

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE AND JOURNALISM

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS FRAME WORK: ASSESSMENT OF HOW IT WORKS IN BRANDING ETHIOPIA.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR DERGERE OF MASTER OF ART IN MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM & COMMUNICATION

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is work and that all sources of materials that are used for this study have been dully acknowledged.

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This is to certify that the thesis is prepared by Abiy Habtamu Kidane entitled "**The role of media in integrated marketing communication framework: assessment of how it works in branding Ethiopia.**" which is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master Journalism and communication. It complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Advertisings (ads)

American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC)

German National Tourism Board (GNTB)

Integrated marketing communications (IMC)

Marketing communications (Marcom)

Marketing public Relations (MPR)

Ministry of foreign affairs (MOFA)

Nation Branding (NB)

Out-of-home (OOH)

Public relations (PR)

South Africa (SA)

The London-based Institute for Identity (INSTID)

Word-of-mouth communication (WOM)

Abstract

The intention of the paper is to examine the extent to which the role of media in integrated marketing communication implemented to brand the nation and the image of the country positively perceived in the eyes of the world with regular promotional organizations, investment agencies, national tourism organizations and embassies follow the principle of synchronization that characterizes an integrated marketing communications approach in the Ethiopia contemporary politics.

Concerning the research gap, on previous related studies, Scarcity of research papers on the area was widely experienced. There is very little research conducted on nation branding at the time in Ethiopia in general and particularly in the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). There is little or no research into integrated marketing communication and nation branding rather than marketing approaches.

The study applied a qualitative research approach aiming at getting a deep understanding of the phenomena. The results of the research are principally valid to the consequent research questions.

Based on the main finding of the study, the Ministry of foreign affairs (MOFA) is chiefly applying planned sources of messages in the process of branding the nation. Furthermore, unplanned sources (other agents such as activists, Diaspora communities and citizens of other countries have been found as a key player in nation branding and country image.

Accordingly, based on the findings of the study, below are recommendations suggested by the researcher. MOFA must look for more effective ways to use the planned sources of brand messages in its nation branding practices and experiences and there should be a proper utilization of mass Medias and advertisements to brand the country and MOFA's connection with the Medias should go beyond giving a weekly press release. Therefore the mass media including Internet, television, radio, billboards, and other forms of mass communications should be properly utilized.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1.1. A broader knowledge of nation branding and IMC

1.1.1.1. 'Brand', 'Nation-brand' and nation – branding

The Current world is speedily and promptly coming to one stage with a massive, versatile, adaptable and dominant effect of globalization. The world is nearly, virtually one market that almost every country, city and region, rich or poor, compete with each other for its share of the world's consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, global sporting and cultural events and for the attention, concentration and admiration of the international media, of other governments, and the people of other countries. This has really exposed the way and system for nations to create and come up with their own country branding strategies in order to accomplish some objectives amongst them; attracting tourists, foreign direct investments, boosting exports, and attracting higher education students and skilled workers (Anholt 2007).

Before looking in detail at the concept of treating a nation as a brand, it is valuable to look at some definitions of what is meant by a 'brand'. Such definitions tend to fall into two camps.

On the one hand are definitions that focus on the visual manifestation of a brand. On the other hand, there are deeper definitions that go beyond the visual aspects of a brand and attempt to capture the essence of a brand.

The American Marketing Association offers a similar definition of a brand as a 'name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition'.

Brands of course do not exist in a vacuum, and to be successful, they must coexist effectively with the prevailing zeitgeist. Popular culture and trends in society drive and influence strong brands. This theme is amplified and theorized by Holt , who analyses how brands become icons through creative interaction with their environment in a process that he terms 'cultural branding', a process that he considers particularly suitable for applying to nations.

A similar culturally aware vision of brands is proposed by one of the UK's most creative and innovative thinkers on branding, who suggests that a brand is 'a cluster of strategic cultural ideas'. Through the foundations of their national identity, nation-brands possess far richer and deeper cultural resources than any other type of brand, be it product, service, corporate or any other brand-able entity. The practice of branding has been defined as the process by which companies distinguish their product offerings from those of the competition] In an increasingly globalized economy, the challenge of distinguishing their product offerings from those of the competition has assumed critical importance for nations competing for both The relevance, scope and evolution of nation branding domestic and foreign consumers. Keller suggests that the strategic brand management process involves the design and implementation of marketing programs and activities to build, measure and manage brand equity.

Nations need to acknowledge this reality and adopt a long-term strategic view when building their nation-brand, rather than aiming for a quick fix short-term advertising campaign whose effects may be ephemeral. When applying the concept of a brand to nations rather than to mere products, there is an ethical obligation to do so in an honest, respectful manner and to acknowledge the limits of how appropriate it is to treat nations as brands. Nations do not belong to brand managers or corporations; indeed, if they 'belong' to anyone, it is to the nation's entire citizenry.

To avoid confusion over terms, it may be helpful to distinguish between a national brand, defined as 'a brand available nationally as distinct from a regional or test-market brand' and a nation-brand, where the brand is the country, state and nation in question. In this paper, the nation-brand is defined as the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences. Moreover, the proposed definition of the nation-brand also recognizes the contention that brands exist in consumers' minds rather than being a totally controllable creation of the marketing function. The definition therefore incorporates reference to perceptual attributes and target markets.

A brand is more than just a name; it is a complex bundle of images, meanings, associations and experiences in the mind of people. Supporting this, (Kotler & Gertner 2002; Cho 2004) define nation branding as a name, related terms, marks, symbols, design or combined, all to differentiate them from other countries. On his part, Aaker (1996) defines a brand as a multidimensional

assortment of functional, emotional, relational and strategic elements that collectively generate a unique set of associations in the public mind. A brand can shape how the country is perceived, both domestically and internationally, from the quality of its goods and services, to the attractiveness of its culture and tourism and investment opportunities, to its politics, economic policies and foreign policy.

Branding is part of the survival of any business on the market. Every company must know what it will communicate to its audience since this will shape people's perception of the company. The effort to develop and implement a communication pattern is called brand messaging, and it can create a standardized way of conveying the brand's values to the public.

Nation branding is an exciting, complex and controversial phenomenon. It is exciting, as it represents an area in which there is little existing theory but a huge amount of real world activity; complex, because it encompasses multiple disciplines beyond the limited realm of conventional brand strategy; and controversial, in that it is a highly politicized activity that generates passionately held and frequently conflicting viewpoints and opinions.

Furthermore, nation branding is steadily gaining prominence, with more and more countries around the world committing resources to the development of their nation-brand.

The concepts of nation brand and nation branding Consider mainly evolve within the marketing discipline. It focuses on the country of origin and place development and their relevance to nation branding. Nation branding has also combined the discipline of international relations to fetch in the concept of public diplomacy.

The term nation brand has been defined in different ways by various authors according to their understanding and interpretation and as such there is no universally acceptable definition. It was coined by Simon Anholt in 1996. Although the emergence of place branding and place marketing dates back to the early 1990's (Szondi 2008).

It exists, with or without any conscious efforts in nation branding, as each country has a current image to its international audience, be it strong or weak, clear or vague. Szondi (2007) , on the other hand, defines a national brand as a sort of umbrella under which further sub-brands can be developed. On their part, Walsh & Wiedmann (2008) define nation brand as a very complex brand

identity that is the result of a specific national reality, its perceptions and evaluations by many different internal and external stakeholders (brand images), and a specific overall reputation.

Nation branding concerns the application of branding and marketing communication techniques to promote a nation's image (Fan, 2006). In support of this, (Anholt 2003) defines nation branding as using strategic marketing to promote a country's image, products, and attractiveness for tourism and foreign direct investment. Communication is the act of developing meaning among entities or groups through the use of sufficiently mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic conventions.

1.1.1.2. Integrated marketing communications (IMC)

1.1.1.2.1. Introduction to integrated marketing communications

The primary idea behind an IMC strategy is to create a seamless experience for consumers across different aspects of the marketing mix. The brand's core image and messaging are reinforced as each marketing communication channel works together as parts of a unified whole rather than in isolation.

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) a multi-disciplinary field that can be defined as the process used to unify traditional and new media practices and marketing communication elements, such as public relations, social media, audience analytics, business development principles, and advertising, into a brand identity that remains consistent across distinct media channels. Professionals with a background in integrated marketing communications might pursue employment throughout the marketing and communications industries, in areas such as social media marketing, digital media, journalism, market research and consulting, public relations, nonprofit and government, entertainment, television and radio, and other related fields. As integrated marketing communications is a holistic marketing approach, it considers marketing strategy within the larger context of an organization's aims and business development and maintenance needs.

By using IMC theories and strategies, marketing specialists, public relations directors, brand managers, digital media associates, social media marketers, and other media professionals can

create, execute, and track multi-channel advertising and communication messages that target and influence specific audiences. IMC's influence can be seen throughout modern society, in website display advertisements, enterprise blogs, search engine optimization, newspaper editorials, outdoor billboards, magazine advertisements, and more.

1.1.1.2.2. The shift from fragmented to integrated marketing communications

Prior to the emergence of integrated marketing communications during the 1990s, mass communications—the practice of relaying information to large segments of the population through television, radio, and other media—dominated marketing. Marketing was a one-way feed. Advertisers broadcasted their offerings and value propositions with little regard for the diverse needs, tastes, and values of consumers.

Often, this "one size fits all" approach was costly and uninformative due to the lack of tools for measuring results in terms of sales. But as methods for collecting and analyzing consumer data through single-source technology such as store scanners improved, marketers were increasingly able to correlate promotional activities with consumer purchasing patterns. Companies also began to downsize their operations and expand marketing tasks within their organizations. Advertising agencies were also expected to understand and provide all marketing functions, not just advertising, for their clients.

Today, corporate marketing budgets are allocated toward trade promotions, consumer promotions, branding, public relations, and advertising. The allocation of communication budgets away from mass media and traditional advertising has raised the importance of IMC for effective marketing. Now, marketing is viewed more as a two-way conversation between marketers and consumers. This transition in the advertising and media industries can be summarized by the following market trends:

1.1.1.2.3. The process of integrated marketing communications

The IMC process generally begins with an integrated marketing communications plan that describes the different types of marketing, advertising, and sales tools that will be used during campaigns. These are largely promotional tools, which include everything from search engine

optimization (SEO) tactics and banner advertisements to webinars and blogs. Traditional marketing communication elements such as newspapers, billboards, and magazines may also be used to inform and persuade consumers. Marketers must also decide on the appropriate combination of traditional and digital communications for their target audience to build a strong brand-consumer relationship. Regardless of the brand's promotional mix, it is important that marketers ensure their messaging is consistent and credible across all communication channels.

1.1.1.2.4. Benefits of integrated marketing communications

With so many products and services to choose from, consumers are often overwhelmed by the vast number of advertisements flooding both online and offline communication channels. Marketing messages run the risk of being disregarded if they are not relevant to consumers' needs and wants.

One of the major benefits of integrated marketing communications is that marketers can clearly and effectively communicate their brand's story and messaging across several communication channels to create brand awareness. IMC is also more cost-effective than mass media since consumers are likely to interact with brands across various forums and digital interfaces. As consumers spend more time on computers and mobile devices, marketers seek to weave together multiple exposures to their brands using different touch points. Companies can then view the performance of their communication tactics as a whole instead of as fragmented pieces.

The other benefit of integrated marketing communications is that it creates a competitive advantage for companies looking to boost their sales and profits. This is especially useful for small- or mid-sized firms with limited staff and marketing budgets. IMC immerses customers in communications and helps them move through the various stages of the buying process. The organization simultaneously consolidates its image, develops a dialogue, and nurtures its relationship with customers throughout the exchange. IMC can be instrumental in creating a seamless purchasing experience that spurs customers to become loyal, lifelong customers.

In this paper, the study of integrated marketing communication (IMC) taking majorly nation branding as a point of reference is very important.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As this section is devoted to identification of research problem, gaps of previous related studies, Scarcity of research papers on the area was widely experienced.

Concerning the research gap, there is very little research conducted on nation branding at the time in Ethiopia in general and particularly in the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). There is little or no research into integrated marketing communication and nation branding rather than marketing approaches, for example a study conducted by Samson (2020) ***'EVIDENCE OF BRAND CONTACT IN THE ETHIOPIAN BEER MARKET: A NORDIC SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE OF STRATEGIC INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION'*** this must be the motive behind the research to study on the case; Therefore, an attempt will be made to bridge the gap left behind.

The focus of this study is to assess the nation branding practices and challenges at the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) particularly, the ministry of foreign affairs (MOFA) in light of the framework of IMC. To establish a sustainable and long lasting relationship with the citizens, government, neighborhood countries and the rest of the world, it demands a consistent, unfailing and reliable information flow at a general level since Information is a great tool and power to build encouraging and optimistic images in the eyes of the world.

It is a key entry to the digital society to add value and redistribute power. Chiefly, countries like Ethiopia that are currently under a serious political instability, shakiness and wavering and routine economical bans and sanctions by majorly the US government and some western based economic and financial institutions, There should be a high-quality nation branding works led by a very well planned and organized ladder with an intelligent diplomacies and public relations activities that comprise multi directional communications using an appropriate and fitting PRs tools to send constructive and cheerful, influential and highly related messages to the world, create awareness, impart knowledge, build confidence, inspire citizens to actively take part in the process of nation branding and to keep them feel a national hero, real Ethiopians and cross border dominant and convincing nation. Noticeably, the world should clearly know about the country.

The public must also be familiar with what is really going on in governmental organizations and public diplomacies. The created policies and strategies applied in the making of nation branding should unavoidably be analyzed and criticized.

The term 'Public' is generally used to donate affairs that affect everyone(Raupp) with national democracy, central government departments (or ministries), local authorities and other public sectors and organizations are legally and morally obliged to notify and update the population and the media about policy decisions and issues affecting everyone in the society as a whole.

However, it is not only just national institutions that have a duty to keep the public informed. Lee Neely and Stewart describe public relations as an important tool of governance. Thus PRs practices in its nation branding process towards addressing the public under investigation.

However, Practice of PRs at the time of external pressure and internal instability, reforms and nation transition and communication campaign at MOFA are not also given due attention by poor diplomacy, lower level of citizens' consciousness, lack of basic input resources, unplanned based on research inspired approach, even if the communication used texts, audiovisual messages, meeting, public lectures, weekly press releases for media sectors are widely utilized, it just to the highest degree misses the point, i.e. connecting the country with the rest of the world and keep the overall images and national interests using a very full-fledged and matured diplomacy.

The ministry office is intimately working with mainstream Medias (mainly TV and Radio) various events and other tools to actively communicate. However, these intensive efforts could not escape from some multi-dimensional challenges encountered while practicing nation branding at the worldwide level. Even though such practices could for the most part be facilitated by its communication office desks, these could also be made by mass Medias (newspapers, magazines, publication agents, TV, Radio and others). In addition to these modes, they could use electronic Medias and other sources. (Like SMS, emails, Websites, electronic and social networks through popular social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Google plus.. etc.) To reach, motivate and inform the ongoing reforms.

The challenges could be various as Ethiopia has been witnessing new twists and turns both in its domestic and foreign policy domain of late with the incumbent government in power adopting political and economic reforms aimed at fostering changes to bring about development. These have invariably provided an opportunity for the world to consolidate its relationship with Ethiopia further.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Predicating on the problem articulated above, the following questions are posed.

1. What are the major frameworks of integrated marketing communication in the process of nation branding communications of public relations that have been done?

2. How does the ministry use the PR tools for image buildings and first class diplomacy?

3. Are there any special PR strategies implemented in MOFA for planning and programming of communication within its overall goals, objectives by selecting the defined target audiences using appropriate Medias?

4. How is the feedback to the MOFA's activities during the process of nation branding?

5. What are the challenges of Ministry of Foreign Affairs public relation campaign communications during the process of nation branding?

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to assess the role of media Integrated Marketing communications used by the Ministry of foreign Affairs (MOFA) to manage nation branding in the contemporary politics of Ethiopia.

1.4.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. to assess the integrated marketing communication used by the MOFA in the process of nation branding.

2. to investigate the PR tools for image buildings and first class diplomacy used by the MOFA in the process of nation branding.
3. to look in to the PR strategies implemented in MOFA for planning and programming of communication within its overall goals, objectives by selecting the defined target audiences using appropriate Medias.
4. to spot the feedback to the MOFA's activities during the process of nation branding.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research is expected to have several contributions and outcomes. Primarily, it is supposed to create opportunities for the ministry to learn its communication platform. It is also helpful to point out hints at the strategic communication and implementation for the nation branding thought and diplomacy potency and public relations. The implication of studying the relationship between nation branding and frameworks of integrated marketing communication is to understand the action of cause and effect, which enables us to give recommendations to the work. In particular as to what should be continued and what should be changed and developed.

The study will give detailed information about nation branding to strengthen the cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, neighborhood and outside world to make a smooth diplomacy and influential Public relations. In addition to this, it enables us to realize the direct relation between the country's new political reforms and nation branding concepts. This study will contribute to a better understanding and implementation of reformation on nation branding processes in the contemporary politics of Ethiopia.

Consequently, the researcher expects that it would push the concerned bodies to implement consistent nation branding strategies that will build up the good images of the country to facilitate the transition of the nation and the people.

Moreover, the researcher believed that based on this research paper, quoted a lot of other researchers can investigate government' nation branding practices, tactics and communication strategies that shall be conducted for the future.

Treated under this sub-heading explicitly are the overall significance of this study to academia, the government and its agencies, civil societies, and the Ethiopian Diaspora.

1.5.1. Academic Significance

This research paper may resolve certain theoretical questions and inspire academicians to undertake other studies in the areas of IMC and nation branding communications.

1.5.2. Significance to the Government

In this age of unhinged globalization, this study may influence policies related to IMC, nation branding, reputation management and diplomacy in Ethiopia's foreign relations. It could also positively affect the way diplomats conduct diplomacy and engage with their foreign publics. In practical terms, it could motivate contemporary diplomats to urgently leverage the soft power potentials of nation branding for the socio economic and political interest of Ethiopia.

1.5.3. Significance to nation

Apart from elucidating the role those stakeholders play, nation branding might help them develop frameworks through which they could engage with their respective audiences – both government and non-government i.e. both elite and non-elite audiences alike

1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is delimited to the role of media in integrated media communications in the Ministry of foreign affairs of Ethiopia. To this end, the target populations of the study will be the Ministry of foreign affairs, expertise, selected academicians, PR personnel's, and diplomatic societies.

It also marks diasporas' communities informally but willingly gathered to contribute their most excellence in the process of nation branding. Moreover, the available potential documents in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs websites and other related printed documents, which are relevant to the messages of the planned and the implemented nation's transformation of nation branding activities by the Ministry shall gravely be assessed. Generally, the study majorly focuses on the particular frameworks of integrated marketing communication of nation's transformation and image building activities applied by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

1.7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is limited in the Ministry of foreign affairs complaining about the IMC and nation branding movement in the contemporary context of Ethiopia politics. However, activities of nation branding being undertaken by other non-government organizations (could be volunteers) are not well given recognitions that it may have impacts in the findings of the research.

The sample size respondents may not give appropriate responses. Furthermore sample size will be limited in the MOFA as it is a direct, responsible and concerned body to get connected the country with the international diplomatic societies. Hence, it will not represent the whole citizen's lack of adequate research of this issue, access to the Ministry of foreign affairs and important persons who have knowledge on the area are considered as a limitation in doing this research from secondary sources of data. Like many other studies, this research has its own limitations. One of the major problems to be stated is the difficulty to access archive materials, such as letters, press releases, reports and news stories. This is mainly because of the poor documentation practices within the organizations under study.

1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

A qualitative exploratory approach is taken, comprising face to face in-depth interviews with key informants from MOFA, selected academicians involved in the implementation of integrated marketing communications, particularly brand sources of contacts interims of nation branding, imaging, communications and public diplomas.

1.9. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the contextual definitions of key terms used were the following:

Brand: A name, term, design, symbol, or other feature that distinguishes one seller's product from those of others. It is more than just a name; it is a complex bundle of images, meanings, associations and experiences in the mind of people.

Branding: It is a process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme.

Brand messaging: refers to the definition of the tone of voice, the line of communication, and the main messages that a brand establishes when communicating with its audience.

Code: a textual description of the semantic boundaries of a theme or a part of a theme.

Coding: the process by which a qualitative analyst links specific codes to specific data segments.

Communication: the act of developing meaning among entities or groups through the use of sufficiently mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic conventions.

Data: the textual representation of a conversation, observation, or interaction.

Diaspora: the dispersion or spread of any people from their original homeland.

Diplomacy: the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad.

Integrated marketing communications (IMC): is an approach used by organizations to brand and coordinate their communication efforts.

Marketing communications: (also known as marcom) is the messages and media that marketers use to communicate with target markets. Examples of marketing communications include traditional advertising, direct marketing, social marketing, presentations and sponsorships.

Nation Branding: The campaigns carried out by governments to raise the profile, improve the standing, enhance knowledge about or generate admiration for their country by foreign audiences.

Public: used to donate affairs that affect everyone.

Public diplomacy: also called people's diplomacy, any of various government-sponsored efforts aimed at communicating directly with foreign publics. Public diplomacy includes all official efforts to convince targeted sectors of foreign opinion to support or tolerate a government'-s strategic objectives.

Theme: a unit of meaning that the reader of the text observes in the data.

1.10. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The thesis is organized into five major chapters. Accordingly, Chapter One introduces the skeletal structure of the study by providing a background, articulating the problem, outlining objectives, posing relevant research questions, making certain viable assumptions, and showing the methodological procedures adopted. Chapter Two lays down the conceptual foundations of the study and the literature review. Chapter Three presents the research design adopted. Chapter Four focuses on the analysis of the data from various sources and findings. Chapter Five presents a conclusion of the findings and corresponding recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. INTRODUCTION

2.1. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

Under this heading, theoretical and conceptual frameworks of integrated marketing communications (IMC), Nation branding and Images of Ethiopia are discussed.

2.1.1. Integrated marketing communications (IMC)

2.1.1.1. Defining the discipline

An overview of some of the earliest to the more recent definitions of IMC is necessary, in order to establish the origins of this approach. The way that IMC has been conceptualized and developed from the 1990's up to the present should facilitate an understanding and application in the context of this study. Some influential descriptions and proposed conceptualizations of pioneers in IMC, driving the field from the 1990s to the present, will be presented in order to understand the development of the discipline, while emphasizing some of the key features of IMC.

Some academicians and practitioners still disagree on definitional issues concerning IMC, as well as the scope of IMC. Varying terminologies have been given to IMC, such as 'new advertising', 'orchestration', '360 branding', 'total branding', 'whole egg', 'seamless communication', 'relationship marketing', 'one-to-one marketing', 'integrated marketing' and 'integrated communications' (Kliatchko, 2005:7).

The core dimension of a discipline is agreement on its definition. Despite a lack of consensus over a definition for IMC, there has been no lack of suggestions. One of the first and most widely quoted definitions of IMC was proposed by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) in 1989 (Duncan & Caywood, 1996:16): "A concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines (for example, advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations), and then combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact".

A task force from the American Association of Advertising Agencies (the "4As") developed one of the first definitions of integrated marketing communications:

The 4As' definition focuses on the process of using all forms of promotion to achieve maximum communication impact. However, advocates of the IMC concept, such as Don Schultz of Northwestern University, argue for an even broader perspective that considers all sources of brand or company contact that a customer or prospect has with a product or service. Schultz and others note that the process of integrated marketing communications calls for a "big-picture" approach to planning marketing and promotion programs and coordinating the various communication functions. It requires that firms develop a total marketing communications strategy that recognizes how all of a firm's marketing activities, not just promotion, communicate with its customers.

In this definition, IMC is regarded as a theory or idea. It emphasizes the added value aspect of a complete IMC plan, to combine, but also to integrate, the various marketing communication functions (tactics) and vehicles in order to ultimately convey a unified and consistent message. This added value applies not only when integrating multiple marketing communication techniques (e.g., advertising is combined with public relations), but also when integrating multiple media (e.g., outdoor advertising is combined with transit advertising media). In other words, the combined effect of multiple activities exceeds the sum of their individual effects; this phenomenon is known as synergy.

This definition has viewed IMC from an agency perspective and referred to managing the traditional marketing communication mix in an integrated fashion, rather than seeing the whole as being constituted by separate practices. It does not, however, specify towards whom IMC should be directed, or what the intended measurable objectives should be.

2.1.1.2. Evolution of integrated marketing communications

A variety of documents like some marketing related researches, articles and journals show that the development and progress of IMC traces several years back. Particularly, 1980’s were pointedly mentioned. In the 1980s/1990s, when IMC first began evolving at Northwestern University, the two most radical conceptual features of the approach, when compared to other existing forms of commercial marketing communication (J.G. Kliatchko 2020). The decades were characterized by

the fast growing areas such as sales promotion, direct marketing, and public relations which began challenging advertising's role as the dominant form of marketing communication, and later on, firms began moving towards the process of integrated marketing communications that involves coordinating the various promotional instruments for communicating with their customers (Belch & Michael, 2018).

Obviously, in the last twenty or thirty years, the integration of marketing functions has moved from theory to practice. Its specific applications may vary from market to market indeed, from enterprise to enterprise but integrated marketing communications (IMC) programs have become standard for marketing organizations, agencies, and the academic community (Philip J.Kitchen & llchul Kim 2008).

The researcher accepts as correct that those years were pioneer and 'lead the way' periods that supplementary strategic integrations were thought to be desired by different companies as a key promotional gear that these firms began moving forward to the process of integrated marketing communications (IMC). Since the inception and formal conceptualization of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in the late 1980s, the concept continues to gain widespread attention and interest among academics and practitioners around the world. However, a review of the literature on IMC over the past decade suggests that contentions on definitional and theoretical issues still remain unsettled (J.G. Kliatchko 2020).

The definitional and theoretical issues involve coordinating the various promotional elements and other marketing activities that a firm's customers communicate with. As IMC is embraced by marketers, they began asking their advertising agencies to coordinate the use of a variety of promotional tools rather than relying primarily on media advertising. As a number of companies came to a decisional point to modernize their works, they began to look forward to seeing the traditional advertising agencies and use other types of promotional specialists to develop and implement various components of their promotional plans.

It is obvious that many agencies responded to the call for synergy among the promotional tools by acquiring PR, sales promotion, and direct-marketing companies and touting themselves as IMC agencies that offer one-stop shopping for all their clients' promotional needs. Some agencies became involved in these non-advertising areas to gain control over their clients' promotional

programs and budgets and struggled to bid any real value beyond creating advertising. However, the advertising industry soon recognized that IMC was more than just a fad. Terms such as new advertising, orchestration, and seamless communication were used to describe the concept of integration.

A concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines, for example, general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact.

This broader perspective of IMC has been adopted by various companies. It is seen as a way to coordinate and manage their marketing communications programs to ensure that they give customers a consistent message about the company and/or its brands. For these companies, the IMC approach represents an improvement over the traditional method of treating the various marketing and communications elements as virtually separate activities. However, as marketers become more sophisticated in their understanding of IMC, they recognize that it offers more than just ideas for coordinating all elements of the marketing and communications programs.

The IMC approach helps companies identify the most appropriate and effective methods for communicating and building relationships with their customers as well as other stakeholders such as employees, suppliers, investors, interest groups, and the general public.

It is stated that there are three basic levels of messages. These are Corporate, marketing, and marketing communications since all of a company's corporate activities, marketing-mix activities, and marketing communications efforts have communication dimensions and play a role in attracting and keeping customers.

Particularly at the corporate level, various aspects of a firm's business practices and philosophies, such as its mission, hiring practices, philanthropies, corporate culture, and ways of responding to inquiries, all have dimensions that communicate with customers and other stakeholders and affect relationships. For example, Ben & Jerry's is a company that is rated very high in social responsibility and is perceived as a very good corporate citizen in its dealings with communities,

employees, and the environment. Ben & Jerry's capitalize on its image as a socially responsible company by supporting various causes as well as community events.

At the marketing level, as was mentioned earlier, companies send messages to customers and other stakeholders through all aspects of their marketing mixes, not just promotion. Consumers make inferences about a product on the basis of elements such as its design, appearance, performance, pricing, service support, and where and how it is distributed. At the marketing communications level, Duncan and Moriarty note that all messages should be delivered and received on a platform of execution and strategic consistency in order to create coherent perceptions among customers and other stakeholders. This requires the integration of the various marketing communication's messages and the functions of various promotional facilitators such as ad agencies, public relations firms, sales promotion specialists, package design firms, direct response specialists, and interactive agencies. The goal is to communicate with one voice, look, and image across all the marketing communications functions and to identify and position the company and/or the brand in a consistent manner.

Many companies are realizing that communicating effectively with customers and other stakeholders involves more than traditional marketing communications tools. Many marketers, as well as advertising agencies, are embracing the IMC approach and adopting total communication solutions to create and sustain relationships between companies or brands and their customers. Some academics and practitioners have questioned whether the IMC movement is just another management fad. However, the IMC approach is proving to be a permanent change that offers significant value to marketers in the rapidly changing communications environment they are facing in the new millennium. We will now discuss some of the reasons for the growing importance of IMC.

2.1.1.3. Emergence from marketing communications to integrated marketing communication

As IMC is a center of focus in this section, it is considered to be beneficial in many ways and yet many organizations seem to be only implementing IMC at the inferior levels of the theoretical models. Various scholars such as Kitchen (2003) and Smith (1996) have described the concept in a different way.

The first scholar argued that the emergence of integrated marketing communications (IMC) has developed into one of the most significant example of growth and expansion in the marketing discipline (Kitchen, 2003) whereas the other one believed that It has influenced acting and thinking among companies but also state owned companies, authorities and political parties, all facing the realities of rivalry in an open economy (Smith, 1996).

Out of them, the concept was still argued by some young academicians like Samson Mekonen. As Samson (2020) highlighted the case that the late twentieth century was attributed to the emergence of IMC as a new paradigm in marketing communications. Samson (2020) supported his views quoting different scholars that several authorities note that IMC is an important advancement of marketing communications due to drastic changes in media and customer behavior in the late twentieth century (Bruhn & Schenbelen 2017; Finne & Grönroos 2017; Kitchen 2017; Kitchen & Burgmann 2015; Batra & Keller 2016; Schultz 2010; Kliatchko 2005).
Today, IMC has been developed into an expansive discipline that links marketing to a number of other grounds, including corporate culture, corporate design, corporate communication and public relations (Van Riel, 1995; Baker and Balmer, 1997; Balmer and Greyser, 2003; Christensen et al., 2008).

IMC has received significant interest in both the practitioner and academic communities, since the beginning. The interest played to IMC is largely a purpose of its strong appeal which makes good sense. It's been more than a decade since the concept was first introduced but; however, most major businesses have yet to fully apply the ideas contained in the IMC. In fact Schultz, et. al. (1992), states that recognition of IMC has not been as rapid as they thought.

Traditionally, many marketing communications tools such as advertising, public relations and sales promotion are budgeted and managed separately for some communication purposes. In the communications or marketing literature, functional specialization and differentiation of marketing communication tools are applied (Grönroos 2020; Kitchen & Burgmann 2015; Schultz 2010; Grönroos 2006). Survey of early marketing communications literature suggests autonomous use of marketing communications tools.

For instance, Dyer (1982) argues the practice and theory of advertising as an individual discipline separated from other marketing communications tools. Similarly, Jefkins (1983) separately discusses public relations as a tool of marketing communications and suggests its autonomous practice. Consistent with the suggestion in literature, marketers also determined the autonomous operation of marketing communication tools (Schultz 2010). This indicates that the tools of marketing communications are theorized and practiced autonomously. However, the proliferation of communication tools and power of customer behavior challenges the philosophy of marketing communications which advocates the autonomous utilization (Schultz 2010)

Technological advancements brought changes in media and communications systems. As a result, the proliferation of different marketing communication tools is apparent and the need to integrate these tools is important both in academia and practice (Schultz 2010). With the proliferation of communication tools and their integration to portray a unique image to all stakeholder groups became more important but difficult to achieve in practice (Kitchen & Burgmann 2015).

Parallel to the proliferation of communication channels, the active role of customers in the communication process is an initiation to the concept of integration of marketing communication tools. Customer behavior change is determined by advancements in information technology as well as caused a major change from mass marketing, product-centered philosophies of marketing to the more customer centric, database-driven interactive and measurable tactics of IMC (Ewing 2009; Mulhern 2009; Kliatchko 2005). Therefore, all communication elements should come together at the customer take-away-point as a clear, concise and consistent set of messages which the customer could easily understand (Schultz 2010).

In sum, technological advancement means that information can be transmitted or communicated via many diverse channels and media forms. Not only does technology facilitate accelerated communication and modalities but also empowered customers communication power (Kitchen & Burgmann 2015). In responding to these changes, the literature recorded some rapid changes in communication practices towards more integrated approaches to marketing communication (Mulhern 2009).

As a result, the first formal definition of IMC was developed at North-western University in 1989. It is referred to in a survey of major advertisers and advertising agencies in the United States (US), sponsored by American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As), Association of National Advertisers, and North-western University (Schultz & Schultz 1998). The early 1990s is the turning point in the field of marketing communications when the term 'Integrated Marketing Communication' is first defined.

The recent and most widely adopted definition in the study of IMC is made by Kliatchko (2008). Kliatchko's (2008) survey of prior definitions of IMC such as Kliatchko (2005), Schultz and Schultz (1998), Duncan and Caywood (1996), and Nowak and Phelps (1994) discuss the merits and apparent inadequacies of each definition. Finally, the definition by Kliatchko (2008) covers fundamental issues that are confronting the development of IMC. The definition identifies the constructs and parameters that are essential to moving this paradigm forward (Kliatchko 2008).

A fundamental concept in the evolution of IMC is the expanded notion of marketing communications channels, including those that may not have been considered or firmly classified as channels in the past (Kliatchko 2008; Schultz & Schultz 1998). With this regard, Kliatchko (2008:149) notes that "The integrated view provides a broader understanding of channels to include not only traditional tools but all other possible brand contacts or touch points where customers or prospects experience a brand and get in contact with it". Therefore, it is important to have detail on how the current IMC notion of 'brand contacts' evolved from the 'traditional tools' view of the IMC.

To begin with the traditional perspective on communication, it normally focuses on one message at a time, with a clearly defined sender (company) sending the message and a receiver (customer) receiving it. For such a communication model, it is important to refer to Schramm and Roberts (1977). In this perspective of the communication process, a customer is an object (passive receiver), and a company is a subject (active sender) (Finne & Grönroos 2009). During the process of communication noise, miscommunication or distortion can happen and interfere, but the communication process is company-driven, simply put, from sender to receiver (Mortensen 1997; Russo, Meloy & Medvec 1998; Russo, Medvec & Meloy 1996).

Sender to a receiver is a company-driven process of communication built on a single source. The process is linear, beginning with one message at a time that is to be transported to a potential customer (Schramm & Roberts 1977). One typical example of this situation would be the planning and execution of a marketing communication campaign. Text books on marketing communications by De Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Van den Berg (2013), Fill (2013), Shimp (2007), Pickton and Broderick (2005), and Duncan (2005) builds on this concept.

They deal with marketing mix and media strategies in which roles and the change of orientation from single-source communication to communication through several sources leads to traditional IMC which has its roots in internal planning methodology (Finne & Grönroos 2017). The dominant idea is that communication does not occur in a vacuum but a broader context.
This includes both traditional media and other means of communication, product and service encounters, some of which are difficult to control from a company perspective (Finne & Strandvick 2012; Lindberg-Repo & Grönroos 1999; Duncan & Moriarty 1997).

However, this signifies an instrument-driven view where the company creates communication instruments (Finne & Grönroos 2017). Most of this domain of literature still relates to a company (inside-out) oriented view in which the company conveys a consistent message to the customer and drives integration (Schultz 1996). This is characterized as a company-integrated marketing communication (Finne & Grönroos 2017). In connection to this, the sources of messages comprised here are labeled as closed sources (Pitt et al 2006).

Despite the call for a customer-oriented perspective, there have been few studies on sources that are not necessarily determined by the sender, or open sources. Pitt et al (2006) argue that the closed-source view represents the conventional organizational viewpoint, where the power of the corporate brand in all its aspects is in the hands of the company. Open-source brands signify the counterpoint, where the consumer's role as an active creator of the constructed brand image from multiple sources is recognized. Accordingly, the company loses control and customers become empowered in the construction of the corporate brand image and making purchasing decisions (Rindell & Strandvik 2010; Pitt et al 2006).

As a result, customers receive numerous communication inputs in their daily lives from sources of messages other than conventional marketing communications (Rindell & Strandvik 2010). Besides, the importance of word-of-mouth is recognized in the marketing literature (Trusov et al 2009). In this context, companies monitor social media, and some offer an arena for their customers to meet online and share and discuss ideas. It is also possible that the company does not participate in this communication process as it may be outside the company's line of visibility, beyond planned messages (Heinonen et al 2013). In such circumstances, the communication excludes a company source (Finne & Strandvick 2012).

Traditionally, IMC begins the communication process by determining an appropriate creative content of the message or incentive, then selecting a delivery system, such as advertising, before finally choosing specific delivery vehicles (Schultz & Schultz 2004). On the surface, this made sense. Since it is assumed that all customers were the same, the use of mass media is the obvious way to reach them. And, since it is further assumed that only a limited number of delivery vehicles existed (print, broadcast, direct mail, and so on) and that most customers would avail themselves on those vehicles at some time or other, it was up to the creative elements of any communication effort to create a brand relationship (Schultz & Schultz 2004). Media selection was naturally considered less important and was therefore downplayed (Schultz & Schultz 2004).

The customers may 'contacts' or 'touch' the brand in many ways, including but not limited to direct experience (either through previous purchasing or sampling), contact with front-line employees, use of the physical product and services, or various forms of marketing communication (Schultz & Schultz 2004). A primary method to understand such brand contact is the brand contact audit (Duncan & Moriarity 1997). Such audit helps to identify how customers contact with the firm and its products or services, either through messages and incentives sent out by the marketing group or through other forms of brand contacts like word of mouth that are outside marketer control (Schultz & Schultz 2004; Duncan & Moriarity 1997).

A brand contact audit enables the marketer to determine how and under what circumstances and conditions the customer contacts the brand, product, service or organization. The audit includes three-step processes according to (Schultz & Schultz 2004). Firstly, identify all brand contacts from the customer's or prospect's perspective, whether they are controllable or uncontrollable by

the marketer and whether the marketer is responsible for them. Secondly, prioritize brand contacts from a customer perspective. Thirdly, develop a better customer experience at each point of contact. These three steps are important in the process of identifying brand contacts.

Evolutionarily, the scope of IMC is broadening to consider what is to be integrated and who is doing integration of brand contacts (Kitchen, Kim & Schultz 2008; Kitchen & Schultz 2009). The traditional school of communication is criticized for its passive view of the customer in the communication process (Schultz 2006). Although considerable studies emphasize customer integration, the set of what to integrate is company oriented. This is built on traditional lists of instruments of communication (De Pelsmacker et al 2013). In sum, in the planning and implementation of IMC process marketers are required to listen to customers, find brand contacts where they meet their customers, thereby recognizing customer contexts and transforming messages to address customer meaning and value (Finne & Grönroos 2017; Finne & Strandvick 2017).

2.1.1.4. Key to success for implementation of integrated marketing communication (IMC)

Despite IMC being a theory that must be implemented logically and simultaneously at all levels and functions of a corporation, Marketing functions and Public relations are not the only programs that are integrated which make the company an example of IMC (Low, 2000).

The key tip is to be careful of companies with strong marketing cultures, because topics like corporate reputation will take a back seat to the provincialism of brand management (Pettegrew, 2000). Functional and Structural issues must become a critical part of any effective IMC series. Of particular importance is beginning with a communication czar who will become the principles and evangelist of the IMC implementation attempt (Reid, 2005). Any IMC program must be personalized to the unique character of a particular organizational culture. For an IMC program to work successfully, it must reflect the distinctive culture in which it must function well.

2.1.1.5. Integrated marketing communication (IMC) underwhelming success

A study by Duncan (1991) revealed that nearly a decade ago, almost 60% of corporate marketing managers were familiar with the term IMC. Hamel (1997) reports a more recent MCl/Gallup survey of American corporate CEOs revealing that fewer than one-in-three (31%) believe success is attributable to better execution of communication functions. A large percentage of CEOs said that success in business today is more a function of newcomers who have changed the rules of the game. Possibly most telling is the fact that many corporations cited as examples in IMC literature turn out to have fairly narrow marketing communication programs that, on closer study, may not represent IMC well at all.

2.1.1.6. The Four Stages of Integrated Marketing Communications Framework

Researchers like Schultz and Schultz (1998) recognized four levels of IMC through which organizations seem to develop. The four stages of IMC framework was first developed by Schultz and Schultz (1998) and it refers to the general patterns to the implementation of integration in which organizations appear to go through phases or levels of integration in their marketing communication efforts or endeavors.

These scholars documented four levels of IMC through which organizations come into sight to step forward. Accordingly, the four levels are known as, Stage 1: Tactical coordination of marketing communications, Stage 2: Redefining the scope of marketing communications, Stage 3: Application of information technology, and Stage 4: Financial and strategic integration. However, this study employed the framework modified by (Shultz and Shultz, 2004).

2.1.1.6.1. Stage one: tactical coordination of marketing communications

The first stage in the progression towards an integrated marketing communications approach inside a company is simple coordination across specialist areas, where they agree upon the use of a standard symbol, an enterprise slogan, corporate colors, and an overall message.

According to Schultz and Schultz (2004), stage one refers to the initial point of implementation of IMC notion in the organization by which the marketing communications activities are coordinated at this tactical level. Moreover, this stage is associated with employment of various marketing communication tools such as sales promotion direct marketing, event marketing, electronic and

printed media, internet advertising, and sponsorship in their marketing activities in a coordinated manner in order to establish a one sight and one sound message, and to achieve greater synergy as well. They further explained another prominent aspect of this stage is that the company establishes proper processes for mounting and creating communication messages and practices cross functionality in its efforts to create proficiency at the highest level.

In doing so, the company tries to unify its communication directed from inside the company to outside the company so as to speak one voice, to convey a coherent and consistent message and image about the company for all receivers of communication in all interaction situations. Despite these areas using a similar approach of message and brand elements, they still largely act independently and are not strategically integrated to realize an overall goal. (Shultz and Shultz, 2004).

2.1.1.6.2. Stage two: redefining the scope of marketing communications

In the second stage towards IMC, the company starts to consider a broader set of touch points than its main communication tools (numerous of which were mentioned beyond). This stage is about redefinition of the scope of marketing communication. At this stage, the company moves its point of view from a corporate operation driven to its customer, consumers and end users.

The company is also considering various points of contact for customers to get in touch with the company's marketing activities. At this stage, the company conducts regular assessment on the marketing communication activities to check the fact that results from assessments allow companies to change their focus from sending messages to customers to learn about what actually received by customers.

At this stage, company ensures marketing communication activities for both internal or externally audiences in line with company are marketing communication programs. Moreover, this stage is a radical move toward customer oriented communication and its essential goal is to give attention to customers' desires like: what they want to hear or see, where, when, and in which media should be they communicated. In practice, this is executed by gathering information about customers, analyzing gathered information, and finally analyzed information is utilized to support or reinforce the company's marketing decisions (Schultz & Schultz, 2004).

2.1.1.6.3. Stage three: application of information technology in marketing communications

The third stage is really attempting to put together the overall communications approach, as achieved in stages one and two, across the knowledge and practices of the organization. To do this, greater use of data and information is generated and shared across their distribution channels, even extending to their retailer and supplier partners.

According to Schultz and Schultz (2004), this stage stresses on how a company applies information technology in its business operations in support of its marketing communication efforts. It does not mean that technology is used only for communication's purposes, but also for objectives of customer relationship management and database marketing. The result of successful implementation of this stage strengthens understanding of customers in which case simple customer information has succeeded to turn into deep understanding of customers.

Basically, a company at this stage is seen as investing a substantial amount of capital on a high tech mailing operations system in its attempt to send personalized information about the company's product and services offered. Besides, the company also distributes information through the internet or intranets.

In addition, the company is also pairing customers' needs and requirements with relevant technology. At the same time the company gives options to its customers and stakeholders on various methods to seek relevant information about the company's products or services offered at anytime and anywhere at their convenience. Database is profoundly used in processing and storing customers and prospects' personal information.

2.1.1.6.4. Stage four: financial and strategic integration

The final stage really reflects that the overall marketing function inside a large company becomes strategically and financially integrated. The starting point for all marketing communications is essentially driven by the top-level strategic plan, which then feeds down to the marketing strategy and plan, which is then effectively executed through the marketing mix elements, including marketing communications.

At this level of the final stage, not only are all the improvements from the previous three stages being implemented, but the organization becomes very financially and marketing metric driven in terms of its overall marketing communications.

At this stage, marketing communication is seen as a strategic matter for the company and the whole business operation is a coherent entity which is focusing on the company's customers. The company examines results of its marketing communication and aspires to measure marketing investments in comparison with profits that are gained by marketing. In addition, company's marketing communication is integrated not only externally, but also internally between different actors and functions such as sales, research and development, and finance. At this stage, the company is said to have the appropriate ways in measuring returns on investment made on customers.

At the same time the company is able to relate revenues received from the same customers that the company has invested. On another point, the company is able to allocate investment made on customers in the same analytical footing as any other decision made on financial investment. Ideally, this can be done when company moves away from its operation-driven, inside-out approach to an outside in approach that focuses on value

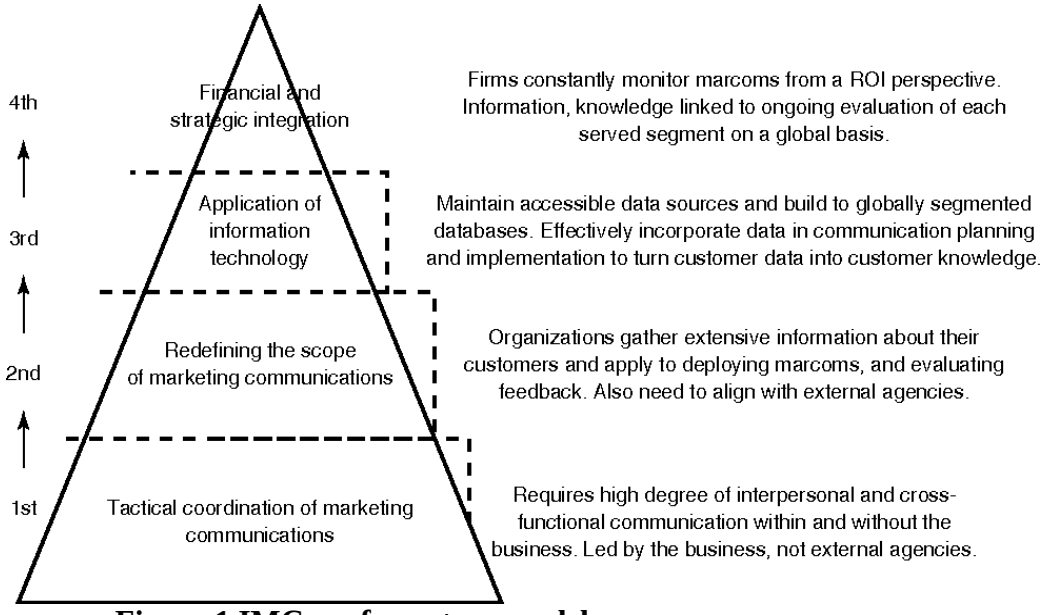

Figure 1 IMC – a four-stage model.

2.1.1.7. Sources of brand messages

Brand messaging is the set of practices that characterize how a company will deliver its value proposition and communicate its business values. Based on the tone of voice, language, and core message, companies can define a specific way to convey their ideas to the public. Through brand messaging, it's possible to transmit values, inspire, and generate the desire to buy

When it comes to brand messages, there are normally four influences. These are planned messages, product messages, service messages and unplanned messages. Each of these influences a stakeholders' relationships decision that marketers must know where these messages originate, what effect they have, and the costs to influence or control them.

2.1.1.7.1. Planned brand messages

One of the most major and significant sources of brand messages is planned messages. This category includes paid advertising messages that are delivered to the targeted customers through mass Medias. This is the essential aspect of IMC that it should move toward a predetermined objective. Planned messages are considered as traditional marketing communications channels. Duncan and Moriarty (1997) argue that planned sources of brand messages are sources of messages which are composed of traditional elements of the marketing communication mix. It is important to note that elements of the marketing communication mix contribute to relationship marketing. Grönroos (2004) expands the view that messages from marketing communication mix which customers receive, process and use to create brand relationships.

A major benefit of planned ads is that you control the placement and message. Press releases, news conferences and scheduled media coverage also fit into the planned message category, as does your company's website and its selling efforts. While public relations are common in corporate branding, you can also use unpaid media coverage to promote new product launches. Each of these modes of planned communication contributes to spreading word about the benefits and value you offer.

A brand is created in the mind of a customer following a flow of brand contacts including planned marketing communication elements in the on-going relationship between the marketer and

customer (Grönroos 2015). Additionally, a considerable number of studies found customers' brand relationships creating the role of marketing communications elements (Mihai 2015).

Additionally, the impact of planned marketing communication elements on customer purchasing decisions is evident in the literature. Planned marketing communication elements are responsible for motivating some types of behavioral responses, such as buying, sampling, requesting additional information or increasing purchasing frequency or quantity (Masimane 2017).

Traditional marketing communication channels include Mass media advertising, sales promotions, personal selling, merchandising materials, publicity releases and event sponsorships and other details.

- **Mass media Advertising**

As it is clearly stated, Mass media is any paid form of non-personal promotion and presentation of ideas, goods or services to various people by an identified sponsor (Keller 2009). The researcher believes that a primary strength of advertising is creating brand awareness as it can be accurately placed and scheduled, its exposure can be well estimated, and its message content can be controlled. Strength of mass media advertising is maintaining brand awareness, keeping the brand top-of-mind. This is especially true for products that are frequently purchased and products in highly competitive categories (Duncan & Moriarity 1997).

The mass media include Internet, television, radio, billboards, and other forms of mass communications. In all cases, a large proportion of the population has access to the communications provided by these media outlets, and advertising can have a profound impact. This differs from local and regional media, which have limited reach within a given population; people around the world read THE NEW YORK TIMES, for example, while local newspapers tend to be read primarily by the residents of a small region.

Companies interested in mass media advertising tend to have a broad reach of distributors for their products and have an interest in building their market share or increasing their reach. Many are multinational corporations operating in a variety of markets, selling products ranging from cars to

cleaning supplies. In mass media advertising, the goal is to familiarize viewers and listeners with the company and its products, build positive associations to encourage people to seek out the company's goods, and provide information about where to find them.

- **Print advertising**

Print advertising is a type of marketing that uses diverse print media channels for advertising to reach a broader target audience. Companies advertise their products on a variety of print advertising channels such as newspapers, direct mails, brochures, magazines, billboards, etc.

A Media that is manufactured by a printing process is called print media. It is agreed that Fill (2009), print media is as effective as television in building brands and is superior regarding attention-getting and communicating information. Newspaper, magazine, out-of-home, poster and kiosks, outdoor advertising, transit advertising, exterior advertising panels, and product literature are types of print media as discussed by du Plessis (2013), and Shimp & Andrews (2013). These types of print media are separately discussed beginning with newspaper advertisements.

Many people think that print media has simply become obsolete. It is true to some extent, but on average, For instance, looking at the case of companies in the United States, they spent 25 billion USD on print advertising annually. This figure is pretty low in comparison to the past, but it is a solid indication that print advertising is still an integral part of modern marketing strategies.

- **Newspaper advertising**

Newspaper advertising simply means advertising your business through ads on publications/newspapers in print or digital form. Newspaper advertising has been one of the oldest and extensive and widespread forms of advertising different brands, products, and services. Newspaper advertising still has a lot of potential for businesses to advertise their brands. People, even in this era of digitalization, still love to read newspapers. Stack Zolnikov reported (January 15, 2020) that 34 percent of consumers still trust print advertisements.

Newspaper adverts reinforce brand awareness and alert customers about brand availability (Percy 2008). The advantages of newspaper advertisements are mass coverage, timeliness and flexibility.

However, the disadvantages are cluttering, the decline of readership, and low reproduction quality (Shimp & Andrews 2008).

- **Magazine advertising**

Compared to newspapers, magazines offer the opportunity for rather focused targeting at almost any type of customer whom the company might require (Shimp &Andrews 2013). In IMC, the inclusion of magazines to deliver direct marketing falls somewhere between highly targeted direct mail that is designed to reach specific audiences and newspapers that deliver a broad-based, geographically targeted audience (Percy 2008). Magazine advertising has its own strengths and drawbacks that it is clearly discussed below.

- **Advantages of magazine advertising**

Some characteristics are peculiar to magazines and make them very attractive to advertisers as a medium. The advantages of magazine advertising include their selectivity, excellent reproduction quality, creative flexibility, permanence, prestige, high involvement of readers and services they offer to advertisers.

- **Selectivity:**

A major advantage of magazines as a medium is the selectivity or their ability to reach a specific target audience. Except for direct mail and Internet, magazines are considered as the most selective of all media. Usually magazines are published for audiences with special interests. Other than interest-based selectivity, magazines offer demographic selectivity and can reach specific target segments because of their editorial content and focus on well-defined demographic characteristics. National or regional advertisers can use maximum selectivity in reaching markets of their choice through appropriate selection of magazines. National advertisers can use regional language editions to test-market products or alternative advertising campaigns in various regional markets.

- **Reproduction Quality:**

From the advertisers' point of view, a highly desirable and valued attribute of magazines is the reproduction quality of advertisements. Magazines are generally printed on high quality paper. The

printing processes used are modern and provide equally superior reproduction both in color and black and white. This is quite an important feature for a visual medium like magazines because photographs and illustrations are often a dominating part in ads. The reproduction quality in almost all respectable magazines is far too superior compared to what is offered by newspapers, particularly in color. Special newspaper supplements are an exception, which are produced on superior glossy paper. Use of color in ads is particularly important for advertisers when a product's visual elements are important in creating an impact.

- **Creative Flexibility:**

Advertisers can take advantage of a great deal of flexibility in terms of the type, size and placement of advertising material in magazines. There are options of special facilities that help advertisers in making the ad more noticeable and readable such as gate-folds, bleed pages and inserts. Multiple-page advertising in magazines takes many forms. The most common advertising of this form uses two page or three page spreads and inserts. A spread increases the impact of the message and removes any competition to reader's attention. Gate-folds is a form of multiple-page insertion and uses a third page that folds out and gives the ad extra-large spread.

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It is used by advertisers to make a striking presentation and are often found at the inside cover of magazines, or on inside pages. Gate-folds are expensive and must be booked well in advance. Only a limited number of magazines offer the facility of gate-folds as they can add to the bulk of the magazine. In case of bleed pages, the ad extends all the way to the edge of the page without leaving any margin of white space surrounding the ad. Bleed creates an impression about the ad that it is large and produces a dramatic effect.

Most magazines charge some extra percentage for bleeds. Other than gate-folds and bleed, creative options through magazines include unusual page sizes and shapes. Occasionally one comes across unique ads that jump off the magazine pages. These are complex three-dimensional pop-up ads that attract the reader's immediate attention. Inserts of different types include return cards, booklets, CD's, coupons, etc. Taking a cue from magazine advertisers of developed countries, probably the time is not far when magazine advertisements might occasionally include samples of certain products such as fragrances, or deodorants whose scent is important. All these techniques in

magazine advertising are attempts to break through the advertising clutter and grab the attention of readers.

- **Permanence:**

As mentioned earlier, a limitation of newspapers is that they are generally dumped or thrown after being read. Similarly, TV and radio ads typically deliver fleeting messages that have a very short life span, only magazines are an exception in this regard. People generally read magazines over several days and retain them at home for reference longer than any other medium. Many readers refer to magazines on several occasions and can be exposed to ads on multiple occasions. Magazines are often read by more family members than one and are also passed on to friends and acquaintances. Magazine reading is less hurried and offers an opportunity to examine any ad more thoroughly. For ads of expensive, complex, risky, or ego-intensive products or services, which are categorized as high-involvement informational or transformational, advertising can use long and detailed copy to communicate effectively with consumers.

- **Prestige:**

Some magazines enjoy a very credible and qualitative image among audiences and the product or service advertised in them may gain prestige in consumer's perception. Quite a good number of products and services rely heavily on perceived quality, image and reputation, and for this reason they are advertised in publications that are considered credible and prestigious. High quality editorial content of magazines is recognized as an important element in creating a favorable environment. Reader opinion surveys furnish objective data in this regard but the image and prestige of a magazine largely depends on subjective estimates of media planners based on their experience. The ultimate evaluation of magazines is whether they can deliver the right audience, at the right cost, and in the right environment.

- **Reader Involvement:**

Readers generally purchase magazines for their information value. The ads furnish additional information about products and services that may prove to be valuable in making purchase decision. The more highly educated a reader, the more thorough is the reading of a magazine.

Reader involvement is related to the credibility and content relationship readers develop with their preferred magazines. Unlike ads in broadcast media, magazine ads are non - intrusive and the reader can always ignore any of them without effort. Magazines are considered as a more reliable source of information and consumers read ads with interest.

- **Services:**

Some magazines offer an important service facility of split runs in which two or more versions of an ad are printed in alternate copies of a magazine's particular issue. This is very helpful to advertisers who want to pre-test the comparative ability and effectiveness of two ads in generating the desired response.

Disadvantages of magazine advertising

As an advertising medium, magazines offer many valuable advantages to advertisers. However, there are also problems that must be considered by media planners. These problems include high costs of advertising, their limited reach and frequency, long lead time for placing the ads and the problem of increasingly heavy advertising competition and clutter.

- **High Costs:**

Magazines are among the most expensive media on CPM basis and in a valued mass circulation magazine, advertising can be quite expensive. Many advertisers use quality magazines as niche supplements in their media schedule. The cost of ad space in magazines varies according to the size of audience they reach and the degree of selectivity. Advertisers with limited budgets may be interested in the absolute costs of ad space and costs of producing quality advertisements for such publications.

- **Limited Reach and Frequency:**

Magazines published in English have their reach in all the regions. Regional language magazines have large circulation but their readership is confined to certain regions only. To reach a broad market area, media planners must make media buys in a number of magazines.

- **Out-of-home advertising**

OOH is advertising media which customers see outside of their homes in contrast to television, social media, magazines, newspapers, and radio which typically are received in the home (Shimp & Andrews 2013). OOH advertising includes posters and kiosks, transit advertising, exterior advertising panels, product literature and outdoor advertising (du Plessis 2013). These are discussed as follows.

- **Posters and Kiosks**

Posters are silk-screened or lithographed, pasted in sheets to the billboard (Shimp & Andrews 2013). Kiosks in the shopping mall are designed for public posting of notices and advertisements usually placed to capture attention at concourse (du Plessis 2013). Posters and kiosks can be used to create brand awareness and attitude (Percy 2008).

- **Outdoor advertising**

Outdoor advertising usually takes the form of billboards or large format posters (du Plessis 2013). Billboards are posted alongside highways and in other heavily travelled areas (Shimp & Andrews 2013). Effective outdoor advertising communicates messages instantly to attract attention (du Plessis 2013). Outdoor advertising can be used with other IMC mixes. For instance, it is possible to direct messages to cell phones (mobile advertising) from outdoor billboards (Percy 2008).

- **Transit advertising**

Transit advertising includes both exterior and interior advertising (du Plessis 2013). Exterior transit advertising refers to advertising posters on the outside of the vehicle, buses or taxis (du Plessis 2013; Blythe 2006). On the other hand, interior transit advertising refers to messages aimed at passengers inside vehicles, buses or taxis (du Plessis 2013; Blythe 2006). An example of transit advertising is Kodak using city buses which are completely wrapped with Kodak (Shimp & Andrews 2013).

- **Broadcast advertising**

Generally speaking, broadcast advertising is radio, television, and Internet advertising. The commercials aired on radio and televisions are an essential part of broadcast advertising. The broadcast media like radio and television reaches a wider audience as opposed to the print media. The radio and television commercials fall under the category of mass marketing as the national as well as global audience can be reached through it.

The role of broadcast advertising is to persuade consumers about the benefits of the product. It is considered as a very effective medium of advertising. The cost of advertising on this channel depends on the time of the commercial and the specific time at which it is aired. For example, the cost of an ad in the premium slot will be greater than in any other slot. This is any form of advertising through Broadcast media. Broadcast media transmits advertisement in the form of sounds or images electronically such as television and radio (du Plessis 2013).

- **Television**

Television is the best medium for driving brand awareness in customer-oriented brand advertising. Because of the intrusive nature of television and its ability to sustain attention, as well as the dynamic nature of the medium it is the strongest medium for building brand attitude (Percy 2008). Regarding IMC, television should be the primary medium (Percy 2008). However, competitive cluttering, erosion of audiences are limitations of television (Shimp & Andrews 2013).

The television advertising is usually considered the advertising for the corporate giant, though even the small businesses can benefit from it. A strong audio and video combination is a must for the success of the commercial. But it is also important that the audio and video should function well without each other. For example, if a person is not viewing the TV but just listening to it, s/he should get the idea and vice versa.

- **Radio**

Radio is one of the most important mass media used to reach large audiences for brand awareness and brand attitude strategies (Fill 2009; Percy 2008). However, radio has a different limitation as it lacks visual content important for brand awareness processing. When the brand awareness strategy

is recognition, one must be able to see the package in which almost any visual media do, but not radio (Percy 2008).

A **radio ad** must be aired several times before it actually sinks in the minds of the consumers. Thus the frequency of the ad is important. The type of your target audience is also important. Therefore, one must do a research on which type of audience listens to which channels if they want the ads to be successful. The voice talent in the commercial should be taken keeping in mind the type of audience and the type of commercial.

- **Product publicity**

Concerning marketing communication, public relations (PR) is used to promote goodwill towards a company and to portray the company's reputation in a positive manner (de Pelsmacker et al 2005). Although marketing public relations (MPR) may not directly increase sales or convince consumers to purchase a certain product. If correctly practiced, it may raise awareness about a specific brand (Fill 2005). This marketing-oriented aspect of public relations and publicity is called marketing public relations (MPR) (Shimp & Andrews 2013). MPR can be further classified as involving both proactive and reactive initiatives (Shimp 2007).

Proactive MPR is a tool for communicating a brand's merits and is used typically in conjunction with other marketing communication tools such as advertising and promotions (Fill 2009). Dictated by a company's marketing objectives, proactive MPR is offensively rather than defensively oriented and opportunity-seeking rather than problem-solving (Percy 2008). Reactive MPR, by comparison, describes the conduct of public relations in response to outside influences (Percy 2008). Publicity is the major tool of proactive MPR (Blythe 2006). Like advertising, the fundamental purpose of marketing-oriented publicity is to enhance brand equity. Three widely used forms of publicity are product releases, executive-statement releases, and feature articles (Shimp & Andrews 2013; Shimp 2007).

- **Product releases**

Product releases are often published in the product section of trade magazines (i.e. publications that cater to specific industries) publications (Blythe 2006). Product releases are also reprinted in

the business or consumer news section of consumer magazines or newspapers (Shimp & Andrews 2013; Fill 2009). Furthermore, product releases proclaim new products, offer relevant information about product features, and inform interested customers how additional information can be obtained (Shimp 2007).

- **Executive statement releases**

Executive statement releases are news releases quoting chief executive officer (CEO) and other corporate executives (Shimp & Andrews 2013). Unlike a product release which is restricted to describe a new or modified product, an executive statement release may address a wide variety of issues relevant to a company public (Shimp 2007). Whereas product releases are typically published in the business and product sections of newspapers and magazines, executive-statement releases are published in the news section which has high credibility (Shimp 2007).

- **Feature articles**

Feature articles are in-depth descriptions of products or other newsworthy programs that are written by public relations for publication by print or airing by broadcast media or distribution through appropriate Internet sites (Shimp & Andrews 2013).

- **Sales promotion**

Sales promotion is a direct inducement that offers extra incentives to channel members to enhance or accelerate the product's movement from manufacturer to consumer (Arens et al., 2008:523). This definition embodies the key features of sales promotion. Sales-promotion techniques, such as free samples, competitions, premiums, coupons and price incentives provide extra incentives to achieve immediate sales. It is also an offer which only lasts for a certain period and tends to be effective only during this period by increasing sales and usage (Burgmann 2007).

It is often interpreted as a stimulus for purchasing (Keller2009). Sales promotion incentive for a brand applies to a single purchasing or perhaps several purchasing during a period, but not to every purchasing customer would make over an extended time (Shimp & Andrews 2013). Different incentive promotions could have strengths for either attracting new users to a brand or for gaining additional business from existing users (Percy 2008).

Sales promotion activities are used in integration with other sources of brand message (Pickton & Broderick 2005). Different forms of sales promotions activities are coupons, sampling, refund and rebate, loyalty and loading devices (price off promotions), premiums, and contests and sweepstakes (Fill 2009; Percy 2008).

- **Coupons**

Coupons are vouchers or certificates that entitle customers to product price discount (Fill 2009). Coupons are included in packages of the product or the use of electronic couponing is becoming more prevalent currently (Blythe 2006). These are frequently used to introduce a new or improved product and help to initiate positive brand attitude (Percy 2008). Where coupons require completion with name and address, the data can be used to add to a database for further IMC planning (Pickton & Broderick 2005).

- **Sampling**

This includes any method used to deliver an actual or trial-sized product to customers (Blythe 2006). The customer is offered something for nothing or a significantly reduced price. For new products, this provides an opportunity to quickly establish a positive brand attitude (Percy 2008). Sampling allows customers to experience a new brand and stimulate positive brand attitude (Fill 2009).

- **Refund and rebate**

Refunds and rebates are used to invite consumers to send in a proof of purchasing and in return receive a cash refund (Fill 2009). Refund and rebate offer made through traditional advertising media, thus have a built-in opportunity of integrating the promotion and advertising message (Shimp 2007). The offer could be worded in a positive way linking to the brand (Percy 2008).

- **Loyalty and loading devices (Price off promotions)**

Price-off promotions entail a reduction in a product's regular price (Shimp & Andrews 2013). By their very nature, such programs require the product to use over time before rewards are forthcoming (Fill 2009). This provides a good opportunity for reminding the customer of the

coming reward within a positive brand attitude message, either on the package, through advertising or direct mail (Percy 2008). Loading devices such as price-packs and bonus packs help attract switchers to a brand and retard switching out to other brands (Percy 2008).

- **Premiums**

Premiums are items of merchandise that are offered for free or at a low cost in return for product purchasing (Fill 2009). Everything from jackets or other apparel with the brand's logo to things like insulated holders for beer cans might be used, but premium must be consistent with an image projected by the brand (Percy 2008). Selecting premiums congruent with motivation ensures positive brand attitude and nurtures brand equity (Percy 2008).

- **Contests and sweepstakes**

A contest is a customer competition based on skill or ability (Fill 2009). One of the benefits of sweepstakes or contests promotion is that by its very nature it attracts people to the advertising or other sources (Shimp 2007). This by itself is a good opportunity for associating the promotion with a strong brand attitude message (Percy 2008). The stronger the link between motivation associated with brand decisions and promotion, the more likely it will be reinforcing a positive brand attitude and corresponding brand equity (Percy 2008).

- **Direct marketing**

Marketers assume that direct marketing and direct mail are the same. Nevertheless, direct mail is only one part of direct marketing (Percy 2008:153). What then is direct marketing? According to the Direct Marketing Association, it is:

The basic feature of direct marketing is that it asks for a response and it can be highly targeted (Percy 2008). It can be aimed at a single individual or a very narrowly defined group of individuals (Shimp 2007). Besides, every aspect of direct marketing must be tied to a database so that statistical analysis can be used to access the effectiveness of any program (Fill 2009). It is merely one way to deliver marketing communication (Kitchen & de Pelsmacker 2004). There are four media to choose from: direct mail, telemarketing, mass media, and interactive media (Percy 2008). These media types of direct marketing as presented as follows.

- **Direct mail**

Direct mail refers to personally addressed advertising that is delivered through the postal system (Fill 2009). Direct mail offers five distinctive features as compared to mass forms of advertising: accuracy, measurability, accountability, flexibility, and efficiency (Shimp & Andrews 2013). Direct mailing by packaged good firms is valuable to introduce new brands and distributing product samples (Shimp & Andrews 2013). For instance, the success of direct mail can be illustrated by Caterpillar E industrial loader campaign and the Stacy's Pita Chip campaign (Shimp & Andrews 2013).

- **Telemarketing**

Telemarketing refers to telephone contact with the target market to deliver a message (Percy 2008). It is possible to understand how closely aligned this definition is with the Direct Marketing Association definition of direct marketing: it enables immediate responses, it can be highly targeted, and it makes use of the best database technologies (Percy 2008). Thus, telemarketing has many advantages such as direct interaction and verbal dialogue with the customer, problems or inquiries can immediately be addressed, and immediate feedback can be given (Kitchen & de Pelsmacker 2004).

- **Mass media**

Direct marketing can use any mass media, the same media used by traditional advertising and promotion. For instance, direct response advertising is a message in a traditional mass medium that asks the customers to respond directly to the sender to ask for further information or to buy a product. The receivers of the message are often invited to send back a coupon, to call a telephone number, or to visit a Website of a particular company (Kitchen & de Pelsmacker 2004). According to Percy (2008), the four major types of mass media in direct marketing are television, radio, newspaper and magazines.

- **Events and Sponsorship**

Events and sponsorships are company-sponsored programs designed to create special brand-related interactions (Keller 2009). Sponsorships include investments in events or causes for the purpose to

attain (e.g. enhancing corporate brand image) or marketing (e.g. improving brand equity and augmenting sales) objectives (Shimp & Andrews 2013).

As a result, event marketing may have a positive contribution to IMC (Shimp 2007). To create brand equity there must be a clear association between the sponsored activities or events and the primary brand benefit (Percy 2008). For instance, beer and sporting events make sense together because beer is associated with sports, and those attending sporting events are likely to be beer drinkers (Percy 2008). Sponsorships play an important role in IMC and involve a company or brand providing support for an event (Percy 2008). In return, the company may have the right to display its brand name or logo linked to the sponsored activity (Fill 2009; Pickton & Broderick 2006).

Event marketing or event sponsorship is similar to sponsorships differing only in that with event marketing a company supports specific event rather than an on-going relationship (Percy 2008). Event sponsorships include supporting athletic events, entertaining tours, arts and cultural institutions, festivals, fairs, and annual events of many different forms (Shimp & Andrews 2013). Cause-oriented sponsorships typically include supporting causes deemed to be of interest to some facet of society such as wildlife preservation and environmental protection (Shimp & Andrews 2013).

- **Personal selling**

Personal selling may be defined as a person-to-person process, whereby the seller tries to determine the prospective buyers' wants, and seeks to satisfy these by offering suitable goods, services or ideas (Du Plessis et al., 2010:6). While traditional advertising is non-personal communication using mass media, personal selling is interpersonal communication with a commercial objective. This two-way communication is one of the major strengths of personal selling. It enables a sales person to customise or modify the message, according to the buyers' individual needs and reactions, as well as to provide instant and precise feedback on customer requests or questions (Duncan, 2005: 624).

Personal selling is often more effective than mass advertising or publicity, due to the more intense personal involvement of the prospective buyer (Pitta, Weisgal & Lynagh, 2006:157). The

accountability of personal selling is a further advantage, because sales generated by each sales person are directly quantifiable, as opposed to other marketing communication elements, where the effect is indirect (Duncan, 2005:624). The possibility of increased sales is enhanced by direct communication to qualified prospects, 42 because sales persons can then screen and select the most likely clients (Belch & Belch, 2012:24)

- **Digital communication**

Digital communication is communication through the electronic world of networks, algorithms and automated systems (Mulhern 2009). The differences between traditional media and the emerging world of digital communications are the fundamental difference between the idea of communication through media channels versus communications through networks, algorithms and automated systems, respectively (Mulhern 2009). Digital communication consists of digital mass media, social media, and interactive media (Young 2014).

Simply said, digital communication involves an organization's online communication efforts. Most organizations today use a wide range of online channels—from their website to mobile chat to blogs—to connect with current and prospective customers, employees, and other stakeholders. They need digital marketing professionals who have a keen understanding of how to leverage this convergence of technology and messaging to their advantage. Digital communications professionals are responsible for everything from creating online brand assets to building an engaged social media audience.

- **Digital mass media**

These are digital dimensions of different mass media forms such as television, radio, magazine and newspaper. Digital mass media is an expansion of mass media with digital subscriptions which offers access to mass media on website and software applications (Shimp & Andrews 2013). This refers to the contents of traditional mass media such as broadcast and print media which are available on digital media. The integration of broadcast and print media with digital media is dominantly experienced on the Internet (Shimp & Andrews 2013). There are separate digital communication channels in addition to the digital dimension of mass media. These are separately discussed below.

- **Social Media**

Social media represents Web-based and mobile technology used to turn communication into interactive dialogue (Young 2014; Shimp 2007). Alternatively, social media may be referred to as "consumer-generated media" (Shimp & Andrews 2013). Whereas the idea of integration and coordination has a long history, the novelty of IMC relies on technological developments that have enabled putting this idea into practice (Kliatchko 2005). Accordingly, the advancements in information communication technology (ICT) in general and social media as one of its most recent developments are considered as important drivers of integration approach (Finne & Grönroos 2009; Kliatchko 2009; Gurau 2008).

Customer engagement, two-way dialogue, consumer feedback, new brand ideas, pricing, and location can all be gleaned from social media sites (Young 2014; Fill 2009). However, limitations are fraud, privacy and censorship (Young 2014; Fill 2009). Shimp and Andrews (2013) identify two of the more prominent social networking venues as Facebook and Twitter.

People use social media to stay in touch and interact with friends, family and various communities. Businesses use social applications to market and promote their products and track customer concerns. Business-to-consumer websites include social components, such as comment fields for users. Various tools help businesses track, measure and analyze the attention the company gets from social media, including brand perception and customer insight. Social media has enormous traction globally. Mobile applications make these platforms easily accessible. Some popular examples of general social media platforms include Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

- **Interactive media**

Interactive media refers to online activities and programs intended to communicate customers to raise brand awareness and elicit sales of products and services (Keller 2009). The following are various interactive marketing communication channels listed by Keller (2009).

- **Websites**

A company's Web is an advertisement for the particular company, and it represents a venue for generating and transacting exchanges between organizations and their customers (Shimp &

Andrews 2013). A brand's Web is an invaluable advertising medium for conveying information about the brand, its character, and its promotional offerings (Shimp & Andrews 2013). Hence, companies must design Websites that embody or express their purpose, history, products and vision (Keller 2009).

Websites come in a nearly endless variety, including educational sites, news sites, porn sites, forums, social media sites, e-commerce sites, and so on. The pages within a website are usually a mix of text and other media. That said, there are no rules dictating the form of a website. A person could create a website of nothing but black and white photos of roses, or the word "cat" linked to another Web page with the word "mouse." However, many sites follow a standard pattern of a homepage that links off to other categories and content within the website.

- **Micro sites**

These are individual or cluster of Web pages that function as supplements to the main site (Keller 2009). Micro sites are much less expensive to set up than a traditional site and are particularly proficient at building awareness as a click-through to micro sites are higher than banners (Fill 2009).

- **Search ads**

The search terms serve as a proxy for the consumer's consumption interests and trigger relevant links to product or service offerings alongside search results from Google and Yahoo (Keller 2009).

- **Display ads**

Display ads are small, rectangular boxes containing text and maybe a picture that companies pay to place on relevant Webs (Fill 2009; Keller 2009). Banner ads could have a positive effect on brand awareness even if Internet users do not click through to learn more about the advertised brand (Shimp & Andrews 2013).

- **Interstitials**

These are advertisements with animation or video that pop up between changes on a Web (Keller 2009). Pop-ups appear in separate browser windows when Web pages are being loaded or closed. Technically, interstitials appear during Web page loading and closing (Fill 2009).

- **Internet-specific ads and videos**

These are internet-specific ads and videos with user-generated content sites such as MySpace Video, YouTube, and Google Video. Advertisers can upload ads and videos to be shared virally by millions of peoples (Shimp & Andrews 2013).

- **Sponsorships**

Sponsorship in interactive marketing can be understood as when companies get their name on the Internet by sponsoring special content on Websites that carry news, financial information and so on (Keller 209).

- **Online communities**

Many companies sponsor on-line communities whose members communicate through posting, instant messaging and chat discussions about special interests related to the company's products and brands (Keller 2009:147).

- **E-mail**

Short for electronic mail, e-mail or email is information stored on a computer that is exchanged between two users over telecommunications. More plainly, e-mail is a message that may contain text, files, images, or other attachments sent through a network to a specified individual or group of individuals.

There are two key characteristics associated with email communications. First, it can be directed at clearly defined target groups and individuals. Second, email messages can be personalized and refined to address the needs of individual users (Fill 2009).

- **Mobile marketing**

Mobile marketing is a multi-channel, digital marketing strategy aimed at reaching a target audience on their smart phones, tablets, and/or other mobile devices, via websites, email, SMS and MMS, social media, and apps. In recent years, customers have started to shift their attention to mobile. It is any advertising activity that promotes products and services via mobile devices, such as tablets and smart phones. Mobile marketing communications involves the delivery of direct marketing messages to mobile devices using wireless technologies (Fill 2009).

2.1.1.7.2. Product brand messages

In IMC theory, every element of the marketing mix (not just promotion) sends a message. Messages about the product, price or distribution elements can also be referred to as product messages. Product messages are messages that customers infer from the product itself (Duncan and Moriarity 1997).

Product messages include packaging, which communicates a lot about the product through the use of color, type fonts, imagery, design, and lay out. For example Apple has a well-deserved reputation for beautiful product packaging. Product messages have a great impact. When a product performs well, the customer infers positive messages that reinforce the purchase decision. However, a gap between the product's performance and advertised promises is likely to convey a negative message. Messages must realize that all marketing mix decisions are also communication decisions.

Product messages specifically communicate the benefits of a product you offer, rather than being general brand-building messages, though the merits of your company brand and the attributes of your products often go hand-in-hand. A company known for its cutting-edge technology can leverage its corporate image even when delivering product-specific messages ahead of new product launches. In product-specific messages, the company notes benefits, availability and pricing factors.

Product messages do not involve human contact between customers and company but may have a significant impact on purchasing decisions (Duncan & Moriarity 1997). However, it includes the performance of the product, appearance, pricing+g, design, and where and how it is distributed

(Grönroos 2015; Duncan & Moriarity 1997). These are discussed separately as follows beginning with product performance.

Product performance

Product performance refers to the performance of the product in many aspects of the customer. Although product design is important, performance is even more important when it comes to sending brand messages. This is the rationale for spending large amounts on sales promotion to generate trials for a new product (Duncan & Moriarity 1997).

Product price

This refers to the amount charged for a product or service. Pricing is a crucial decision as it may have an impact on demand for the product. In the context where a variety of brand choices for most product categories are available, price determines the purchasing decisions (Duncan & Moriarity 1997).

Product design

Packaging can be used to convey persuasive information to influence customers' purchasing decisions. In the FMCG market, the decisions made at the point of purchasing often require buyers to build awareness through product design (Grönroos 2015). The design of a package is important as it attracts the attention of buyers (Fill 2009). Ampuero and Vial (2006) identify color, shape, and graphical forms and images as key packaging variables of product design. Color and shape may influence the purchasing decisions of customers (Duncan & Moriarity 1997).

Product distribution

Product distribution refers to points of distribution such as where and how the product is available (Grönroos 2015). Especially for retail products, the distribution sends a strong message, although does not have the differentiating impact (Grönroos 2015).

2.1.1.7.3. Service brand messages

Many messages result from employee interactions with customers. In many organizations, customer services are supervised by operations, not marketing. Yet the service messages they send have greater marketing impact than the planned messages.

This is one of the constructs of IMC in addition to Planned and Product sources of the brand message. Service sources refer to the interaction between an organization's employees and customers (Duncan and Moriarty 1997). Interactions between customers and service employees in the service process include a substantial element of communication.

Not only can the customer get valuable information in these encounters but may develop a sense of trust based on such interactions in their purchasing decisions (Grönroos 2015). This includes the organization's customer service representatives, receptionists, secretaries, delivery peoples and drivers (Grönroos 2015; Duncan & Moriarity 1997). These sources of the message have a significant impact on customer purchasing decisions (Duncan & Moriarity 1997).

In highly competitive or service-driven industries, your brand communication should include details about the nature and quality of services you provide. One of the key brand messages from McDonald's, for example, is about the efficiency of their service. If you have a service business, you need to tell customers how your service works, what benefits it provides them, and why you have credible experts on staff to provide the services. Service brand messages have many components that some of them are discussed below.

Customer service representatives

Customer service representatives are individuals who interact with customers on behalf of an organization (Duncan & Moriarity 1997). They offer information about products and services, take orders and respond to customer complaints. Service representatives often work in customer contact centers, stores, or other places that have contact with customers (Grönroos 2015).

Receptionists

These are firms' receptions whose responsibility may include answering visitors' enquiries about a company and its products (Duncan & Moriarity 1997). The receptionists expect and welcome calls for help regarding claims about the product or service (Duncan & Moriarity 1997).

Delivery people

Delivery is the process of transporting goods from a source location to a predefined destination (Duncan & Moriarity 1997). Delivery persons, couriers or messengers pick up packages and various other products and deliver to a different location (Grönroos 2015).

2.1.1.7.4. Unplanned brand messages

While you can control some PR messages, many others exist beyond your planning or influence. Media coverage about your company and its products includes both positive and negative messages. While the adage "there's no such thing as bad publicity" suggests that even negative attention is better than no attention, it is naturally ideal if media projects a positive image to your market.

Unplanned messages about the product are sent by fellow customers who interact with a given customer during the service process or who make comments in social media and covey good or bad word-of-mouth communication (Grönroos 2015; Duncan & Moriarity 1997). Customers receive various inputs from sources other than conventional marketing communications and word-of-mouth is well represented in the marketing literature (Rindell & Strandvik, 2010; Trusov et al 2009). It is also possible that the company does not participate in the communication process (Heinonen et al 2013).

Word-of-mouth communication (WOM)

This is a person-to-person oral, written or electronic communication (Keller 2009). WOM is defined as informal communication among customers about products and services during the service process or who make comments on social media and convey a good or bad word of mouth communication (Grönroos 2015). WOM means message about the organization, its credibility and trustworthiness, its offerings, brand and so on are communicated from one person to another or from digital media to groups of another person (Grönroos 2015).

The impact of word of mouth has been growing exponentially due to the Internet and since the introduction of social media (Grönroos 2015). Shimp and Andrews (2013) argue that WOM

influence is both complex and difficult to control. Nonetheless, brand managers must attempt to control WOM in the best interests of their brands such as food and beverages (Keller 2009).

2.1.2. Nation branding

Branding a nation is a major undertaking. It is important for national policy makers as well as public and private organizations to be aware of the power of branding in achieving national goals (Fetscherin, 2010). Nation branding has become a popular trend in the current highly competitive economic realm. This is mainly because an increasing number of countries are engaging in branding themselves targeting to reap the fruits of having a good country image and reputation.

The concept of nation branding is considered to be a recent phenomenon in its current form though its genesis has been present for quite some time. The gist of nation branding is creating a positive image of a nation to the outside world by using the history, culture, economy and politics of that particular nation (Li, 2016, p.15).

Even though the numbers of articles regarding nation branding are increasing, they have not yet been commonly defined. One of the first attempts was made by Fan (2006:8) who defines it as "a country's whole image, covering political, economic, historical and cultural dimensions.

There is no universally agreed definition towards the concept of nation branding. However, different scholars have presented their own definition in explaining the concept of nation branding, to mention some, for (Dinnie, 2008, p. 139).

> *Nation branding is an active approach to creating positive perceptions of a country which would perhaps not arise if the nation's reputation was left solely to stereotypes and clichés, and thus, branding techniques are essential to differentiate one's nation from others and compete in the global market.*

Dinnie (2008:15) also defines it as "the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences".

A further suggestion of its definition is made by Aronczyk (2008:42) who explains that nation branding should "attract the 'right' kinds of investment, tourism, trade and talent". Additionally,

Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) and Rawson (2007) highlight the importance of governments creating, promoting, protecting, and supervising the nation-brand. Dinnie (2008) explains that the emergence of nation branding is based on national identity and country-of-origin.

There is an opposing point from Dinnie (2008) about national identity and country of origin. He argues that these two concepts are interacting within the context of economic globalization causing homogenization of markets and increasing sense of national identity. These effects together with the lowering of trade barriers between nations have resulted in the emergence of nation branding. To effectively compete in a global market, nations have turned to brand management strategies, which is another factor of the evolution of nation branding.

In the 21st century, nation branding has grown to be busy business, and its practitioners take great pains to emphasize that what they do is different from the more straightforward marketing and advertising work that came before them.

With regard to previous definitions in the literature, this study adopts the following definition: nation branding is a complex and unique multi-dimensional mix of elements operating on a local, regional, national and international level. It is context dependent and concerns the nation's identity, reputation and image with the aim to stimulate tourism-, investment-, and trade promotion, as well as public and cultural diplomacy (Samson 2020).

2.1.2.1. The Importance of Nation Branding

A well - known media studies scholar, Aronczyk (2013:16) highlights different purposes for a nation-state to brand itself. She supports her ideas with three major reasons that are discussed below.

The first is just for the need to access international capital through foreign investments, tourism and skilled labor. The second relates to nation branding being a form of public diplomacy where nation-states communicate through nation branding to foreign publics and perform within the international arena in the bid to be legitimate and enhance the nation-state's image on the international stage. It must be noted that nation branding and public diplomacy overlap in terms of function; they are both a form of soft power and work towards the betterment of the image of the

nation-state. Nation branding uses all possible avenues and tools and in opposition to traditional public diplomacy which has tended to reside within governmental structures and personnel, nation branding is less centralized and has a vast reach to an array of different foreign publics.

Thirdly, Aronczyk (2013:16) states that nation branding has the potential to have a recursive function, where the nation-state as it performs nation branding activities on the international stage these revert back to the citizens of the state and engender goodwill and patriotic feelings, these are helpful where building consensus and nationalism is concerned.

This paper will look at nation branding and public diplomacy as connected concepts which lead into one another.

In March 10, 2018, an article published on *New York Times* as 'Why the U.S. Needs to Act On Its Brand?' stated more about the benefits of nation branding. In the introductory section of the article, it was said that Apple, Starbucks, Singapore Airlines, and Cartier were all well-known. Their popularity was not a fluke. It comes from managing and investing carefully in building their brands. David Reibstein and Suneal Bedi, article contributors on New York Times asked why companies invested in their brands. They believed that it was not just to feed their egos. They did so because it was economically beneficial to their firms. A strong well-known brand allows a firm to either sell more products or charge a higher price. Often, it is both.

The researcher imagines that even when companies do not spend to create their brand, people form impressions of the products and services they offer. According to David Reibstein and Suneal Bedi. (2018), for years, Google never advertised, yet it is known as one of the best brands in the world. Starbucks has done minimal advertising, and it is recognized globally.

While intensively analyzing the article, I could realize that there is an immense confusion of associating brands only with those well-liked companies on the bases of their advertisement dominancy on main media outlets like television. When people think of brands, their minds usually go to companies that they see on TV, in grocery stores or malls. Brands are more than just associated with products we consume. The countries we live in, visit and hear about on the news also are brands. As brands, countries elicit distinct attitudes and perceptions, and it is these attitudes and perceptions that countries should really care about.

A country's brand is important for the same reason a corporate brand is important. Having a strong brand that people view positively increases the likelihood that consumers will purchase from that brand. When we walk down the beverage aisle of the supermarket, we are bombarded with brand names. Pepsi, Coke, Sprite, Gatorade, Red Bull, all conjure up different images in our heads. Positive images make it more likely that we will take that brand's products and put them in our shopping carts.

The same goes for a country. The best Countries ranking is not merely a beauty contest and for bragging rights when ambassadors get together. A positive country brand brings money and economic growth to it.

A country's brand, however, is not just about attracting visitors. A good brand also attracts direct foreign investment. When deciding whether to invest in a country's bonds, real estate, or even currency, or to build a factory or open an office, several factors of a country's brand matter including how transparent the country is, how easy it is to do business there, and how much the country's economy is growing. In addition, other economic factors are closely tied to a country's brand. In 2015, when Volkswagen was issued a notice of violation of the United States Clean Air Act, Germany's brand took a hard hit. Cars were Germany's largest exporter and provided more than 800,000 jobs. The decrease in exports and loss of jobs hurt the German brand and its economy, according to Reuters.

> *The proof is in the numbers. Together with U.S. News and BAV of WPP, we produced a report – the* 2018 Best Countries study *– where we ranked 80 countries by polling more than 21,000 people around the world. We have been doing this over the past three years. This gives us insight into how changes in a country's brand affect the economic health of the country.*
>
> *Take, for example, the* United States. *In 2016 the country was ranked the No. 4 country in the world. By 2018, the U.S. had fallen to No. 8. This is in part due to the fall in the global perceptions ranking of "open travel policies" (from No. 20 in 2016 to No. 51 in 2018). This decline in the U.S. brand has been associated with a sharp decline in overall tourism from all parts of the*

> *world. According to the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office,* tourist visits were down *2 percent in 2016 from the previous year and further down 6 percent in 2017. Visits from Africa and the Middle East were both down over 25 percent in 2017.*
>
> *This is due in part to the U.S. branding itself as anti-Muslim and anti-immigration via the Trump administration and campaign. This decrease in tourism translated into a loss of nearly $2.7 billion just in the first three months of 2017,* according to The New York Times and Tourism Economics, *a branch of Oxford Economics.*

People think that a brand has its impacts only on a single sector but a country's brand affects not just tourism. Money flowing into the country can also be affected when a country's economic brand is hurt. Taking the case of America's brand of being "open for business", the article published in the New York Times identified that it declined from a ranking of No. 23 in 2016 to No. 43 in 2018. This has been associated with a decrease in foreign direct investment inflows of 2 percent according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Just as a company can rebuild and rebrand, so can a country. Changing a country's brand for the better can create increases in economic prosperity. In another case that the New York Times studied, the United Arab Emirates was not ranked as a top country in 2016, but in 2017 reached as high as No. 22 overall. It was then ranked as the No. 1 up-and-coming country in the world in the Best Countries "movers" category.

It's not surprising then that Dubai visits increased 10 percent in the first three quarters of 2017, according to the Dubai Statistics Center publication from the government of Dubai. Even the UAE's foreign direct investment inflows have increased year to year since 2015. In contrast to the United States, the country with the best "open for business" brand, Luxembourg saw an increase in foreign inflow of 271 percent from 2016-2017.

A country's brand can have large impacts on its gross domestic product and economic growth. Developing and increasing a country's reputation on a global scale is an important part of

managing a country, just as developing and maintaining a strong positive corporate brand is an important part of managing a company. Brands are ubiquitous, but the largest brands in the world are countries.

The researcher strongly believes that a good country brand can mean great prosperity for its citizens and its future.

2.1.2.2. How to brand a country?

In September 2018, an article published on apolitical *How to brand a country: why our governments are hiring PR specialists'* described that Governments' use of clever sloganeering and storytelling to attract tourists is nothing new. From "I Amsterdam" to "what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas", branding has long been a way for countries, regions and cities to manage their reputations. But over the past 10 years, the field has evolved. It's no longer marketing gurus churning out logos and taglines a bevy of consultancies have popped up all over the Western world to help governments discern and market their identity.

In practice, this can mean anything from designing a line of clothing to sell a region to younger generations, to helping high-level diplomats come up with talking points for international conferences. The London-based Institute for Identity (INSTID), a branding agency, has done both of these for its clients.

Apolitical recently published an interview with Natasha Grand, the co-founder of the INSTID. In it, Grand discusses how she and her co-founder conduct ethnographic research, much of which involves interviews with citizens from government officials to chefs, craftspeople and musicians. The aim is to nail down an archetype for the region: an abstract representation of its character. These consultants dig deeply into a culture to build entire personas, with traits both positive and negative: one region may be characterized by perfectionism; another by stubbornness.

The task of branding countries is not easy. The process of developing a country' brand often takes 10 to 20 years. According to an article published in The Economist, there are two ways in which a country can improve its image quickly, luck and innovation (Martínez, 2010).

The concept of luck is based on successful cases related to the media. Such is the case of the film Crocodile Dundee, which switched American perceptions of Australia, or "The Lord of the Rings" which served to showcase the spectacular landscapes of New Zealand. On the other hand, innovation means new brands, products, music, art, politicians, even new public administrations (Martínez, 2010).

Abdu Yimam. (2018). Mentioned the seven step plan to brand a country by refereeing Wally Olins, a British branding expert, who created the concept of territory branding. These are,

1. Set up a working party with representatives of government, industry, the arts, education and the media to start the program.
2. Find out how the nation is perceived both by its own people and by nations abroad through qualitative and quantitative research.
3. Develop a process of consultation with opinion leaders to look at national strengths and weaknesses, and compare them with the results of the internal and external studies.
4. Create the central idea on which the strategy is based with professional advisors. This needs to be a powerful, simple idea that captures the unique qualities of the nation and can be used as a base from which the entire program can be developed.
5. Develop ways of articulating the central idea visually, including logos.
6. Look at how the messages required for tourism, inward investment and export can be coordinated and modulated so that they are appropriate for each audience.
7. Create a liaison system through the working party to launch and sustain the program in government activities and to encourage supportive action from appropriate organizations in commerce, industry, arts, media, and so on.

2.1.2.3. Countries Experiences and best practices

Nation branding as a concept and practice is embedded in the concepts of branding, nationalism, national identity and public diplomacy. Olins (2005:196) believes that the practice of nation branding has been going on for far longer a time than we realize and cites French history and the manner in which that country has changed over centuries, from being a state ruled by a monarch, to the French revolution, Napoleonic empire and so on, stating that at pivotal points of its history

France has had to rebrand especially due to political power changing hands and the need to legitimize the state.

Olins further goes on to state that the need for nations to brand and rebrand themselves rises from ongoing changes and "the need to project this real change symbolically to all the audiences with whom they relate," (2005:196).

To this end, some countries such as Germany (Europe), South Africa (Africa) and South Korea (Asia) are particularly selected so that their experiences and best practices of nation branding are discussed as follows.

Germany

Image 1: Map of Germany



Source: INFOPLEASE: An online Encyclopedia

The Federal Republic of Germany is a federal parliamentary republic, situated in central-western Europe and is a member of the European Union with a current population of 84,272,659 as of Sunday May 1, 2022 according to World meter's latest elaboration survey. It has a long-standing history stretching millennia but in recent history, it has been known for Adolf Hitler, Nazi Germany and the atrocities of the holocaust. After which followed the separation of Germany into East and West and then reunification in 1990,However presently Germany is now one of the most powerful and wealthy nation-states in the world and has put a lot of work towards rebranding itself.

Derks (2009) states that even though it was 15 years after reunification the country from the people's perspective still felt divided; the economy was in a bleak state, unemployment was high and the campaign to rebrand would go a long way in rejuvenating the nation. In 2005 towards the World Cup occurring in 2006 it was agreed that Germany needed to rebrand itself as a more likeable location. Through different ministries in the interior Germany has been able to rebrand itself under the moniker "the land of ideas" even to the present day across the board participation by different shareholders both public and private driving the strategic communication of brand Germany.

Private sectors mostly made of giant German brands such as DHL, Audi, Adidas, Mercedes Bayer and these brands would assist in communicative strategic integration of the idea of "Germany, a land of ideas." These brands are found all over the world. Thus their reach was international.

The "land of ideas" concept was an umbrella term housing the different ways in which brand Germany would proliferate the internal and external market with their new campaign thus rebranding and building an image of an open, creative and free Germany (Liseli N, 2018).

Zeroing in on one particular governmental organization that is dedicated to the place branding and public diplomacy of Germany is the German National Tourism Board (GNTB)in existence for 60 years and funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy it is an organization particularly concerned and tasked with the destination marketing of Germany (GNTB 2016). The GNTB is tasked with developing strategies around brand Germany such as the creation of themes, products and strategy to enter new markets. The GNTB works on many different levels and in partnership with different organisations. It has 73 members and 14 sponsors within the tourism industry and other associations as well as the marketing arms within the different federal states (GNTB 2016).

The GNTB aids in the building of the nation brand of Germany through press and PR activities overseas, the website **www.Germany.travel** works as a tourism portal with information about travelling to Germany and is packed with information a tourist would require. The GNTB also uses social media to interact with consumers and advertises brand Germany in international media for strategic communication purposes.

The Goethe institute is a non-governmental, independent German cultural institution with the slogan "*Sprache. Kultur. Deutschland"* it is an organisation that seeks to "convey a comprehensive

image of Germany by providing information about cultural, social and political life" (https://www.goethe.de/en/uun/org.html). The institute has a global reach and can be found in over 90 countries and is said to be the first point of contact with Germany for many. The Goethe institute promotes brand Germany through cultural means and in this manner contributes to the image and perceptions of Germany. The fact of existing in different countries around the world can be seen as playing a diplomat role implicitly and though the Goethe institute claims independence on its website www.goethe.de there are official documents of association describing the relationship between the institute and the federal government wherein which it is stated that the institute is funded by federal government. Of course that is not to say that the institute is not independent of political interference but rather that perhaps even this organisation is not completely a non-governmental actor.

To this point I would like to add that as far as nation branding is concerned, there seems to be a need to control the messages that are put out into the public space, messages that could be deemed contrary to the image that a nation-state would want to adhere to and thus the need to oversee institutions claiming a tie back to the nation-state.

The GNTB (2015:8) sees the number of overnight stays as a marker of its success but according to Zenker and Martin (2011) there are more variables that underlie the measurement of the success of a place. However from their annual report it is clear to see that the GNTB has monitored the number of visitors over the years as well as the effect on the economy and perhaps deeming the effect positive results in a success rating.

Germany has for years been seen as a safe and secure nation and this is perhaps changing where we are seeing a spate of terrorist attacks and the threat of more. This can definitely erode the image of a safe Germany, a Germany that prides itself in being the best travel destination in Europe. The lack of security and anxiety regarding these threats and the attacks that have already occurred have the probability of causing brand failure if not dealt with adequately.

On the other hand there is also the refugee question and while German has set up an image of openness not all citizens are in agreement with the influx of refugees and perhaps this might lead to unrest and if reports can be trusted xenophobic attacks on said refugees.

South Africa.

Image 2: Map of South Africa and satellite image



Source: Geology.com

Situated in the global south, South Africa as it is known today is democratic state that has only been in existence for twenty-two years. With a segregated past, it is perhaps understandable that the South African government would want to create an organization such as Brand SA which can perform multi-pronged nation branding functions of promoting South Africa globally as well as internally to engender nationalistic and patriotic feelings.

Established in 2002 Brand SA with the slogan 'Alive with possibilities' had the initial mandate of improving South Africa's global competitiveness and building a positive image internally and externally (Brand SA 2012:9).

With a board of trustees reporting to the presidency, there exists a connection between the National Development Plan, nation branding and the president as the first citizen of South Africa. This can perhaps be seen as an explicit link between the interplay that exists between nationalism, public diplomacy and nation branding. Brand SA (2012:2) remarks that "the presidency strengthens a nation's brand standing within the global community."

Through the use of the Anholt-Gfk Nation Branding hexagon model which assists nations in pinpointing areas of important for nation branding, Brand SA has highlighted the following six

pivotal elements: Investment and immigration, exports, people, culture and heritage, governance and lastly tourism (Brand SA 2012:1). These areas coordinate to produce cohesive communication which is paramount where nation branding, the reputation and image of a nation-state are concerned.

In recent years Brand SA has seemed to shift focus as a democratic South Africa has sought to find its place in the global village. With a new slogan "inspiring new ways, Brand SA has seen South Africa's nation branding strategies gain definition. Through ongoing research Brand SA now recognizes the place of importance that South Africa holds in Africa and within the sphere of emerging markets. To this end Brand SA has grown to focus on building a nation brand that showcases South Africa as at the crux of African development, a state that is "a top developing and globally competitive nation" (Brand SA 2015:20). These factors are closely related to public diplomacy because as a new democracy South Africa would seek to make itself visible on the world stage and as already stated, nation branding and public diplomacy are able to work hand-in-hand to enhance the image, reputation and perceptions of a nation-state.

Brand SA as an organization found within the gamut of the South African government and at present falling under the Department of Communications works together with both governmental and non-governmental players to further South African nation branding initiatives. Within government Brand SA works with different departmental bodies such as the Office of presidency as already stated, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Home Affairs, South African Tourism, the Government Communication and Information System, South African Airways, SABC, the Department of Sport and Recreation, the Department of Arts and Culture. The aforementioned governmental stakeholders are pivotal to the nation brand as they can perhaps be described as the spokes of the wheel that is nation branding, they assist in ensuring a strategic, holistic South African voice is put out into the market place internally and externally.

These departments lend cohesion to the construction of the South African nation brand for example South Africa is a well-known tourist destination and through the collaboration with Brand SA, South African tourism is able to augment its destination marketing initiatives and in fact ride on the back of Brand SA to further these initiatives. In the same manner Brand SA is inadvertently assisted in building better perceptions and associations.

Non-governmental institutions that aid in the nation branding of South Africa can be found in all corners of civil society. The ordinary South African citizen is a definite point of contact for sharing the gospel of the nation-state and Brand SA believes in "active citizenship" (Brand SA 2016:12) and the importance of instilling pride and patriotic feelings within South Africans, this of course would translate to ordinary citizens being ambassadors for South Africa to other nations across the globe. Brand SA instituted the Play Your Part initiative to this end and fostered relationships with South Africans across the country as well as faith-based organizations to engender a tolerant society (Brand SA 2016:12).

The private sector is another important non-governmental stakeholder that Brand SA utilizes. South Africa as one of the biggest economies in Africa has seen the expansion of South African firms into the rest of Africa and implications of this while varied, where nation branding is concerned there is room for the advantages of nation branding to result. Brand SA (2016) highlights training activities that were undertaken to educate about what constitutes nation branding and the role of stakeholders in the greater scheme of building brand South Africa.

Brand SA seems to make a concerted effort in the distribution of media that promotes a favorable image externally to foreign publics an example of this was a media programmed hosted by Brand SA in partnership with CNBC Africa at the World Economic Forum in Davos where a press conference was held, people were given room to network and even the minister of finance Mr Gordhan was in attendance (Brand SA 2014:20). Another initiative carried out by Brand SA was a campaign to advertise South Africa on taxi cabs in London, this was to showcase South Africa as a good place to do business as well as highlight South African ingenuity and creativity (Brand SA 2004). Brand South Africa (2016) also supported the minister of Trade and Industry on his trip to the US where he was able to hold a press briefing and dislodge and clarify certain perceptions of South Africa and business possibilities between the US and South Africa and other African states. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was also recently held in South Africa and Brand SA was in participation on different levels and "facilitated the participation of key Chinese media," (2016:13).

An analysis of the short history of Brand SA as an organization geared towards the nation branding of South Africa reveals that the nation-state has shown growth in its ability to harness and improve the image and perceptions held about South Africa and those that South Africans hold about their country. However the measurements of success vary and mean different things to different stakeholders. One example of success would be the lack of cognitive dissonance where the driving narrative behind the nation brand is totally different to experience on the ground that is a nation-state says one thing and does another.

Most scholars agree that this would in no uncertain terms bring about brand failure. Where Brand South Africa is concerned the anxieties about the high crime rate are problematic for the efforts of nation branding as are the spates of xenophobic attacks. Recently corruption and issues of governance have also come to the fore as issues affecting brand South Africa. In a field research study carried out by Brand SA into African countries like Nigeria, DRC and Kenya, it was found that the perception of South Africa vary, while they are perceived to be pivotal in the development of the rest of Africa, they at times enter African markets with a "know-it-all attitude" and are not cognizant of the foreign environment into which they have entered. (Brand SA 2016:57).As South Africa seeks to operate within Africa this would be good advice to heed.

South Korea

Image 3: Map of South Korea and satellite image



Source: Geology.com

South Korea, officially the Republic of Korea (ROK), is a country in East Asia, constituting the southern part of the Korean Peninsula and sharing a land border with North Korea. Its western border is formed by the Yellow Sea, while its eastern border is defined by the Sea of Japan. South

Korea claims to be the sole legitimate government of the entire peninsula and adjacent islands. It has a population of 51 million, of which roughly half live in the Seoul Capital Area, the fifth largest metropolis in the world. Other major cities include Incheon, Busan, and Daegu.

Melissa Leong, an article contributor, on Aug 02, 2014 to her article content published on Financial Post genuinely described South Korea as *'South Korea, once a poor, war-torn country is deliberately staking its future prosperity on the export of its culture, its television, its music and the likes of Psy and 'Gangnam Style'* (the case will be well described below.)

One of the most popular music that was recently well liked and widely accepted "Gangnam Style " went viral was launched by Park –sang, known professionally as PSY, the South Korean rapper, into super-stardom. The music video has been watched on Youtube more than 2 billion times, the song has once ranked second in both the US and the UK charts, and there have been "Gangnam Style flash mobs" throughout the world. It means that hundreds of millions are listening to Korean lyrics, singing along to a Korean song and following the wacky dance. Alongside the global sensation that is "Gangnam Style," there are other Korean successes. Kim Ki-duk's 18th film, PIETA, won the Golden Lion, top prize at the Venice Film Festival in September. Also Shin Kyung-sook became the first Korean and first woman to win the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2011 for "Please Look after Mom."

Melissa Leong, the article author of Financial Post wrote about How Korea became the world's coolest brand. She initially began her article describing how the music industry led by PSY and the country's culture had shaken the world.

> *When Snoop Dogg flew to Seoul in January to film a music video with pop star Psy of "Gangnam Style" fame, he didn't seem to realize just what South Koreans are willing to do to create a global phenomenon. Initially told that* the shoot for the song "Hangover" *would be "very relaxed," the California rapper was instead subjected to a grueling 18-hour shoot in more than 10 different locations without breaks.*

Six months later, on June 8, the music video got more than 10 million views on YouTube the day it was released. Today, it has been watched online more than 109 million times.

When the Western world got its first taste of Psy and his horse-riding dance moves in 2012 — "Gangnam Style" is the most viewed video in YouTube history, with more than 2 billion views generating a reported US$8-million through the site in 2012 alone — some people wondered if his success was a pop culture fluke, a random burst of Korean lightning.

There is not a country that has not had some influence from Korean culture. But that phenomenon was decades in the making. It is one of the fruits reaped from South Korea's compelling rise from one of the poorest, war-torn countries in the world to the economic and cultural powerhouse it is today. And it is deliberately staking its future prosperity on the export of its culture, its television, its music and the likes of Psy and "Hangover" and "Gangnam Style."

Image 4 : Park –sang, known professionally as PSY, the South Korean rapper



Source: Social Medias

Interestingly, these global achievements by Korean individuals were not part of the South Korean government's plan. Rather, their global impact surpassed the intended outcomes of Brand Korea,

Presidential Council on Nation Branding, and South Korean government's cultural diplomacy. Back in 2009, the Lee Administration established Brand Korea, to re-mold a country's reputation using the backdrop of South Korea's relatively undervalued nation brand. Its main policy was named "For a Global Korea." For many years, South Korea has been actively involved in international affairs, hosting multiple global events including G20 in 2010, Nuclear Summit and Yeosu Expo in 2012.

Brand Korea's ten-point action plan is to promote Taekwondo; to dispatch service volunteers abroad every year; to adopt a "Korean Wave" program; to introduce the Global Korea scholarship; to adopt a campus Asia program; to increase external aid; to develop state-of art technologies; to nurture the culture and tourism industries; to treat foreigners and multicultural families better; and to help Koreans become "global citizens." In addition, South Korean government utilizes cultural diplomacy to enhance Korea's image; to sustain the Korean Wave by subsidizing the costs of production of some Korean dramas, movies, and documentaries; to spread the Korean language by establishing an additional five hundreds King Sejong Institutes overseas by 2015; and to make Korean food one of the world's top five favored cuisines by 2017. Furthermore, the South Korean government has worked with multilateral organizations such as UNESCO and hosted a number of international sports events including the 2011 International Athletic Games.

It simply shows that the South Korean government has spent a massive amount of money to enhance its soft power to captivate a better image of Korea; yet, there is skepticism over global Korean policies wondering if those policies actually improve South Korea's reputation. Ironically, "Gangnam Style" became the biggest cultural export even though the Gangnam district has been severely criticized internally by domestic politicians and the media. An authentic picture of contemporary culture in Seoul has been projected and read worldwide through "PIETA" and "Please Look after Mom." Some of the South Korean contemporary culture on display in the movies: the feeling of loss, loneliness, hatred, superficial behaviors etc., is unlikely to be promoted by the government, but the eyes of the world prefer watching and reading the actual culture rather than accepting the filtered and polished Korean image provided by the government.2.1.3. Image of Ethiopia

2.1.2.3.1. The Concept of Image

Image is an important aspect in the marketing and branding of places. According to Um and Crompton (1990), it is a holistic construct that derives from attitudes towards the perceived attributes. Potential travelers generally have limited knowledge about the attributes of a destination they have not previously visited. For this reason the image and attitude dimensions of a place as a travel destination are critical elements in the process of choosing it, irrespective of whether or not they are true representations of what it has to offer. In order to have an attitude towards and to form a perception and an image of it, people have to be aware of the target country (see Percy, 2008). Percy and Elliott (2009) also emphasize the role of feelings in image formation.

Country images are important extrinsic cues in product evaluations. They elicit associations and they can influence purchase decisions. A positive country image can foster a positive reputation for a whole product category. A nation's success in developing a beneficial image for a certain line of products or services, for example, can be used for branding (Stock, 2009). Countries in themselves could be perceived as products, or preferably brands. According to Fan (2006), there is a correlation between countries that produce strong brands and those that are strong brands.

It is argued that globalization and the resulting competition among countries have caused nations to be sensitive towards the way they are portrayed (e.g. Anholt, 2007; Stock, 2009; Olins, 2002). It has also been suggested that images of places can and do evolve and that they can be influenced. According to Kotler et al. (1993), place image is the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place, herein a country. Thus, the image of Nation A, for example, resides in the minds of the people of Nation B (Anholt, 2007). Fan (2006, 2010), in turn, refers to the actual image: "the real image of a nation held by another nation" and what is projected to the other.

Even though a nation does not plan and implement any nation branding activities, nations always have an image (Anholt, 2007; Fan, 2006; Papadopoulos & Helsop, 2002). As stated by Papadopoulos and Helsop (2002), nation images are multifaceted, originate from various different sources and can include factual as well as affective information. Moreover, a nation image may also be mainly positive or negative, strong or weak, rich and complex or simple (Anholt, 2007; Papadopoulos & Helsop, 2002). A nation is considered to have a strong image if it has the same

associations to many people whereas a nation with little or widely different associations has a weak image. Strong images are not necessarily positive since for example North Korea and Afghanistan mean the same things to a lot of people but the associations are rather negative (Anholt, 2007).

A nation image can be created through many different ways which include first-hand such as personal experiences through working in or travelling to a country. Furthermore, second-hand experiences such as word-of-mouth, the use or ownership of a product made in that country, the behavior of people associated with the country, mentions of the country in films and other media, acts of war and charity, sporting and cultural events, the history and music determine the images people hold of different nations (Anholt, 2010; Dinnie, 2008; Fan, 2006).

National images tend to emerge through stereotyping, in other words placing nations and their people in categories – frequently with negative undertones (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2000). Although superficial, stereotypes provide mental shortcuts to perceptions of attitudes and intentional orientations. The stereotyping may be planned or unplanned, and the fact that it is a dynamic, fluid process indicates that it is possible to manage the evoked images (Freire, 2009). The building of an effective nation brand may well start from the stereotype, countering what is potentially damaging and reinforcing the positive aspects.

2.1.2.3.2. Ethiopia in the Eyes of the World

How is Ethiopia seen in the eyes of the world? What do people know about Ethiopia? Why does their knowledge of the nation not exceed much more than its name and perhaps its geographic location? How is Ethiopia perceived abroad? What are the prevailing expectations and fears given the current world situation?

These are among the questions that we had been clicked by though the answers wouldn't be as easy as the interrogative forms. I strongly believe that all questions asked in the introductory session are highly integrated with the image of a certain state towards the rest of the world. Countries are seen in different ways as the perceptions really vary. Country-image perceptions may vary depending on the perceiver's nationality (Roth and Romeo, 1992; Beerli and

Martı´n, 2004). Therefore researchers should consider the perceptions of informants in more than one country.

We have a long serving quote saying that Ethiopia is an origin of human kind and the land of unique people. We may probably think that the statement has a factual point, but outsiders never assume it the same way we do. Because the point we seriously take it as a fact is like the light under the pot that is not shared among others. The same is true for the case of Ethiopia for her untold stories that have not been told to others rather than being kept aside. What the country is or has is strictly different from the way the rest of the world is looking towards us. And the researcher assumes that once the world's eyes are firmly fixed against, it is very challenging to reverse back to the normal position unless a very deep and routine action is undertaken.

It is true that Ethiopia is poorly represented around the world. Beyond this, Nowadays, outsiders are giving us additional tags as the state is full of battlefields. Currently, it has become a state that has hugely been shaken by political instability. It has also undergone a hostile war in its northern part. At the moment, the nation is facing an enormous socio-economic crisis. All these cases are doubling the negative image of the state in the eyes of the world. Despite the fact there has been huge hostility; it doesn't have to not be the facts people should know about us; However, I strongly believe that most people do not know what they should know about Ethiopia.

For decades, the image that has been embedded in the eyes of the world about us is of a nation that is backward, poor or at war. Decades of weak planning and misguided economic development strategies has meant a nation that cannot depend on a skilled workforce. Instead, we have been looking for handouts, either from Western development partners or our own Diaspora community overseas, most of which subsist on jobs that they would have looked down on in Ethiopia.

This dependent mentality has long infected leaders who are busy asking for aid and funds to support a fragile economy. Like much of the public, their view is of a country that is impossible to fix. The notion of a good day's work is barely existent. We have failed to grasp

the concept that every developed country has had dynamic economic strategies and sacrifices to make a better nation for future generations.

Ethiopian embassies are not doing much to change the image of this country through the access they have to public figures and leaders overseas. Annual event activities in Ethiopian embassies are nothing more than ineffective promotion campaigns and do very little to build the country's brand instead they are causing the country to spend millions of dollars. Particularly, looking at some of the embassies, they are good examples to show that the country is losing foreign exchanges spending on millions of dollars. Following this, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said that some measures would be taken to halt losing millions of dollars.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the country would shut down several embassies, including one in Kenya, to manage costs, with most diplomats working as non-resident ambassadors. This shows that it is among the plans to cut the number of embassies it has in other countries by at least half in a bid to save costs. This means the government had intended that Ethiopia shouldn't have 60 or so embassies and consulates in the present moment. The prime minister believed that Instead of throwing US dollars everywhere and 30 of the embassies should at least be closed, the ambassadors should instead be here.

He said the Ethiopian ambassador to Kenya, for example, could be based in Addis Ababa and only makes field trips to meet with officials, while following events in Nairobi through the media. Therefore the decision was the need of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to undergo serious reforms as well.

The researcher strongly believes that we need to think harder about differing parameters of diplomatic representation between democracies and autocracies and the possible consequences of this

Measures could be taken to correct and fix problems and come to a level of point where the country could cop up with the standard in the international stage of competitiveness. That standard could be building a good nation and creating a country with good images in the eyes of the world. Certainly, building a nation's good name would not be so simple. But

conveying a good image locally and to the rest of the world should be one of the priorities of the government. The nation must take advantage of globalization, in which communication, opportunity and culture are used to generate sustainable economic benefits. It is a powerful method that can allow Ethiopia to be identified in the global social and economic arena.

The government will go a long way if it can craft public diplomacy to inform and to reach citizens and companies. This would create the organizational framework in which our diplomats can be led and measured by.

A positive image cannot be crafted unless institutions and cultures are promoted, as well as national goals and current policies for sustainable economic development. Instead of working hard to be eligible to acquire aid and funds from developed countries, international relations must be directed toward establishing a good image and promoting ideas for non-nationals to take an interest in.

Ethiopia can be represented by the culturally diversified nation with untapped opportunities it has. The ever increasing development of social media means that the infrastructure is already there. What is missing is the creativity to use this to our advantage. Public diplomacy is directly related to effective public relations at the government level, where the image of nations is successfully communicated on a brand. Hiring local and international firms can go a long way in popularizing branding.

Ethiopia is a poor country, but this is not the only defining characteristic it has. It is also a tragedy that this is what the world thinks of it. Images of hunger and famine have lingered ever since the 1980s, while the successes since that moment and culture of the nation have failed to garner as much attention. Therefore, A country's good image is a necessary prerequisite to attract investment, tourism and skilled man-power. Countries use their potential resources which makes them unique from other countries- be it their geographical location, technological advancement, cultural heritages and economic strength.

Ethiopia seeks a position to be an attractive investment destination and a vision of top five tourist destinations in Africa. The country has many opportunities to drive the image internationally. The sectors like tourism, culture, investment, natural resources, historical events, athletics and others

are some of the crucial advantages of branding the country, but none of the alternatives has been implemented in a well- organized and strategic way. It is almost done instinctively and in a conventional way. Abdu Yimam (2018).

The question I had used as a commencement of the issue still clicks on my mind. How do others see us? For Ethiopia, a country that has established such appreciating associations to the rest of the world but that depends so loosely on its foreign relations; this information is critical and vital. How we are perceived, what others like about us, what they are less fond of, what they expect of us and what role we are being asked to play – the answers to all these questions can have a major impact on the way we collaborate with our international partners, making it easier or harder. By comparing the picture we have of ourselves with the impressions others have of us, examining where they diverge and identifying our own blind spots, we can garner valuable information to help guide our future actions.

2.2. Review of Empirical literature

The research by Samson (2020) affirmed that the emergence of IMC at North-western University is motivated by the expansion of the marketing communication mix. Bundling marketing communication mix elements together to create the 'one-voice' phenomenon is the starting point of IMC. Samson (2020) added some realistic and crucial standpoint that the other stream of the literature suggested the outside-in perspective of IMC and the integration of sources of brand message.

The researcher clearly painted the line that the argument was that the integration of marketing communication should broadly include sources of brand message from customers' context because of considerations to customers who one-sidedly and autonomously decides sources of brand message – even sources invisible to the marketer. This provides guidelines for the IMC planning and implementation – where to start, what to look for and what to consider. This is fairly a recent development in the evolution of IMC.

Concerning the review section, Samson (2020) still replicates that inside-out or outside-in perspectives of IMC give partial views in the planning and implementation of IMC. It added that an alternative approach to this is the consideration of both perspectives. Such bidirectional

perspective comprehensively informs the strategic integration of marketing communications. It stresses the fact that to make a broad understanding of customers, integrating brand contacts in their context must come first. Further, understanding the firm context is important to get a comparative picture of the integration of marketing communication. As Samson (2020) clearly highlights the perspectives, this signifies consideration of both customer and marketer perspectives but making customers as a starting point in the planning and management of IMC.

Samson (2020) wraps up the case that the inclusion of the Nordic School theories into IMC is important to a broader understanding. For instance, the synthesis of value-in-use theory with brand contacts points to brand contacts-in-use. In this case, the emphasis switches towards based on what brand contacts, the value of communication emerges for the customer instead of focusing on available communication instruments only from one sender. Further, the theoretical assumption of IMC is expanded from the concept of 'integration' to the new conceptualization called 'integration-in-use'.

In sum, the development of sources of brand message and the growing power of customers calls for the turnaround of IMC. The shift of IMC from either inside-out or outside-in to a bidirectional perspective (inside-out and outside-in) from the concepts of value-in-use, open source logic and communication-in-use are required for the planning and implementation of IMC.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

Essentials of Research Methodology and Data Collection are an outstanding section that has a collection of fundamental concepts and terminologies in research methods. The application of fitting and suitable methodology is vital to pull off the overall objectives of a meticulous study. Thus, addressing the questions raised by the research.

As this research is an examination and assessment to the Ministry of foreign affairs (MOFA) that the study aimed at enlightening the nation's branding practices and strategies, the application of qualitative research methodology was found to be suitable.

Research Methodology is a set of systematic techniques used in research. This simply means a guide to research and how it is conducted. It describes and analyzes methods, throws more light on their limitations and resources, clarifies their pre - suppositions and consequences, relating their potentialities to the nightfall zone at the frontiers of knowledge. Research methodology is very crucial section of the study that Chinelo I, (2016) stated that the following are the advantages of research methodology:

1. Advancement of wealth of human being

2. Provision of tools for carrying out the research

3. Develops a critical and scientific attitude, disciplined thinking to observations

4. Enrichment of the research process and provision of chance for in-depth study and understanding of the subject

5. Helps to inculcate the ability to evaluate and use research results with reasonable confidence and in decision making

6. Inculcates the ability to learn to read and think critically.

3.1. Definitions of Terms

3.1.1. Research

(Chinelo I, 2016) argued that the process of research came into being due to man's quest to be at tune with his environment and also understand nature. To achieve this, man uses the tools of experience and reasoning available to him. Man also makes use of experience and authoritative sources beyond his immediate circle.

Experience and authority are rich and major sources of hypothesis, which are based mainly on common sense knowledge and haphazard events, therefore it can be unjustified for drawing conclusions on events. Hence research hypothesis formulation using experience and authority is judged to be unscientific. Research anchors on scientific reasoning; which could be inductive and deductive or both.

3.1.2. Methodology

It is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It comprises the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge. (Chinelo I, 2016). Typically, it encompasses concepts such as paradigm, theoretical model, phases and quantitative or qualitative techniques. (Irny & Rose, 2005).

A methodology does not set out to provide solutions. It is, therefore, not the same thing as a method. Instead, it offers the theoretical underpinning for understanding which method, set of methods or best practices which can be applied to specific case, for example, to calculate a specific result.

3.2. Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is defined as a market research method that focuses on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational communication. According to Raftopoulou (2007), the qualitative approach has been considered the most appropriate research method to have an in-depth understanding of people's beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, motivations, views and behaviors.

Brikci and Green (2007) assert that applying a qualitative method would help to explore the meaning participants attach to a phenomenon by deeply understanding their perspectives. The overall aim of qualitative research is to understand some aspect of social life and its methods generate words rather than numbers as data for analysis (Ibid).

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. In general terms, scientific research consists of an investigation that seeks answers to a question, systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question, collects evidence, produces findings that were not determined in advance and produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

Qualitative research is using methods such as participant observation or case studies which result in a narrative, descriptive account of a setting or practice. Sociologists using these methods typically reject positivism and adopt a form of interpretive sociology. (Parkinson & Drislane, 2011)

To this end, the study applied a qualitative research approach aiming at getting a deep understanding of the phenomena. The results of the research are principally valid to the consequent research questions.

3.3. Data Gathering Instruments

Even though there are several means of data gathering instruments, the data gathering instruments for this study that applied qualitative research design were mainly One-on-One In-Depth Interview, Focus Group Discussions, Qualitative Content Analysis and Focus Group Discussions. These three data gathering instruments are discussed as follows.

3.3.1. One-on-One In-depth Interview

One-on-one or intensive interviews are the most important data collection tool used in this study. It is a type of qualitative research technique that allows one-on- one discussion and exchange of ideas. Different scholars have discussed it in multiple ways. According to Wimmer and Dominick

(2010), this type of interview is useful for researchers who wish intensive or detailed information about the thoughts and behaviors of an individual or want to explore new topics in depth.

The other scholars such as Brikci and Green (2007) state that one-on-one in-depth interview is used to explore the respondent's own perceptions and accounts in a detailed manner on topics for which needs in- depth understanding.

In this connection, the data gathered through an in-depth interview was presented and analyzed in light of the research objectives.

3.3.2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2010) FGDs or group interviewing is used to gather first round information for a research study or to gather qualitative data concerning a research question. FGDs would enable the researcher to easily collect data and get deep firsthand information and the data obtained from focus groups are used to enhance understanding and to reveal diversified opinions (Ibid).

The deep interviews were undertaken in MOFA that has been concerned in the actions stanchly correlated to Nation branding and image building of the country. Public and Business diplomacy staff, spokesperson counselors, digital media counselor and digital diplomacy professionals from MOFA involved in the interviews.

Thus, 9 professionals from MOFA were requested for the interview. And 6 were really willing to give the interview that made a response rate of 67%. Only 1 interviewee was not enthusiastic to provide the interview. One has given excuses and another one gave an uncertain appointment until he gets suitable periods to hold a meeting. Out of 6 interviewed only 1 responded via phone call and email, the remaining 5 were interviewed face to face. Concerning the working experience of the respondents, they were selected depend on the field of digital, business & public diplomacy, spokesperson & digital media counseling range from 2 – 17 years. The age group of the respondents also ranges from 25- 45 years and 77.7% are male while 22.2% are female.

The interview questions were positioned in a way that will give a natural flow to the respondents rather than following the sequence of the research propositions. The results reported here are the ones which are found most important and relevant to the study. Therefore, some irrelevant answers have been omitted.

Regarding the setting, the researcher tried to make the setting for the FGDs as comfortable as possible by selecting venues that made the informants comfortable and feel at ease to express their thoughts.

3.3.3. Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is commonly used for analyzing qualitative data. Various scholars have tried to portray qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is one of the several qualitative methods currently available for analyzing data and interpreting its meaning (Schreier, 2012). As a research method, it represents a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012).

Berg (2001) quoting Hoisri (1968: 608), wrote that broadly defined, content analysis is "any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages". While for Wimmer and Dominick (2010) content analysis is an efficient way to explore the content of a certain media.

As a research method, it represents a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). In qualitative content analysis, the abstraction process is the stage during which concepts are created. Usually, some aspects of the process can be readily described, but it also partially depends on the researcher's insight or intuitive action, which may be very difficult to describe to others (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). From the perspective of validity, it is important to report how the results were created. Readers should be able to clearly follow the analysis and resulting conclusions (Schreier, 2012).

Explaining the importance of qualitative content analysis, Schroder et al. (2003) emphasize that content analysis enhances the researcher's knowledge about the media product in a bid to be able

to conduct a meaningful and focused conversation with the informants about the issue at hand. Flick (2002) contends that textual analysis has an importance of distinguishing the objective facts of documents from the subjective views and opinions of informants.

Qualitative content analysis can be used in either an inductive or a deductive way. Both inductive and deductive content analysis processes involve three main phases: preparation, organization, and reporting of results.

The preparation phase:

This stage consists of collecting suitable data for content analysis, making sense of the data, and selecting the unit of analysis.

The organization phase

In the inductive approach, the organization phase includes open coding, creating categories, and abstraction (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In deductive content analysis, the organization phase involves categorization matrix development, whereby all the data are reviewed for content and coded for correspondence to or exemplification of the identified categories (Polit & Beck, 2012). The categorization matrix can be regarded as valid if the categories adequately represent the concepts, and from the viewpoint of validity, the categorization matrix accurately captures what was intended (Schreier, 2012).

The reporting phase

In the reporting phase, results are described by the content of the categories describing the phenomenon using a selected approach (either deductive or inductive). A requirement for successful content analysis is that data can be reduced to concepts that describe the research phenomenon (Cavanagh, 1997; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) by creating categories, concepts, a model, conceptual system, or conceptual map (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Morgan, 1993; Weber, 1990).

There has been much debate about the most appropriate terms (rigor, validity, reliability, trustworthiness) for assessing qualitative research validity (Koch & Harrington, 1998). Criteria for

reliability and validity are used in both quantitative and qualitative studies when assessing the credibility (Emden & Sandelowski, 1999; Koch & Harrington, 1998; Ryan-Nicholls & Will, 2009). Such terms are mainly rooted in a positivist conception of research. According to Schreier (2012), there is no clear dividing line between qualitative and quantitative content analysis, and similar terms and criteria for reliability and validity are often used. Researchers have mainly used qualitative criteria when evaluating aspects of validity in content analysis (Kyngäs et al., 2011).

The most widely used criteria for evaluating qualitative content analysis are those developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). They used the term trustworthiness. The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is especially important when using inductive content analysis as categories are created from the raw data without a theory-based categorization matrix.

Several other trustworthiness evaluation criteria have been proposed for qualitative studies (Emden, Hancock, Schubert, & Darbyshire, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Neuendorf, 2002; Polit & Beck, 2012; Schreier, 2012). However, a common feature of these criteria is that they aspire to support the trustworthiness by reporting the process of content analysis accurately. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four alternatives for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, that is, credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability. In 1994, the authors added a fifth criterion referred to as authenticity. From the perspective of establishing credibility, researchers must ensure that those participating in research are identified and described accurately. Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions. Conformability refers to the objectivity, that is, the potential for congruence between two or more independent people about the data's accuracy, relevance, or meaning. Transferability refers to the potential for extrapolation. It relies on the reasoning that findings can be generalized or transferred to other settings or groups. The last criterion, authenticity, refers to the extent to which researchers, fairly and faithfully, show a range of realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Beck, 2012).

Researchers often struggle with problems that compromise the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings (de Casterlé, Gastmans, Bryon, & Denier, 2012). The aim of the study described in this article was to describe trustworthiness based on the main qualitative content analysis phases, and to compile a checklist for evaluating trustworthiness of content analysis study.

Table 2: Checklist for Researchers Attempting to Improve the Trustworthiness of a Content Analysis Study.

Phase of the content analysis study	Questions to check
Organization phase	**Categorization and abstraction** How should the concepts or categories be created? Is there still too many concepts? Is there any overlap between categories? **Interpretation** What is the degree of interpretation in the analysis? How do I ensure that the data accurately represent the information that the participants provided? **Representativeness** How to I check the trustworthiness of the analysis process? How do I check the representativeness of the data as a whole?

Reporting phase	**Reporting results** Are the results reported systematically and logically? How are connections between the data and results reported? Is the content and structure of concepts presented in a clear and understandable way? Can the reader evaluate the transferability of the results (are the data, sampling method, and participants described in a detailed manner)? Are quotations used systematically? How well do the categories cover the data? Are there similarities within and differences between categories? Is scientific language used to convey the results? **Reporting analysis process** Is there a full description of the analysis process? Is the trustworthiness of the content analysis discussed based on some criteria

Source: Satu Elo, Maria Kääriäinen, Outi Kanste, Tarja Pölkki, Kati Utriainen, and Helvi Kyngäs. (2014).

3.4. My Role as a Researcher

During the data gathering, the searcher had a moderator's role. Hence, in order to facilitate the discussion and provide equal chance to all discussants, one assistant moderator who is oriented on the contents of the discussion, worked together with the researcher during the discussion sessions.

The researcher prepared and used an interview guide that contained issues which are relevant to the research with a view to making sure that the discussants focused on the subjects or issues

related to the research. A tape-recorder was used to record the interviews with the consent of the participants. The researcher also took note as a backup material. Then the data recorded by the audio tape recorder was transcribed and translated from Amharic.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Scholars such as Samson (2020) states, it is vital to consider ethical questions before, during and after the research process. Awareness of ethical concerns is helpful to avoid and prevent conflict with respondents. Qualitative research is considered as a research that utilizes relatively unstructured forms of data (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). Grix (2004:120) asserts that "Ethical considerations are thought to be greater for those conducting qualitative research, given the direct contact researchers have with people, their personal lives and the issue of confidentiality that arise out of this."

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2010) some common areas where mass media researchers might encounter ethical dilemmas include voluntary participation and informed consent, concealment and deception and protection of privacy.

Regarding informed consent Wimmer and Dominick (2010) assert that it may be necessary for a qualitative researcher to disclose all the details of the project that might make the respondent's life more difficult. A prospective informant for a project using intensive interviewing should be told about the significant time commitment involved if he or she participates in the research. Participation might also mean traveling to the interview site, agreeing to have the interview audio recorded, and possibly being re-interviewed in the future. All these facts should be revealed to the informant to fulfill the obligation of informed consent. (p. 133)

Concerning the above mentioned ethical considerations, participants of this study were informed about the purpose of the research beforehand. It was made clear for them that they should be involved in the research voluntarily but if they have any reservation, it is possible to withdraw their consent at any time. Every participant agreed to this. While asking the informants the researcher made sure that their rights are respected and well protected.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedure

According to Samson (2020), within the qualitative research literature, different frameworks can be found which can help in analyzing qualitative data transcripts. In general, it can be said that the analysis of data from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews is based on an inductive content analysis due to the research's exploratory nature.

The data gathered by the above discussed qualitative data collection techniques were analyzed based on appropriate qualitative research methodologies and by linking them to the objectives of the study. Hence, in this study thematic analysis is used to analyze the data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data (Braun and Clarke 2006). According to Gibson (2006), the data that will be thematically analyzed can include an interview text, field notes, photographs and video footage. Boyatzis (1998) describes thematic analysis as a process for encoding qualitative information. "The encoding requires an explicit 'code'. This may be a list of themes; a complex model with 36 themes, indicators, and qualifications that are causally related; or something in between these two forms" (Ibid: 4).

Researchers utilizing this method identify themes, which are patterns (a group of repeating ideas) that have emerged from the coded data (Vaismoradi et al. 2016; Boyatzis 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006:10) assert that "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set."

The data gathered through the FGDs and one-on-one interviews was thematically analyzed based on the transcripts of the recorded interviews and on the notes taken by the researcher during the FGDs and one-on-one interview sessions. The data collected by the audio tape recorder was transcribed word-by-word in order not to miss vital information. After that the data was translated from Amharic into English.

The analysis of the data gathered by the above methods is not bound to a specific theory, model or empirical concept discussed in the literature review part of the study but the theoretical frameworks, the models and the empirical concepts were utilized as a guide to thematic analysis and making sense of the data. Inductive data analysis was used in order to generate themes from

participants of the FGDs and one-on-one interviews. In so doing as a researcher I have tried my best to identify and bring to light interesting findings and recurring themes in the FGDs and one-on-one interviews.

The data collected and analyzed in the above mentioned manner are presented in a descriptive form and quotations are used whenever necessary in order to further strengthen the major findings of the study.

3.7. Sources of Data

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources in the study. The main data collecting instrument for this research is an in-depth interview and hence the researcher has conducted in-depth interviews with various primary sources. The sources interviewed for the research have experiences in nation branding, business, digital diplomacy and public diplomacy tasks which range from a junior diplomat to senior business and public counselors in the MOFA mostly. To cross check and enhance the validity of data, secondary sources are also used.

The primary sources of data for this study are business and public diplomacy and nation branding counseling professionals who work at different levels of the Ministry. An in-depth interview, using semi- structured questions, was conducted to get substantive data valuable for the study. The interviewees have different levels of educational background, experience and positions in the Ministry.

Regarding the use of secondary sources, the researcher conducted an analysis of documents such as the Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategies, Diaspora policy. As Prior (2004) mentioned, documents are put forward for consideration in schemes of social research and are approached in terms of what they contain and the focus is primarily on the language embodied in the documents as a medium of thought or expression.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides Analysis, presentation and Findings of the research. The main objective of this part is to assess Integrated Marketing communications (IMC) used by the Ministry of foreign affairs (MOFA) to manage nation branding in the contemporary politics of Ethiopia. To this end, the researcher used codes in place of the respondents' names to keep their privacy. These codes are a combination of letters and numbers. For instance, I1, I2, I3 correspond to Interviewees 1, Interviewee 2 and Interview 3 correspondingly. The letter 'I' stands for the word 'Interviewee' and the numbers simply stand for the interviews. Thus, the data gathered through an in-depth interview will be presented and analyzed in light of the research objective. The research was conducted by following the qualitative methodology as presented in chapter three. The research outcomes chiefly applicable to the subsequent research questions:

1. What are the major frameworks of integrated marketing communication in the process of nation branding communications of public relations that have been done?

2. How does the ministry use the PR tools for image buildings and first class diplomacy?

3. Are there any special PR strategies implemented in MOFA for planning and programming of communication within its overall goals, objectives by selecting the defined target audiences using appropriate Medias?

4. How is the feedback to the MOFA's activities during the process of nation branding?

5. What are the challenges of Ministry of Foreign Affairs public relation campaign communications during the process of nation branding?

The deep interviews were undertaken in MOFA that has been concerned in the actions stanchly correlated to Nation branding and image building of the country. Public and Business diplomacy staff, spokesperson counselors, digital media counselor and digital diplomacy professionals from MOFA involved in the interviews.

Thus, 9 professionals from MOFA were requested for the interview. And 6 were really willing to give the interview that made a response rate of 67%. Only 1 interviewee was not enthusiastic to

provide the interview. One has given excuses and another one gave an uncertain appointment until he gets suitable periods to hold a meeting. Out of 6 interviewed only 1 responded via phone call and email, the remaining 5 were interviewed face to face. Their working experiences in the field of digital, business & public diplomacy, spokesperson & digital media counseling range from 2 – 17 years. The age group of the respondents also ranges from 25- 45 years and 77.7% are male while 22.2% are female.

The interview questions were positioned in a way that will give a natural flow to the respondents rather than following the sequence of the research propositions. The results reported here are the ones which are found most important and relevant to the study. Therefore, some irrelevant answers have been omitted.

4.1. Background of the organization

For many centuries in the past Ethiopia had been known to the outside world by the name Abyssinia. The term "Ethiopia" is of Greek origin and in classic times used as a generic and rather diffused designation for Africa, south of the Sahara.

This exogamic imagination of the outsiders towards Ethiopia, a country watered by the four major rivers (the Blue Nile, Awash, Omo & Genale) and one of the oldest states in the world has for long times inspired the thoughts of travelers and geographers. Also due to its geopolitical location i.e. transferring the two continents, Africa and Asia, Ethiopia has also been the center of attention in all times, before and after the establishment of modern diplomatic practices.

In the recent history of the country, different regional lords and Kings (especially Tewodros and Yohannes) before Emperor Minilik were communicating with the outside world through missionaries and envoys. Later in 1907 G.C., the formal foundation of the present day ministries in Ethiopia was laid down by the formation of the first Cabinet of Emperor Minilik. Among the Twelve Ministries of Minilik's First Cabinet headed by the old palace officials, the Ministry of Commerce and Foreign Affairs was the ever-existing Diplomatic Institution of Ethiopia. Upon its formation, the Ministry had been led by Neggadras (Leader of Merchants) Hayle-Giorgis wolde-Michael. A number of officials have served the country since Minilik's time as Foreign Minister and the following is their list.

According to the present Organizational Structure the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has a Minister, a State Minister, 29 General Directorates and 49 Diplomatic Missions abroad.

4.1.1. Powers and Responsibilities of the Ministry

As stated in the Proclamation No. 4/1995 which defines the powers and duties of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the following powers and responsibilities.(source: MOFA official website)

1. Based on studies undertaken on the country's foreign relations, formulates and submits to the government policy guidelines on foreign affairs and, upon approval, follows up their implementation.
2. In consultation with the concerned organs, negotiates and signs treaties and agreements that Ethiopia enters into with other states and international organizations which are approved by the Government, except insofar as such power is specifically given by law to another organ, and affects all formalities of ratification of treaties and agreements.
3. Coordinates all relations of other government organs with foreign states and international organizations.
4. Keeps contacts, as may be necessary, with foreign diplomatic and consular representatives in Ethiopia as well as with representatives of international organizations with a view to facilitating the protection of mutual interests.
5. Coordinates and supervises the activities of Ethiopia's diplomatic and consular missions, and offices of the permanent representatives of Ethiopia to international organizations.
6. Ensures the enforcement of rights and obligations arising from treaties and agreements signed by the Ethiopian Government except, insofar, as specific power has legally been delegated to another organ.
7. Registers and keeps all authentic copies of international treaties and agreements concluded between Ethiopia and other states or international organizations.
8. Performs the functions of a depository of multilateral treaties and agreements when the Ethiopian Government is such a depository.

9. Ensures the privileges and immunities of foreign diplomatic missions and representatives of international organizations under the international laws and treaties to which Ethiopia is a party.
10. In cooperation with the appropriate organs, safeguard the interests and rights of the country, and ensures that they are respected by foreign States and that the interests and rights of Ethiopian nationals abroad are protected.
11. Ensures that good neighborly relations with neighboring countries are strengthened.
12. Issues diplomatic passports and in cooperation with the appropriate organs, carries out, matters regarding persons who apply for political asylum and Ethiopian nationality.

4.2. Inquiring the sources of messages implemented by MOFA

These sections or departments have valuable benefits in delivering the country's messages to the world because as it is plainly explained in chapter one the world is nearly, virtually one market that almost every country, city and region, rich or poor, compete with each other for its share of the world's consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, global sporting and cultural events and for the attention, concentration and admiration of the international media, of other governments, and the people of other countries.

The question asked to a business and public diplomat (I1) was "What are the major frameworks of integrated marketing communication in the process of nation branding communications of public relations that have been done?"

A business and public diplomat (I1) roughly describes about these departments that there are departments in the diplomatic mission in a certain country that build up bilateral ties. Then there are also other sections that formulate a diplomatic mission. But sometimes, both of them could be integrated. The ministry is organized into various divisions such as a division that makes up a relationship with the public, a division that promotes business, tourism and trade. Beyond these, there is a Diaspora policy that the appointed ambassadors comprise with themselves.

Thus, the planned sources massages are sometimes applied together with the panned one. Informant (I1) believes that agendas could not always be provided to citizens and makes them mobilize.

However, a business and public diplomat (I1) explains his opinion as follows

> *Because you can give citizens agendas in all aspects and make them move forward. Sometimes, there would be ways to reach out by conducting face to face conferences. From the democratization and other perspectives, in principle, there would be discourses on things that can be compromised. It may probably be individuals or groups that violate the governments. Therefore, using different mechanisms, we make them calm and sit to listen. We tried to influence each other in some way. We help each other until other agents internalize where they should have an interception. It helps us have their view of all the business and we explain ourselves to them as a government.*

Generally, both planned and unplanned messages are parallel applied. Concerning the planned one, MOFA conducts different mechanisms of communications to meet various stakeholders through their level of representatives and explains each other. They ask them questions and tell them their concerns so that they try to understand them. They provide an explanation to any concerns raised as MOFA strongly believes that the concept of country doesn't only belong to a single person. The researcher accepts this discourse as true as the center core is not well known.

4.3. Examining the role of activists, ordinary citizens, and citizens of other countries in the image building of Ethiopia

Image is an important aspect in the marketing and branding of places.(stated in chapter 2). According to a business and public diplomat (I1) Activists, ordinary citizens, and citizens of other countries are agents mentioned as unplanned sources of messages and they have shares in their countries. In the Ethiopia context, before platforms were widespread like today, these agents had either positive or negative impacts in the image building of Ethiopia. For instance, someone who travels on foot with a positive message and shares his life experience could spread his message.

According to a senior public diplomat (I2) who was in Rome for four years highlights that particularly, taking the case of citizens of other countries that lived in Ethiopia in various ways and made a good attitude about the country would propagate messages using multiple mechanisms when they return back to their home lands. Specially, those experienced people that were born here could serve as an unplanned next to Diasporas or Ethiopian origin citizens. The Ethiopian Diaspora is a post-1970s phenomenon. Ethiopian government sources have it that there are more than 3 million Ethiopians scattered throughout the world: From America to Australia, from Norway to South Africa. However, the majority of these Ethiopians reside in the US, the Arab Middle East, and Israel in that order. Currently, a little more than a quarter of a million Ethiopians live in the US. (Solomon .G. 2019)

In relation to the subject of the business affiliation, they would consistently contribute many things being in teaching or other professions. Therefore they could be categorized from one to the other.

The other thing is that somebody who suddenly went to some other country and returned back to his/her home land may tell his/her positive or negative experiences when he/she hears about that country in different ways. Consequently, on the other side, someone recipient of the messages could associate with a good or bad aspect. Activists, ordinary citizens, and citizens of other countries have great roles in informal ways. Therefore, their roles are valuable.

A public diplomat (I2) underlines the fact that these days, there is an excess supply of information that may lead to miscommunications. The conditions in which people who are seriously taking the cases would decrease in number and this will back fire result. This is a case directly concerned to the public. Informant (I3) believes life is not like yesterday. In older times, there was scarcity of information, but today, information can easily be accessed from different sources.

Generally speaking, these agents play a great role as an unplanned source of messages. However, these agents may feel they are the only that they are always under influence because for instance, through time, could be in a democratization process when a country with inconsistent transport system shows changes on the relationships and economic conditions it has with medias or other things, The old narration would go on changing itself. Not only people who feel they are concerned and exposed in different ways, there is a condition that the whole world is forced to

change its image with a new method. Therefore, these activists, ordinary citizens and citizens of other countries take the front line in the process of image building of Ethiopia.

Obviously, wherever the citizens live, they can see complaints raised and things done or good things said by the people that are connected with cyber that someone who sees that message can make an impact.

In this case, though there is also a fast flow of messages the content of the messages matters too. Therefore, the way that they forward their complaints in relation to either policy or its implementation to make their content messages and interactions taken to consideration is seriously not seen, its end results would be dangerous.

Solely, what we planned or purchased advertisement to tell to the world could not stand alone unless there are supports because if the message doesn't have supporting agents, it will fall under the influence.

Taking the case of the great Ethiopian renaissance dam (GERD), a business and public diplomat (I1) believes that those who live in different countries especially in Middle East and northern Africa countries have a very breathtaking contribution to their home land promoting GERD with different platforms. These Ethiopian born citizens, beyond their social media platforms, through different mainstream Medias tell the world, especially the Arab dominant countries that the construction of GERD is only the concern of development. Related to this, when some Ethiopian academies that are affiliated with hydro politics present on Medias and give their professional analysis, it creates immense impacts and exerts pressures on opponents. Its impacts could be seen either from the point of language or proficiency.

4.4. Evaluating the Ethiopia diplomatic missions abroad

A business and public diplomat (I1) states that Issues raised related to Ethiopia are borderless. It is clearly the prior mission of the minister and the diplomats to clear out misperceptions, to accept positively raised discourses and suggest own thoughts in all stages and give corrections for people who raised unfair points. Questions would be raised in relation to its formulation and implementations. It is true that the rate of the country's economy and some other aspects are imbalanced. A business and public diplomat (I1) recognizes that Ethiopia is not represented very

well. He believes that the representation should be active and Ethiopia has a country with better development, trade and investment. And if its implementation is strong, it may grant fair evaluation.

Particularly taking the case of its implementation, it has some gaps. Challenges to implement the policy would be a problem. The problem could be related with engagement and openness. For instance, in the political affiliation, it may be related to either welcoming people or as it serves the representations of all, step forward further distance and provide service.

A public diplomat (I2) shares his experience on this as follows:

> *As to my understanding, I know many Ambassadors served anyone that had asked for passports. Beyond that, I think we should have never waited until 2018 to scale down the complaints of citizens that have scattered around the world since the student's movement and make treaties with them. Many things would have been done in those decades, especially in 27 years. Million Ethiopians live around the world. Tasks basically related with remittance or volunteer jobs would have been done too. Even though generations before that era were highly educated and in active age too, we really missed them. We could benefit from them.*

According to my observations, the following are major shortcomings:

- Poor implementation of policies.
- Gaps to promote works of the Public.
- An absence of standards to measure the staff of MOFA with its institutions.
- An absence of maturity that makes the foreign affair considered as complete and competitive in the globe.
- An absence of diplomatic wisdom.
- Gaps in relation to language skills.

4.5. Opportunities and challenges in branding Ethiopia

4.5.1. Opportunities

Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest countries, its territorial extent having varied over the millennia of its existence. The fact that Ethiopia is one of the oldest countries in the world, its communalities and unity, being a multi religious country, its colonization resistance, its size/land territory, population, climate, natural resources and human resources are all positive.

4.5.2. Challenges

According to Mario C., Hamid J. & Jim O. (2019), Governments are driving nation branding projects, but some fail in detailing their objectives. Even when the objectives are weak, it is necessary to evaluate the performance of these projects. This is why some studies and indexes have been created. The indexes distinguish how a country ranks in various areas of study (economic, social, cultural, etc.), and the results are used to measure the efficiency of nation branding.

Theoreticians, but practitioners, as well, identify a number of challenges that a branding process may face (Szondi, 2007, Papadopoulos, 2004). They are critical factors in brand making process one can consider (Fetscherin and Marmier, 2010, Szondi, 2007, Florek and Conejo 2006, Florek, 2005):

Concerning the challenges in the context of Ethiopia, A business and public diplomat (I1) elucidates the fact that Ethiopia is not economically strong and a well-developed country has a negative impact on its image; they are taken as challenges.

The other thing is that there are immature people with a poor culture of discussions around the table on different problems. For instance the situation we have still been going through could be the best example. Therefore, these things are a huge tackle for nation branding.

Additionally, it is also the East Africa region where the country is located; the fact that the country is plagued by conflict, drought and famine will be affected. A business and public diplomat from MOFA (I1) added points on this as follows:

To explain the case with example, if you tell the international community, particularly, the global north, to go to another country, especially a sub Saharan country, they will be terrified. Not only to tell them to invest, may you lose your energy even to tell them to visit the country. They have to do a lot of filtering if they have to do. And this in itself is a major disadvantage.

4.6. Utilization of mass media advertising by MOFA in nation branding

4.6.1. Introduction

According to Maria D.M. & Rajul. J (2016) Nation branding efforts are the means through which many countries attempt to influence how foreign publics perceive them. However, in a media landscape that now includes not only traditional one-way media but also two-way social platforms, countries undertaking these efforts are presented with a series of new challenges. This environment makes it more difficult to manage the issues associated with a nation brand, challenges countries to better communicate their advantages, and allows the public to create its own, potentially competing, messages about a country.

In the global experience, economy, nations compete against each other for the attention of investors, tourists, businesses, consumers; foreign governments, and international media (Anholt, 2006). In an attempt to stand out among competing and contrasting voices, nations use branding and marketing tools to promote a unique and favorable image to their national and international publics (Fan, 2006).

Public perceptions of a country are based mainly on firsthand and secondhand experiences with the country or its goods and services (Yang et. al, 2008). People obtain firsthand experience by visiting the country, or using its products and services. Those with firsthand experiences often use travel sites, review sites and other social media platforms to express and share their views and opinions about a country and its offerings. The consumption of this information and word of mouth about the country make up the secondhand experience on which others may base their opinion.

Therefore, the information that potential tourists or consumers receive via these platforms could be influential in how others feel about a country. When it comes to forming an opinion about a

country, “all transactions and points of contact whether promoting policies, selling products, or attracting investment— will feed off the general image of a country and reflect back onto it, in both positive and negative directions” (Leonard, 2002, p.49). Therefore, it is in the best interest of a country to actively engage in managing its reputation, given that they are all dependent to a lesser or greater degree on foreign perceptions. In an effort to gain competitive advantage and manage their reputations, many governments have implemented nation-branding campaigns for their countries.

Nation branding is “a process by which a nation’s image can be created or altered, monitored, evaluated and proactively managed in order to enhance the country’s reputation among a target international audience” (Fan, 2010, p.101). Put differently, nation branding is a way for governments to manage the image that their country shares with foreign audiences, and improves their ability to compete globally for tourism, trade, talent, and investments (Aronczyk, 2008, p.42).

4.6.2. Mass Medias Advertising

As it is plainly discussed in chapter two, Mass media is any paid form of non-personal promotion and presentation of ideas, goods or services to various people by an identified sponsor.

To this end, the researcher made an intensive evaluation on the mass media advertising platforms that MOFA is currently utilizing to promote its nation branding and diplomacy activities. It is obvious that the primary strength of advertising is creating brand awareness as it can be accurately placed and scheduled, its exposure can be well estimated, and its message content can be controlled. Strength of mass media advertising is maintaining brand awareness, keeping the brand top-of-mind.

Concerning the mass media advertising, MOFA majorly uses television to promote its nation branding and image building works. Television is the best medium for driving brand awareness in customer-oriented brand advertising. Because of the intrusive nature of television and its ability to sustain attention, as well as the dynamic nature of the medium it is the strongest medium for building brand attitude. (Discussed in chapter two)

It has divergent ways such as by sending representatives to different media outlets. In some other ways, the ministry regularly either sends statements to different Medias, particularly television

radio stations or invites these media outlets for bi- weekly press releases conducted by the ministry of office spokesperson.

This bi-weekly press release is delivered to Medias every Thursday and Ambassador Dina Mufti is currently responsible for this weekly event. In this regard, the spokesperson office regularly sends invitations to journalists from different Medias through email. The spokesperson office addresses the public and international community on different core points of local, national, regional and international aspects that are either directly or indirectly related with the country. In this sense, Medias are accessed in an appropriate manner.

Furthermore, MOFA has made a special agreement with one of state's media, Ethiopian broadcasting corporation (EBC) to jointly work on promoting the country's diplomacy from the nationwide to the international level. This program is intended to advertise the ministry routine and regular activities on foreign affairs particularly, Public and digital diplomacy.

The program is transmitted every Wednesday on EBC aiming at building up the country's diplomacy across the globe. The program started a couple of months before making deputy prime minister and foreign minister Demeke Mekonen its first respected guests. This program has a unique point of view and presentations as the television station had previously been producing and transmitting programs that typically have diplomacy image but the new one is different because there is a direct involvement of the concerned body i.e. MOFA.

As the veteran Ethiopian diplomat Aklilu kebede mentioned on his book entitled **'የኢትዮጵያ የውጭ ግንኙነት ከጥንት እስከ ዛሬ'** the word diplomacy does not have an exact and widely accepted meaning. But diplomacy can be taken as a wisdom that a certain state uses to secure its foreign affairs and national interests either through peace or negotiations.

To conclude, the ministry is attempting to utilize mass Medias to promote their diplomacy works. And it could be taken as a good start but the researcher believes that many more systematical and technical methods of mass media advertisements are expected to reach out to the public and the international community as a whole.

4.7. Gaps of Ethiopia Embassies in nation branding and image building

It is obvious that Embassies play a key role in promoting the country's assets in the international market and make a difference on the outsiders mind towards the real image that must be drawn. The appointed ambassadors together with various hierarchical personnel and other staff members carry the responsibility to stick on working according to the country's national and foreign policy and strategy in order to create a clear awareness about state, public and the country as a whole to their consumers.

As it is discussed in chapter two; Country images are important extrinsic cues in product evaluations. They elicit associations and they can influence purchase decisions. A positive country image can foster a positive reputation for a whole product category.

To this end, the researchers believe that Ethiopia embassies abroad are not doing much to change the image of this country through the access they have to public figures and leaders overseas. Annual event activities in Ethiopian embassies are nothing more than ineffective promotion campaigns and do very little to build the country's brand instead they are causing the country to spend millions of dollars. Particularly, looking at some of the embassies, they are good examples to show that the country is losing foreign exchanges spending on millions of dollars. Following this once, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said that some measures would be taken to halt losing millions of dollars.

Back in 2021, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed once said the country would shut down several embassies, including one in Kenya, to manage costs, with most diplomats working as non-resident ambassadors. This shows that it is among the plans to cut the number of embassies it has in other countries by at least half in a bid to save costs. This means the government had intended that Ethiopia shouldn't have sixty or so embassies and consulates in the present moment. The prime minister believed that Instead of throwing US dollars everywhere and thirty of the embassies should at least be closed, the ambassadors should instead be here.

He said the Ethiopian ambassador to Kenya, for example, could be based in Addis Ababa and only makes field trips to meet with officials, while following events in Nairobi through the media.

Therefore the decision was the need of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to undergo serious reforms as well.

The researcher strongly admits that we need to think harder about differing parameters of diplomatic representation between democracies and autocracies and the possible consequences of this case. Measures could be taken to correct and fix problems and come to a level of point where the country could cope up with the standard in the international stage of competitiveness. That standard could be building a good nation and creating a country with good images in the eyes of the world. Certainly, building a nation's good name would not be so simple. But conveying a good image locally and to the rest of the world should be one of the priorities of the government.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The intention of this research was as discussed in Chapter One to assess Integrated Marketing communications used by the Ministry of foreign affairs (MOFA) to manage nation branding in the contemporary politics of Ethiopia. Therefore, the chapter covers a conclusion the researcher recommends on the root of the research outcomes.

Qualitative research approach, which is well thought-out as the most excellent was employed as a research design in this study. One-on-One Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Qualitative Content Analysis were used to collect the data for the study in a bid to come up with its findings.

There are various clear ways that two of the sources of brand messages, planned and unplanned sources of brand messages are either independently or conjointly implemented in the process of branding Ethiopia.

As it is visibly discussed in chapter two, Mass Media's advertisements have invaluable roles in the process of nation branding and image building. In this regard, MOFA attempts to utilize mass media such Television and Radio to promote its routine works on foreign affairs, mainly in keeping up the image of the county, developing fruitful public diplomacy initially starting from the neighboring countries and extending to the whole world. In this regard, the ministry has a routine weekly press release on different ongoing and current situations of the country. As it was clearly discussed earlier, nowadays, MOFA uses Television to promote the diplomacy of the country. They made a special deal with the Ethiopian broadcasting corporation (EBC) to collaborate on Public diplomacy and some other related aspects.

According to MOFA’s digital diplomacy departments the ministry believes that mass media have a key role in the process of branding the country and that the ministry is intensively creating integration with different media outlets. MOFA uses divergent mechanisms to promote its nation branding tasks. Though the ministry is not properly utilizing the media outlets and its connection

with them is loosening, there are some attempts. One of the most crucial and effective ways is proper utilization of mass media, especially televisions.

Television is the best medium for driving brand awareness in customer-oriented brand advertising. Because of the intrusive nature of television and its ability to sustain attention, as well as the dynamic nature of the medium it is the strongest medium for building brand attitude.

The television advertising is usually considered the advertising for the corporate giant, though even the small businesses can benefit from it. A strong audio and video combination is a must for the success of the commercial. But it is also important that the audio and video should function well without each other. For example, if a person is not viewing the TV but just listening to it, s/he should get the idea and vice versa. Therefore, the information that potential tourists or consumers receive via these platforms could be influential in how others feel about a country.

Concerning the utilization of Medias in promoting its works on nation branding, public diplomacy and other aspects, MOFA recently started a weekly television program named 'our Diplomacy' or 'ዲፕሎማሲያችን'. It is a half an hour weekly program aired on EBC every week. The program is fully sponsored by the ministry. Ministers, Ambassadors, diplomats, higher government's officials and different professionals from MOFA are appearing on the program as guests and sharing their technical and professional thoughts. FDRE Deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister Demeke Mekonen was the first higher government official that appeared on opening of the program as guests.

There are various restructured sections in MOFA that have been established either in the local department of the ministry or in its departments of international representations. There are departments in the diplomatic mission in a certain country that build up bilateral ties with different countries. Then there are also other sections that formulate a diplomatic mission. But sometimes, both of them could be integrated. The ministry is organized into various divisions such as a division that makes up a relationship with the public, a division that promotes business, tourism and trade. Beyond these, there is a Diaspora policy that was formulated in 2013 that the appointed ambassadors comprise themselves.

According to the present Organizational Structure the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has a Minister, a State Minister, 29 General Directorates and 49 Diplomatic Missions abroad. (discussed in chapter four)

Issues raised related to Ethiopia are borderless. It is clearly the prior mission of the minister and the diplomats to clear out misperceptions, to accept positively raised discourses and suggest own thoughts in all stages and give corrections for people who raised unfair points. Questions would be raised in relation to its formulation and implementations because there are many who believe Ethiopia is not represented very well that the representation should be active.

Particularly taking the case of its implementation, it has some gaps. Challenges to implement the policy would be a problem. The problem could be related to engagement and openness. For instance, in the political affiliation, it may be related with either welcoming people or as it serves the representations of all, step forward further distance and provide service.
Activists, ordinary citizens, and citizens of other countries are agents as unplanned sources of messages have been shared in their countries. In the Ethiopia context, before platforms were widespread like today, these agents had either positive or negative impacts in the image building of Ethiopia.

Image is a significant aspect in the marketing and branding of places. According to Um and Crompton (1990), it is a holistic construct that derives from attitudes towards the perceived attributes. Potential travelers generally have limited knowledge about the attributes of a destination they have not previously visited. (Discussed in chapter two)

According to MOFA particularly, taking the case of citizens of other countries that lived in Ethiopia propagate messages using multiple mechanisms. Specially, those experienced people that were born here could serve as an unplanned next to Diasporas or Ethiopian origin citizens.

T0 conclude, Country images are important extrinsic cues in product evaluations. They elicit associations and they can influence purchase decisions. A positive country image can foster a positive reputation for a whole product category.

5.2. Recommendations

Accordingly, based on the findings of the study, below are recommendations suggested by the researcher.

- MOFA must look for more effective ways to use the planned sources of brand messages in its nation branding practices and experiences.

- There should be a proper utilization of mass Medias and advertisements to brand the country and MOFA's connection with the Medias should go beyond giving a weekly press release. Therefore the mass media including Internet, television, radio, billboards, and other forms of mass communications should be properly utilized.

- More professionals and well skilled people in the area of nation branding must be incorporated.

- MOFA should prioritize the promotion of the country over any other aspects including government promotion.

- There is no strategic coordination among the institutions and messages that MOFA should prepare an independent policy and strategy of nation branding.

- The national policy and strategy prepared twenty years before should be amended considering the current situation of the country in relation to its foreign affairs.

- There should be applicable public-private partnerships in developing brand strategies

- Domestic audiences must be considered as an audience to support its implementation.
- MOFA shall check its policy of utilizing advertisings and avoid lack of advertising and message's credibility.

- MOFA is expected to put more effort on the lack of governmental tools to support the branding program, including suitable human resources and well-prepared people from the state entities

- The government must strive to show transparency on its stance of foreign affairs and Short-term effects and thinking should be avoided.
- Ethiopian embassies should do much to change the image of this country through the access they have to public figures and leaders overseas.
- The nation must take advantage of globalization, in which communication, opportunity and culture are used to generate sustainable economic benefits. It is a powerful method that can allow Ethiopia to be identified in the global social and economic arena.

- The government should go a long way if it can craft public diplomacy to inform and to reach citizens and companies. This would create the organizational framework in which our diplomats can be led and measured by
- Ensures the privileges and immunities of foreign diplomatic missions and representatives of international organizations under the international laws and treaties to which Ethiopia is a party.
- Coordinates and supervises the activities of Ethiopia's diplomatic and consular missions, and offices of the permanent representatives of Ethiopia to international organizations.
- As clearly stated in chapter four, the government should keep contacts, as may be necessary, with foreign diplomatic and consular representatives in Ethiopia as well as with representatives of international organizations with a view to facilitating the protection of mutual interests.
- In general, this study can contribute by serving as a baseline for further studies in the area of nation branding and image building. Hence other studies that address the limitations of this particular study could be conducted.

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Appendix 1

Interview questions for key informants

1. What kind of frameworks does MOFA use in the process of branding the nation? (Planned or what?)
2. Is there any other agent (unplanned) like Diaspora communities, involved in NB?
3. What is the role of activists, ordinary citizens, and citizens of other countries plays an important role in the image building of Ethiopia?
4. How is country's branding policy and strategies implemented?
5. How is Ethiopia seen in the eyes of the world?
6. The better our strengths are known, the better Ethiopia and the Ethiopians fare from the perspective of our political and commercial interests, how do you see this point?
7. Some Countries have formed a board another agents and or organized bodies to promote their image, taking the case of Finland; the country's image is promoted under the leadership of the Finland Promotion Board (FPB), which consists of representatives of public administration bodies, the private sector and third sector representatives. The FPB is chaired by the Director General of Communications of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry's Unit for Public Diplomacy serves as its Secretariat. How about us? How do Ethiopia's experience and practices look like?
8. Who really are the stakeholders in the practices?
9. As we know, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ethiopian diplomatic missions around the world should work in a systematic and coordinated manner to enhance a positive image of Ethiopia, how do evaluate your work, what are the shortcomings?
10. What are the opportunities and challenges of branding the country (Ethiopia)?
11. How is the strategic framework in nation branding activity look like?
12. Diplomats must understand the tension between individual needs and state requirements, and engage with that tension without detriment to the state, what is your perception on this?
13. How is the role of our ambassadors in NB seen by MOFA?
14. How is the Countless decisions about Ethiopia and Ethiopians are made daily in different parts of the world based on Ethiopia's reputation?

15. It is obvious that Ethiopian Embassies have a key role in NB and country image in the eyes of the world. Do you think our embassies are successful on this?
16. How do you measure their success?