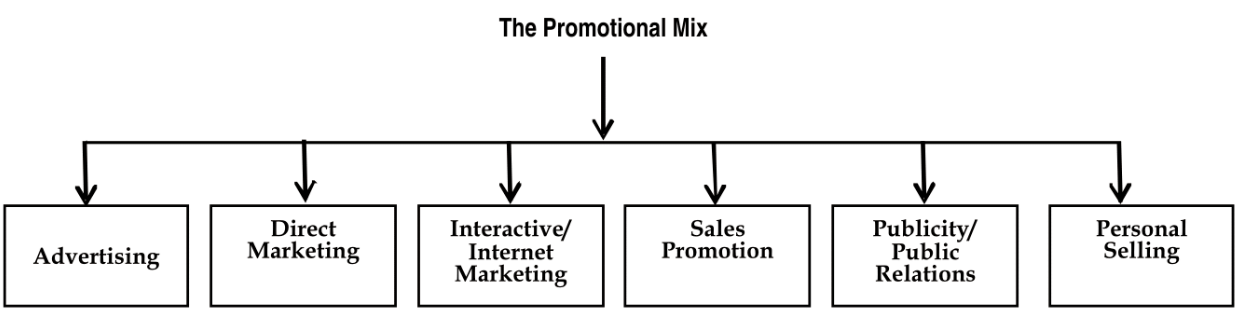

Figure 3: Elements of the Promotional Mix

and maintaining data-bases encompassing the addresses and/or phone numbers of existing and potential customers. They use telemarketing strategy to call customers directly and effort to sell those products and services or succeed them as auctions tips. Sellers also send out direct-mail portions reaching from simple letters and brochures to detailed leaflets, catalogues, and video tapes to give information to their potential customers about their products or services. Direct-marketing methods are also used to dispense product samples. Internet Marketing is also a communicating medium that is having the highest impact on marketing. While the Internet is altering the ways companies' project and implements their whole business and marketing policies, it is also affecting their marketing promotion programs. Billions of corporations, ranging from great multinational corporations to small local businesses, have established websites to promote their products and also services, by giving present and prospective customers with information as well as to entertain and interact with them. The Internet is essentially a complicated promotional instrument. On one hand, it is an advertising medium as many companies advertise their products and services on the websites of other companies and/or organizations or pay to link their banner ads or websites to search engines such as Google and Yahoo. The Internet can also be observed as a marketing communications instrument in its own right as it is a medium that can be used to implement all of the elements of the promotional mix. In adding to promotion on the Web, marketer's suggestion sales promotion reasons such as, challenges, and sweepstakes online, vouchers and they use the Internet to conduct direct advertising, personal selling, and public relations activities more efficiently and professionally.

The following variable in the promotional mix is sales promotion, which is usually defined as those marketing actions that provide extra-value or incentives to the trades force, the suppliers, or the final customer and can stimulate instant sales. Sales promotion is usually fragmented into two major categories: consumer-oriented and trade-oriented activities. Consumer-oriented sales promotion is targeted to the final user of a product or service and includes couponing, sampling, bonuses, discounts, tournaments, sweepstakes, and various point of buying resources. These promotional tools inspire consumers to make an instant purchase and thus can inspire short-term sales. Trade-oriented sales promotionis targeted toward marketing intermediaries such as suppliers, providers, and sellers. Advertising and marketing allowances, price deals, sales contests, and trade shows are some of the promotional tools used to inspire the trade to typical and endorse a company's goods.

Another important element of an organization's promotional mix is publicity/public relations. Publicity mentions to non-personal communications about an business, service, product, or idea not openly funded for or run under identified sponsorship. It typically comes in the form of a news story, editorial, or declaration about an organization and/or its products and services. Like advertising, publicity encompasses non- personal communication to mass viewers, but unlike promotion, publicity is not directly paid for by the company. The organization efforts to get the media to cover or run a favourable story on a product, service, source, or event to affect awareness, knowledge, opinions, and behaviour, Methods used to gain publicity include broadcast publications, press seminars, articles, snapshots, pictures, and videotapes. Public Relation is significant to identify the distinction between publicity and public relations. When an organization methodically plans and allocates information in an attempt to control and manage its image and the nature of the publicity it obtains, it is really engaging in a function known as public relations. Public relations are defined as "the management function which assesses public attitudes, classifies the strategies and measures of an individual or organization with the public interest, and performs a program of action to earn public sympathetic and greeting." Public relations regularly have a broader objective than publicity, as its purpose is to found and sustain a positive image of the company among its various publics.

Conventionally, publicity and public relations have been measured more helpful than main to the marketing and promotional procedure. Though, various companies have begun making Public Relation an essential part of their determined marketing and promotional strategies. Public Relation companies are gradually advertising public relations as a communications instrument that can take over many of the functions of straight advertising and marketing. The last part of an organization's promotional mix is personal marketing, a form of individual to individual statement in which a seller efforts to contribution and/or encourage potential buyers to obtaining the company's product or service or to act on an idea. Unlike advertising, personal selling includes direct contact between consumer and supplier, either face-to-face or through some form of telecommunications such as telephone sales. This interaction provides the marketer communication flexibility; the seller can see or get the potential buyer's reactions and adapt the message accordingly. The personal, customized communication in personal selling allows the seller to modify the message to the customer's precise needs or condition.

Effect of marketing communication on dimensions of brand equity

Brand equity (Kotler et al., 2009; Leone et al., 2006) is influenced by marketing communication events through the formation of brand awareness, the building of accurate associations in customers' mind, the simplification of stronger consumer-brand construction, and the creation of brand loyalty . Certain theories are expressed to clarify the effects of marketing communication tackles on the measurements of brand equity. Villarejo-Ramos and Sanchez-Franco (2005) brand equity is exaggerated by two variables of marketing communication that resulting from marketing mix, which are price Companies spend and perceived advertising spending high costs in advertising in direction to generate a positive observation of the product in the eyes of customers. Perceived advertising expenditure has positive result on each of brand equity dimension: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand image.

Advertising may contribute customers in buying decision making process and help the corporations in structuring and sustaining brand equity (Goldfrab et al., 2009; Madhavaram, 2005; Sriram and Kalwani, 2004). As service is imperceptible as well as has great experience and credibility qualities, users can not estimate the value only from visual presence. The metaphors created through advertising is essential to permit the customers measure the service quality (Goldfrab et al., 2009; Leone et al., 2006; Milgrom and Roberts in Villarejo-Ramos & Sanchez-Franco, 2005; Selnes, 1993). Advertisement is used to notify, to encourage, and to prompt the customers about a specific brand. Therefore, advertisement has positive result on brand image and brand awareness as it delivers some information about a brand. It also carries positive influence on brand loyalty of the customers who before have use the product.

Due to short-term benefits received by consumers, Price promotion is measured to weaken brand equity, (Keller, 2008; Sriram & Kalwani, 2004; Yoo et al., 2000). It is because price promotion can be recognized and copied by competitors effortlessly. consumers may perceive low price brand as low quality product in the long term, which reduces its brand image. Ailawadi, et al. (2003), identified larger market share due to price promotion may not truly signify strong brand equity. Even though price promotions initiative the customers to repurchase, but this performance is associated with their attention in price promotion rather than their loyalty. When the promotion movement is over, consumers may lose their interest on that brand. Consumers generally recall a brand through associative network model (Blackwell et al., 2007; Dillon et al., 2001; Kardes et al., 2011).

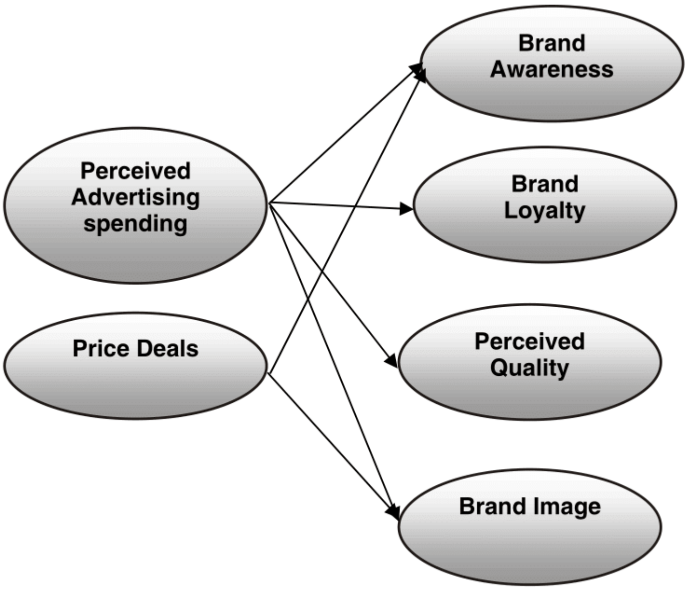

Figure 4: Effect of marketing communication on dimensions of brand equity

Aaker and del Blanco (1995) examined that brand awareness affects behaviour and have positive influence on behaviour and perceptions toward the brand. Price promotion and advertisement permits the customers to identify a specific brand and to make quality decision based on the information stored in their memory. Customers usually recall a brand through associative network model (Blackwell et al., 2007; Dillon et al., 2001; Kardes et al., 2011).

Even though advertisement and other outgoing opportunities play an important role in the marketing plans, growth of brand equity is the key goal. Because of flexibility, advertising communications effect on brand equity in diverse ways. Marketing communications play an significant role in growth of brand equity by giving information about brand, positive associations in memory of the customers, authorization of judgment and positive approaches relative to brand and lastly simplification of determining powerful relationship between customers and conventionality with brand (Keller, 2008),. In other ways, brand is considered as intangible asset of the organisation. In the advanced economics, there is a straight relationship between commanding firms' stock price and brand equity. So, the domestic manufacturers should examine brand process and implement this process and participate with the well-known brands. Brand is a composite processes that different ideas and features are offered. By using its features and every effective factor as recognized personality, brand communicates with consumers (Hollenbeck et al, 2008).

STRATEGIC ROLE OF IMC IN BRAND EQUITY

Kitchen et al. (2004) examined that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is no longer just a communication process, but also a process associated with management and brands. Furthermore, Kitchen et al. (2004), Identified Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) involves managing marketing communications in a holistic manner to reach strategic objectives. The findings of McArthur and Griffm (1997) that the accountability for marketing communications is obviously becoming an internal, upper management affair advises that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is evolving to be Strategically oriented rather than tactically oriented.

IMPORTANCE OF IMC ON BUILDING BRAND

There have been demands about the influence of the combination of all marketing communications. Is integration crucial for an effective communication? Can Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) be measured as a major communications development of 21st century to build brand? These questions were answered by many recent studies do offer support Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) brining many benefits to businesses. Naik and Raman (2003) identified in their studies that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)) indeed helps companies in improving their brand equity of services and products by accomplishing synergy across the company. The question of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) being related to a company brand related performance is answered positively by Reid (2003) in his studies. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in services have been thoroughly studied by Carlson, Gove, and Dorsch (2003) and concluded that a positive Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) can create desirable customer reactions. We can effectively conclude from the several studies above that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) plays a critical role by making companies more operative and efficient in reaching their target markets. This actual reach would increase the brand equity of the firm thus will help companies in achieving greater financial performance.

DISCUSSION

This study has highlighted the integrated marketing communication (IMC) plays impact of brand equity. If believed that IMC plays very important role for increase the brand equity this may be right up to some extent. The aim of the study was to review previous literature for integrated marketing communication practices and brand equity and thus resulted those effective IMC strategies can increase the brand equity

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is the traditional communication process (which depicts the flow of messages from senders to receivers via elements of transmission these are encoding, media, and decoding, has experienced obvious changes and has evolved into a more interactive and dynamic process However, the traditional framework is still followed as a advice for considerate and describing the brand communication procedure. Under the developing interaction-focused view of brand communications, there is a wide focus on brand contacts. It is now extensively accepted that (1) communication is one of the drivers of brand equity, it is nonetheless a critical one, (2) brand communication is conveyed through a mixture of vehicles rather than program advertising alone, (3) brand communication can be accurately scheduled or unintended, and (4) certain significant brand (equity or identity) contacts are not manageable by the brand strategist. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) has been advanced as a strategic commercial process that could donate to building brand value (Schultz 2004a). Although systematic research on numerous planned and strategic aspects of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is gaining momentum, it is extensively accepted that actual communication is critical in allowing the creation of brand awareness and brand image, that is, brand equity. Branding has stayed recognised as a valuable source of competitive advantage for many organizations.

Recommendations for future researches

As it is revealed numerous times throughout this research, brand equity is one of the most important competitive elements in past and present time that is ever-increasing spread and organizations want to make detailed value more than other competitors. Brand equity may not only add value for company and consumers, but also can add value for workforces, stockholders and managers, because it is only finished common factor which can be directed organizations to success (Schultz, 1998). Concerning to detailed significance of the brand equity, a general suggestion is that researchers must pay more consideration to the brand equity.

In this direction following suggests are listed:

- Classifying possible operative components in effectiveness of the brand equity.
- Using of more programs of product as well as services, various issues and the other cultures.
- Studying the effect of the efforts of marketing mix (product. price, place and promotion) on brand equity.
- Studying the role of intellectual image of the company in the efficiency of marketing mix mechanisms on brand equity.
- Studying relations between brand equity dimensions.
- Classifying operative factors on brand equity according to their importance.

We also recommend strongly integrated marketing communication (IMC) plays a very important role in branding. If companies use properly integrated marketing communication (IMC) components and correctly use in correct place than they easily increase the brand equity among customers.

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