

# Effect of Integrated Marketing Communications on Consumer Buying Decision of Internet Service (An empirical study of Mobilink in Multan City)

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**Abstract-** *The study finds how IMC influence the consumer decision to buy internet services; which include (internet marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing). Questionnaire were used for data collection and 435 questionnaires were distributed among Mobilink service users. The results showed that internet marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing positively influence consumer buying decision. The paper recommended that Mobilink should focus more on public relations with related parties to create a positive image about Mobilink which will enhance their buying decision of internet service.*

**Keywords-** *Internet Marketing; Public Relations; Direct Marketing; Integrated Marketing Communication*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In a competitive environment, organizations need to understand why the integrated marketing communication program have become significant in their activity. Basic components of the marketing mix – the 4P's – are no longer as efficient as they were in the past. But today, the elements of the traditional marketing have lost their value as competitive tools. It was late 20<sup>th</sup> century when IMC was first introduced. It was developed to provide organizations with options to cater their customers with something more than just simple advertisement. A revolution was required as different agencies, in house advancements were being made by companies to provide themselves with different options other than basic advertisement and for customer focused planning which include activities such as internet advertising, public relations, direct marketing etc. a concept like IMC was introduced (Jones, 2008)[10]. Assimilation has become the focus of marketing.

In 1990, an evolution struck when Mobilink brought up GSM services in Pakistan for the first time. Because of its long term thinking and culture of serving customers better than anyone has kept its leadership position till date.

Mobilink's leadership is further testified through its introduction of WAP connectivity in Pakistan and first company to partner with different banks in country and also supported Blackberry communication services.

Since its introduction, Mobilink's number of subscribers have grown exceptionally, with the number reaching up to 39 million subscribers in the country by April 2017. Mobilink covers majority of the country by providing services in more than 20000 cities or towns. Mobilink

introduced, in 2014, high speed Mobilink 3G services through modern HSPA+ technology. In 2016, Mobilink along with Warid (both named as Jazz) purchased the legal right to provide 4G services "LTE" for the first time in Pakistan.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

IMC is considered as an important strategic marketing management approach (Zavrsnik and Jerman, 2011)[22] because of its effective integration of following tools (i.e. internet marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing). Because of this assimilation of communication tools customers are best served (Vantamay, 2011)[21]. IMC follows a holistic view of communications tools to achieve combined impact (Seric and Rijeci, 2012)[18].

**Advertising:** Advertising is used to address mass audience to target their needs and wants and communicate them about product and services and it is usually in paid form (Moriarty et al., 2012)[15]. Advertising uses following types of media (Magazines, Radio, Television, Print Media etc.).

**Sales Promotions:** Sales promotion is a specialized technique used by companies to push customers to purchase a product within a specified time (Solomon et al., 2008)[20]. It cannot go for long period of times. It is often used for products that are newly introduced to increase awareness among customers so they are influenced to buy them. The basic objective of this technique is also to influence customer decision making.

**Public Relations:** Public relations is another form of promotion and can be described as the management function aims to develop and sustain mutual beneficial

relationships among the various organizations, enterprises and its publics (David, 2001).

**Direct Marketing:** Marketing is used to develop a long-term relationship with customers so as achieve something in return from customer in the shape of profits and sales (Kolter & Armstrong 2008)[12]. Direct marketing and General marketing are two of its types. General marketing focuses on medium such as television which allows to reach mass customer base but does not allow too much segmentation choices (Bose, Chen 2009)[2].

**Internet Marketing:** Using internet services and digital methods to achieve marketing objectives is known as internet marketing (Chaffey et al., 2000)[5]. This is the simplest way to define internet marketing but this definition does not include as aspect such as customer relationship. According to Kotler et al., (2010: 493) Online marketing not only helps in promotion of products but also provide support for building customer relationship. Burrett (2008)[3] stated that this is the most personal medium to interact with the customer so the targeting needs to be done very carefully otherwise this could backfire.

**Consumer Buying Decision:** It involve a series of steps before reaching a decision regarding the products purchase, Pride and Ferrell (2012) stated that it is important for companies to understand how customer makes decision about a product and how they use it. Hoffman & Bateson (2001)[9] describe the consumer buying decision process through 5 stages when they are considering a purchase

#### **Empirical Studies**

Alharthey (2015)[1], tried to understand decision making process of customers through assimilated communication and different advertising strategies. The study states that there is a connection between decision making process and IMC. Therefore, it can be concluded that to influence decision making of customer, a well-designed IMC is necessary. In addition to this, Umbreen et al., (2013)[17] also looked at how IMC influences customer's viewpoint about product and services buying decisions, mainly to the understanding of consumers. The research paper shows the importance of IMC activities and concludes that IMC is the best to target the consumers, because the

consumers are strongly influenced by IMC implementations. Furthermore, they found also advertising and sales promotions were the most important tools of IMC practices for customers" which means that they are more in touch with these tools as compare to other.

### **3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of this research paper can be concerned as following:

1. To study how much influence IMC can have on consumer buying decision of Mobilink's internet service at Multan city.
- 2.To provide recommendations to marketing managers that will help them to develop well-designed IMC that affects consumers buying decision of internet service at Multan city.

#### **3.1 Research Framework**

Following model is achieved after careful studying of past studies which involved IMC components such as (internet marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing). These components are thought to be acting as independent variables while consumer decision making is taken as dependent variable. Figure 1 illustrates the research framework:

This paper looks to test one main hypothesis and its five sub-hypotheses:

Ho: There exist a relationship between IMC components and customers buying decisions.

The main hypothesis is broken down into the following hypotheses:

H1: There exists a relationship between advertising and customers buying decision.

H2: There exists a connection between sales promotion and customers buying decision.

H3: There exists a relationship between public relations and customers buying decision.

H4: There exists a connection between direct marketing and customers buying decision.

H5: There exists a relationship between internet marketing and customers buying decision.

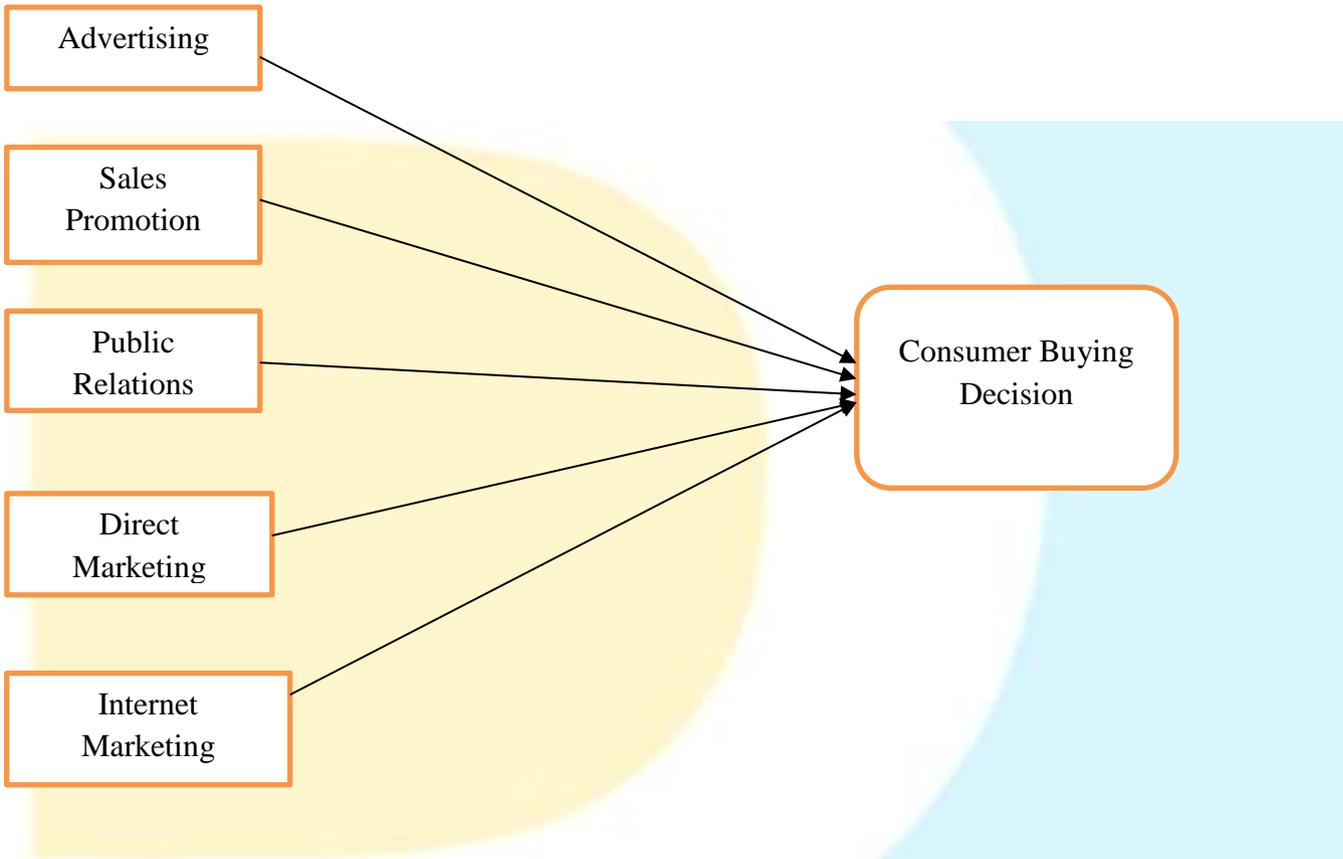


Figure 1: Research Framework

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research involved a survey of internet services users at Multan city. This research paper will focus on integrated marketing communications that affect consumer buying decision of internet service (i.e. internet marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing). For that we have proposed five hypotheses to determine the relationship between the different IMC components acting as independent variables and consumer buying decision as dependent variable. Researchers have tried to make sure that questionnaire was clear and understandable so the questionnaires were pre-tested with 40 consumers of Mobilink at Multan city before it was distributed to all respondents. The objectives of the study were explained to the respondents to achieve direct feedback and respondents pointed out few questions having unclear statement. Other than above mentioned few suggestions, results of pilot testing were fine. Questions were amended and revised after pilot testing. Convenience sampling was followed to get a representative sample; Mohr (1990) stated that convenience sampling is most appropriate in social sciences and is best suited to statistical inferences. Such sampling design has also found support in services

marketing field. Population consisted of people who used or are potential user of internet service of Mobilink at Multan city. Total of 435 questionnaires were distributed among respondents, however; only 415 questionnaires were returned for data analysis. According to Sekaran (2003)[19], this number of dataset is sufficient to run regression analysis and have reliable results.

##### 4.1 Questionnaire Design

Questionnaire is designed to gather the data. It consists of three parts, the first part deals with personal details of the respondents such as gender, age, education, income and marital status. The second part of the questionnaires consist 25 questions to measure the independent variables such as (internet marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing). The third part also include of 4 questions to measure the dependent variable consumer buying decision. This study used Likert scales for measuring responses against independent and dependent variables, these types of scales are most often used in social sciences and specifically marketing field (Burns & Bush, 2002)[4]. However, many researchers argued that using a five-point format is good as any other (Churchill and Lacobucci, 2004)[6].

#### 4.2 Reliability Testing

The reliabilities of individual scales fell within the Nunnally's (1978)[16] minimum requirement of 0.70.

High levels of reliability were achieved on all variables involved. Table 1 states all the reliabilities achieved:

Table 1

Variables	Number of Item	Cronbach Alpha
Advertising	6	0.827
Sales Promotion	5	0.856
Public Relations	4	0.858
Direct Marketing	5	0.868
Online Marketing	5	0.849
Consumer Buying Decision	4	0.839

#### 5. FINDINGS

Demographic variables show that there were 61.1 % of male respondents in the study while female representation was 38.9%. As far as the age demographic is concerned, majority lied in 29 to 38 years' limit. Majority of people

involved n study had bachelors level educational qualification. 40 % of the respondents had income level greater than 50000. More than 69.7% of the respondents were married.

Table 2

Characteristics	Title	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	255	61.1%
	Female	160	38.9%
Age	18-28 years	108	26.1%
	29-38 years	120	28.8%
	39-47 years	105	25.4%
	More than 48 years	82	19.7%
Education	Secondary School	55	13.3%
	Diploma	95	22.9%
	Bachelor	193	46.5%
	Masters	72	17.3%
Income	20000-30000 Rs	90	21.7%
	30000-40000 Rs	80	19.3%
	40000-50000 Rs	79	19%
	50000 Rs and above	166	40%
Marital Status	Single	119	28.7%
	Married	289	69.7%
	Others	7	1.6%

#### 5.1 Simple Regression

Simple regression analysis shows the contribution of each variable on consumer buying decision. Based on the table (3) advertising R<sup>2</sup> is 0.446, which means the advertising has an effect and contributes on consumer buying decision by 44.6%. Sales promotion R<sup>2</sup> is 0.255, which mean it has an effect and contribute on consumer buying decision by 25.5%. Public relations R<sup>2</sup> is 0.257, it

has an effect and contributes on consumer buying decision by 25.7%. Direct marketing R<sup>2</sup> is 0.435, it has an effect and contribute on consumer buying decision by 43.5%.and internet marketing R<sup>2</sup> is 0.499, and it has an effect and contribute on consumer buying decision by 49.9%. That means it's the most critical variable effect on consumer buying decision.

Table 3

Variables	R <sup>2</sup>
Advertising	0.446
Sales Promotion	0.255
Public Relations	0.257
Direct Marketing	0.435
Internet Marketing	0.499

**5.2 Hypothesis Testing**

Based on the result of multiple regression table (4) the data shows there is an effect of all variables accumulative on consumer buying decision at the level (.000).The results show that there is a significant and positive relationship between advertising and consumers buying decision (Beta=.103, p=.024). Sales promotion is significantly and positively related with consumers buying decision (Beta=.125, p=.014). Results of

hypothesis 3 show that there is a positive relationship between public relations and consumers buying decision (Beta=.181, p=.000). The findings for Hypothesis 4 state that there is a positive connection among direct marketing and consumers buying decision (Beta = .024, p = .000). Finally, hypothesis 5 is also accepted because online marketing also showed positive relationship with consumers buying decision of the total sample (Beta=.381, p=.000).

Table 4

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.832	.162		5.084	.000
Advertising	.107	.051	.103	2.103	.024
	.111	.057	.125	1.920	.014
Sales Promotion Public Relations Direct Marketing	.170	.051	.181	3.304	.000
	.015	.052	.024	.293	.000
	.381	.044	.381	8.644	.000

**6. CONCLUSION**

The major objective of this research was to find out the effect of integrated marketing communications on consumer buying decision. Selected independent variables were internet marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing dependent variable was consumers buying decision. After collecting and analyzing the using different statistical softwares and techniques all IV's were found to have significant impact on DV. Out of all the independent variables, internet marketing was seen to have the highest impact on consumer buying decision making. Based on these results we recommend managers that they should focus on using digital means for promotion and awareness, public relation is another marketing tool that need to be given due consideration when designing a IMC program in the future to create a positive image about the company and its internet service s which will enhance consumer buying decision.

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