INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION MIX AND BRAND PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE BAKERY FIRMS IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Many bakery firms in Nigeria adopt various elements of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) mix without adequately considering the associated costs and the appropriate stage of the product life cycle at which such promotional tools should be applied. The general aim of the study is to investigate the level of relationship between IMC mix and brand performance of small and medium scale bakery business in Kogi State, Nigeria. The population of the study consists 120 bakery firms according to Master Bakers and Caterers Association in Kogi state. The study was quantitative in nature and used the deductive method which is the research method used in the positivist paradigm. The study was conducted in Kogi state, Nigeria. Only bakery business firms belonging to Master Bakers and Caterers Association of Nigeria (MBCAN) in the three senatorial districts participated in the study. Simple random sampling was employed. Primary source of data was used for this study through questionnaire instrument. Pearson's correlation was used for the analysis. The study found that advertising has positive and significant effect on brand performance. The result also reveals a positive and significant relationship between sales promotion and brand performance. The study concludes that advertising and sales promotion is being applied at different rates which is impacting brand performance at different levels. The study recommended that bakery firms should develop a more effective sales force by providing adequate training in interpersonal communication and personal selling techniques. This will enable sales personnel to strengthen relationships with existing customers while also enhancing their ability to attract and retain new customers.
Keywords: Integrated Marketing mix, advertising, sales promotion, bakery firms, brand performance

1.0 Introduction

One of the major objectives of every human being is to satisfy his physiological needs. All of us require food for our hunger, and live to carry out our daily duties. Hunger needs can be satisfied with food which comes in natural, semi-processed or processed forms. Bread happens to be one of the processed foods. Bread is an indispensable food in family households in Nigeria (Izuchukwu 2018). In fact, it is more 'staple' than rice, 'eba' or any popular staples which are perceived as an exclusive 'culinary culture' of Nigerians (Izuchukwu, 2018). It has been observed that bread is eaten by all genders, all ages, tribes, both rich and poor and is available in different sizes, shapes, composition and price level to cater to the needs of different groups of consumers. Bread is a 'grab and go' food; it is consumed with practically anything and this is why there is hardly any household in Nigeria that does not have bread in the house at all (Izuchukwu, 2018).

One of the major challenges of the industry according to Izuchukwu (2018) is the saturation of that space with too many players. If outsiders with not much knowledge of the industry understood the business of bread-making, it would appear very profitable. This explains the many bakeries-both certified by NAFDAC and non-certified by NAFDAC-in all nooks and crannies of the country. Similarly, there are also unregistered, unlicensed and undocumented producers of bread who are not required to follow any health and safety regulations of NAFDAC. Not only do they present a risk to regulated bakers but also the final consumer as well. They make low quality, low cost bread using unwholesome baking material such as potassium bromate, which is harmful to health and causes cancer; they are able to attract high patronage due to their low prices.

Many bakery firms in Nigeria are using different promotional mixes without due consideration for the cost and appropriateness of the stage of product in its life cycle. They are often skeptical as to how to properly coordinate and integrate the communication mix at different stages of a product life. Many bakery owners/managers have not fully appreciated the fact that communicating effectively with customers and other stakeholders involves not only a mix of the traditional tools but rather an efficient coordination through the adoption of the IMC approach.

There are a lot of small and medium scale bakery owner and/or manager who always seek to attract and keep their customers and create high level of brand loyalty without realizing the value of integration and coordination. The problem for companies is to find out what might be the most effective way to support or obstruct the implementation of an IMC, when a multitude of departments are left with the task of distributing marketing communication (Swan, 2004).
The study addresses questions posed below:

i. To what extent is advertising related to brand performance of small and medium scale bakery firms' in Kogi State, Nigeria?
ii. What is the extent of relationship between sales promotion and brand performance of small and medium scale bakery firms' in Kogi State, Nigeria?

The general objective of this study is to determine the extent of relationship that exists between integrated marketing communication mix and brand performance of small and medium scale bakery firms in Kogi State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

i. Determine the relationship between advertising and brand performance of small and medium scale bakery firms' in Kogi State, Nigeria.
ii. Examine the relationship between sales promotion and brand performance of small and medium scale bakery firms' in Kogi State, Nigeria.

The following research hypotheses were used to guide the study:
Ho; there is no significant positive relationship between advertising and brand performance of small and medium scale bakery firms' in Kogi State, Nigeria.
Ho: Sales promotion does not have significant positive relationship on brand performance of small and medium scale bakery firms' in Kogi State, Nigeria.

2.0 Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Integrated Marketing Communication Mix

A combination of marketing communication and information channels which are used to keep the "necessary public" in touch with each other is called integrated marketing communication mix. It is basically a blend of different promotional elements employed to communicate efficiently and effectively with the target audiences (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Different tools and channels are used by marketers to establish mutual lines of communication with key stakeholders (Saeed et al. 2013). According to Fill (2005), there are four marketing communication practices, the first being obviously advertising, then publicity, sales promotion and personal selling. According to Kotler and Keller (2013) as cited by Bennett (1995), the marketing communications mix is composed of 8 major modes of communication which include advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, interactive marketing, word of mouth marketing and personal selling.

Advertising

Advertising is defined as any paid, non-personal communication to promote or sell a product, service, or idea. It is used by businesses and organizations to communicate with their target audience, increase brand visibility, and encourage customers to take action (Kotler, 2023).

Regardless of the size of a business firm, advertising is simply one of the roles that it plays. It is always seen or indistinctly interpreted to mean – the process of locating and encouraging buyers to the output of a firm (Gana, 2008). Therefore, according to Achumba (2000) advertising's role as a marketing promotion activity is to get the product/ service into the hands through the right channels, to inform the customer/client about the methods through which wants can be satisfied, and finally to influence the behaviour of the customer/client to help the sender of the communication process.

Thus identification of markets and buyer motives should be the salient consideration in developing any advertising programme. In normal terms however, advertising is associated with the development of a product, pricing, distribution and communication; and in the more advanced firms, the consideration of the customer's needs and the development of new products, which means that all the products are modified in response to the needs (Kinghan, 2007).

Sales Promotion

A sales promotion is a short-term marketing campaign or marketing incentive that can enhance short-term income, generate new sales leads and dispose of stock. These approaches are leveraging the customer's need for urgency or value to prompt customer action. Promoting product and services of the company is one of the most commonly used methods and sales promotion is one of them. Sales promotion is one of the key components of the promotional mix, alongside advertising, direct marketing, and personal selling. It comprises a variety of short-term incentive strategies aimed at encouraging consumers to make faster and larger purchases of specific products or services. According to Adeniran et al. (2016), sales promotion activities are designed to appeal directly to consumers and influence their purchasing decisions. These promotional efforts provide additional value or rewards that motivate customers to buy a product, thereby enhancing demand and increasing sales volume. Tarigan et al. (2020) noted that sales promotion offers incentives to consumers, encouraging immediate purchase behavior and strengthening customer interest in a firm's offerings. Furthermore, sales promotion activities are primarily directed toward end-users and are intended to inform, persuade, motivate, and remind consumers about the availability and benefits of products and services. Ibrahim et al. (2018) emphasized that effective sales promotion can significantly influence consumer behavior, enhance customer engagement, and contribute to improved organizational performance. Cham et al. (2018) defines sales promotion as a communicated message from a known entity which gives a clear instruction to the receiver to take some type of action in the present or in the future.

Brand Performance

Brand performance is the quantifiable effect of your brand's actions on consumer perception, market presence, and financial results. It closes the gap between a brand's perception (long-term equity) and its ability to produce rapid, observable business outcomes (short-term sales or conversions). The goal of a brand-based differentiation strategy is to set a brand apart from rivals by emphasizing its distinctive attributes, principles, and character. By developing a unique brand identity and value proposition that appeals to the target market, this approach seeks to boost customer loyalty, brand recognition, and eventually gain a competitive edge (Lai, 2020)

Small and Medium Scale Bakery Firms

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in the bakery industry manage tight margins, shifting consumer preferences, and supply chain changes while meeting local market demand. Instead of relying just on low pricing, survival and profitability depend on product diversification, operational effectiveness, appealing packaging, and digital marketing (Lai, 2020).

Offering a variety of baked items (cakes, pastries, and specialty breads) guards against swings in sales of traditional bread. Diversification dramatically improves a company's performance from mediocre to excellent, according to research. In the face of shifting consumer demands for freshly baked artisan items, bakeries that consistently develop their products, methods, and market offerings are fiercely competitive.

Theoretical Review

This study is however anchored on contract theory and relationship marketing theories as they explain the relationship between the variables under consideration.

Contract Theory

Hart and Holmstrom (1986) established the contract theory. They contend that any kind of transaction must be mediated by a contract, whether explicit or tacit, and that the barrier is caused by people's divergent interests. They concur that contractual agreements are often used in contemporary societies to mitigate, if not entirely resolve, conflicts of interest. By working together under a well-crafted contract that offers them incentives, contracting parties take advantage of potential benefits. There are specific applications of the contact theory to brand performance. According to Lloyd and Barber (2016), advertising offers convey a promise that the items should fulfill. A product or service must fulfill its performance and safety guarantees, and brand owners must agree to any legal liability arising from the brand's performance being consistent with its promise.

Relationship Marketing Theory

The theory of direct response marketing led to the theory of relationship marketing, which later became a form of marketing that focuses on client satisfaction and retention rather than on sales (Alexander & Schouten, 2002). With the Internet and mobile platforms expanding, there have been more channels of social and collaborative communication, which have led to the growth of relationship marketing (Berglof & Bolton, 2002).

Relationship marketing is based on communicating with and gathering consumer needs only from current clients in a mutually beneficial transaction that typically entails the client's consent for contact via a "opt-in" mechanism. The volume of sales compared to other businesses that produce or sell the same goods and services is heavily influenced by the price and quality of the good/service, plus customer service, and has especially important ramifications for customer satisfaction (Berglof & Bolton, 2002).

Empirical Review

Comiche and Goncalves (2024) used the qualitative literature review method to investigate the strategic function of integrated marketing communication in creating brand value in Portugal. In order to determine current trends and strategies on integrated marketing communication and brand value, data analysis was done critically. The study's findings demonstrated how vital coherence and consistency are to the success of integrated marketing communication. Integrated marketing communication's ongoing adaptability to shifting consumer preferences and market circumstances has emerged as a crucial business approach. It has also shown itself to be an effective tool for delivering consistent experiences and crafting genuine storylines.

Butkouskaya et al. (2023) used structural equation modeling and multi-group analysis to investigate how customer performance influences integrated marketing communication results in various sizes of businesses in an international setting. The investigation of integrated marketing communication outcomes in the complicated model was the main emphasis of this study. The outcome demonstrated that the benefits of integrated marketing mix on word-of-mouth and repurchase intention are less when customers are satisfied. The findings contribute to an understanding of the particular role that customer performance plays in the efficacy of integrated marketing communication deployment in enhancing market and financial performance. It also demonstrated how the company's degree of formalization and flexibility affects the efficacy of integrated marketing communications.

3.0 Methodology

This study used the positivist paradigm's deductive research method because it is quantitative in nature. The research design comprises collecting information from respondents who worked for Kogi State's bakeries. The degree of correlation between the dependent variable (brand performance) and independent variable (integrated marketing communication mix) was ascertained through the examination of the generated data. Both the independent and dependent variables were regarded as multidimensional constructs because they are operationalized.
The study is carried out in Kogi states, Nigeria. Only bakery firms that are members of Master Bakers and Caterers Association of Nigeria in the three senatorial districts would participate in the study.

The population of the study consists of forty (40) registered members of Master Bakers and Caterers Association from each senatorial district of Kogi state, Nigeria. Therefore, the population of the study was 120 bakery firms according to Master Bakers and Caterers Association in Kogi state. Because the population was manageable, the study used the whole enumeration (census) approach, in which the entire population served as the sample size. Basic random sampling was used. This provided equal participation opportunities to all small and medium-sized bakeries in Kogi State, Nigeria that are members of the Master Bakers Association.
The primary means of gathering data for this study was the questionnaire. Five-point Likert scale questions were used in the study. The completeness of the gathered data was examined. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze quantitative data after responses were matched, tabulated, and examined using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). To determine which IMC tool contributed most to brand performance, a multivariate regression model was employed. In order to demonstrate the relationship between IMC and brand performance of small and medium-sized bakery businesses in Kogi State, Nigeria, the study also employed regression and Pearson's correlation.

Model Specification

Below are the simple linear regression models that will be applied as:

$BP \quad = f(AD, SP)$

Mathematically, the model was specified as:

$\mathrm{BP}_i \quad = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \mathrm{AD}_i + \beta_2 \mathrm{SP}_i + \varepsilon_i$

Where:

BP = Brand Performance
AD = Advertising
SP = Sales Promotion
ε_i = Error term
A priori expectation: $\beta_1 > 0,\ \beta_2 > 0,$
β_0 = Intercept of model constant

$\beta_1 \ldots \beta_2$ = Coefficients of the Independent variables

i = Cross-sectional; and

f = Functional relationship

4.0 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The nine targeted bakery businesses in Kogi State, Nigeria, received questionnaires, which were ideally given to the marketing directors and other individuals involved in the respective businesses' marketing initiatives. Ninety-two of the 120 completed and returned surveys were used for the study. The study's response rate is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Response Rate for the Study

Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned
120	92

Source: Primary Data, SPSS V26, 2026.

Out of the 120 surveys provided, 92 were filled out and returned. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2000), the 92 representatives (77%) are considered sufficient for analysis, with a return rate of between 50% and 70%.

Descriptive Analysis

Integrated Marketing Communication Mix Tools

With pertinent questions under each marketing tool, the research aimed to identify the integrated marketing communication mix tools utilized by the different organizations. The study will determine which of the solutions is more frequently utilized by bakeries.

Advertising

The findings in relation to advertising are presented in table 4.4 followed by elucidation.

Table 4.4: Advertising
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Advertising of products and services create more awareness	92	4.82	.479	.230
Advertising of your firm's product encourage new customers	92	4.00	.703	.495

Advertising of products increase sales volume	92	4.49	.605	.366
Advertising changes consumers attitude	92	3.93	.624	.389
Advertising leads to greater market share	92	4.71	.689	.474
Grand Mean Total		**4.39**	**0.62**	**0.39**

Source: Primary Data, SPSS V26, (2026)

Table 4.4's results show a grand total mean of 4.39 and a standard deviation of 0.62, confirming that bakeries do, in fact, employ advertising to promote their goods. Product and service advertising raises awareness and boosts sales volume, which increases market share. The corresponding mean scores are 4.82, 4.49, and 4.71. There is a connection in that product and service advertising raises awareness, which raises the volume of sales of the products and increases the possibility of gaining market share. However, the results show that, with a mean score of 3.93, advertising's capacity to alter consumer attitudes was evaluated as the lowest.

Sales Promotion

The findings in relation to sales promotion are presented in table 4.5 followed by elucidation.

Table 4.5: Sales Promotion

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Sales promotion increases products awareness	92	4.23	.674	.454
Sales promotion improves customer loyalty	92	4.52	.657	.431
Sales promotion stimulates product purchase	92	4.23	.530	.281
Sales promotion enhances customer buying Decision	92	4.74	.581	.337
Sales promotion leads to increased sales volumes	92	4.60	.578	.334
Grand Mean Total		4.46	0.60	0.37

Source: Primary Data, SPSS V26, (2026)

Sales promotion has a grand mean score of 4.46 and a standard deviation of 0.60 in the application across the 92 enterprises, as shown in table 4.5. With mean scores of 4.74, 4.60, 4.52, and 4.23, respectively, the majority concur that sales promotions improve customers' purchasing decisions, increase sales volume, improve customer loyalty, raise product awareness, and encourage product purchase. Additionally, it is agreed through a tie that product purchases are stimulated by sales promotion, which results in higher volumes. This may have to do with the fact that sales promotion investigates or employs strategies like discounts to increase sales.

Discussion of Findings

The main aim of the study was to determine how integrated marketing communication affects the brand performance of small and medium-sized bakeries in Lokoja, Kogi state. Advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, public relations, personal selling, and social media marketing were among the IMC tools. Data was examined to ascertain whether they agreed or disagreed with the cited literature while also contributing to the body of knowledge. The majority of the analysis's conclusions were in fact consistent with the body of information cited in the literature study.

Descriptive Analysis

According to the descriptive analysis of the integrated marketing communication mix (IMCM) tools, every bakery company used all of the tools, albeit to varying degrees, to determine their effects on brand performance among their customers. This is corroborated by Oduor's (2017) claim that the tools are combined with varying degrees of intensity to communicate with customers. Public relations and sales promotion received the highest mean score (4.46), followed by advertising (4.39), personal selling (4.23), and direct marketing (4.20), according to the data. Therefore, these results are consistent with the research conducted by Reid (2002) and Lekhanya (2014), which shows that high-level marketing communication integration improves performance.

Correlation Analysis between the IMCM Tools and Brand Performance

All of the integrated marketing communication mix (IMCM) tools and brand performance had a favorable and statistically significant link, according to the correlation analysis of the variables. The results showed that brand performance will rise in response to an increase in integrated marketing communication mix tools (IMCM) and fall in response to a decrease in IMCM.

The research conducted by Chaudhuri (2002), who believed that loyalty and awareness were essential to performance, supports these conclusions. Hoeffler and Keller (2003) concurred that strong brands with improved product performance perception, as indicated by the mean obtained via the use of IMC tools, are indicative of a brand's organizational value. Apoghiran (2016) affirms that IMC techniques are useful for developing awareness campaigns. Additional studies by Oduor (2017), Fill (2005), Blythe (2006), Kotler and Keller (2009), and Palmer (2005) all supported the different roles that IMC tools play in brand promotion.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

An overview of the research's findings addresses the main aim of the study, which was to ascertain the degree of correlation between the brand success of small and medium-sized bakery businesses in Kogi State, Nigeria, and the integrated marketing communication mix. Both descriptive and correlation analyses have demonstrated that there is, in fact, a strong relationship between integrated marketing communication and brand performance.

In conclusion, regardless of how quickly businesses use them, advertising and sales promotion have a major impact on brand performance at various scales. This suggests that, with the right use of ICM tools, small and medium-sized bakeries in Kogi State, Nigeria, may improve brand performance. Others, such as sales marketing, should be investigated because their significance was negligible. Nonetheless, the fact that the two (2) MC tools directly account for 56.8% of brand performance indicates that combining them strengthens the brand and should be used by all businesses.

Based on the findings of the study, the followings were recommended:

i. Advertising is an underutilized tactic that might have a bigger impact on raising brand awareness because it demonstrated a stronger positive and significant association with brand performance. These indicate that the businesses are not utilizing the tools appropriately, which results in a negative impact on brand performance rather than an improvement.

ii. Since sales promotion has been shown to have a significant impact on improving brand performance, it should receive more attention. This can be achieved by developing a more capable sales force that is well-versed in public relations and people skills, which will help them cultivate stronger relationships with their current clientele and attract new ones.

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