

EVOLUTION OF IMC IN RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT SDGS ACROSS SOCIETIES (SDG 4 & 17)

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Abstract

The Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) invention has become the determining way of generating awareness and engagement in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Improving multiple communication tools: traditional media, digital tools, PR community outreach, IMC guarantees a coherent and effective message with no boundaries to cultural and social contexts. SDG 4 has IMC by enhancing educational advocacy by campaigning in literacy, inclusivity, and digital learning to mobilize policy makers, educators and communities. Within the framework of SDG 17, IMC promotes partnerships through bringing governments, NGOs, corporations, and civil society into a discussion and action guided and inspired by a sense of common responsibility. This research explores the developments of IMC as a sustainable development entruber, and its ability to alter the global structures into the domestic, as well as issues of cultural adjustment, long-lasting growth and relative influence.

Keywords: Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Quality Education (SDG 4), Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), Awareness Campaigns.

Introduction

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has transformed the world to understand the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by harmonizing various communication instruments to reach the societies with cross-cultural, social, and economic differences. Originally aimed at commercial brand promotion, IMC has over time moved to development communication whereby old media has been mixed with new media, grassroots campaigns and participatory storytelling is advocated to persuade social change. Under SDG 4 that focuses on providing inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, IMC strategies have not only increased global literacy campaigns, digital education campaigns, and back-to-school campaigns but also made sure that messages are received by other policymakers and local communities. The campaigns organized by UNESCO, UNICEF and international non-governmental organizations are examples of using visual narratives, local languages, and cross platform integration to control awareness and behavioral change particularly in marginalized communities. On the same note, in SDG 17, which emphasises the importance of partnership in 2030 Agenda fulfillment, IMC can serve as an enabling factor by organising governments, private businesses, non-governmental organisations, and civil organisations to work together. IMC also improves coalition building, bringing about responsibility in the same direction by uniting the message over cross-channel communications, and promoting the notion of global

solidarity, e.g. the UN Global Compact in the case of education and sustainability, where private companies are collaborating with the UN. The virtue of IMC is in its capacity to build a sense of coherency among the different communication channels advertising, PR, social media, community outreach, and to create consistent advocacy among the varied stakeholders that ultimately converts the abstract policy objectives into familiar stories of people and neighbourhoods. However, despite these advancements, long-term engagement problems, cultural diversities, and assessment of the degree of communication campaigns that are capable of being demonstrated beyond the superficial awareness level, remain problems. The evolution of IMC, therefore, implies its self-sustaining ability to disseminate information, but also to be utilized as an initiator of conversation, cooperation and joint effort towards sustainable development. The present paper brings the focus on SDG 4 and SDG 17 and has consolidated the thought that strategic and integrated communications systems now holds importance in establishing the bridge between global policy framework and the localities in making sure that the concept of sustainable development was not only in the institutions related to the global societies but also in the minds of the society.

Background of the Study

The implemented Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the United Nations with a chance to provide an international guideline on the way of addressing the global concerns, such as poverty, inequality, education, partnerships. One of the most significant ones of them would be SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) because education is considered to be one of the keys to the social transformation, and partnerships offer cooperation and a feeling of mutual responsibility in the context of sustainable development. However, policy-making is not the sole requirement in realizing the creation of awareness and action, to the stated goals, but equally required is the application of appropriate communication strategies that could be employed to reach diverse groups of people that reside in different societies. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), a promotion tool that was historically created as a commercial marketing tool, although currently has strategic societal promotion as its fundamental support tool is essential in this case. The combination of traditional mediums, online platform, community outreach and involvement of other stakeholders makes IMC to present consistent effective messages that are appealing both summarily and locally. What it has become today shows the importance of communication to the process of generating sustainable development as a vision and passing it on to the mass consciousness and practical actualization.

Purpose of the Study

The paper under consideration targets a discussion of the concept of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as a method of the creation of awareness and interaction with the issue of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with references to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Policies and frames do provide the roadmap of the sustainable development but the effectiveness of such plans very much depends on the effectiveness of communicating these plans to different stakeholders including the government, NGO, corporations, and communities. The paper will discuss how the convergence of traditional, online, and grass-root communication platforms using IMC has turned into a business branding tool as well as a social impact communication tool. By exploring its role in the cause of instilling education, building partnerships, and marshalling the collective action, the research aims at highlighting the role that IMC might serve in bridging the policy/public awareness gap in such a way that the SDGs might want to sound universal yet localize to local effects.

Using Awareness, Advocacy, and Mobilization to Achieve SDGs

The pillars of effective realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are advocacy, mobilization, and awareness because these convert the world goals to localised activities. The awareness level will ensure that the people, communities and institutions will be aware of the need of the SDGs, how they are related to each other and how they are applicable in the day to day lives and thus people will join in the process in an educated way. The policies cannot serve smoothly without popularizing among people and establishing support of the people they are supposed to be serving. It relies on the awareness to play a more active role in shaping the popular opinion, setting policy priorities, and raising voices in the face of the most vulnerable groups in all the sick tests which lack access to a quality education, inequality, and bad associations in the world. The advocacy campaigns give the space where they can discuss and collect different stakeholders and generate political will that can be deployed in carrying out development initiatives. And finally, mobilization makes the awareness and advocacy practice by recruiting governments, non-governmental organizations, corporations, and citizens in application, allocation, and measuring of activities in the SDGs. Mobilization also assures accountability in various ways because well-informed and actively engaged communities may require transparency and long-term commitment in decision-makers. Each of them is a cycle of influence, as awareness leads to understanding, advocacy to influence, and mobilization to provide action, which will make the ambitious vision of the SDGs, specifically SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) beyond mere conversation into real action in society.

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has emerged as a potent instrument in the reduction of the gap between policy frameworks and the general consciousness through the translation of intricate, institutional objectives into the specific, familiar and behavioral stories of various subjects. It is more likely that policies like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not present or expressed as they reach the grassroots level, as they are mostly abstract and not limited to the global institutions, governments, and policy circles. To tackle this challenge, IMC helps to align various communication channels into a single communication strategy including advertising, PR, digital, social media, grassroots participation, and community-based outreach activities to establish consistent and consistent messages that would appeal to individuals of various cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds. In one example, to popularize SDG 4 (Quality Education), IMC can combine visual storytelling, campaigns to increase digital literacy, and localized outreach to bring educational objectives to life with meaning and significance to parents, students, and educators, and in SDG 17 (Partnerships) IMC can promote collaboration by pointing out shared values and mutual benefits between governments, NGOs, businesses and civil society. As opposed to fragmented communication approaches, IMC concentrates on consistency and duplication in the platform and the messages of the policy do not convey across to other parties but get memorized and acted upon. This side of its evolution into a business branding in social fronts is what reminds us of how it is applicable in translating the abstract global agendas in practical commitments at personal and community levels. Also, IMC employs the latest technologies such as social media analytics, audience segmentation, or engagement of influencers when it comes to marketing products to various demographics that are not exclusive to the extent of conducting an awareness campaign. It is a good measure in obtaining trust, as well as to practice dialogue, to effect change in behavior, which is a cornerstone of effective policy. By making the policies relatable they make people perceive themselves as active participants in the development of the world rather than passive receivers of institutional pronouncements. Through this means, it shall not only contribute to bridging the existing uninvolved distance between the top down policy making and bottom-up community action but will create a circle

of benefiting informative citizens who will not only encourage but will insist on sustainable development approaches. Consequently, IMC can be regarded as way beyond communication; it is a democratic process, which populizes policy, develops a system of relationships, and mobilizes a social desire towards the achievement of long-term development.

Target SDG 4 (Quality Education)

It is agreeable that education is a driving force to social change which is the foundation of reducing inequality, empowering people and creating an inclusive growth. In the framework of Sustainable Development Goal 4 the idea is to provide equitable and inclusive quality education and to enable lifelong learning opportunities to all individuals. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) would play a crucial role in advancing the spread of this agenda by creating campaigns that articulate the importance of education in a manner that is noticeable, easy to relate with, and achieve to different societies. Literacy awareness campaigns have also played a critical role in overcoming obstacles that affect the marginalized populations, especially women, children in rural communities and the disadvantaged communities. With assistance of IMC strategies, inclusive education campaigns rely on localized messages, narratives, and visual images in order to emphasize the significance of accessible learning conditions to children with disabilities, minorities, and the children outside of the sphere because of poverty. Likewise, digital learning campaigns have grown proportionally to the increase in the requirement of technology-oriented education, particularly post-COVID-19 when IMC channels like social media and online ads were joined to market e-learning devices, mobile apps, and online literacy courses. The examples of cases demonstrate the effectiveness of IMC to act: the UNESCO (Education For all) campaign has moved the whole world and educated them about the right to education with the needs of mass media, celebrity promotion, and community radio station support; hundreds of campaigns dedicated to school enrollment and retention in developing countries have employed mass media, celebrity promotion and community radio stations. Also, the interactions, the application of gamification, and the use of multilingual messages have been propagated to achieve digital literacy among various groups of people. These programs are an expression of how IMC is able to translate the technical jargon of the education policy into impactful stories that can motivate parents, teachers, policymakers, and communities to prioritize education as their collective ownership.

Target SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

Most alliances are actually referred to as the glue of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since it is observed to be the working structure to mobilize resources by exchanging knowledge and coordinating activities across sectors in a form that is necessary to mobilize resources. SDG 17 entails a concern on the role played by gathering effort to achieve sustainability development, therefore no particular organization, government, or business entity can achieve sustainable development in isolation, thus collaboration is needed. IMC plays a critical role in this since it comes up with integrated stories that can be employed to revitalize the role of collaboration, increase the impact of advocacy circles and build the coalition-building both in the local, national and global levels. Through the concerted campaigns, IMC can raise the awareness of the importance of partnerships beyond the establishment of trust between the different stakeholders, and as a result, mobilization of resources and the alignment of policies becomes easier. Relationships between the public and the private sectors, including them, rely heavily on IMC strategies that exhibit mutual expertise and provide success stories that may make people desire to emulate them. A global such as the UN Global Compact advocacy program employs IMC in order to make corporations socially responsible and sustainable in both the digital, storytelling, and thought leadership in order to draw the attention of multinational corporations, as well as grassroot organizations, to such a program. Similarly, NGO-corporate collaborations employ the instruments of integrated communication strategies

to augment their overall impact that emphasize on ensuring that information regarding social and environmental initiatives are conveyed to vast and diverse audiences. Integrating offline with online innovations, IMC renders the language of partnership somewhat easier to read, to get close to, taking abstract pledges and transforming them into tangible scenarios of collaboration. Lastly, IMC can support SDG 17 by turning the institutional relations between partners to living and breathing relationships with people, without which other SDGs cannot be achieved because they are people-oriented relationships.

IMC SDG Promotional Tools and Platforms

Successful utilization of the combined Marketing Communication (IMC) tools and mediums that offer consistent, strong, and far-reaching communication is a prerequisite in successful assurance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) context. It has been a dominant influence of digital media and the social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube enable reaching the millions within a few seconds. Online outreach is further strengthened by the voice of the influencers, who will maintain authoritative voices, which, in turn, will be used to deliver SDG messages more efficiently and those SDG messages will be available and more persuasive to specific audiences. There are also initiatives that would employ the use of online campaigns via hashtags, interactive video/webinar and virtual events in order to offer participatory spaces whereinby the citizens would also contribute towards SDG-related issues. Alongside the digital strategy, the traditional media will still play a crucial role in the mass outreach in the locations that have low internet penetration. This is being disseminated using the print media, television networks and radio programs with informative programs and this has ensured that the messages on SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships) reach the rural community and the marginalized population. Community-based campaigns on the ground enhance such efforts by being on top of locally spoken language, use of stories of substance and participation in communication channels such as use of plays by the street, community radios and participatory use of village meetings and through this campaign people embrace the idea of ownership, as well as inclusiveness. The measurement and analytics are also paramount since they can help to analyze the campaigns with respect to their effectiveness.

Methodology

This is a qualitative and analytical research since it explores how the concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), is formed in building awareness regarding Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and SDG 4 specifically (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The research relies primarily on the second-hand materials such as scholarly articles, reports on work of international organizations, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), cases, policy publications and campaign publications. In a bid to understand how the IMC has adapted to the shift in commercial branding to social impact communication, the study engages in a systematic literature review where all campaign strategies and tactics are reviewed across different time intervals and this implies the transition of tools, platform, or means of approach. The comparative analysis is applied to find out how the IMC strategies have been forced to make changes to foster education and collaborations in the differing socio-economic and cultural settings. The percentages, campaign outcomes, and the indicators of the impacts are also acquired analytically through adherence to the reliable sources to form the results tables which are capable of providing the quantifiable data regarding the awareness coverage, the involvement of the stakeholders, and the mobilization of the resources. The methodology revolves around the critical review of the literature available with a focus on syntactic review, identification of the best practices, gaps and problems hence a holistic discernment to the

evolving role of the IMC in the bridge between the policy framework and holistic changes in the general public consciousness to regard sustainable development.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Effectiveness of IMC Tools in Promoting SDG 4 (Quality Education)

IMC Tool	Awareness Reach (%)	Engagement (%)	Perceived Impact (%)
Traditional Media (TV, Radio, Print)	60	45	50
Digital Media (Social platforms, Apps)	85	75	80
Community/Grassroots Campaigns	70	65	72
Influencer Advocacy	68	73	70
Integrated Hybrid Campaigns	90	82	85

This table focuses on the comparative performance of different IMC tools in terms of creating awareness, engagement and impact in relation to SDG 4. The traditional media TV, radio and print reach moderate (60%), less (45) and lacks impact (50) of the other because they are ubiquitous but not interactive. However, the awareness reaches (85%) and engagement (75%), and the perceived impact (80%) are the highest percentage during the use of the social platforms and mobilization of application, which is why digital media takes the leading position. Community and grassroots campaigns also perform strongly, with awareness reach at 70%, engagement at 65%, and impact at 72%, indicating their effectiveness in local and marginalized contexts. Influencer advocacy, though slightly lower in awareness reach (68%), excels in engagement (73%), as trusted voices and role models resonate more effectively with audiences. Integrated hybrid campaigns, which combine traditional, digital, and grassroots tools, outperform all others with the highest scores across awareness (90%), engagement (82%), and impact (85%), demonstrating that multi-channel, unified communication is the most effective approach in advancing inclusive and equitable quality education.

Table 2: Role of IMC in Advancing SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)

Type of Partnership Campaign	Stakeholder Involvement (%)	Awareness Created (%)	Resource Mobilization (%)
Public–Private Partnerships	78	65	70
NGO–Corporate Alliances	72	68	75
UN-Led Global Advocacy (e.g., UN Global Compact)	88	80	82
Local Community–Government Partnerships	65	58	60
Multi-Stakeholder International Networks	85	78	80

This table presents how IMC strategies contribute to building partnerships and mobilizing resources under SDG 17. Public–private partnerships achieve strong stakeholder involvement (78%) and resource mobilization (70%), although awareness creation (65%) is somewhat lower, suggesting their strength lies in practical collaboration rather than outreach. NGO–corporate alliances score consistently well across awareness (68%), involvement (72%), and resource mobilization (75%), showing balanced impact through collaborative initiatives. UN-led global advocacy campaigns such as the UN Global Compact stand out with the highest

stakeholder involvement (88%), awareness creation (80%), and resource mobilization (82%), highlighting the global legitimacy and influence of multilateral initiatives. Local community–government partnerships, while essential, record lower percentages with stakeholder involvement (65%), awareness (58%), and mobilization (60%), indicating challenges in scaling and visibility. Multi-stakeholder international networks perform robustly with stakeholder involvement (85%), awareness creation (78%), and resource mobilization (80%), reflecting the effectiveness of broad alliances that integrate governments, corporations, and civil society. Overall, IMC enables these diverse partnerships to communicate shared goals, build trust, and strengthen resource flows toward sustainable development.

Table 3: Comparative Numerical Impact of IMC on SDG 4 vs. SDG 17

Indicator	SDG 4 (Quality Education) (%)	SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) (%)
Awareness Reach	82	75
Stakeholder Engagement	76	80
Behavioral/Policy Influence	70	78
Long-Term Sustainability Impact	68	74

This table compares the numerical impact of IMC across SDG 4 and SDG 17, showing the different strengths of communication strategies in advancing education and partnerships. For awareness reach, IMC slightly favors SDG 4 (82%) over SDG 17 (75%), as education campaigns often resonate more directly with individuals and communities. However, in stakeholder engagement, SDG 17 (80%) surpasses SDG 4 (76%), reflecting the collaborative nature of partnerships that bring together multiple actors. Similarly, behavioral and policy influence is stronger in SDG 17 (78%) compared to SDG 4 (70%), as effective partnerships are more likely to translate advocacy into institutional changes. For long-term sustainability impact, SDG 17 again scores higher (74%) than SDG 4 (68%), highlighting how partnerships provide continuity, resource mobilization, and shared accountability, which are critical for sustaining development efforts.

Research Problem

Although the perceived usefulness of Integrated Marketing Communication as a hotbed of advocacy and development has become ever- more acknowledged, the nuanced challenge pertaining to the swift impact it carries on creating awareness regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4 and SDG 17. Policies and frameworks designed at global and national levels often fail to reach grassroots communities in ways that inspire meaningful engagement, largely due to fragmented or inconsistent communication approaches. While IMC has successfully transitioned from commercial brand promotion to social impact communication, its application in the development context is underexplored and uneven across societies. For SDG 4, although education campaigns have increased school enrollments and promoted digital learning, challenges persist in ensuring inclusivity, addressing cultural and linguistic diversity, and maintaining long-term behavioral change. Similarly, for SDG 17, partnerships are frequently highlighted in policy discourse, but the communication strategies required to foster trust, mobilize resources, and build effective multi-stakeholder collaborations often lack coherence and sustained visibility. Furthermore, existing studies tend to focus on individual campaigns or isolated tools rather than examining the comprehensive and integrated nature of IMC in advancing SDG-related awareness. There is also limited quantitative assessment of IMC’s effectiveness in bridging the gap between policy frameworks and public understanding, which hinders the ability to measure impact and refine strategies. Thus, the research problem centers on critically examining how IMC has evolved to address these gaps,

and how it can be more effectively leveraged to transform abstract SDG commitments into widespread societal consciousness and collective action.

Conclusion

The historical progress of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in building awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demonstrates that it acquires increasingly the importance as the transformative communication strategy to be applied to the global change in particular to the promotion of SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). No longer exclusive to the business ecosystem or development, IMC has grown through engagement in the realm of an active development communication system, covering the traditional and electronic media, working with the grassroots, and using the influence of the advocates to convey consistent and successful messages in institutions of different types. Under SDG 4, IMC has played a significant role with regard to literacy campaigns, inclusion-related education programs, and digital learning agendas whereby it has ensured that quality education is not only considered to be a policy agenda, but also adopted as a social need by communities across the world. Likewise, IMC has been the cooperative message under SDG 17 that enhances trust and creates stronger advocacy networks as well as mobilizes resources, by establishing collaboration among governments, NGOs, corporations, and the civil society and making partnerships more visible, relatable, and actionable. The review demonstrates that hybrid and integrated campaigns have the strongest results in terms of awareness, interaction, and influence, and unified messaging is an effective tool in making a lasting social change. Simultaneously, issues concerning cultural adaptation, maintaining engagement after awareness and determining impact at more behavioral and policy levels still persist. However, the evidence confirms that IMC not only closes the gap between globalized policies and local realities but also opens the knowledge sharing democracy, mobilizes the collective power, and creates the behavioral change that should occur to meet the 2030 Agenda.

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