Sustainable Development of the Mobile Phone Telecommunication Industry of Bangladesh: An Integrated Marketing Approach

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Abstract

The sustainable development (SD) of a business entity often relies on the effective implementation of an integrated approach through the satisfaction of all the concerned stakeholder requirements. This can achieve through the integration of suppliers, cross-functional departments within the organization, distributors, and above all the marketing mix elements. From this perspective, integrated marketing may play an effective role in the SD of the concerned organization. Toward this end, the current study aims to examine the role of integrated marketing approach in ensuring SD of the mobile phone telecom industry of Bangladesh. This paper will also attempt to undertake factor, correlation and multiple regression analyses on the basis of the factors identified in the previous research findings. The study has also placed some recommendations in this regard.

Keywords: Integrated Marketing; Sustainable Development; Stakeholders; Marketing Mix; Mobile Telecom Industry

1. Introduction

The intensity of competition is acute among the market players of the mobile phone telecom industry of Bangladesh. In addition, the continuous up-gradation of new mobile telecom technologies by forcing the obsoletion of the similar technologies of old version is another challenge in this context. Thus, the telecom marketers find themselves in such challenging situation of retaining their existing clientele by upgrading their service usage in one hand and acquiring the reluctant segment on the other hand. All these urge to adopt a viable marketing approach to counter the prevailing challenges. As a result, conventional marketing approach is not seemed to be very effective in mitigating the upgraded telecom technology oriented customer acquisition and retention related challenges. This acts as a severe shortcoming in developing the concerned business in a way which is sustainable. However, sustainable development (SD) may be possible through the implementation of a viable marketing approach. From this perspective, integrated marketing may be a suitable approach that integrates all the concerned stakeholders including the suppliers of technology, logistics, hardware, and software; distributors, outsourcing partners, customers, etc. In this regard, the current study aims to investigate the role of integrated marketing approach in ensuring SD of the mobile phone telecom industry of Bangladesh.

2. Conceptual Aspects of SD and Integrated Marketing

2.1. SD

The Rio declaration in 1992 fostered the discussion on the SD and the follow-up world summit on SD in Johannesburg in 2002 further opened up new directions for the debate on the roles and
responsibilities of business organizations in society. Hence, from the early 1990s onward the discussion on sustainability has been extended into the field of business activity, and the terms “sustainable” and “sustainability” have been integrated into the standard business jargon.

“Sustainability” has been a significant conceptual tool for assessing not only economic and social development but also business activity more generally (Crane and Matten 2004). Toward this end, the concept of “SD in marketing,” was developed once the societal role of marketing was discussed and debated among the marketing scholars (Dawson, 1971; Feldman, 1971; Kelley, 1971; Kotler and Sidner, 1969; 1971; Kotler and Gerald, 1971; Lavidge 1970; Lazer, 1969). Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) discussed the term SD in marketing as marketing efforts that are both competitively and ecologically sustainable. Fuller (1999) found SD in marketing as the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products in a manner that satisfies the following three criteria: (1) Customer needs are met, (2) organizational goals are attained, and (3) the process is compatible with ecosystems. SD in marketing refers to “building and maintaining sustainable relationships with customers, the social environment and the natural environment” (Belz, 2008; Belz and Peattie, 2009).

Fida (2002) identified integrated marketing services as an approach to SD through a set of interrelated activities such as credit and group development, effective management, marketing development and support, market systems analysis, economic analysis, and enterprise development.

2.2. Integrated marketing

Integrated marketing deals with the strategic issues of product, price, place, and the tactical issue of promotion which, are also described as customer, cost, convenience, and communication (Schultz et al., 1994). Liu (1998) wrote that marketing strategies should be integrated into institutional strategic planning. Sevier and Johnson (1999) identified six key elements of integrated marketing including an outward focus; desire to address strategic problems strategically rather than tactically; strategic, organizational, and message integration; active listening to the customer; database dependence; coordination of messages. Sevier defined integrated marketing as a listening-first, database-dependent approach to marketing that includes both a willingness to segment and coordinate such strategic assets as product/customer, price/cost and place/convenience and to develop the effective promotion/communication strategies for key target audiences (Sevier, 2000).

3. Literature Review

In the years of research literature, the following influencing factors of integrated marketing on SD have been identified.

3.1. Functional integration through cross-functional team

There are interdependencies between different functional departments (Song et al., 1998). Accordingly, various studies have found a positive effect for cross-functional integration (Gupta et al., 1987; Olson et al., 2001). Cross-functional integration involves various functional departments (Urban and Hauser, 1993), and their personnel is involved in many interdependent tasks. For example, marketing and manufacturing are dependent on R&D to understand the technological potential of a product. Much of the existing research examines only bi-functional cooperation, in most cases focusing exclusively on the relationship between marketing and R&D (Gupta et al., 1985; Song and Parry, 1992). Service firms often use formalized cross-functional teams as a tool for coordinating actors and knowledge in the service innovation process (Hull, 2003; Fay et al., 2006). Thus, through such integration, marketing’s interpretation of customer preferences leads to a bundle of desired product features that R&D has to consider during product development, which will then determine the required manufacturing capabilities.
3.2. Integrated services/products

As part of integrated marketing, mobile telecom companies integrate a number of product/service strategies. For example, bundling of core products and/or services is a well-known phenomenon in the telecommunication industry. Bundling can be defined as selling of two or more products in a package for a special price. Packages in which telephony services are combined with wireless and internet services are common. Bundling of mobile services with “an almost for free” handset is now a common practice. Since the objectives of telecom service providers are very well defined, i.e., increasing revenue, lower churn-rates and improve margins (Bouwman et al., 2005), bundling of value added services (VAS) offers an exciting strategy to achieve all the objectives. Carlton and Waldman (2002) investigated how the tying of complementary products can be used to preserve and create monopoly positions. Offering two goods both separately and as a bundle (at a price other than the sum of the components’ prices) is known as bundling (Salinger, 1995; Venkatesh and Mahajan, 1993). Under such bundling strategies, mobile telephony and commercial services are provided.

3.3. Integrated pricing

Baker and Crompton (2000) identified that there is a positive relation between service quality and willingness to pay higher prices. Service center manager should constantly obtain updated information in regard of the customer costs to the service center which are competitive relative to the other forms of service (Kirkup and Rafiq, 1999). A number of research studies (ITU, 2005; Rouvinen, 2006) found that because of the variability of mobile services and thus their pricing, mobile operators adopt per minute local call peak charge to measure the cost of mobile services in each country. The previous studies have used the local call peak charge per minute (or per month) measure to indicate the relative level of prices for residential mobile voice services. Regarding the factor of non-voice mobile applications, the cost of short message services (SMS) is employed as the price proxy for mobile broadband relevant applications. SMS is a feature available in many new digital phones that let users receive and send short text messages. Fixed-broadband price is measured by broadband monthly charge. The studies also included telecommunication infrastructure investment in the empirical model which is measured by annual telecommunication investment (ibid).

3.4. Integrated marketing communication (IMC)

Lauer (1998) found that through IMC approach companies combine the power of marketing, advertising, and public relations and involve the entire organization in communicating a consistent message. A glaring illustration of integrated marketing in the mobile phone telecommunication industry is that after integrating the four areas, telephone, mass media, consumer electronics, and computing; a new industry has been developed, called the multimedia information industry (Fransman, 1997; Chan-Olmsted and Jamison, 2001).

3.5. Integrated distribution through forward integration

Location-based services are tried to be produced by many marketers; the main value proposition is the location (Becker and Arnold, 2010). A business located close to the public transportation can enjoy a benefit of bigger catchment population and draw more people to the service center (Seah, 2003, quoted by Wee and Tong, 2005). Good customer interchange among various service centers within the trade area is a sign of a well-chosen location that different stores can generate business for each other and customers can traffic throughout the area smoothly (Institute of Real Estate Management, 1990). Easy accessibility can minimize the searching time and psychological costs of consumers including stress and frustration (Levy and Weitz, 1998; quoted by Sit et al., 2003), and attract people coming back again for visiting and transactions. By tracking technical address of mobile devices, it is possible to detect
the local position of the user in the environment of mobile commerce (Lee and Jong Kun, 2007). As an example Telia (Swedish company), one of the biggest telecommunication companies in Europe, applied real-time SMS game using mobile devices position to allow users to interact with each other while playing (Dickinger et al., 2005).

3.6. Integrated teamwork (people)

Kirkup and Rafiq (1999) found that a friendly and consistent service of the operation staffs can build good image of the service provider. He stated that the quality and visibility of security staffs can provide symbols of reassurance. Yuen (2005) mentions that knowledgeable, efficient, effective management personnel of any level and their services can add significant value to the total service and establish customer loyalty as well as encourage repeat visits. This factor can make a good impression on the customers and encourage them to come back to the service center (ibid).

3.7. Integrated process

Kim et al. (2004) emphasized on the adoption of integrated process for maintaining variety of customer support systems, speed of complaint processing, and ease of reporting complaint as the important criterion of delivering excellent customer service to the mobile users. While Lim et al. (2006) emphasized integrated process as a broad range of service delivery items such as perceptions of a firm’s customer care and the manner of service personnel. These form the basis of the customer’s evaluation of the service provided and provider. Process quality becomes more imperative in determining the overall perception of the service (Grönroos, 1983).

3.8. Integrated physical evidence

According to Yuen (2005), the key function of physical evidence element is used by a company is to attract more customers when the service center can differentiate itself from the other companies centers through exterior design. Yuen (2005) also highlights that the front design and displays impact the service center image and environment that customers do not like to stay in the mall with poor layout and circulation, dead-end corridors, and confusing signage. In addition, the service center can be integrated with leisure attractions, e.g., cinema, ice rinks and large food courts to act as marketing differentiators, which can retain the customers and attract them to re-visit the center (Kirkup and Rafiq, 1999). Sit et al. (2003) raises out the point that “entertainment can be a means of image differentiation for service centers,” which is one of the critical determinants in consumer patronage decisions.

3.9. Inter-operator relationship through horizontal integration

Interconnection agreements between mobile operators are treated as strategies for compatibility (Economides, 1996). For an operator, its interconnection choices have an overwhelming influence on the diversity of its services, quality, and price. They also condition its profitability, hence its survival in the market. An interconnection agreement reflects an integrated relationship, whereby an operator needs the other for its own service provision. Meanwhile it is in the owner’s interest to provide end user services himself (Economides and Woroch, 1992). This integration strategy may even be favorable for consumers, since the price of the end user service may decline. This result holds from the elimination of the double margin when the supply of the service is integrated (Economides and Salop, 1992; Economides, 1999). Infrastructure sharing is the most cost-efficient design principle for any new roll-out in emerging markets and the best approach for technology migration and consolidation (Wymann, 2007). Frisanco provides a three dimensional categorization of infrastructure sharing. According to this view, the dimensions are (i) the technical dimension, which is related to the proportion of the 3G network that is shared; (ii) business model, which defines
the legal and financial roles of the sharing operators; (iii) geographic dimension, which defines the sharing of which parts of the operators networks will be effective. Laffont et al. (1998a) show that when the operators choose interconnection tariffs non-cooperatively, the result is non-optimal, with too high tariffs, since operators do not internalize the adverse effects on the utility and the demand of users. The authors then study the case of a collective determination of interconnection charges. The cooperative choice may reduce competition and increase the retail prices of calls, reflecting a possible collusion among operators. These effects are strengthened when the regulator imposes a non-discrimination principle between incoming and outgoing calls, as well as a reciprocity of access charge (the same charge for incoming calls of all networks) (Economides et al., 1996). If these regulatory constraints are upheld, a cooperative determination of access charges leads to less collusion (Laffont et al., 1997; 1998b).

3.10. Integrated supply through backward integration

Wilde and de Haan (2006) discussed that mobile phone suppliers get into arrangements with mobile network/service operator, who are, in a sense, large-scale consumers (and resellers) of mobile handsets. As a result, though only a fraction of their revenues comes from handset sales, network operators often see handset manufacturers as their most important suppliers. Mobile telecommunications equipment manufacturers offer network operation services not only to customers with their own hardware and software products but also to those who use equipment from rival suppliers or multi-vendor networks (Friedrich et al., 2009). Specialized external suppliers can offer network operation services at lower cost than internal departments at operators (Hecker and Kretschmer, 2010). Orascom telecom has followed the strategy of backward integration and so its subsidiaries have no danger or uncertainty from the suppliers (The NEWS, 2007).

4. Research Problem

The up gradation of mobile telecom technologies at regular intervals has created serious challenges for the mobile phone telecom service providers in satisfying and retaining their customers. To do this successfully by coping with all the concerned stakeholders, SD of the mobile phone telecom companies is essential and integrated marketing may be an effective marketing approach to adopt by the operators for the same. However, regarding this subject matter, there is paucity of research works. Hence, it is clearly evident that there is a research gap and to mitigate this gap a rigorous research is yet to be systematically attempted.

5. Research Question

This study investigates the research question: “Can integrated marketing ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh?”

6. Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis derived from the research question of integrated marketing exhibits the appropriate answers to the research question is as follows:

$H_0$: Integrated marketing cannot ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh.

$H_a$: Integrated marketing can ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh.

7. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the role of integrated marketing in the SD of the mobile phone telecom industry of Bangladesh.
8. Methodology of the Study

This study is the embodiment of the collection of primary and secondary data collection and their analyses. For the purpose of collecting primary data, convenience sampling method has been adopted on a sample size of 577 of which 454 customers and 123 employees of six mobile phone telecom service providing companies in Bangladesh through an extensive survey. A structured self-administered questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree) has been used for the survey. While the secondary data have been collected through literature review, which is based on the relevant research papers and articles published in the referred journals. To quantitatively analyze, SPSS version 21 has been used and factor analysis has been endeavored using principal component analysis with orthogonal varimax rotation and then correlations and multiple regression analysis was also conducted to identify the relationship of the integrated marketing components and their role in the SD of the mobile telecom industry of Bangladesh.

9. Analysis and Findings of the Study

9.1. Factor analysis

From the results of the reliability, sampling adequacy, validity, and factor analysis based on the extensive review of literature, the following statistics have been found:

9.1.1. Reliability

The Cronbach’s alpha value of all the 11 items (i.e., 10 independent variables and 1 dependent variable) together is 0.930 which is >0.7, indicating overall higher reliability factors of integrated marketing variables used in this study.

9.1.2. Sampling adequacy

The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure is 0.920 which is “marvelous” suggesting the adequacy of the sample size for the factor analysis.

9.1.3. Validity

From the results of the Bartlett’s test of sphericity, it is seen that the approximate Chi-square statistics is 3603.609 with 45 degrees of freedom, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Calculated value 3603.609 is greater than table value. This means that the null hypothesis that the population correlation matrix is an identity matrix is rejected by Bartlett’s test of sphericity. Hence, the result of Bartlett’s test of sphericity is significant suggesting that the population was not an identity matrix. Therefore, the Bartlett’s test of sphericity is significant.

9.1.4. Component analysis

Table 1 exhibits two components of integrated marketing for SD with the Eigenvalues >1.0 using the factor loading of 0.50 as the cutoff point and cumulative proportion of 69.579% variance.

From the above findings of this study, it is evident that SD of the mobile phone telecom industry of Bangladesh is ensured through integrated marketing for two reasons namely “Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix,” and “Component 2: Integrated value chain’ component.”

The Component 1 contains 5 variables namely v1: Functional integration, v2: Integrated service/product, v3: Integrated pricing, v4: IMC and v5: Forward integration with component loading 0.820, 0.837, 0.855, 0.743 and 0.667, respectively. Among them, the variable v1 is related to the integration of the cross-functional departments or teams within the organization and the remaining four variables (v2-v5) are related to 4Ps or the core marketing mix. Hence, it has been proved from the factor analysis (Table 1) that “functionally integrated core marketing mix” is a significant component of integrated marketing that can effectively ensure SD of the mobile phone telecom industry of Bangladesh.

Component 2 contains 5 variables, namely v6: Integrated teamwork, v7: Integrated process, v8: Integrated physical evidence, v9: Horizontal integration and v10: Backward integration with component loading 0.620, 0.761, 0.821, 0.827 and 0.715, respectively. Among them, the first three variables
(v6-v8) are related to the integration of the extended marketing mix (3Ps) while the last 2 variables (v9 and v10) are, respectively, related to horizontal and backward integration. Hence, it has been proved from the factor analysis (Table 1) that “integrated value chain” is a significant component of integrated marketing that plays a positive role in the SD of the mobile telecom industry of Bangladesh.

Thus, components loading of the variables and percentage (%) of variance of the components as exhibited as shown in Table 1 rejects the null hypothesis (H$_0$): Integrated marketing cannot ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh and proved the alternative hypothesis (H$_a$): Integrated marketing can ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh).

9.3. Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression analysis has been used to examine whether integrated marketing can ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh or not. The dependent variable (SD) has been regressed against each of the component scores (beta coefficients) of the two independent
variables Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix and Component 2: Integrated value chain derived from the factor analysis as orthogonal components.

The dependent variable, SD, has been used as a surrogate indicator of respondents’ evaluation of the role of integrated marketing in assuring SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh.

Table 3 exhibits the results of the regression analysis. To predict the goodness-of-fit of the regression model, the multiple correlation coefficient (R), coefficient of determination, or square multiple correlation coefficients (R²), adjusted R², F ratio and t-values with significance have been examined.

In Table 3a: First, the multiple correlation coefficients (R) of independent variables (i.e. two components) on the dependent variable (SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh) is 0.866, which showed that SD has positive input from the two components of Integrated Marketing. In other words, the R value 0.866 shows 86.6% multiple correlation coefficients which mean that there is 86.6% correlation between the predictors or independent variables (Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix and Component 2: Integrated value chain) and the dependent variable (SD). Second, the square multiple correlation coefficients (R²) is 0.750, suggesting that more than 75% of the variation or variance in the dependent variable (SD) has been explained by the predictors or independent variables (Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix and Component 2: Integrated value chain). This meets the assumption of non-zero variance based on the fact that the R² value the variance in the predictor values, which in this case is not equal to zero. Third, the adjusted R² value 0.749 is ideal to generalize the model well because this value is close to R² value with a small difference of 0.001 (0.750-0.749). This means that if the model was applied to the population, it would account for 0.1% less variance in outcome.

In Table 3b: First, the F ratio is 861.471, which is highly significant (P < 0.001) and this means that the model significantly improves the ability to predict the outcome variable. In this table, the P value is shown as 0.000 which is >0.05 indicating the model has a significant fit to the overall data. Hence, the regression model achieved a satisfactory level of goodness-of-fit in predicting the variance of SD in relation to the two components, as measured by the above-mentioned R, R², adjusted R² and F ratio. In
other words, at least one of the two components is important in contributing to SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh.

In Table 3c: The application of the b-values in the multiple regression model equation ($Y_{SD} = \beta_0 + B_1 + B_2 + \text{Or, } = 3.132 + 0.508 + 0.453$) interprets this model to mean that for every increase of one unit in Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix, assuming the effects of Component 2: Integrated value chain be held constant, SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh would increase by 0.508. Likewise, should the effects of Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix is held constant, a single unit increase in Component 2: Integrated value chain would result in a 0.453 increase in SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh.

Since the beta values are the standardized versions of the b-values and are directly comparable, these values may be used to infer regarding the relative importance of each predictor or component to the model. In other words, the beta coefficients could be used to explain the relative importance of the two dimensions (independent variables) in contributing to the variance in SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh (dependent variable). As far as the relative importance of the two integrated marketing dimensions is concerned, Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix, beta = 0.646, significant = 0.000, followed by Component 2: Integrated value chain, beta = 0.577, significant = 0.000.
Again, since there are more than one predictors or components (independent variables), the magnitude of the t-value in conjunction with the significance has been considered to assess the overall contribution to the model. Based on the decision rule “the smaller the significance value and the greater the t-value, the greater the contribution of the predictor,” it is seen that Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix, $t = 30.975$, significant $= 0.000$ and Component 2: Integrated value chain, $t = 27.632$, significant $= 0.000$ are both significant predictors or components of integrated marketing in the SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh. In this regard, from the t-values, it can also be concluded that Component 1: Functionally integrated core marketing mix has a greater impact on the outcome (i.e., SD) than Component 2: Integrated value chain is more important in the SD of the mobile phone telecom industry of Bangladesh.

Finally, it can be stated that all underlying dimensions are positive, and therefore, are significant. Thus, the result of multiple regression analysis rejects the null hypothesis ($H_0$) that “integrated marketing cannot ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh” and proves or accepts the alternative hypothesis ($H_a$) that “integrated marketing can ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh.” Hence, there is a relationship as expected.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the light of the identified components of integrated marketing in the above section, it can be stated that the proper implementation of the following recommendations can ensure SD of the mobile phone telecommunication industry of Bangladesh.

10.1. Functional integration

Effective delivery of mobile telecom service depends on the integrated contribution and assistance of the specialists from the various departments of the concerned operator. In this regard, cross-functional team may be developed with the specialists from the departments such as customer service, network and telecom engineering, VAS, documentation management, billing delivery, human resource management, sales, marketing, and finance so that any technical or business process related problem can be resolved and necessary services can be rendered at ease, high speed and with zero defect and care.

10.2. Integrated services/products

Since mobile operators have already launched segment wise unique service packages, some of such services may be incorporated together in the form of combo or integrated offer to further their business. This in one hand will position the package among the users of multi services to serve their very purpose while the other users who want an individual package of unique service would be happy with such current service offer. In this regard, the concerned mobile operators may launch combo package of all services such as basic mobile telephony (e.g., conversation, instant messaging), mobile internet (e.g., web access, emails, chat), mobile commerce (e.g., hotel and travel ticket booking, stock trading, and shopping), mobile banking, location finding through quick response codes, etc., through the same connection of one single SIM. Besides this, compatible handset with all latest technological support and facilities may also be included in this package.

10.3. Integrated pricing

Currently, there are unique call rates for individual service packages. But for the above-recommended package an integrated but affordable price (e.g. flat rate at peak and off-peak hours, free call to the users of the same operators’ numbers) may be fixed as part of special benefit offer. In addition to this, the currently prevailing varied country specific international call rates may be brought to a common or lump sum but affordable charge so that volume of users’ communication activities can substantially be increased resulting into greater amount of revenue for the operating company.
10.4. IMC

Integrated promotional campaigns through all forms of communication tools such as:

Advertising through television, radio, mobile SMS, mobile Apps, newspaper, magazine, poster, banner, social media, etc., has to be undertaken to create mass awareness of mobile telecom service. In launching an advertising campaign through electronic media, the detailed schedule with sufficient budget allocation has to be ensured so that maximum television and radio channels with their popular programs may be utilized. Similarly, newspapers, tabloids, specialty magazines with their prominent pages, supplements, special editions, etc., have to be covered. The extensive use of SMS advertising may also have to be effectively conducted to reach the target users directly with a more personalized message. The celebrity endorsement for the service package may also be very effective for the promotion of the mobile operators. In this regard, popular celebrities with fair image and pleasing personalities may be hired as advertising model or opinion leader such as brand ambassador to endorse or recommend the service package of the concerned mobile operator.

Sales promotion (SP) measures for customers such as gift items, free offers such as free talk time, free SMS, and emergency balance and handsome commission and allowances for the distributors, sales personnel, advertisement support to the middlemen, risk coverage or replacement of the damaged SIM, etc., have to be continued with more facilitative approach so that brand switching may be reduced, and usage quantity may be increased through the enhancement of brand loyalty among the current users.

Segment-wise marketing also have to be pursued through personal selling and direct marketing campaigns including visit by the sales teams to the campuses of academic institutions to approach students and teachers, employees at workplace of varied organizations like garments factories, banks, clinics, tourism and travel agencies, etc.; people at railway stations, bus stops, restaurants, park, museums, markets, etc., wherever there is big gathering of mass people. In this regard, (i) the sales teams of the mobile operator may set up some stalls in each of the college and university campus to organize a daylong or weeklong marketing campaign to attract the students, teachers and staffs by offering special rates and benefits such as Free SIM, (ii) the stalls have to be decorated by the professional designers with colorful festoon, and attractive furniture, (iii) selective handsome male and beautiful female students of the college and university may be assigned as company representatives with necessary training, pay, and reward. Thus, the students are motivated to organize the presentation ceremony on the various mobile telecom services of the concerned operator, demonstration of uses and benefits, (iv) common as well as individual interactive customer query and service sessions have to be organized in which various service packages, their detailed features and benefits have to be visually highlighted. The advertisements of their services which are telecasted through TV, You Tube, etc., also have to be displayed through multimedia projector, (v) an IQ test on mobile telecom service packages may also be organized after the demonstration and display. Finally, the winners have to be awarded with memento and certificates from the company.

It is expected that a daylong or weeklong marketing campaign of such kind may bring the outcome like (i) increased rate of queries, calls, participation, etc., by the current and prospective individual users. It is because in such campaign, individual users like students, teachers, and staffs of the colleges or universities may know in detail regarding the various packages and their suitability like call rate, talk time, free SMS quantity, emergency balance feature, intra- and inter-operator call rate, etc., (ii) attract mass gathering and participation in the service presentation session. An effective presentation may encourage many to take a new mobile telecom connection or add new features in their current or old connection. Satisfied users also convey the message and learning through positive word of mouth. Thus, many individual users may be assisted in their buying decision.

Together with the above, the other promotional campaigns such as publicity (e.g., press conference, retailers conference, press release), public relations (e.g., event marketing), sponsorship (e.g., sponsoring academic, corporate, festive, national and social events), participation in trade fairs, etc., also have to be undertaken on regular basis to ensure mass marketing.
10.5. Place/forward integration

The customer service centers and distributors which/who are scattered all over the country play the role of forwarding or delivering the service. They all have to be brought under an integrated system so that from their respective locations they can satisfactorily and uninterruptedly serve the local customers with the same level of mobile telecom service standard. In this regard, various services such as SIM registration, mobile banking, mobile telephony, and mobile internet problem resolution have to be ensured with the same level of efficiency and support from any of these points.

10.6. Integrated team commitment of key people

Since there is acute competition in the mobile telecom industry of Bangladesh, there is no alternative to customer service orientation for the survival of a mobile operator. Toward this end, an integrated approach of marketing among the key people representing employees, investors, media, and distributors is essential so that the joint effort of these stakeholders can ensure maximum customer satisfaction. In this regard, rewarding benefits for the performance excellence of the employees and distributors, important contractual terms and conditions for the investors to prioritize their investment on the state of the art technology and extensive use of media may be emphasized so that everyone may be engaged with a common and unified objective to think about customers and serve them with excellence.

10.7. Integrated process

To provide all services from one location or one device through a simple, smart, fast and easy process, an integrated management system of service delivery has to be developed by the concerned mobile telecom companies. As part of this, all services including bill pay, balance recharge, balance transfer, interactive communication, 24 h call center support, mobile banking, SMS confirmation after every transaction, etc., may efficiently be rendered which may ensure convenience of the customers.

10.8. Integrated physical evidence

The mobile telecom operators can apply the same colored furniture and fittings, similar decoration, interior and exterior, atmosphere, etc., in every customer service center and sole distribution points so that a long lasting and strong brand image may be positioned. In addition to this, the concerned companies now may pursue co-branding through partnering with the other brands. For example, Robi-Grameen, Robi-Banglalink packages for the customers may be offered by integrating the distinctive advantages of each brand.

10.9. Horizontal integration

The rising flow of communication has increased the volume of cross-border economic activities, labor mobilization, technology transfer, etc., which have altogether created a new momentum in the local, regional and global economies. This has already been proved as a tremendous business opportunity for the mobile telecom companies. However, different users use the mobile telecom services of different operators. Hence, the inter-operator network sharing with both the local and foreign operators needs to be increased. Although currently such network sharing is seen among the local operators and foreign operators of some countries, it has to be increased with maximum foreign operators for better connectivity all over the world so that the users can connect with their target recipients’ at any time and to any destination. In this regard, the concerned operators have to ensure necessary legal formalities, network logistic establishments, etc. The supportive and proactive role of government will also be required for which lobbying to the concerned department of Government has to be pursued.

10.10. Backward integration

To keep the promises of best quality service to the customers made by the mobile operators, selection of right suppliers and development of good and sound relationship with the same should be highly
prioritized. Since there are various types of suppliers for SIM card, phone set, different types of technologies, mobile tower equipment and other accessories which are directly related to mobile telecom service, an integrated system to monitor and control their performance is highly required so that service excellence can be ensured through the integrated supply of all the necessary requirements.

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