



## The effect of Integrated Marketing Communication on Brand Awareness: The case of Amhara Bank S.C

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of integrated marketing communication tools on brand awareness in the case of Amhara Bank Adama city branches. The study used primary and secondary data and employed a convenience sampling technique to collect data from 380 customers. Key independent variables were identified. These independent are advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion. The study has targeted the customer of Amara Bank in Adama which were uncountable. Sample size was determined to be 384. The study followed convenience sampling method in the place where the customer use banking service. Data were collected from primary sources through questionnaire and analyzed through both descriptive and regression methods. The descriptive analysis was conducted by using mean and standard deviation and the regression analysis was conducted by using multiple regressions method. Multiple regression was used to examine the effect of independent variables on brand awareness. The finding shows that most of the independent variables, i.e., advertising, personal selling and public relations have a significant positive effect on brand awareness except direct marketing and sales promotion. The study recommends that in order to gain competitive advantage from the brand the organization should strive to integrate various marketing communication tools for maximum communication effect to the brand awareness. This study examined the controllable marketing communication tools' effects on brand awareness. For the future, researchers can study by including other factors like social media, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth advertising, etc. that affect brand awareness.

**Keywords:** Advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, public relation, sales promotion, brand awareness, and marketing communications

### Introduction

Banks compete fiercely with one another in the modern business environment because of aspects like rapid technological advancements, globalization, and the uniformity of bank services. Because of this, creating strong brands is essential for differentiating banks and enhancing the value of financial services. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is being practiced worldwide on a very large scale. Integrated marketing communication is a consumer-oriented approach rather than an organizational-oriented one that focuses on organizational needs. IMC is performed in a manner of synergy rather than in isolation (Kitchen, Philip, Schultz, and Don, 2003). IMC is associated with some positive results like brand awareness, customer satisfaction, brand loyalty, a positive brand image, a unique brand association, greater profitability, increased sales, and cost savings.

Kotler (2013) <sup>[15]</sup> pointed out that messages delivered through different promotional approaches, such as advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, or direct marketing, all become part of a single message about the brand. Conflicting messages from these different sources can result in confused company images and brand positions. The use of a richer mixture of communication channels and promotion tools poses a problem for marketers. Consumers are being exposed to a greater variety of marketing communications about the brand from a variety of sources. However, customers don't differentiate between message sources the way marketers do.

In Ethiopia, many companies still aim to convey a consistent message to their clients and potential customers,

even when the money spent on marketing their services may flow to integrated marketing communication (IMC). Advertising, sales promotions, direct marketing, public relations and publicity, sponsorships (events and experiences), social media and interactive marketing, professional selling, and other sorts of marketing communications make up an organization's promotion or communication mix.

Today, many organizations spend more on different marketing communication tools to contact customers in order to create awareness about the brand. But they fail to know the effect of each promotional mix on brand awareness and to what extent each promotional mix element has an effect on brand awareness. This scenario is really wasteful for the organization. Using different marketing communication tools without understanding their effects on customer brand awareness is just like running blindly for the organization.

The first and critical task of an organization should be assurance about whether our communication tools create top-of-mind awareness about the brand or not. Once sound brand awareness creates brand loyalty and other brand issues, So, the organization should first build sound brand awareness in the minds of customers and the general public by using integrated marketing communications approaches properly. But the organizations currently do not do this in this fashion, simply promoting the brand to target customers by using various communication tools without coherence.

Proctor and Kitchen (2002) <sup>[22]</sup> state that in marketing communication, there has been a shift in emphasis from the individuality of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations to a movement towards

integrated marketing communication. Currently, customers find it hard to distinguish between banks (Rambocas *et al.*, 2014) <sup>[23]</sup>. Therefore, building brands is vital to differentiating banks and adding value to banking services (Harris, 2002) <sup>[12]</sup>. According to Franses and Verins (2004) study with the title "Advertising Effects on Awareness, Consideration, and Brand Choice using Tracking Data", the result showed that most of the advertising has an influence on brand awareness.

The study is expected to bridge a gap in the literature for empirical research focusing on the effect of integrated marketing communication tools on brand awareness. And, this study is expected to provide new solutions and evidence on the usefulness of integrated marketing tools on brand awareness in the case of Amhara Bank (Adama Branch).

## Literature Review

### Integrated Marketing Communication Tools

Kotler and Keller (2012) <sup>[16]</sup> claim that promotion is a part of a company's marketing mix that educates, persuades, and reminds the market of a product while also assisting the market in understanding the company selling it in the hopes of influencing the recipients' emotions, beliefs, or behavior.

#### 1. Advertising

Kotler (2013) <sup>[15]</sup> defines advertising as any form of paid, impersonal promotion of concepts, goods, or services by a reputable sponsor with the goal of influencing the beneficiary to act now or in the future. Included are broadcast, print, outdoor, indoor, and other forms (Rogers, 2008) <sup>[25]</sup>. Advertising is a vital part of the marketing communication tools that are crucial to the promotional strategy. It is a powerful way to communicate a brand's inspiring and useful values (Ramos and Franco, 2005). So, advertising helps customers understand what a product or service is, what its main function is, and how it differentiates from other products or services that are comparable to it (Richards and Curran, 2015) <sup>[24]</sup>.

#### 2. Personal Selling

According to Dmour (2013) <sup>[2]</sup>, in order to ensure that customers receive the service for which they are paying, personal salespeople must have the necessary attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills. This interpersonal communication technology includes face-to-face communication, which enables the individual seller to receive prompt feedback throughout the conversation (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012) <sup>[16]</sup>. A sort of one-on-one interaction known as personal selling involves a seller attempting to assist and/or persuade potential consumers to purchase the company's goods or services or act on an idea. Personal selling, in contrast to advertising, comprises direct communication between the buyer and the seller, either in person or over the phone (Belch/Belch, 2013) <sup>[4]</sup>.

Kotler and Armstrong (2012) <sup>[16]</sup> define sales promotion as a different type of non-personal communication with a sales-oriented purpose. It is described as a short-term incentive designed to affect the desired results in sales. In sales promotion, a variety of tactical, transient promotional tools are employed (Shamout, M. D. (2016) <sup>[29]</sup>. Price-oriented promotions include things like price cuts, rebates, and discounts. Examples of non-price-focused promotions include free samples, giveaways, contests, and premiums (Gilbert and Jackaria, 2008; Builet' al, 2013) <sup>[5, 10]</sup>.

Today, this tool comprises catalogues, telephone marketing, direct mail, e-mail, the Internet, and other tools to communicate directly with specific customers (Keller, 2010). Direct marketing is the practice of contacting clients via phone or mail. When telephone, email, or direct mail are used in place of face-to-face human selling, many of the usual salesperson's activities are eliminated (Fill and Davis, 2007) <sup>[8]</sup>. Over the past ten years, as mass communications have been replaced by direct mail, telemarketing, and the rapidly developing era of interactive communications, such as the Internet, the use of direct marketing tactics has expanded substantially (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012) <sup>[16]</sup>.

PR aids in raising awareness and enhancing an organization's reputation (Smith, 2013) <sup>[30]</sup>. As a result, it might change how people view and prefer the organization's products and services (Fill and Davis 2007) <sup>[8]</sup>. PR molds and creates relationships between businesses and their audiences that are beneficial to both parties as a strategic communication tactic (Mubashir, et, al 2013) <sup>[19]</sup>.

### 3. Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the capacity of a consumer to recognize or recall that a brand belongs to a product category (Aaker, 1991). Brand recall and brand recognition are thus both included in brand awareness (Kotler, 2013) <sup>[15]</sup>. Brand recognition and recall are essential for evaluating brand equity because they show how well-known a good or service is among consumers. Without enough top-of-mind exposure, building brand equity is difficult (Dahlen, 2010). A company with strong top-of-mind recognition can influence consumers' purchases of a certain good or service (Keller, 2009) <sup>[13]</sup>.

### Research Design and Approach

This study uses a marketing management approach specifically regarding the relationship of Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand Awareness. The research method uses explanatory survey and descriptive verification. The variables in this study, namely; Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and Brand Awareness. The study population is the group of elements from which you draw your sample. (Patricia Leavy, 2017) The population of this study is the bank sector, which is involved in Amhara Bank in Adama Ethiopia. Therefore, the study population included all the customers of the Amahara Bank in Adama which were uncountable.

Data analysis techniques used descriptive and inferential statistical approaches. The stages are; Test the validity and reliability of the Instrument, descriptive statistics, and Inferential Analysis; Data normality test, correlation test, regression test, and statistical hypothesis test using the t test. the statistical hypothesis of this study is;

**H1:** Advertising has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

**H2:** direct marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness.

**H3:** personal selling has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

**H4:** public relation has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

**H5:** Sales promotion has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

**Reliability**

Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient (a number between 0 and 1) that is used to rate the internal consistency (homogeneity) or the correlation of the items in a test. A good test is one that assesses different aspects of the trait being studied. Cronbach's alpha was generally increase as the inter correlations among test items increase and is thus known as an internal consistency estimate of reliability of test scores. Because inter correlations among test items are maximized when all items measure the same construct, Cronbach's alpha is widely believed to indirectly indicate the degree to which a set of items measures a single construct (George and Mallery 2019)<sup>[9]</sup>. George and Mallery (2019)<sup>[9]</sup> provide the following rules of thumb:

— >.9 Excellent, >.8 Good, > .7Acceptable, >.6 Questionable, >.5 Poor, and < .5 Unacceptable. All dimensions' Cronbach's Alpha is by far above the cut of point of 0.7. The lowest Alpha registered is 0.690 (Advertising) and the highest is 0.819 (Public relation). Therefore, it can be inferred that all measures are internally consistent.

**Table 1:** Reliability test of the research variable

Item	Number of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal consistency
Advertising	7	.690	Questionable
Direct marketing	8	.743	Acceptable
Personal selling	8	.743	Acceptable
Public relation	5	.819	Good
Sales promotion	5	.736	Acceptable
Brand Awareness	6	.863	Good

**Results and Discussion**

Data Result the overall analysis results of Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand

**Table 2:** Overall mean score of dependent and independent variables

	Mean	St. Deviation
Advertising	3.63	.650
Direct marketing	3.92	.593
Personal selling	4.32	.582
Public relation	3.69	.787
Sales promotion	3.60	.616
Brand awareness	4.74	.499

As shown in Table 2, the mean score for every variable is higher than 3. Personal selling has the greatest score (4.32) and sales promotion has the lowest (3.60) among the five independent variables. The dependent variable's (brand awareness) mean value is 4.74 as well.

For each of the variables included in the Table, the maximum and minimum responses are 5 and 1, respectively. The average number reveals that all dimensions are above average. While standard deviation demonstrates the range of consumer responses to a given concept. For instance, a large standard deviation indicates widespread data, which indicates that consumers have a wide range of opinions, whereas a low standard deviation indicates that customers have similar opinions. Advertising (3.63), direct marketing (3.92), personal selling (4.32), public relations (3.69), and sales promotion (3.60) have the highest comparison of

means across all dimensions. Thus, as can be seen from the average scores, brand awareness for Amhara Bank ranges from 4.32 to 3.60 on all dimensions.

According to the following Table, customers have a very positive perception of Amhara Bank's brand recognition level. Given that every aspect of integrated marketing communication tool is both above average and positive.

Looking into correlation, specifically Pearson correlation, was help you comprehend the strength of the linear link between two variables. The strength of the association is indicated by the correlation coefficient (r), which ranges from -1.0 to +1.0. As a result, a strong link is stated to exist if the coefficient is close to either +1.0 or -1.0, whereas a weak relationship is indicated by a result that is close to 0. According to Cronk (2016)<sup>[7]</sup>, a correlation coefficient between two variables that is above 0.7 on both sides is regarded to be high, below 0.3 and close to 0 on both sides is considered to be a weak link, and between 0.3 and 0.7 is considered to be moderate.

**Table 3:** Correlation of research variables

Correlations		Brand Awareness
Advertising	Pearson Correlation	.672**
Direct Marketing	Pearson Correlation	.583**
Personal Selling	Pearson Correlation	.609**
Public Relation	Pearson Correlation	.559**
Sales promotion	Pearson Correlation	.619**

The correlation between IMC tools and brand awareness was determined using a Pearson correlation coefficient. Also, between all of the brand awareness, significant linear correlations and a strong positive correlation are obtained. All variables' correlation coefficients (r) fall between 0.559 and 0.672, indicating a moderate association. Advertising (0.559), direct marketing (0.583), personal selling (0.609), public relation (0.559) and sales promotion (0.619) are the IMC tools dimensions that are most strongly connected with brand awareness.

**Multiple Regression and Hypothesis Testing**

This regression analysis was conducted to know by how much the independent variable explains the dependent variable. It is also used to understand by how much independent variable (Advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, public relation and sales promotion) explains the dependent variable that is brand awareness.

According to the regression analysis results between integrated marketing communication tools and brand awareness in Table 4. the result showed that integrated marketing communication tools has the power to explain brand awareness. When considering of the correlation of integrated marketing communication tools and brand awareness and R square 0.717 is taken into consideration. R square is coefficient of determination or explained variance and it is the square of multiple R (0.846)<sup>2</sup> besides, it is confirmed that 71.7% of integrated marketing communication tools can explain the dependent variable i.e., brand awareness. This means that 28.3% of the brand awareness is explained by other factors other than the integrated marketing communication factors studied in this research.

**Table 4:** Coefficient analysis

Coefficients								
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	(Constant)	.415	2.16		.191	.849	-.191	.305
	Advertising	.682	.070	.666	9.786	.000	.141	.379
	Direct marketing	-.088	.082	-.102	-1.07	.285	.040	.210
	Personal selling	.177	.082	.205	2.161	.032	.013	.213
	Public relation	.206	.069	.176	2.969	.003	.238	.480
	Sales promotion	-.057	.074	-.052	-0.771	.442	.099	.235
	R Square	.716						
	R	.846						

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

Based on the table 4 the established mathematical equation of multiple regressions presented as follows

$$Y = 0.415 + 0.682x_1 + (-0.088)x_2 + 0.177x_3 + 0.206x_4 + (-0.057)x_5 + e$$

Where: Y = Brand awareness β0=constant (0.415), X1 = Advertising, X2 = direct marketing, X3 = personal selling, X4 = public relation, X5 = sales promotion, e = Error term.

The regression equation above has established that taking all factors in to account (advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, public relation and sales promotion) constant at zero brand awareness is 0.415. The findings presented also show that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in advertising would lead to a 0.682 increase in brand awareness. In addition, the findings show that a unit increases in personal selling would lead to a 0.177 increase in brand awareness. The study also found that a unit increase in public relation would lead to a 0.206 increase in brand awareness. Overall advertising had the significant effect on brand awareness of Amhara Bank S.C followed by public relation, personal selling. But direct marketing and sales promotion are insignificantly affected brand awareness in Amhara bank.

The above coefficients table show that brand awareness has a positive relationship that is statistically significant (B=0.680; P<0.05) to advertising. Thus, the higher the advertising budgets, the higher the brand awareness levels are likely to be. Accordingly, the question (1) stated that brand awareness the affected by advertising was supported. An increase in brand awareness is attained with an increase in the advertising of 0.68. As such the bank increase advertising of its brand results in enhanced brand awareness by different advertising platforms. This finding is consistent with the results of (Yoo *et al.*, 2000) [33] indicate that advertising has a great power to customers able to brand recall and recognition and concluded there is a statistically significant relation between them. This result also coherent with the findings of (Tong and Hawley, 2009) [31] also recommended out of the various marketing activity the advertising is very helpful to the formation of brand awareness. Finally concluded, no doubt, advertising help to provide complete information regarding brand which boosts the brand awareness and it leads to asset. The above findings approve that advertising plays a statistically significant role to create or enhance the brand awareness.

Direct marketing also has insignificant effect on brand awareness where a unit less in brand awareness is caused by a consequent decreasing of -0.088 units of direct marketing. This relationship is statistically insignificant (B= (-0.088), P>0.05). Personal selling also has a statistically positive effect on brand awareness where a unit increase in brand awareness is caused by a resulting increase of 0.177 units of personal selling. According to the finding personal selling

had a statistically significant effects on brand awareness (B=0.177, P<0.05).

This result shows that the staff interaction, greeting, truthfulness as one way to create top of awareness about the brand. The findings of (Shafi and Madhavaiah, 2013) [28] showed that personal selling is a very much significant promotion tools to build brand awareness. In addition (Sadek *et al.*, 2016) [26] describe the effect of personal selling on the creation of brand awareness, Personal selling has a significant and positive effect on building brand awareness. Therefore, this research result aligns with the above findings. Further, this research finding is coherent with the findings of the significant positive direct effect of personal selling on the brand awareness was supported by (Gronroos, 2012), Page and Luding (2003) [21], Kotler and Armstrong (2012) [16], and Dmour *et al.* (2013) [2] who argued that this face-to-face communication that exist between individuals (who represent an organization) and customers helps the organization to inform, encourage, persuade or remind people to command respect to the brand. Therefore, this result fully supported to accept alternative hypothesis (H3) stated that personal selling has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

The results also indicate that public relation had statistically significant effects to brand awareness (B=0.206, P<0.05). Based on this fact the bank adequately invests in public relation as crucial component to strengthen brand awareness. This could be the reason why public relations are used in order to enhance brand awareness by participating in special events and sponsoring different critical social service activities. Besides, the relationship is statistically significant. (James, et, al, 2013) concluded that public relation has a positive effect on brand awareness. Higher public relations create to the customer to be more familiar with the brand.

The results also indicate that sale promotion had statistically loss effects to brand awareness (B= (-0.057), P<0.05). The researcher concluded that sales promotion has a negative result means insignificant effect on brand awareness.

**Conclusion**

One of every company's most valuable assets is brand recognition. Understanding its main forces is so crucial. Examining the effect of integrated marketing communication tools on brand awareness was the aim of this study. Additionally, the researcher took a quantitative approach to the examination of integrated marketing communication tools in order to achieve this goal. This study's findings supported the notion that sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, direct marketing, and advertising are the most important forms of integrated marketing communication for raising brand recognition. The

results of the Pearson correlation study make it abundantly evident that the five integrated marketing communication tools— advertising, direct marketing, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotion—are all positively correlated with brand awareness at Amhara Bank S.C.

The study's conclusion that integrated marketing communication tools explain brand awareness was supported by the regression analysis portion. Additionally, the regression study revealed that integrated marketing communication tools account for 71.7% of brand awareness. The remaining 28.3% of the variation in brand awareness in this study is attributable to un researched factors. This study has found that advertising significantly helps Amhara Bank S.C. increase brand recognition. However, the bank has only used advertising to a limited level, and as a result, not all its potential benefits have been realized. Brand awareness and bank advertising are significantly associated ( $B=0.682$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Additionally, the study found that public relations had a statistically significant ( $B=0.206$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) effect on brand awareness. Personal selling also has a direct, statistically significant effect on brand awareness ( $B=0.177$ ,  $P <0.05$ ). Additionally, brand awareness has not been significantly affected by direct marketing and sales promotion ( $B= -0.088$ ,  $P<0.05$ ; and  $B= -0.057$ ,  $P<0.05$ , respectively).

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