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Measuring the Effectiveness of Promotional Mix and its Effect on the Market Share in the Jordanian Communication Companies

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at determining the influence of promotional approaches on customers' buying decision. The promotional mix is combination of activities comprised of advertising, publicity, public relations, personal selling and sales promotion. The purpose of the study is to understand importance and how these approaches play their role to influence users' buying decision. In today's competitive world organizations have to have superior understanding of customers' needs and motivation and concrete plan to get buy in from them. This is a constant race to win over competitors. Choosing a good promotional mix can determine the success of business. In this study the author selected the most cited four promotional approach elements i.e. advertizing, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations. The study illustrated how these four promotional approaches influence customers' desire, interest, awareness and lead them to act.

Keywords: Promotional Mix, Market share, Advertising, Sales Promotion, Public Relation, Personal Selling.

1. INTRODUCTION

Promotion is a long term or short term approach of communicating product/service features or getting direct buy in from the customer using a non-person or face to face technique or a combination of multiple techniques. Literature suggests that, no organization can deny the vital role played by the promotional activities. A well designed promotional approach can generate tenfold the cost incurred. No matter how good the value a product/service offers, if not communicated properly the endeavor may fail. In this era or globalization and technology the merits of an effective promotional approach is being realized more than ever. There days products/services have a very short life cycle and therefore, an action oriented fast paced promotional campaign can get the edge. However, promotional mix also includes long term brand marketing.

Jordan has seen a rapid growth in communication sector over the last decade. New and new competitors are joining in. To achieve competitive advantage, the companies are adapting as well. Innovation in this domain requires proper understanding and on time utilization of the suitable promotional techniques. In modern day telecommunication sector, the influence of promotion is even greater as the success largely depends on awareness, persuasion and informing regarding the offerings. Big telecom organizations generally carry out their promotion activities in an integrated manner, with the combination of message, media, direct sale and sponsorships. In this study author demonstrated how promotional elements such as advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling and public relation influence the awareness, interest, desire of a customer and leads to action. Arens (1999) illustrated that responding to the important needs of a customer generates more action and helps the buyers to confirm their decisions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of a well constructed market mix is to create or explore latent demands in targeted consumer base and increase the sale or value out of a sale. Therefore, organizations are always exploring the opportunities to set up a better strategy around promotion. As per Kotler (1984), organizations are applying more innovation and sophisticated approaches to reach out to their consumers. Eberhard and Lenz (2006) focused on the telecommunication markets and illustrated that the sector is becoming more saturated and therefore the importance of a well planned promotional strategy is even more important. As more and more companies are entering the market competitors need to improvise and focus on fast effective means of promotion. The marketing team are the linkage between the company and the customer. Their strategy should be aligned with the organization's goal while enabling the customers to distinguish among brands. The best approach for developing an effective promotional strategy is to view everything from the consumers' perspective and understand value with an eye of customer. As per the theories of marking and market share, 70% of the market is controlled by few (3-5) big players while the rest 30% is shared by hundreds of small companies. Therefore, the promotional approach cannot be and should not be universal. It should be customized company wise. Smaller companies should always seek for innovative ways to gain leverage. This study aims at exploring four major elements of promotional mix and establishing a linkage between these elements and The Hierarchy of effects model.

Advertising

Advertising is one of the four element of promotional mix discussed in this study. Almost all researches mentioned advertising as an significant element playing important roles within the models developed. As per Belch & Belch (2009), advertising is the most cost effective solution to reach the customer base quickly. This even better realized in communication sector. Jobber (2007), defined advertising as a paid form of non-personal communication about products/services via media. Fill (2006) emphasized on the ability of advertisement to develop brand awareness, values and associations. The approach of advertisement depends not only on the products/services to be sold but also on the consumers' demographics and geographic location (Belch & Belch, 2009). In spite of different approaches within the element, the aim is always to build or maintain awareness of a product or organization. Subhojit (2009), considered advertising as the most dominant factor in the promotion mix. Advertisement can also be considered as a cheap way to deliver the message if it is well constructed and communicated via proper media. The money spent on

advertisement can generate tenfold returns. A million dollar spent on advertisement is money well spent if it can reach hundreds of millions of people (Aaker & Myers, 1982).

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is another frequently mentioned element in promotional mix. Researchers termed sales promotion as an action-focused approach where the goal is to influence the behavioral intension of targeted customers. It is a method of expediting the sale by dint of providing additional advantage to customers. De Pelsmacker, (2001) acknowledged that sales promotions offer better value for money and therefore, encourage customers to respond quickly. Sales promotion depends less on the product/service specific information and rather creates a win situation in terms of monetary benefits. However, prior experience with the product/service does gains a tempo. The extra incentive offered in a sales promotion is expected to accelerate the sale. Fill (2006) acknowledged that sales promotion creates a quick short term effect unlike a steady long term vision of advertisement. Sales promotion too follows a non-personal communication methodology. Advertising creates a latent demand while sales promotion is kind of a push approach (Brennan et al. 2007). This is a quick action based behavioral approach rather than a long term awareness or attitude driven methodology.

Public Relation

Jobber (2007) defined public relations as an approach to create and maintain effective communication between customers and company that brings about positive change for both and establish trust and loyalty. This element focuses on long term relation and aims at resolving company specific issues to better people's perception towards the brand. Fill (2006) illustrated that, public relations is a mechanism managing the relationships between organizations and their customers. Individuals who carry out the activities for public relations are not directly associated with selling products. Their key responsibility is to identify the gap between expectation and perceived image of organization from customers' point of view and act to reduce the gap (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001). Many considered public relations as the most visible element in the promotional mix. Belch & Belch (2009) saw public relations as a tool more powerful than advertising or sales promotion.

Personal Selling

Personal selling is a two way communication approach where a representative of the company meets directly with the targeted customer and tries to get buy in from the him/her. According to Belch & Belch (2009) personal selling can take the form of retail selling, field selling, telemarketing and inside selling. Being a direct linkage between company and customer the representative can make or break the game. Therefore, personal selling to a great extent depends on the skill of the company representative. Representative chosen by the company is responsible for making the sale and build relationship. In terms of money, personal selling is a costly endeavor an labor intensive approach. It's effect is short term and it is effective only when the cost incurred can be justified. Storbacka (2009) emphasized that to be successful through this approach, the representative needs to have adequate information on market, financial issues and activities. Although the overall effect is short term, the representative can develop a long term relationship using this two-way, face-to-face communication approach where the representative shares information and gives

demonstrations to particular audiences (De Pelsmacker et al, 2001). Although a lot rests on the shoulder of the representative, this approach can be very effective as it enables the representative to collect instant feedback (Fill 2006).

The Hierarchy of Effects Theory

Osuagwu, (2002) demonstrated that there are a series of steps a consumer undergoes due to the effect of promotional approaches before he/she makes an purchase i.e. the marketing objectives are achieved. The Hierarchy of effects theory incorporates the following six steps:

1. Awareness: During this step a customer becomes aware of the products/service.
2. Knowledge: During this step a customer gets further acquainted with the product/service and it's features.
3. Liking: During this step a customer develops a latent need for the product/service.
4. Preference: During this step a customer starts to develop a brand/product/service preference.
5. Conviction: During this step a customer the customer strongly leans toward getting the product to meet his need.
6. Purchase: During this step the actual purchase takes place.

3. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this era of globalization consumers have the power to influence the products they need and how they need it. Therefore, business has to adept to customers' requirements and always improvise and bring something new to the table. The product/service introduction on time is key. It is also important for business that the consumers receive the product/service details ahead of the competitors. Modern business follows pull system setup unlike the then product/service push concept. Customer requirement initiates creation of product/service. Even new product/service apply pull concept by creating a latent demand through advertisement and other promotional activities. Ansari, Shahriar (2011) defined promotion as the method used to ensure that consumers are aware of the products that the organization is offering. The advancement in technology has made it possible to carry out promotional activities in a variety of ways. These methods determine the market success. Promotion is comprised of the activities aimed at targeted consumers. Belch and Belch, (2004) defined promotion as the coordination of all business efforts to create channels for information to pass through to the customer and create persuasion to sell goods and services.

From the review of literature we are considering four promotional strategies to work with i.e. sales promotion, advertisement, public relations and personal selling as these are most commonly used methods of marketing mix. These four elements of marketing mix are hypothesized to influence consumers intention/action. The hierarchy-of-effects model i.e. AIDA model have been used to define consumers' action by many researchers. As per AIDA model, customers experience four phases as they eventually take an action regarding product/service purchase. These four phases are: Desire, Awareness, Interest and Action (Heymer, 2008). In this research the author hypothesized the following relations between promotional mix factors and Hierarchy-of-Effects Model.

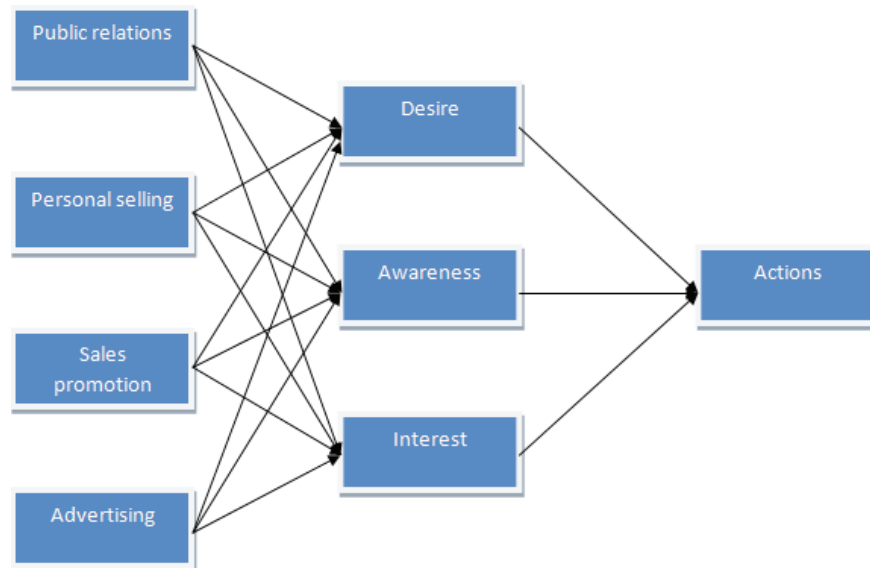


Figure 1: Conceptual model

As per the conceptual model, the following hypotheses have been developed:

- H1: Sales promotion has positive influence on consumers' desire.
- H2: Sales promotion has positive influence on consumers' interest.
- H3: Sales promotion has positive influence on consumers' awareness.
- H4: Advertising has positive influence on consumers' desire.
- H5: Advertising has positive influence on consumers' interest.
- H6: Advertising has positive influence on consumers' awareness.
- H7: Personal selling has positive influence on consumers' desire.
- H8: Personal selling has positive influence on consumers' interest.
- H9: Personal selling has positive influence on consumers' awareness.
- H10: Public relations has positive influence on consumers' desire.
- H11: Public relations has positive influence on consumers' interest.
- H12: Public relations has positive influence on consumers' awareness.
- H13: Consumers' desire influence his action i.e. purchase intension.
- H14: Consumers' interest influence his action i.e. purchase intension.
- H15: Consumers' awareness influence his action i.e. purchase intension.

Data Analysis Plan

The data gathered have been numerically coded and entered in SPSS. First of all the data was checked for values which are missing/ mistakes. After rectification of the missing and data entry errors a Confirmatory

Factor Analysis model was developed using SPSS AMOS plug-in. The CFA was observed for factor extraction, reliability and validity. Upon finding satisfactory results a Structural Equation Model was developed. As the model reached a good fit the coefficients were observed for testing the hypotheses developed from the study of literature.

Data Collection

The author considered Jordanian IT sector as the domain of research. The research data was collected using primary data collection approach. Author made the use of a questionnaire to gather public opinion regarding the factors at hand. The questionnaire was uploaded in an online based research platform and people were invited to participated in the survey. The data collected included people from 18-55 years of age. Although about 65% of the participants were male, the sampling method was completely random. The author also printed hard copies of the survey and distributed among people of different age and occupation. The data collection procedure took 2 months. Authors received 552 responses after that 2 months time period.

Questionnaire Design

The research applied a questionnaire based data collection approach. The questionnaire was administered through Qualtrics which is a popular platform for research data collection. The questionnaire included 34 questions on 7 factors. The questionnaire items were on 7 point Likert scale from where 1-strongly disagree, 2- generally disagree, 3- slightly disagree, 4- neutral, 5- slightly agree, 6- generally agree and 7- strongly agree. The questionnaire had $3 \times 5 = 15$ questions on AIDA factors and 19 questions on 4 marketing mix factors.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

To test the hypotheses developed and answer the research questions a thorough analysis has been carried out with the data collected through survey. The survey included questions focused on the factors included in the conceptual model. The data collected using survey has been coded accordingly and entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for analysis. Author used SPSS version 20 and associated AMOS plug-in for the analysis.

Reliability and Validity

The first step in the data analysis was to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs. The reliability measure shows the internal consistency of the items related to a factor. The confirmatory factor analysis conducted to illustrate the factor loading and reliability and validity statistic of the factors included in the model. The aim of the reliability analysis is to make sure that the item groups are consistent. Reliability analysis illustrated that the internal consistency was sufficient among the item groups.

The criteria reported here are: Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Maximum Shared Variance (MSV), and Average Shared Variance (ASV). The thresholds for these values are as follows:

Reliability $CR > 0.7$, Convergent Validity $AVE > 0.5$, Discriminant Validity $MSV < AVE$.

Table 1 below shows that The Composite Reliability (CR) for all the constructs are satisfactory as all the measures achieved were greater than 0.7. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was also greater than 0.5. Therefore, the model does not have any reliability and validity concerns.

Table 1
Reliability and validity

	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>MSV</i>	<i>ASV</i>
Personal selling	0.967	0.855	0.397	0.354
Public relations	0.945	0.812	0.460	0.383
Action	0.860	0.681	0.610	0.442
Sales promotion	0.946	0.778	0.610	0.370
Advertising	0.974	0.883	0.460	0.372

The following tables shows that the Square root of AVE (along the diagonal) are greater than inter-construct correlations. Therefore, all the criterias for reliability and validity are met.

Table 2
Square root of AVE

	<i>Personal selling</i>	<i>Public relations</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Sales promotion</i>	<i>Advertising</i>
Personal selling	0.925				
Public relations	0.615	0.901			
Action	0.630	0.609	0.825		
Sales promotion	0.526	0.569	0.781	0.882	
Advertising	0.604	0.678	0.625	0.521	0.940

Measurement Model (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

Confirmatory factor analysis has been conducted to illustrate how well the factors are defined by their respective items. This is a second order measurement model as the factor ‘Action’ is a second order construct comprised of ‘desire’, ‘interest’ and ‘awareness’.

The following table illustrates the model fitness. Table shows that the ratio of chi square value and degree of freedom i.e. CMIN/DF (χ^2/df) is within the acceptable limit. GFI has not been reported as many researchers argue about using it due to sample size bias (Sharma, Mukherjee, Kumar, & Dillon, 2005). Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is also a good fit illustrating adequate $\chi^2 - df$ ratio for proposed model. Similarly good fits have also been achieved for IFI, TLI, NFI and RFI (Bollen, & Long, 1993). As suggested by Kenny, Kaniskan & McCoach, (2014), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) also for this CFA is a good fit (0.065).

The table 4 below shows the factor loading by each item on the respective factors. It illustrates that all the items have loading greater than 0.4. Therefore, the questionnaire items were able to collectively express the factors they have been assigned to. The loading also shows how each strongly items influences the factors they were expressing. Therefore, the questionnaire was adequate to capture and explain the factors represented in the model.

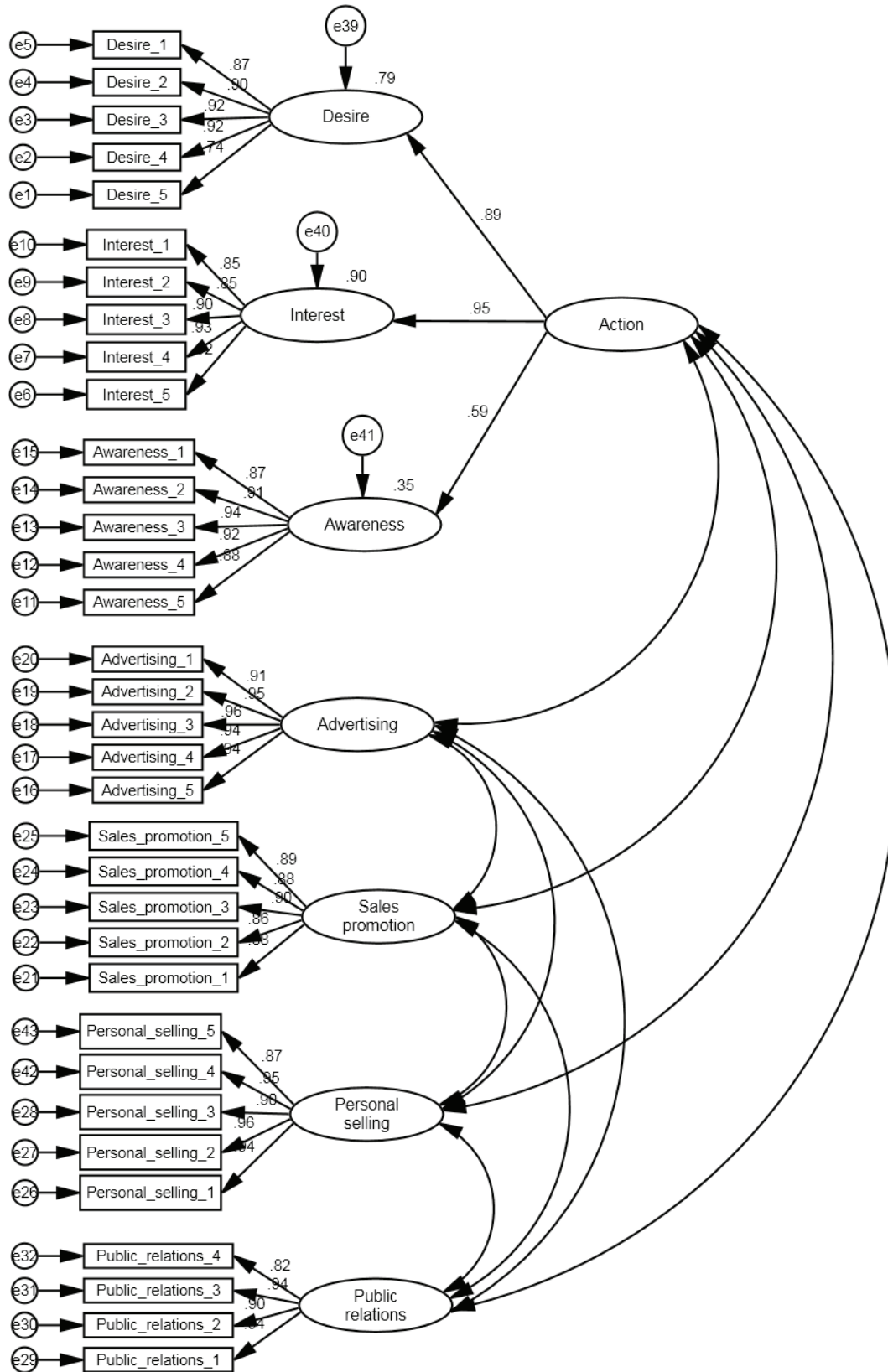


Figure 2: Measurement model (Confirmatory factor analysis)

Table 3
CFA fit Indices

<i>Model Fit indices</i>	<i>Achieved values</i>	<i>Baseline values</i>	<i>Remark</i>
χ^2/df	3.35	< 3 “good fit”, < 5 “marginal fit”, >5 “poor fit”	Good fit
NFI	0.930	$\geq .9$	Good fit
RFI	0.923	$\geq .9$	Good fit
IFI	0.950	$\geq .9$	Good fit
TLI	0.945	$\geq .9$	Good fit
CFI	0.949	$\geq .9$	Good fit
RMSEA	0.065	< = .05 “close approximate fit”, > .05 but < .08 “marginal fit”, > = .10 “poor fit”	Good fit

Table 4
Factor loading

			<i>Loading</i>
Desire	<---	Action	0.891
Awareness	<---	Action	0.59
Interest	<---	Action	0.949
Desire_5	<---	Desire	0.743
Desire_4	<---	Desire	0.915
Desire_3	<---	Desire	0.924
Desire_2	<---	Desire	0.901
Desire_1	<---	Desire	0.87
Interest_5	<---	Interest	0.923
Interest_4	<---	Interest	0.928
Interest_3	<---	Interest	0.902
Interest_2	<---	Interest	0.853
Interest_1	<---	Interest	0.853
Awareness_5	<---	Awareness	0.882
Awareness_4	<---	Awareness	0.922
Awareness_3	<---	Awareness	0.94
Awareness_2	<---	Awareness	0.913
Awareness_1	<---	Awareness	0.865
Advertising_5	<---	Advertising	0.944
Advertising_4	<---	Advertising	0.935
Advertising_3	<---	Advertising	0.962
Advertising_2	<---	Advertising	0.95
Advertising_1	<---	Advertising	0.906
Sales_promotion_1	<---	Sales_promotion	0.875
Sales_promotion_2	<---	Sales_promotion	0.859
Sales_promotion_3	<---	Sales_promotion	0.903
Sales_promotion_4	<---	Sales_promotion	0.884

			Loading
Sales_promotion_5	<---	Sales_promotion	0.888
Personal_selling_1	<---	Personal_selling	0.943
Personal_selling_2	<---	Personal_selling	0.963
Personal_selling_3	<---	Personal_selling	0.904
Public_relations_1	<---	Public_relations	0.94
Public_relations_2	<---	Public_relations	0.901
Public_relations_4	<---	Public_relations	0.816
Public_relations_3	<---	Public_relations	0.941
Personal_selling_4	<---	Personal_selling	0.945
Personal_selling_5	<---	Personal_selling	0.866

Structural Model (Structural Equation Modeling)

Figure 3 illustrates the structural model developed to test the relations illustrated in the conceptual model. The model shows four important form of marketing influence AIDA i.e. Interest, Desire and Awareness eventually leading to an action i.e. sale.

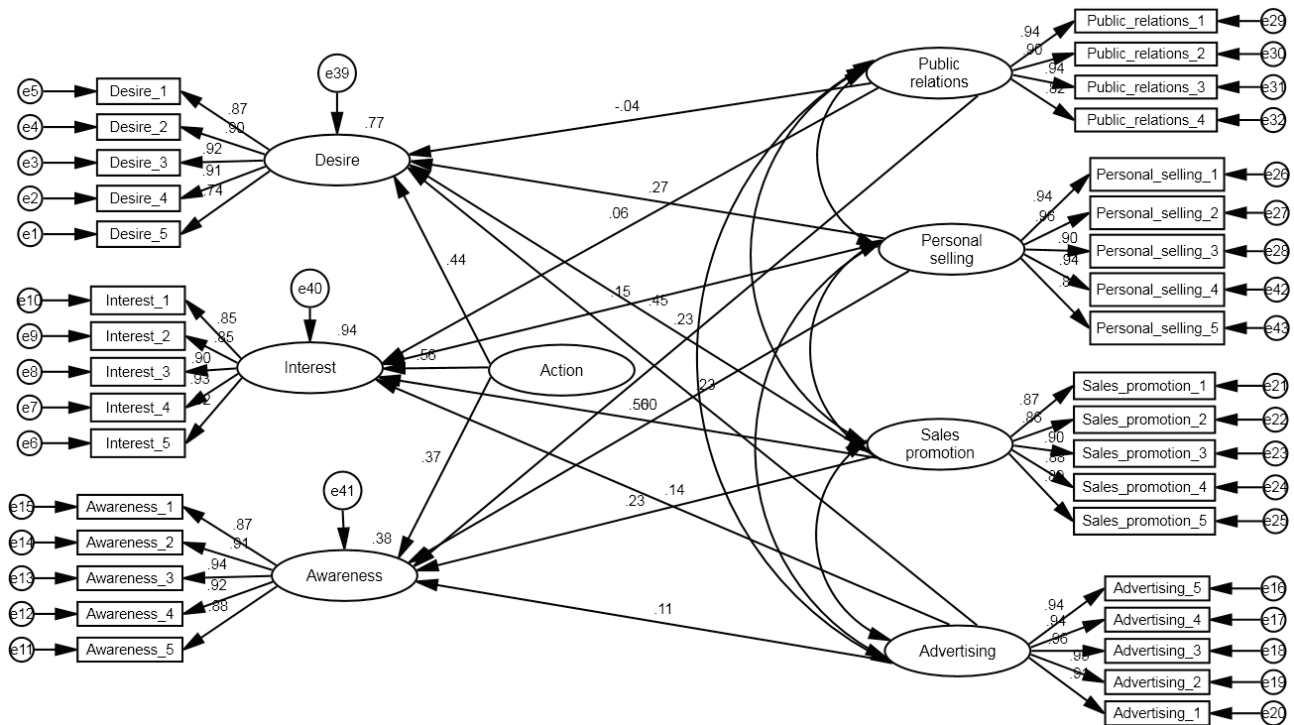


Figure 3: Structural model (Structural equation modeling)

The following table illustrates the model fit indices for the structural equation model. The SEM fit indices were well within the acceptable limit suggested by literature.

The model met all the applicable fit indices and therefore has been used to estimate the relations predicted in conceptual design. Table 6 below shows the β coefficients and associated p values of the relations. The coefficient table below shows that, advertizing and sales promotion positively influences

Table 5
SEM fit Indices

<i>Model Fit indices</i>	<i>Achieved values</i>	<i>Baseline values</i>	<i>Remark</i>
χ^2/df	3.315	< 3 “good fit”, < 5 “marginal fit”, > 5 “poor fit”	Good fit
NFI	0.932	$\geq .9$	Good fit
RFI	0.924	$\geq .9$	Good fit
IFI	0.951	$\geq .9$	Good fit
TLI	0.946	$\geq .9$	Good fit
CFI	0.951	$\geq .9$	Good fit
RMSEA	0.065	< = .05 “close approximate fit”, > .05 but < .08 “marginal fit”, > = .10 “poor fit”	Good fit

customers’ interest, desire and awareness i.e. the AIDA factors (for advertizing, $\beta = 0.144, p < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.226, p < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.113, p < 0.05$ and for sales promotion $\beta = 0.562, p < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.447, p < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.226, p < 0.05$). Personal selling positively influences desire and interest ($\beta = 0.268, p < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.155, p < 0.05$) but does not have a significant influence over awareness. Public relations has significant influence over only awareness ($\beta = 0.235, p < 0.05$).

Table 6
Standardized Coefficients

			<i>Estimate</i>	<i>P value</i>
Desire	<---	Action	0.441	0.000
Awareness	<---	Action	0.372	0.000
Interest	<---	Action	0.56	0.000
Desire	<---	Sales promotion	0.447	0.000
Interest	<---	Sales promotion	0.562	0.000
Awareness	<---	Sales promotion	0.226	0.000
Desire	<---	Personal selling	0.268	0.000
Awareness	<---	Personal selling	0	0.997
Interest	<---	Personal selling	0.155	0.000
Awareness	<---	Public relations	0.235	0.000
Desire	<---	Public relations	-0.043	0.369
Interest	<---	Public relations	0.062	0.167
Desire	<---	Advertising	0.226	0.000
Interest	<---	Advertising	0.144	0.000
Awareness	<---	Advertising	0.113	0.000

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study included a combination of four promotional approaches i.e. sales promotion, advertisement, public relations and personal selling influencing customers’ intension, desire, awareness and action. Many researchers mentioned these four promotional mix factors (Perner 2008; Osuagwu 2002; Adetayo 2006; Smith and Taylor, 2002). These marketing promotion strategy creates a marketing sub-system that conveys product/service informing to customers and thus respond to or creates needs (Armstrong and Kotler,

2009) Asikhia (2000). These promotional strategies are very important in determining the efficiency and effectiveness of a company's marketing efforts (Osuagwu, 2002). They not only serves the goal of the company but also helps in redefining and improving action plans. Adetayo (2006) emphasized that all of these promotional elements are required to work together in order to accomplish the organization's goal. A well thought promotion plan is thus an essential element of strategic marketing. However, these elements often are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, depending on the product/services we often observe a mixture of multiple approaches.

Analysis illustrated that the two most significant and influential promotional elements factors here are sales promotion and advertising. Berkowitz et al. (2000) defined advertisement as a paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, good, service or idea by an identified sponsor. As per Blattberg & Neslin (1990), sales promotion is a set of promotional incentives which aims at increasing volume or speed of purchase. Sales promotion and advertizing illustrated significant influence with all the AIDA variables. However, personal selling showed significant influence with desire and interest but not with awareness. As per Armstrong and Kotler (2009) personal selling is personal presentation by the firm's sales force for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationship. This process involves two or more persons communicating directly with each other (Enikanselu, 2008). The last factor in the promotional mix i.e. public relations illustrated significant relation with only awareness. Public relations is a communication management system which influences the image of an organization and its products/ services (Fiske, 1980).

These promotional strategy influences customers desire interest and awareness and thus influences customers action to make a purchase. Therefore, proper promotional mix plays a vital role to increase company's market share and ability to stay ahead in battle with its nearest rivals.

Table 7 below shows the hypothesis testing results based on the findings.

Table 7
Hypothesis testing results

<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Status</i>
H1: Sales promotion has positive influence on consumers' desire.	Not rejected
H2: Sales promotion has positive influence on consumers' interest.	Not rejected
H3: Sales promotion has positive influence on consumers' awareness.	Not rejected
H4: Advertising has positive influence on consumers' desire.	Not rejected
H5: Advertising has positive influence on consumers' interest.	Not rejected
H6: Advertising has positive influence on consumers' awareness.	Not rejected
H7: Personal selling has positive influence on consumers' desire.	Not rejected
H8: Personal selling has positive influence on consumers' interest.	Not rejected
H9: Personal selling has positive influence on consumers' awareness.	Rejected
H10: Public relations has positive influence on consumers' desire.	Rejected
H11: Public relations has positive influence on consumers' interest.	Rejected
H12: Public relations has positive influence on consumers' awareness.	Not rejected
H13: Consumers' desire influence his action i.e. purchase intension.	Not rejected
H14: Consumers' interest influence his action i.e. purchase intension.	Not rejected
H15: Consumers' awareness influence his action i.e. purchase intension.	Not rejected

6. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Despite of all the efforts there are several limitations in this study that must be acknowledged. The 552 samples include a 65%-35% gender ratio. Author did not consider effect of gender as 30% of the participants did not share that information. Author included four promotional mix factors which limits the scope of the study. Researchers have introduced a few other factors also. There could be many small and big influences exerted by other factors which have not been considered. Influences/differences due to geographic locations of the participants have not been considered. In this study author focused on one specific geographic location. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized and one may achieve different results in another region. The author considered IT sector as the domain of the study. Therefore, generalization of the results in other sectors is not recommended without further research.

7. CONCLUSION

The study focused on specific promotional mix approaches and intended to establish relations between promotional mix and customers' action. Promotions are of utmost importance in strategic marketing and comprised of significant elements of marketing activities. It has been widely acknowledged by all the large, medium or small multinational corporations that there is no better alternative than an effective promotional strategy to effectively communicate product/service information with customers and initiate sale. The examples are evident and these days it has become even more important. No corporations, big or small can survive without a clear plan for promotional strategy. It's importance is realized even more in IT sector. Jordanian IT sector has seen a significant growth over the last decade. Mahmud et al.(2014), in their research focused on the effect of promotional mix elements in Jordanian Ceramic and glass production companies and found that advertising and personal selling are the two most important approaches followed by sales promotion and public relations. The findings of this study are similar but not exactly matches with the work of Mahmud et al.(2014) as here the author worked with a different domain i.e. IT sector in Jordan. Amira (2013) in his research, worked with advertising, internet marketing, public relation, personal selling and illustrated that these factors collectively contributed to 31.5% of the purchased decisions. Therefore, there can be many other factors which contribute to 68.5% of the purchase decision made. The author too acknowledges the limitation of this study and specifies that it's business implication should be limited to IT sector.

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