Exploring the Interplay between Integrated Marketing Communication and Human Resource Analytics: Systematic Literature Review

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This systematic literature review provides an in-depth exploration of the dynamic interaction between Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Human Resource (HR) Analytics, fields that traditionally function in distinct domains but are increasingly recognized for their potential synergies. Based on a comprehensive analysis of case studies and existing research, the paper discusses how HR Analytics can optimize IMC strategies, and conversely, how the implications of IMC can inform HR practices. A key finding reveals that effective deployment of HR Analytics aids in fine-tuning internal communications and aligning messaging with employee insights, thus positively influencing external brand perception. Further, it demonstrates that coalescing these areas bears organizational benefits by enhancing productivity, stakeholder involvement, and overall performance. This paper endeavours to shed light on the imperative interoperability of IMC and HR Analytics, encouraging businesses to harness their combined power for superior outcomes and competitive advantage. Future explorations are encouraged to build upon this integrative approach, contributing to sustainable organizational success.

Keywords: Integrated Marketing Communication, Human Resource Analytics.

This research paper explores how integrated marketing communication plays an important role in the area of Human resource management with effective internal communication through various channels and with the help of Human

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resource analysts in channeling the right message to the right personnel while also analyzing the impact on perception and performance. The first step towards successful external marketing and positive brand perception is through internal employees of the company.

1. Introduction

INTEGRATED Marketing Communication (IMC) and Human Resource (HR) Analytics are critical facets within any contemporary business schema, each adding value in its unique ways. IMC, a strategic business approach, encompasses the cohesive utilization of a variety of promotional methods to ensure clarity, consistency, and majorly impactful communication (Kliatchko, 2008). It integrates all aspects of marketing communication, including advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and social media, ensuring they work together as a unified force. On the other hand, HR Analytics (also known as People Analytics), focuses on people-related data within an organization to inform HR practices and broader business strategies (Marler & Boudreau, 2017). It employs sophisticated analytics tools to gain insights from its human resources data, aiding in making data-driven decisions that ultimately enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of HR. The intersection between IMC and HR Analytics, though seemingly disparate, offers compelling prospects for business success. Leveraging HR data can stimulate well-informed decisions in marketing communication strategies. Similarly, effectively communicated marketing strategies can be echoed in HR practices, contributing to better recruitment, retention, and overall employee engagement. This research paper delves into the dynamic interplay between IMC and HR analytics, illustrating not just the potential for individual synergy but also the value brought forth by their intersection. This exploration draws primarily from an array of existing literature and real-life case studies to provide a well-rounded perspective. The scope of this paper encompasses the conceptual understanding of both the core areas, the emerging convergence, the challenges therein, and a glimpse into potential future trends. The purpose of this research is to enable businesses, academia, and other stakeholders to perceive the potential held by integrating these domains, thus inspiring comprehensive, data-driven, and effective business strategies.

## 2. Understanding the IMC and HR Analytics

IMC, or Integrated Marketing Communication, is a progressive approach to marketing communications that implies the meticulous integration of all marketing tools, avenues, and sources within a company into a seamless programme aimed at maximizing the impact on consumers and stakeholders (Kliatchko, 2008). The primary components encompass advertising, public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing, personal selling, and digital

marketing (online and social media marketing). The scope of IMC is broad, including applications like brand building, customer relations, business development, and enhancing shareholders' value. Fundamentally, IMC seeks to ensure the organization's brand message is consistent, cohesive, clear, and complementary across all channels. HR Analytics, also known as People Analytics, involves analyzing people's behaviours and attributes through HR and related data to gain insight that aids HR administration and decision-making (Marler & Boudreau, 2017). Its primary components include data collection, statistical analysis, predictive modeling, and data visualization. Its applications encompass areas like talent acquisition, performance management, employee engagement, retention strategies, and workforce planning. Its primary mantra is to optimize talent management strategies by leveraging data-driven insights to make informed decisions. IMC and HR Analytics confer tremendous benefits to organizations, independently. IMC can enhance brand image, cut down wastage due to inconsistent communications, and boost profits by reducing costs and increasing marketing effectiveness.

On the other hand, HR Analytics can improve the quality of hire, enhance talent management, aid in strategic workforce planning, improve performance and productivity, and boost employee retention. These fields provide organizations with a more holistic approach to marketing and HR management, inducing efficiency and effectiveness. In examining the potential synergy between

FIGURE 1
THE INTERSECTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION
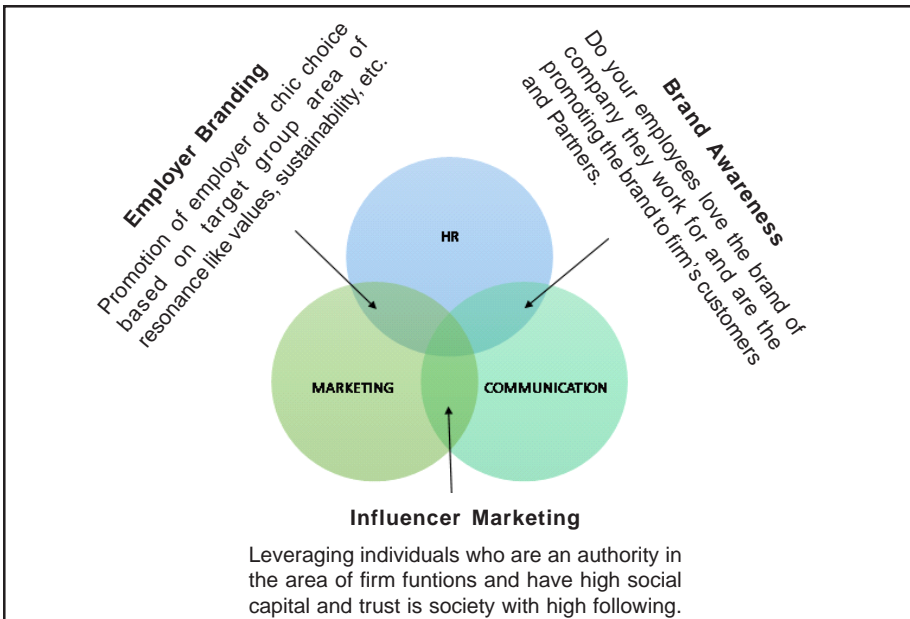
these two fields, HR analytics may inform IMC strategies by providing human-oriented data that can help refine and personalize marketing communication strategies. Likewise, IMC can enhance HR practices by promoting the company's image as an employer of choice, aiding recruitment and retention.

As per Figure 1, we can see the intersection and benefit of HR Analytics and Marketing when collaboration happens, with the intermediatory variable being communication. The output is a benefit of building the organization's reputation amongst employees and subsequently amongst customers and partners.

When HR and Marketing work together, it leads to higher employer branding. Similarly, when Marketing and Communication leaders collaborate, it leads to Influencer marketing. Moreover, when Communication and Human Resource teams come together, it results in positive brand advocacy.

3. The Synergy between IMC and HR Analytics

As the organizational environment is rapidly changing, evidence suggests that there are potential synergies between Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Human Resource (HR) Analytics. The study of this intersection is relatively novel, providing an exciting opportunity for organizations to leverage IMC and HR in an interdisciplinary fashion, enabling the potential for increased competitive advantage. One compelling demonstration of this interaction is in how HR Analytics can influence strategic decisions in IMC. HR Analytics' application in understanding employee behaviours, insights, and patterns can suggest cues for creating tailored communication strategies (Marler & Boudreau, 2017). For instance, understanding an organization's diversity profile could aid the IMC in creating inclusive advertising campaigns, reflecting not only its diverse customer base but also its workforce. Such insights could further refine customer-targeting strategies. Correspondingly, IMC strategies could significantly be reflected in HR practices and be captured through analytics. A well-orchestrated IMC strategy reflects a strong brand image, which can naturally attract talent and increase retention rates (Gupta & Singh, 2022) Further, quantification of the IMC's impact on HR metrics can yield meaningful insights. For instance, the analysis could compare periods of intensified IMC campaigns and the subsequent impact on talent attraction, recruitment metrics, and retention. However, organizations must exercise caution in interpreting the data and interactions observed. Metrics may be influenced by various factors, both internal and external, and dissecting these intersections requires a careful and systematic approach. The exploration of the interplay between IMC and HR Analytics opens a new field of interdisciplinary research. The merger of these areas presents possible benefits in terms of cost-efficiency, increased organizational efficacy, and the opportunity for a more holistic viewpoint on strategic corporate communication and HR management.

## 4. Review of Relevant Literature and Case Studies

In this literature review, the intersection between Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Human Resource (HR) Analytics is discussed. Both these areas of organizational functioning have emerged as critical aspects of strategic decisions. A plethora of research work has already pointed towards their independent significance (Marler & Boudreau, 2017).(Belch & Belch, 2020) However, the interplay between these two areas is still relatively unexplored. IMC revolves around delivering a cohesive message to consumers, ensuring brand consistency across all communication platforms (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015). Holistically, the successful implementation of IMC is directly attributable to the employees behind the strategy. Thus, understanding how HR analytics could potentially inform and improve IMC strategies is a promising course of research. Marler and Boudreau (2017) suggest that HR analytics involves the systematic identification and quantification of the people-related drivers of business outcomes. In the context of IMC, HR analytics could endow organizations with valuable insights regarding the skills, competencies, and behaviours necessary for effective communication strategies. Arguably, by integrating employee performance data from HR analytics into the development of their IMC strategies, organizations could ensure a better alignment between their internal capabilities and external communication efforts (Baker & Hart, 2016). Some cases of organizations successfully integrating their IMC strategies with HR analytics can amplify the key insights. A case study by Nathou and Bennett (2021) discusses how a multinational organization effectively aligned its employer branding - an element of IMC - with HR analytics, resulting in enhanced talent acquisition and retention. Another instance of the merger could be seen in the tech giant, Google, which reportedly uses HR analytics to inform its marketing communication strategies (Gupta, 2019). The emerging research stream suggests that enabling a synergistic relationship between IMC and HR analytics could present a valuable depth in organizational decision-making. Nevertheless, it requires a more in-depth and comprehensive approach highlighting the specific mechanisms through which HR analytics could enhance IMC effectiveness and *vice versa*.

5. Potential Implications for Organizational Success

The successful integration of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Human Resource (HR) Analytics has potential implications for the prosperity of organizations. Research suggests that simultaneous utilization of IMC and HR analytics could lead to improved decision-making, enhanced productivity, and increased profitability. IMC maintains a steadfast focus on the customer experience, incorporating their perspective into every aspect of marketing (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015). Coupling this with HR analytics, which

uses data-driven insights for human resource decisions, can combine the strengths of both domains. For instance, HR analytics can illuminate staff behaviours, skill levels and productivity that can align with IMC activities and strategies (Angrave *et al.*, 2016). With data integrity as a common ground, IMC and HR analytics can provide organizations with a holistic understanding of internal and external environments.

FIGURE 2

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES
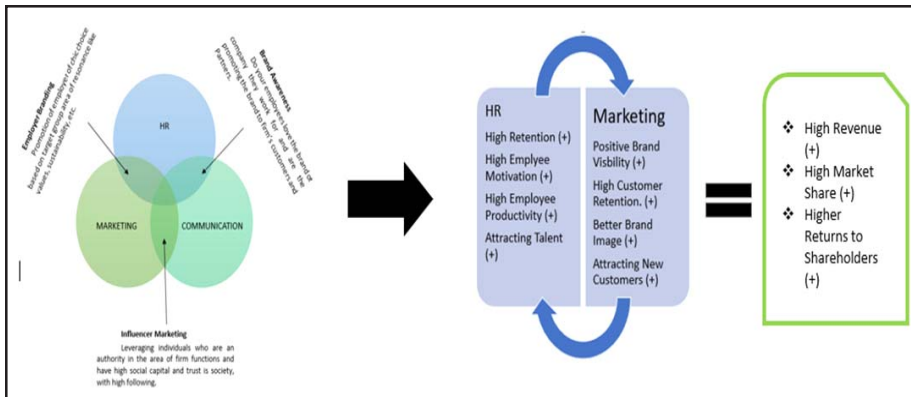
In Figure 2, we can observe the advantages of combining Integrated Marketing Communication and Human Resources. The HR department benefits from higher employee retention and increased motivation, leading to improved productivity and attracting high-quality talent to the organization. On the other hand, the Marketing department benefits from building a positive brand image, improving customer retention, attracting new customers, and enhancing the brand's visibility. All these benefits ultimately result in higher revenue for the organization, increased market share in their respective business field, and better returns for stakeholders.

Such integration can enhance strategic planning and decision-making processes, leading to improved organizational performance (Davenport, 2013). Data from a survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2020) portrays that organizations employing HR analytics have 40 per cent higher employee retention rates and 38 per cent higher sales per employee compared to those that do not. Moreover, a study by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA, 2018) found that businesses that implement comprehensive IMC strategies reported 25 per cent higher profit margins. Therefore, merging IMC and HR Analytics may provide an opportunity not just to capitalize on efficiency but also on strategic alignment, creating a synergistic impact on organizational success.

6. Challenges and Limitations

The integration of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Human Resource (HR) Analytics presents an exciting proposition from a strategic standpoint. Nevertheless, several potential constraints and issues may arise during this integration process. We categorize these challenges into four main constituents: technological constraints, data privacy concerns, lack of skilled personnel, and cultural resistance. (a) Technological Constraints: The sophistication of IMC and HR Analytics requires advanced technological platforms. While many businesses currently have systems that can handle either IMC or HR Analytics, integrating the two would require robust systems which not all organizations might have at their disposal (Knox, & Van Oest, 2021). (b) Data Privacy Concerns: Data privacy emerges as another important issue. The integration of HR and marketing data may raise concerns connected to an employee's right to privacy and potential misuse of personal data (Frey& Osborne, 2017). Strict adherence to data privacy laws is essential to curtail this challenge. (c) Lack of Skilled Personnel: The underlying challenge remains the scarcity of personnel skilled enough to handle and interpret both IMC and HR Analytics effectively. Cross-functional skill sets necessitate a profound understanding of both domains (Bersin, 2017). (d) Cultural Resistance: The integration can face internal resistance from the organization. Employees and departments may feel threatened by the sharing of information across different units in an organization (Alvesson, & Sveningsson, 2015). Nevertheless, these challenges can be mitigated by setting actionable and judicious strategies, including investing in advanced technology, conducting regular staff training and development sessions, respecting privacy laws, and encouraging a culture of transparency and collaboration within the organization. It is essential to cultivate an understanding that the integration of IMC and HR Analytics aims to create a holistic and synergistic perspective to achieve organizational success rather than a means to infringe upon individual rights or departmental autonomy (Merriden, 2022).

7. Future Directions

The amalgamation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Human Resource (HR) Analytics presents an unfathomable scope of opportunities and advancements. There are several potential trends and advancements to be considered for future research in this burgeoning interdisciplinary approach. One paramount trend is the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) into IMC and HR analytics. Advances in technology have allowed for these tools to be easily integrated into various business functions, and their adaptation into IMC and HR analytics would enable companies to sift through vast amounts of data

more efficiently, generating impactful insights to drive strategic initiatives (Gupta, George, & Mishra, 2020). Another key direction is the examination of data-driven employee engagement models integrated with IMC perspectives. This not only enhances internal communications but has the potential to augment the perception and reputation of organizations externally (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). It is important to discuss the ethical and privacy issues related to HR Analytics. We need to understand how legal and ethical considerations might be relevant to IMC, particularly at a time when data usage and protection are under increased scrutiny. Cai, Y., & Zhu, D. (2020) have explored this topic. All these potential trends and advancements warrant extensive investigation, presenting sufficient opportunities for further academic contributions in this area.

8. Conclusion

The contemporary business landscape underscores the significance of managing external communications with markets and consumers and internal communications with employees. This systematic review synthesized a breadth of literature to explore the interplay between Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Human Resource (HR) Analytics, two prime drifts within businesses that previously operated in functional silos. Our primary aim was to demarcate the scope of their intersection and understand the imperative of integrating these domains into modern businesses. A salient finding is that HR Analytics, usually confined to human resource management, hugely impacts IMC when employed in unison. It refines internal communications through data-driven insights on employee engagement, which in turn surges the organization's external image. Likewise, IMC influences HR Analytics by creating comprehensive employee communication strategies that affect recruitment, retention, and overall employer branding. As businesses traverse an increasingly digital and data-driven era, connecting IMC strategies with HR Analytics offers an innovative way to optimize internal and external business performances. Integrating these two fields also paves the way for companies to gain competitive advantages, enhancing overall productivity and augmenting profits. This study's overarching inference denotes a compelling need for scholars and practitioners alike to understand this interdisciplinary approach's applicability and hope that our review induces further research on this fertile ground. The unique combination of IMC and HR Analytics, solidly grounded in its potential to transform business communication and decision-making, heralds an exciting future for research and practice in this burgeoning academic field.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest.

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