



## Exploring the Relationship between Brand Switching and Integrated Marketing Communication in the Apparel Industry of Pakistan

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### Abstract

*In today's economic and technological advancements era, accelerated technological innovations create business and marketing opportunities. Due to this, there is a need to better align the strategies of the companies with respect to the external environment. To do this, companies need to understand integrated marketing communication. The study focuses on integrated marketing communication and brand switching. The apparel and clothing industry of Pakistan has been taken into account. Three dependent variables have been taken: advertising, personal media and sales promotion. Brand switching has been treated as an independent variable. Besides this, consumer behavior has been taken as moderating variable. The study belongs to the quantitative research methodology. A survey method has been used, and a questionnaire has been designed to gather information. Furthermore, 80 respondents have been taken into this study. The questionnaire has been made on a 5-point Likert scale. A judgmental sampling technique has been used to find the respondents. Pearson correlation tests have been conducted on the variables. The results showed that brand switching has a positive relationship with other variables. Future research is needed to gain insights into Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)*

**Keywords:** *Brand switching, Advertising, Personal Media and Integrated Marketing communication*



## **Introduction**

The ongoing market conditions and rapidly changing technological advancement increase the competitiveness among the market players, change the marketing method, and create the need to think towards unique promotional strategies. To build strong connections between seller and buyer, ways of marketing services, products, and consumer communication has been changing tremendously over time. With the increased competition within the market, Innovation and technological advancements have provided the platform for manufacturers to transfer information of products or services to the end users more effectively. Consequently, marketers have been valuing new marketing methodologies for more desired, focused, and holistic customer-oriented communication to foster a strong relationship with their customers and figure out their choices. This approach to communication is referred as Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). (Nadube, 2018) state that sales promotional activities are time oriented and boost the company's sales for a short period. There are pros and cons of sales promotion. One benefit of sales promotion is that it achieves its targeted goals of the brand by selling the item in no time. The second advantage is that it promotes or encourages the consumer to try the product due to promotional activities. This implies a high chance that the consumer would switch from the brand and become loyal to this new brand. It can be said that although this is a good benefit of sales promotion, there are drawbacks too. One of the disadvantages of doing sales promotional activities is that it is a short-term strategy (Shahzad et al., 2020). The severity of said disadvantage has largely been disregarded within the context of the present research, i.e., the consumer buying behaviour owing to IMC for the apparel industry of Pakistan. The scope of the study is based on the ongoing market trend and analyzing consumer demands and satisfaction. The study revolves around the IMC holistic concept that uses different marketing strategies and innovations to strengthen consumer and producer relationships by understanding consumer choices and preferences. In today's era of the ever-changing business environment, marketing becomes an important part of any organization or business (Sangroya & Nayak, 2017). It contributes greatly to the success of an organization, enables the creation of business awareness and enhances the level of customer relationship (Verhoef, 2003). Therefore, organizations cannot accomplish their objectives without scrawny marketing strategies. And when it comes to marketing strategies, the customer is always bound to be the core.

The core objective of the study mainly focuses on the integrated marketing system's impact on consumer buying behaviour, how region-wise sales promotion affects consumer buying



behaviour and its impact on the current apparel clothing industry of Pakistan (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2010). In the marketing context, it is quite difficult for a consumer to make a purchase decision as a result of so many available options; as far as a marketing strategy is concerned, consumer behaviour mainly involves their need, motivations and their thought process to choose one product over another and the patterns of purchasing different goods and services (Orji, 2017). Several factors in the background play a significant role in taking customers to the final decision. Therefore, the marketing team must understand the factors influencing customers' purchasing process and buying decisions (Khaniwale, 2015). People attract different schemes towards buying products besides their needs and motivations. In the growing era, marketers launch innovative promotional tools to attract consumers to temporarily increase the company's sales, attract new customers, and retain the old ones. Sales promotion is one of the oldest and finest tools growing in the market from ancient to modern times (Fang et al., 2020). Significant activities in today's market are linked with sales promotion.

- To critically assess the impact of promotional tools on Consumer buying behaviour in the apparel industry of Pakistan.
- To evaluate the impact of promotional tools on brand switching intention of Pakistani Consumers for the apparel clothing Industry.

Sales promotion includes three main strategies: push, pull and the combination of pull and push. Push means the product is pushed from distributors to the consumer by different promotions like discounts, personal selling, buy-back guarantee, free trial, allowances, and contests; and pull means the consumer pulls the product from the distributors through different ways like samples, games, coupons, premiums, loyalty rebates and cash refund (Nochai, 2011). Sales promotion plays an essential and significant role in the consumers' purchase intention and their decision to purchase a specific product. Prior studies like Qazi et al. (2021) have shown that there has been a mixed relationship between the sales' promotion and the consumers' purchase intention, so there has been a need to introduce another variable between the sales' promotion and the consumers' purchase intention to strengthen this relation increasingly; therefore, social media has been used as a moderator in this relation.

### **Key Definitions**

**Discounts:** A deduction from the usual cost of something, typically given for prompt or advance payment or to a special category of buyers.

**Coupons:** A ticket or form allows the holder to receive service, payment, or discount.



**Buy One Get One Free:** If you buy one of the products, you will receive a second one without paying any money for that item.

**Free Samples:** A small portion of goods from whole, distributed free, especially as an introduction to potential customers.

### Literature Review

In today's digital marketing world, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of consumer perceptions toward e-commerce around the globe. In today's volatile business environment, marketing has become essential to any organization or firm. It enhances an organization's presentation, strengthens the framework of business consciousness and works reasonably and squarely on client connection (Aguirre et al., 2015). As a result, organizations with poor advertising strategies will fail to meet their objectives. In addition, when it comes to advertising strategies, the client is always at the center. As a result, clients play a risky role in the success of small businesses because they are the ones who generate cash for the organization by acquiring, utilizing, and convincing others to buy their services and goods (Khaniwale, 2015). As a result, the goal of recognizing consumer buying behaviour is to learn about customers' buying decisions and how to influence them to influence how they interpret the approaches involved with creating such decisions. Consumer behaviour encompasses more than just obtaining things, but also various exercises ranging from issue identification to post-purchase behaviour, reasoning age, or circumstances to satisfy their desires and requirements. As a preliminary step for the promotion process, any purchasing decision begins with the unlocked door accessible for any services or products in the store, market, and consumer (Kotler, 2003). The apparel clothing business in Pakistan is critical to the country and its economy. Pakistan is the eighth-largest material export market in Asia. The segment accounts for 8.5 percent of total GDP. It employs approximately 15 million people or 30% of the labour force in a country of approximately 49 million. The yearly basis volume of worldwide production of textiles is US\$18 trillion, with a 2.5 percent growth rate each year. Since Pakistan's inception, economic growth has received special attention, with a special emphasis on agricultural areas. Pakistan, which was once the world's leading cotton manufacturer and textile sector emergence, ended up taking comprehensive benefit of its enormous assets was essential. It was critical to have an apparel sector that extensively used its vast resources. Yarn assets are a key development concentrate. There are currently an estimated 124 large spinning units, 442 spinning units, 1,221 ginning units, and 425 minor spinning enterprises industrialized knits.

Clothing manufacturers have taken part in increasing yield in stocks, and among the businesses, labelled apparel has shifted traditional clothing awareness among the people (Yasin, 2017). The tendency of marketing in industrialized economies has dramatically changed the way consumers and buyers are spoken with. People's daily lives have been influenced by technological progress and uprisings. Numerous individuals were practically unknown several generations earlier. According to reports, data management has shifted away from manufacturers. As a result, vendors have had to revise their existing marketing strategy. The interaction practices to create a more appealing, defined, comprehensive purchaser-placed, cooperative environment are called Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC).

Figure 1  
*Integrated Marketing Communication Tools*



Source: (Kotler et al., 2013)

A few workplaces become adaptable in non-promoting territories to gain influence over their consumers' limited-period activities. A few newer publicities, organizations and sustained coordination were used to define the process. Many organizations have adopted IMC's broad perspective. People consider it a process to coordinate and manage their endorsing interactions drives to provide a coherent message to customers about the organization and its brands. According to these organizations, the IMC approach advances the previous act of viewing advertising and interactions as separate exercises. When marketers gain a better understanding of IMC, they realize that it goes beyond simply planning all aspects of marketing and communications crusades. There is no universal definition of integrated



marketing correspondences, and there are numerous interpretations. The presumption of encouraging interchanges is a critical instrument of the IMC program (Rehman et al., 2022). Advertising exchanges are broadly defined as "the sharing of data or suggesting that aids in recognizing, animating, or fulfilling client needs or needs."

A much more constrained and precise definition of showpiece in exchanges is: "the vital cooperation of various communications speakers to improve the impact of a potent connection on both client and non-shopper masses by organizing such elements of the promoting blend as publicizing, marketing, progressions, immediate displaying, and package layout (Gronstedt & Thorson, 1996). Marketing intersections aim to establish and maintain marketing and element consistency by firmly implanting this thought in the shopper's mind. This is complicated by the sheer competition among similar products currently on the market. It is difficult for an organization or its product to stand out. One solution is to use the actual organization as a framework to aid from within the organization's companion for advancement (Reid, 2005). There are several rules which add to the necessity for displaying correlations. A few critical factors for this assurance are the way that significant documentation workplaces have merged or joined with other organizations, the widening amount of deeply evolved customers, the soaring expenditure to utilize conventional publicizing techniques, broadening overall competition, reducing the efficiency of conventional media, the reduced cost of data set admission and use, additionally the deterioration of a distinctive media message (Duncan & Everett, 1993).

The supposition of an IMC plan is based on using one principal data and correspondence procedure for every significant interest group. This approach is then used as the foundation for carrying out each separate interconnects' capacity, such as advertising and marketing, via a variety of various correspondence frameworks. The reference refers to the organization or connection intending to convey messages to the buyer, who is referred to as the recipient. The content has been sent via different mediums, which decodes the message for the client. The beneficiary can respond to the shipper and convey whether the notification was regarded or effective. The idea of an advertisement on TV capturing the supermarket's eye externally is an example of criticism. A good showcasing data and correspondence strategy occurs when the customer can correctly decipher the underlying meaning as all is well with the globe delivered (Clow et al., 2002). Advertising Strategy is a term that refers to an all-encompassing approach to advertising communication. It aims to ensure message consistency



and the effective use of media. They relate to the objectives of both online and offline promotional techniques.

Online marketing channels include any e-marketing efforts or projects, ranging from site design enhancement (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC), companion, and electronic mail, league title mostly to current online-based networks for online programs, websites, miniature posting for a blog, RSS, electronic transmit and Internet TV. Traditional copy (sheet, journal), mail requests, digital marketing, manufacturing relations, press release, radio, and television are all disconnected advertising channels. An organization develops its integrated marketing correspondence program by utilizing all components of the advertising mix (item, value, spot, and advancement). It acknowledges that Internet advertising has become the best and most widely acknowledged type of global correspondence. Web-promoting correspondence includes the worldwide exchange of thoughts, concepts, and information about services and products. Internet promoting correspondence began with promotional strategies drivers, for instance, digital entertainment organizations, conversations, email, ad campaigns, online journals, public statements, RSS conveyance, and other time-limited instruments. If you have a website selling products or services, it can help you generate visitors to your site, and within what appears to be an instant time, you have been obtaining contacts and selling. Increasing traffic to your website is critical; obviously, your website must look fantastic, be well-organized, have a lot of content, and be search engine optimized. It will enable you to stand out even more than your competitors. In any specific instance, those new visitors will aid in communicational interaction by informing those around your novel and substance-rich website. The web marketplace is consistently overflowing (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). Conversely, consumers are willing to spend more money on marketing and direct marketing, and as a result, they are achieving better outcomes. Even though there have been some continual declines in the regular prevalence rate of traditional publicizing in the promoting affiliation blend, it is still a substantial part of promoting correspondences. Preparing an IMC program necessitates the individual in charge of the organization discussing innovative and media issues typically discussed in traditional marketing. These basic perspectives are applied to a broader range of options to create a successful plan (Caywood & Ewing, 1991). The three main perspectives of integrated communications in marketing include increased corporate or client-side competition and risk. Mergers and acquisitions have introduced new markets to meet consumers' changing needs. Creative marketing techniques to better meet their needs. Second, regarding the media and the market, Conventional marketing and sales



trends have been crippled because of data visibility. As an outcome of technological developments, the exploration for more impactful and cost-effective methods has intensified. Marketers must communicate effectively. Third, advertisers must develop more detailed and effectual communication layouts as consumers' lifestyles evolve. Client relationship management (CRM) has become a requirement for most organizations in recent years, and by implementing it, they attempt to compete in competitive business sectors (Becker et al., 2009). Although no universally accepted definition exists for CRM, it is commonly regarded as developing legitimate customer relationships in various ways to generate long-term benefits. The purpose of CRM is to create an open door for repurchase even further by constructing the client relations process and providing the right proposal at the right cost and item through the right correspondence framework at the right time. CRM programs are centered on attracting the ideal client, sustaining with him, and enabling him to purchase additional of the company's services and products. Marketing interaction is the key to this relationship's success. Displaying communication is a broad term that depicts various instruments that render organized responses to crowds via different media to fabricate a brand. The primary tools are promotion, business development, advertising activities, advertising, individual selling, event and endorsement (Kotler et al., 2013). IMC is a concept that has become a pivotal factor for both academics and businesses since the early 1990s. According to (Schultz & Patti, 2009), IMC is a process by which organizations accelerate returns by aligning communications aims with company objectives. Duncan defined it as a concept that directs and coordinates the most common method of organizing, carrying out, and directing brand messages through which brand-client relationships are built (Huang, 2008). A sponsored, non-individual recommendation of materials by a company is known as promotion (Kotler, 2003), using various types of print, outdoor, broadcasting, and interactive media to raise brand awareness and image and persuade clients to respond. Dealing with improvements is a valuable additional momentary thought to rouse clients to encourage response and item provisional. Misusing this tool can damage brand image and decrease benefits over time (Aaker, 1996).

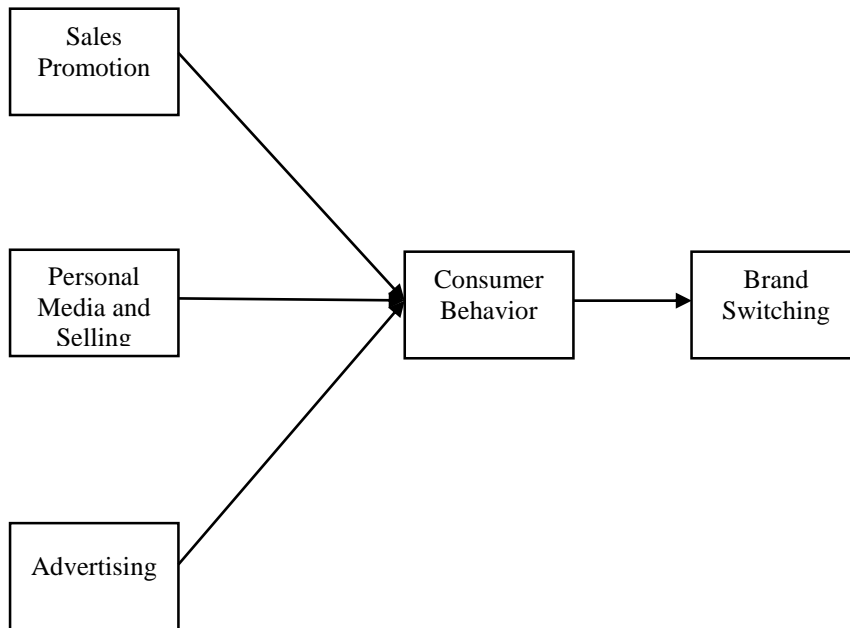
Direct marketing is a data-driven, direct, and instinctive communication method that uses various media to elicit a client response. Due to the volume of rudeness, it is frequently regarded as an aggravating device by clients (Šķiltere & Bormane, 2018). Lowering client surrender and actively increasing benefits should be considered to avoid this. Marketing attempts to create and control brand news, declarations, and updates distributed through free



media. Showcasing executives use this MC to promote and enhance their image. According to (Boyland et al., 2016), Independent marketing is an interpersonal connection in which the agent meets the needs of the client in order to gain mutual benefits. Independent sales are the most expensive marketing communication tool.

### Conceptual Framework

Figure 2



### Hypothesis

The hypotheses for this research are mentioned below:

- H1:** Sales Promotion elements have a significant impact on brand switching.
- H2:** Personal Media and Selling have a significant impact on brand switching
- H3:** Advertising elements have a significant impact on brand switching
- H4:** Consumer behaviour has a moderating impact on sales promotion and brand switching.

**H1: Sales Promotion elements have a significant impact on brand switching.**

### Explanation

The study by Ali et al. (2019) examines the impact of sale promotion on the brand-switching behaviour of Pakistani in the clothing industry. This study investigates each factor of sales promotion, including various incentives, discount-based offers, and special event offers that significantly impact customer behaviour in switching brands. The findings of the study discussed that sales promotion does have a significant influence on customer behaviour in



regards to brand switching, such as a customer who are encouraged by sales promotion are most like to choose the specific brand that has high value and consist of more benefits, along with this it increases the customer satisfaction level.

## **H2: Personal Media and Selling have a significant impact on brand switching**

### **Explanation**

Gulamali and Persson (2017) suggested that personal media assist in the selling of the products through various means, such as markets that majorly influence the individual perspective, communication of various brands through word of mouth, along with offering some recommendations to individuals and experience gain by engaging with the customers, all these factors are having a huge impact on switching off the brand. The study's findings also imply that when customers gain a positive experience or achieve some personal point of view from others, they are most likely to switch brands.

## **H3: Advertising elements have a significant impact on brand switching**

### **Explanation**

According to Jernberg et al. (2020) advertising consists of different factors, including certain commercials, numerous ads on online platforms, posters, and external advertising strategies, which significantly influence brand switching. The study also explains the development of brand value by having an effective campaign, which helps in communicating the rewards of the brand, along with a unique selling strategy and propositions that have a huge influence on the customers' behaviour that ultimately leads towards the switching of the brand.

## **H4: Consumer behaviour has a moderating impact on sales promotion and brand switching.**

### **Explanation**

The study conducted by Lindholm (2008) suggested that customer behaviour is considered one of the moderating factors associated with the promotion of sales and brand switching. The study implores that how the customers distinguish, construe, and respond to the promotion of sales activities that include certain loyalty-based programs, discount rates, and incentives significantly impacts brand switching. The study also found that the customers' behaviour in making a certain decision, brand loyalty and the choices of everyone has an



impact on the effectiveness of promotion in sales, which are considered major driving factors for brand switching.

### **Research Methodology**

Research methodology is the scientific method and systematic way of gathering pertinent knowledge about a topic, analyzing it appropriately, and drawing authentic conclusions (Kothari, 2004). Based on this, it can be stated that research methodology is an integral part of any research required to maintain a certain standard of research outcome. The following chapter contains specifications on research philosophy, research approach, research design, and, most important, justifications for opting for a certain methodology over others (Saunders et al., 2019).

This research is based on positivism. Positivism approach helps in prior study in collection of data through the questionnaire. The goal of positivist studies is to establish causal relationships or explanatory links that, in turn, enable prediction and management of the phenomena under study. Quantitative observations that result in statistical examination are necessary for positivism. For a long time, it has dominated both the business and management research industries. The empiricist hypothesis, which holds that all information comes from human experience, is stated to be in line with positivism as a concept. The idea is that the universe comprises distinct, recognizable elements and occurrences that interact visibly, predictably, and regularly. An atomistic, ontological viewpoint regularly, and predictably (Irshaidat, 2022). Deductive research is based on the beliefs that are confirmed or put to the proof to advance science. Deductive research does not need these concepts, while inductive research attempts to develop or establish new theories. The deductive research method explores a historically significant occurrence or hypothesis to determine whether it holds true under conditions. "The deductive approach most closely adheres to the line of reason." it has been said. From a theory to an innovative hypothesis, the case progresses. By contrasting the theory with observations, which either support or refute it, the theory is put to the test (Wardani & Kusuma, 2020).

The researcher chose this approach because it depends on logical premises and arguments and enables the researcher to build a conclusion on data results. This approach aids the researcher to explain the relationship between concepts and variables. The benefit of the deductive approach is that the data analyzed through this method is considered valid. Expanding on the initial sample might be necessary from time to time. However, only during data collection can this decision be made. In this research study, the sample size was 80



respondents which belongs to different provinces of Pakistan. The researcher presume that a better and larger sample size will be resulted in comprehensive results.

## Results

Interpretation of the Pearson correlation has helped the researcher to get the data and to find the relationship of variable and significance and insignificant has been indicated as per value, that all the all the hypothesis has been accepted via working with the perception of individual.

Table 1

Data findings

	Correlation	Brand
Advertising	Pearson Correlation	.957
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
Sales	Pearson Correlation	.835**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
Personal Media	Pearson Correlation	.903**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
Consumer Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.872**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
Brand Switching	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).*

*At the 1 tailed brand switching has the significance relationship with the rest is significant.*

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that brand switching is a positive relationship with the rest of the variables which are part of the study. The brand switching has a strong positive relationship with the rest of the variables in the study. Hence future more collection of data is required in order to gain a better insight in the research. The statement of the problem has been discussed briefly associated with the knowledge gap from the fact that there is no extensive literature available on IMC in marketing research. There are no studies till date which can address the question of how sales promotion affects the consumer buying behaviour especially in apparel industry of Pakistan. All variables and hypothesis have been accepted.

Overall, the conclusion of the present study implores the influence of integrated marketing communication regarding brand switching. As per Aguirre et al. (2015), in today's era, one of the critical concepts to comprehend is digital marketing and the behaviour of customers.

From the literature, it has been discussed, according to Yasin et al. (2017), in the concept of integrating market-based communication incorporating IMC-based strategies, various brands



can involve with the customer and can establish strong relationships with them that help to influence the customer with their decision-making process and help to increase the loyalty with the customer that significantly reduces the switch of the brand. As discussed, Huang et al. (2008) also stated that by implementing different media for interaction helps the industry to increase the brand awareness and help to motivate the customer to respond and remain consistent, loyal with the brand.

The brand is considered successful according to its ability to effectively present them and help to strengthen the brand image and help establish strong customer relationships. Research suggests that customers' behaviour is based on their attitudes, beliefs, and preference.

Incorporating communication in the market is considered to have a significant impact on achieving the goals and coordinating with different communication channels and advertising to offer a convincing brand experience to the customers. Implementing numerous factors such as sales promotion, establishing a strong relationship with the customer and advertising strategy significantly impact the customer. Additionally, the study analyses the key role of the customer in the marketing strategy; by incorporating various communication strategies, the brands can effectively reach the target customer, comprehend their perspective, and needs, and influence their decision-making process.

One of the examples of the clothing industry in Pakistan offers various communication-based strategies that influence the customer's behaviour regarding switching the brand. Pakistan is one of the efficient textile-based exporters that efficiently depend upon the attitudes and preferences of the customer behaviour toward certain brands. In general, comprehending the influence of communication in switching the brand is considered dynamic in the current digital-based framework.

## **Implication and Recommendation**

### **Implications**

- As per ( , IMC is crucial for digital media to reach and engage customers efficiently. It is also according to the findings of Čikošev (2019)
- Not only this, implementing market communication significantly impacts the behaviour of customers and the choice of a particular brand. It helps to develop an interconnected experience of the brand and strengthens the brand's reputation.



- The clothing industry present in Pakistan can be beneficial by incorporating IMC to effectively shape consumers' behaviour and significantly reduce the switching of the brand image.

### Recommendations

- Establish a clear objective and align the IMC-based plan with communication goals within the organisation.
- Additionally, develop the brand's image across numerous communication channels that help create a strong and loyal image of the brand.
- Moreover, establish advertising campaigns, and apply social media and various digital platforms to reach the customer efficiently.
- The industry needs to focus on the relationship with the customer to establish a strong relationship and maintain loyalty with them to reduce brand switching.
- According to the IMC strategies, the brand must emphasize its image to stay updated with the recent ongoing trends in the digital market framework.
- Moreover, the industry must collaborate with various ambassadors to maintain credibility with the investors.

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