

# The Role of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) in Absorbing Tourists: A Case Study in Kish Island

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**Abstract:** Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) are known as one of 4ps marketing mix elements. Five basic factors of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) which have been investigated in the present study are: advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing. The present study adopted a descriptive and correlational approach. Data were collected based on library research as well as a questionnaire. The statistical populations of study consist of 49 hotel managers along with 317 tourists in Kish Island who were selected randomly from tourism industry experts and tourists in Kish Island. In order to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire, 30 questionnaires were administered among tourists and it was reported 93% by researchers; meanwhile, The subsequent data analyses via SPSS revealed that all of five basic factors of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) including advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing have a significant relationship with absorbing tourists in Kish Island.

**Key words:** Advertising, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC, Tourists, Kish Island.

## 1. Introduction.

In recent decades, Advertising is taken into consideration as one of the most important tools for success in career life in human societies. This tool should be studied and investigated carefully as one of the scientific disciplines, social, cultural and communicative and it should be used in various aspects of economic, political and cultural activities scientifically and artfully in order to achieve the objectives successfully (Doswell, 2000). The main purpose and function of advertising is increasing the "marketing and increasing market" and any negligence and lack of proper utilization of these tools will not only be a failure, but also it leads to the backwardness of tourism marketing competitions and ultimately failure and bankruptcy in the world of correct marketing in the international arena (Ebrahimi et al., 2010). Mass media, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotion tools are parts of marketing communications strategies which must be effectively integrated for success through a system. In this regard, the concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), through the integration of the messages, strengthens its position in the market and makes advertising powerful. The concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) was introduced at Northwestern University in 1998 for the first time. A research team from the Union of American advertising companies has offered a definition of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as follows: The concept of marketing communications planning which identify added value of a comprehensive program and evaluate the key role of various communication tools, such as advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations and integrate these tools to achieve transparency, consistency and the maximum communication impact (Belch, 2001). In fact, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) seeks to maximize the positive messages and minimize the negative messages. According to American Marketing Association, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a concept of a marketing communications plan which evaluates strategic roles of a variety of communication tools such as advertising, public relations, personal selling and sales promotion in the form of a comprehensive program of communication, and integrates these tools to maximize the impact of marketing communications (Keller, 2001). Therefore, the main objective of this research is to investigate the role of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) to attract more tourists to Kish Island in order to use tourism attractions as a source of income, job creation, improve social services in Kish Island.

## 2. Research Methodology.

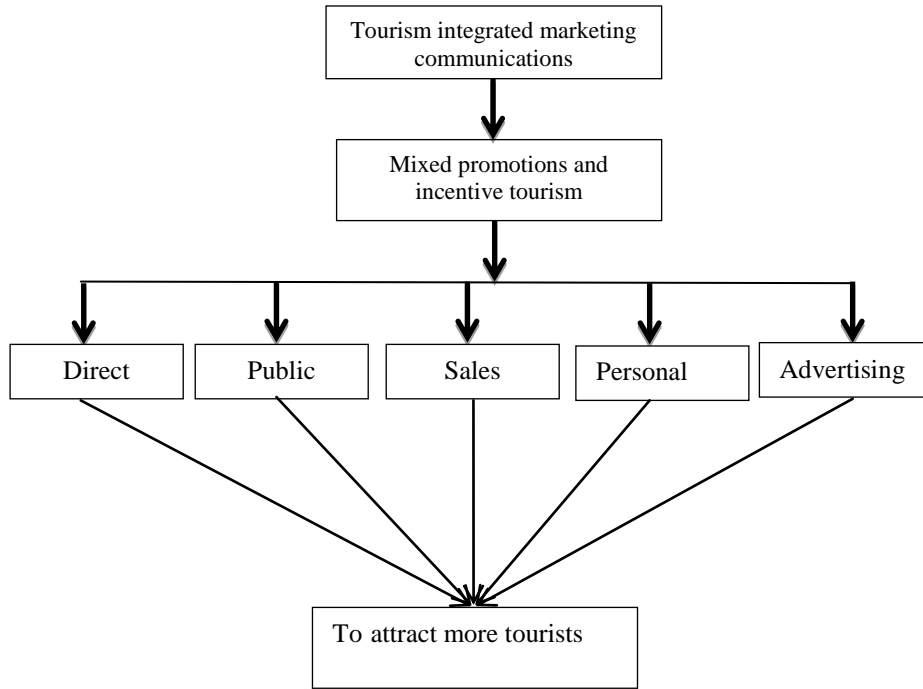
Current research has a practical goal and it is descriptive in terms of the data collection. Meanwhile, data analysis is analytical. The statistical population consists of all administrators, scholars and experts in tourism and marketing, as well as all tourists in Kish Island. A random sampling was used in this study both in the first sample (managers) and the second sample (tourists) and 317 tourists as well as 49 hotel managers in Kish were selected according to Cochran formula.

In this study, a closed questionnaire with Likert scale of five options has been used. Firstly, 30 questionnaires were distributed among the participants in order to assess the reliability, after collecting data, reliability was estimated via SPSS software and Cronbach's alpha was reported to be 0.93.

3. **Research Hypotheses.**

- 3.1. Advertising is effective in attracting tourists to Kish Island.
- 3.2. Personal sale is effective in attracting tourists to Kish Island.
- 3.3. The sale promotion is effective in attracting tourists to Kish Island.
- 3.4. Public relations are effective in attracting tourists to Kish Island.
- 3.5. Direct marketing is effective in attracting tourists to Kish Island.

Conceptual Model is as follows:



Source: Chris Fill, Marketing communication, Context, Strategies and application. 3th ed, Perentice Hall .Europe, 2006, p21.

4. **Data Analysis.**

Before examining hypotheses, it should be identified whether data are normal or not. To ensure the normality Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted and analyzed. The following table shows the results of the test.

**Table 1.** The Kolmogorov-Smirnov the significance level

Advertising	Public relations	Direct marketing	Sales promotion	Personal selling	
4.46	1.58	1.83	1.75	0.29	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
0.00	0.01	0.002	0.004	0.04	level of significance

According to level of significance in the above table, as all levels of significance for the subscales are smaller than 0/05;thus, it can be said that normal distribution assumption of collected data is rejected for all the Subscales.

**Table 2.** Chi-square statistic

level of significance	degrees of freedom	Value of statistics	
0.00	16	0.001	Advertising
0.00	16	0.018	Personal selling
0.00	16	0.013	Sales promotion
0.00	16	0.022	Direct marketing
0.00	16	0.022	Public relations

Based on the results, the significance level for this test is equal to zero which is smaller than 0/05 so the null hypothesis will be rejected at 95%;in other words, all dimensions of Integrated Marketing Communication have significant impact on attracting more tourists to Kish Island.

As mentioned above, effectiveness factors in attracting tourists including (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing). In this study, researchers analyze these factors in the sample size to evaluate the factors of Integrated Marketing Communication from tourists and experts' perspectives. For this reason, factors under investigation have been converted to relative data lack of scale. To do the maximum and minimum each factor was identified and variation range was estimated. Then minimum amount decreased of the value of each factor and results was divided on amplitude domain in order to obtain relative data lack of scale between zero and one.

Eventually, the relative data obtained for each factor in each dimension were averaged. The findings are provided in the following table:

**Table 3.** Integrated Marketing Communication indicators in attracting tourists to Kish Island

Direct marketing	Public relations	Sales promotion	Personal selling	Advertising	
0.34	0.35	0.46	0.41	0.46	Tourists
0.3	0.33	0.42	0.36	0.39	experts
0.32	0.34	0.44	0.38	0.42	total

The results show both groups of respondents believe that sales promotion with a score of 44/0 hits the highest score in the marketing among other factors of marketing communication in Kish. The second place is occupied by advertising with a score of 0/42, then the scores of 38/0, 34/0 and 32/0 will be allocated to the dimensions of personal selling, public relations and direct marketing respectively, This means that marketing communications are better than the indices of advertising, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing. Furthermore, five dimensions of marketing communications get more points from tourists' the perspective than the experts.

**5. Investigation of the Causal Effects of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Variables on Attracting Tourists.**

Now in order to investigate the causal effects variables including advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, and public relations and direct marketing on attracting tourists multiple regression is applied. To achieve this purpose, variables including advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing are considered as independent variables and tourist attraction is considered as the dependent variable. Then the effect of independent variables on the dependent variables will be examined.

**Table 4.** Changes in the dependent variable by the independent variables

Standard Error	Corrected Coefficient of Determination (R <sup>2</sup> )	Coefficient of The Coefficient of Determination (R)	Correlation	Model
0.76	0.67	0.57	0.755	

As Table 4 shows, corrected coefficient of determination is equal to 67/0, this value indicates that the about 67% of the dependent variable (tourist attraction) is explained under the influence of independent variables of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) by the model.

**Table 5.** Regression model coefficients statistics of Integrated Marketing Communication

The significance level	T	Standardized coefficient beta	Non-standard Beta	coefficients SE	Model
0	-6.992		0.056	-0.395	Constant Amount
0	19.345	0.537	0.027	0.523	Sales Promotion
0	11.401	0.301	0.030	0.034	Advertising
0	12.932	0.254	0.017	0.223	Personal Selling
0	11.240	0.204	0.015	0.198	Public Relations
0	10.819	0.199	0.009	0.160	Direct Marketing

As it can be seen in Table 5, the level of significance for all variables is less than 0/05, in other words, the results indicate that all of the independent variables in the regression model are significant. Regression analysis also suggest that the most important factor affecting tourism is sales promotion by coefficient of 0/537, This means that for every one unit which is added to sales promotion,0 /537 units will be added to tourists attraction.

**6. Conclusion.**

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a new phenomenon in marketing communications. Studies in this field show that dimensions of Integrated Marketing Communication have been changed dramatically in terms of concepts, principles, and views. But very little work has been done in terms of content patterns, and little research has been done in this field. Managers must be able to convince their customers to do business with them and continue to do so. Effective communication is a key to convince customers to buy the product or receive service. So to attract customers and satisfy the clients will be difficult without having the necessary skills in communications, Even if the product or service being offered complies with customers' needs.

The results of the present research are consistent with khezri (2013), Bashokuh and Shekasteband (2012), Kia Hosseini (2009) and Reed (2005). Thus, by enabling active agencies in the tourism industry, reducing the government's tenure and transferring of administrative affairs to the private sector with priority on infrastructure development and strengthening the related companies in the tourism industry with respect to global success models and by providing training and consulting programs by the tourism authorities,

It will be possible to introduce Kish's tourism attractions and facilities as a different destination. This would be accessible and achievable by means of active participation in festivals, exhibitions and tourist seminars through the use of experts who have the necessary skills in effective advertising.

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