

# Marketing Through Sport: Exploring Impact Of Integrated Marketing Communication On Effectiveness Of A Company's Pink Ribbon Campaign

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## Introduction

In recent years, integrated marketing communication (IMC) has become a vital strategy to lead success of business. With the systematic changes, the mass merchandising philosophies of major brand companies have been replaced by strategies that retain micromarketing, databases, and consumer-initiated communication (Keller, 2016). Among the numerous forms to run a successful business campaign, sponsoring sport events that support philanthropic cause is one common tactic (Sung & Lee, 2016). Despite a massive popularity of application of IMC, its effectiveness in the field of sport business has not been thoroughly examined (Kinney, 2010). In particular, little is known about the relationship among campaign interest, media channels, and sponsoring philanthropic sport events. Considering the increasing popularity of corporate sponsorship of philanthropic sport events, it is necessary to investigate how IMC strategy influence the sponsorship outcome. Thus, the purpose of the current study is to examine how participants' interest of the social issue (i.e., preventing breast cancer), number of media channel they received about the campaign (i.e., pink ribbon campaign), and usefulness of media channel have an impact on awareness of company's campaign, and further, brand image and brand loyalty.

## Methods

Amore Pacific, the sponsoring company, is the largest cosmetics company in South Korea. The company and the Korea Breast Cancer Foundation have run pink ribbon campaign together for 11 years applying diverse methods and media channels such as sponsoring pink ribbon marathon, advertising breast cancer awareness campaign, publicizing breast cancer self-check guides, etc. Data were collected in five major cities in South Korea by using stratified random sampling method. A total of 1,000 female subjects (mean age = 38.89, SD = 10.88) participated in this investigation. Female subjects were used because most of the company's products are designed for women. The questionnaire contained five distinctive components: 1) types of media channel (TYPE), 2) usefulness of media channel (USE), 3) event-sponsor fit (FIT), 4) corporate image (CI), and 5) purchase intention (PI). FIT was measured with four items taken from Gwinner and Bennett (2008) and Speed and Thompson (2000). CI was measured by three items adopted and modified from Nguyen and Leblanc (2001) to meet the research purposes. Finally, three items from Nguyen and Leblanc (1998) were used to measure PI. All of the items were measured using a 7-point Likert-scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In order to test the suggested model, structural equation modeling was conducted by using Amos 21.

## Results/discussions

The study gauged whether participants' interest of breast cancer affects their awareness of pink ribbon campaign, brand image and brand royalty as a result of IMC strategy (i.e., number of media channel participants were exposed and perceived usefulness of media channel). Across the different data-model fit indices, the proposed model performed well and should be kept as a valid model. Data assembled in this analysis support findings from other investigations in that consumers' interest in the social issue (i.e., breast cancer) had a positive influence on the awareness of pink ribbon campaign, brand image, and brand royalty. In addition, the results reveal that the company's efforts to apply IMC strategy are significant predictors of effectiveness of pink ribbon campaign (i.e., campaign awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty). Furthermore, the findings shed considerable light on the value of IMC strategy and importance of selecting reliable media channel in the context of sport marketing. This study provides guidelines for selecting media channels and clearly demonstrates how IMC strategy, particularly sponsoring a philanthropic sport event, can influence business performance.

## References

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